

INTRODUCTION

It is increasingly evident that pronunciation plays a key role in oral language teaching, and there are some studies that lay bare that gestures and body language may improve the production of phonetic segments (Odisho 2007; Gluhareva, Prieto 2017; Crison, Romero & Romero, 2018). Considering that spoken language and some body movements are controlled from the same motor system (Gentilucci & Dalla Volta 2008), this study aims to check to which extent this factor influences the improvement of the Catalan vowels pronunciation as a FL.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This project seeks to highlight the relevance of gestures for enhancing the pronunciation of any language and, in this case, Catalan pronunciation.



Map 1. Catalan

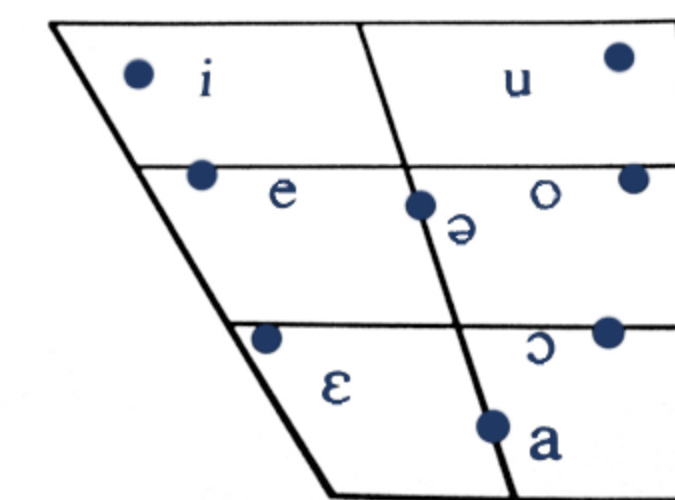


Figure 1: Eastern Catalan Vowel Inventory

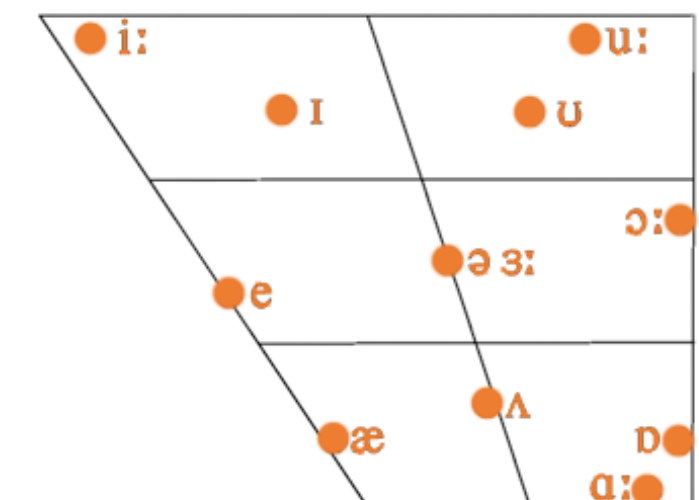


Figure 2: English Vowel Inventory

METHODOLOGY

Trainees:

4 American English native speakers resident in Catalonia, men and women of different ages, who were learning Catalan FL.

Data: pretest and posttest

Pretest: December 2016 - (comic strip about *Ot el Bruixot*) // Posttest: July 2017 (comic strip about *Ot el Bruixot*)

Training proposal: Taking into account the problems detected at the first production tests, a gestural and prosodic proposal was created to enhance the production of the sounds, taking tension into consideration as a basis for the improvement of pronunciation. This articulatory tension is acquired through proprioception, and for this reason gestures more or less tense have been performed. Intonation has been used to support the effect these gestures.

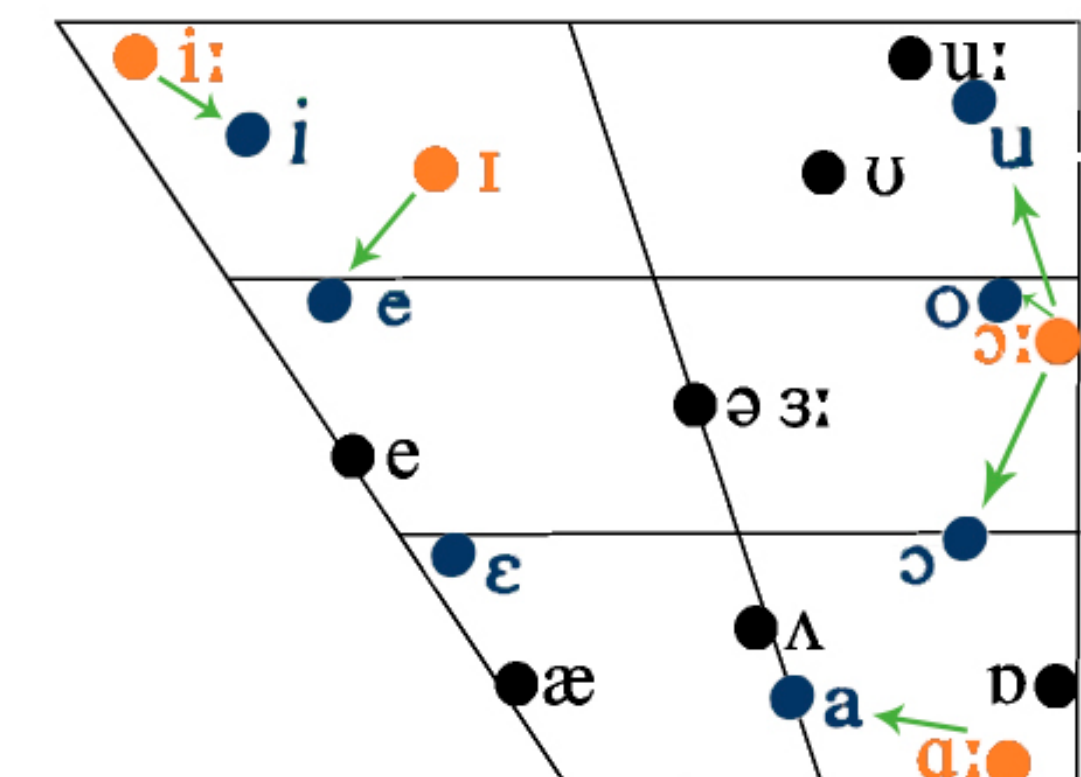
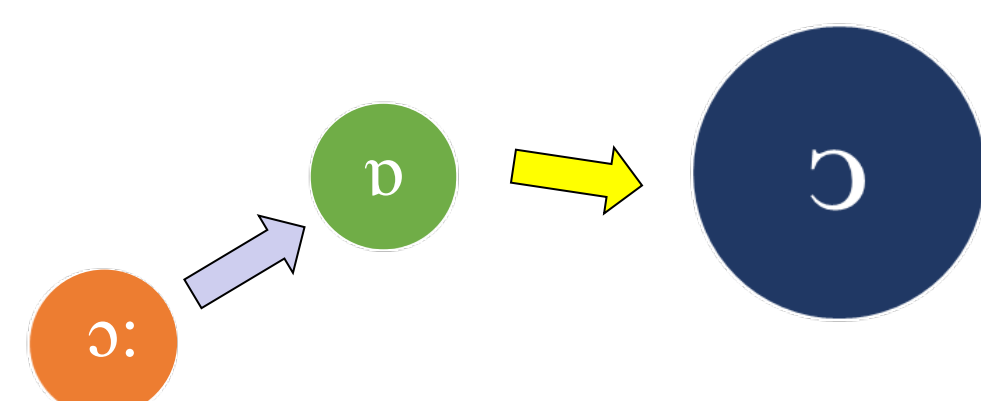


Figure 3: combination of both vowel inventories – basis for the proposal

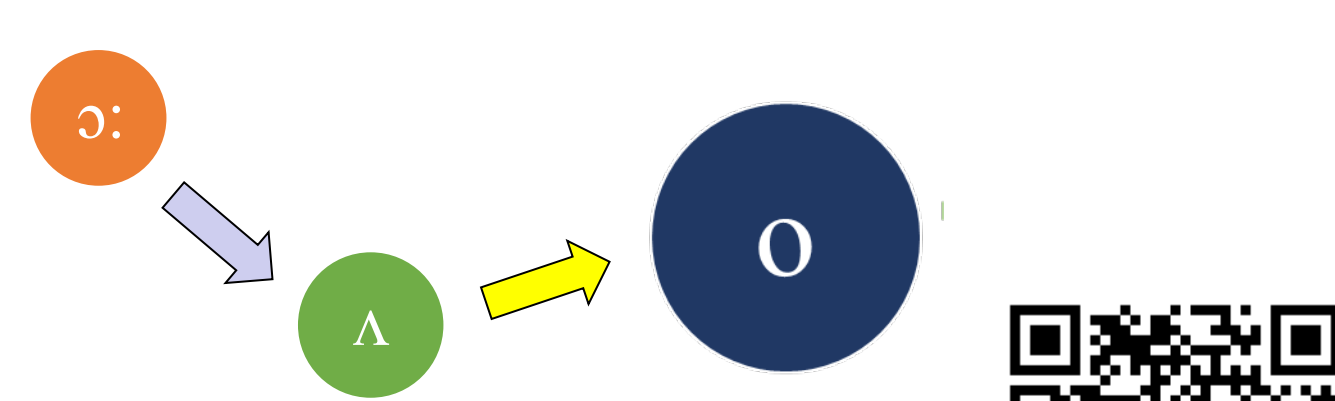
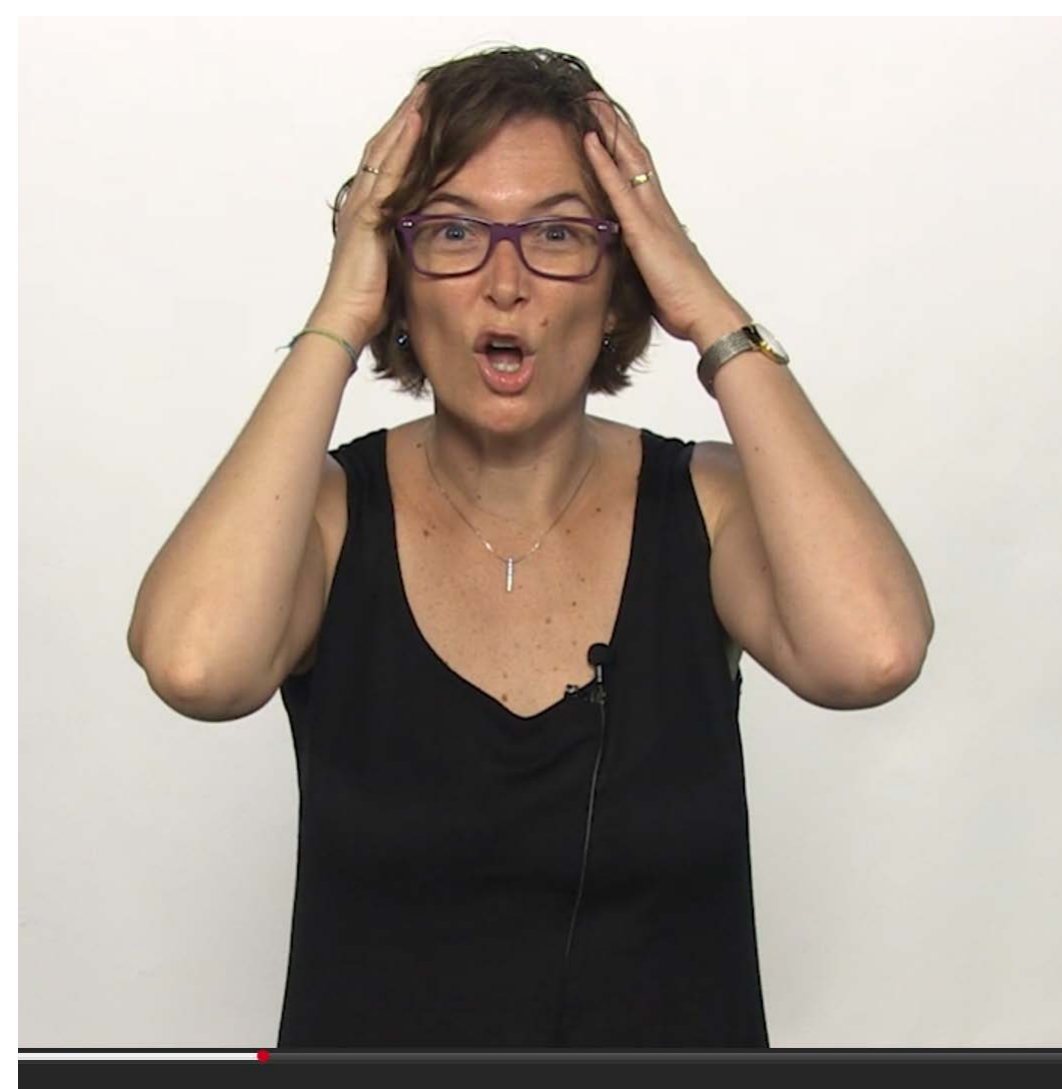
GESTURAL PROPOSAL



Atònit, m'he quedat.
'Astonished, I was.'



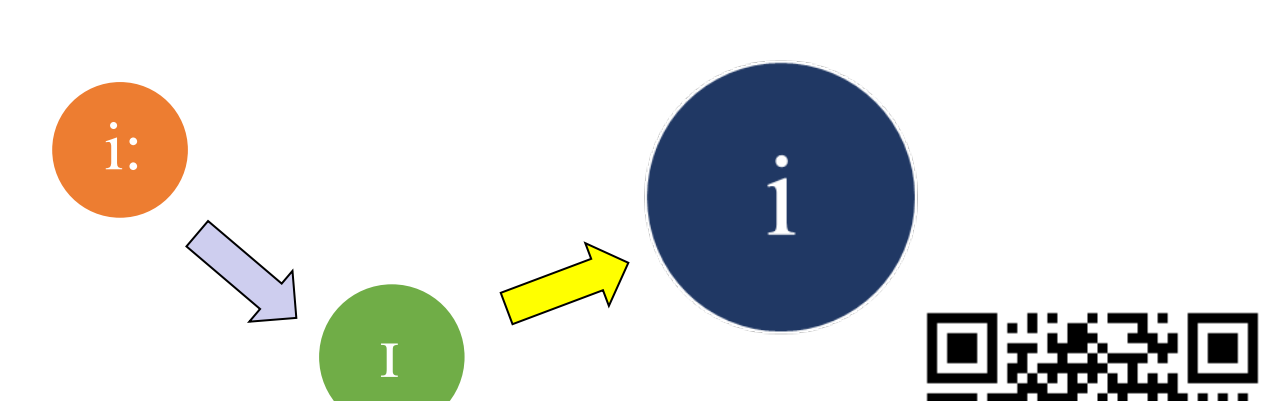
https://www.guiesdepronunciacio.cat/sites/default/files/videos/oo_fr6.mp4



Que em faràs un petó?
'Will you kiss me?'



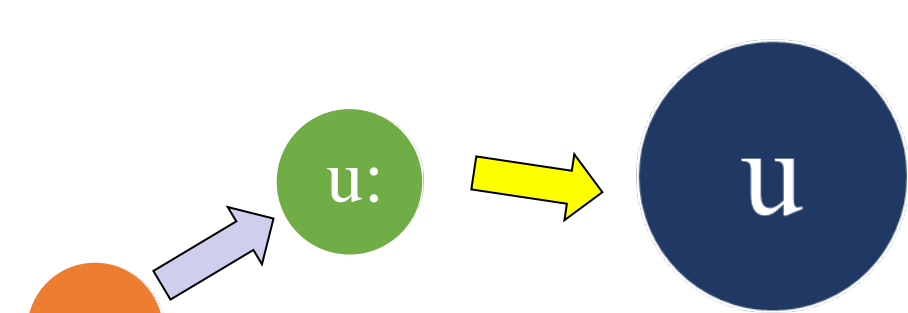
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Que t'has adormit?
'Did you fall asleep?'



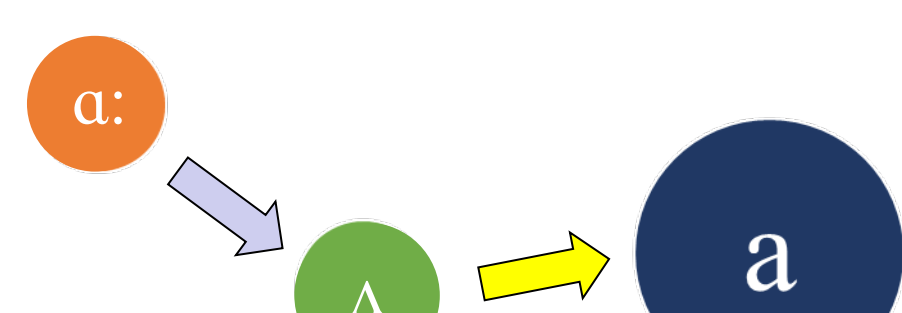
https://www.guiesdepronunciacio.cat/sites/default/files/videos/i_fr14.mp4



Caradura!
'You insolent!'



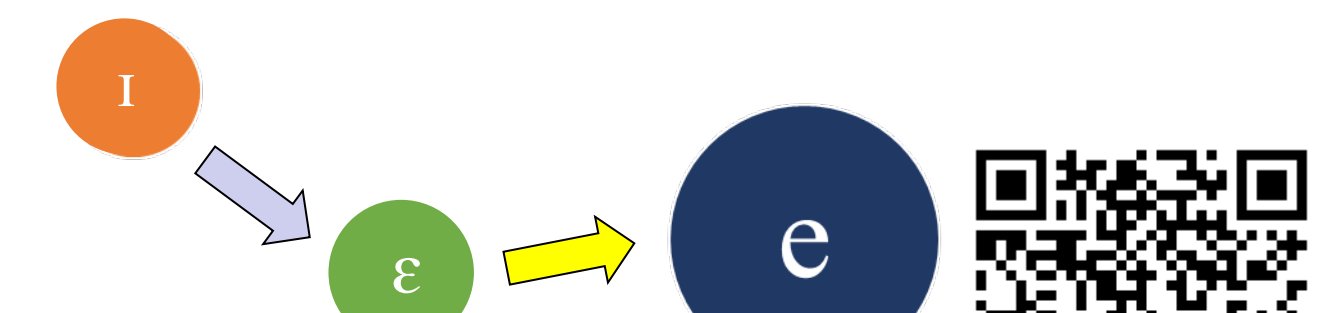
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La meva germana vindrà demà.
'My sister is coming tomorrow.'



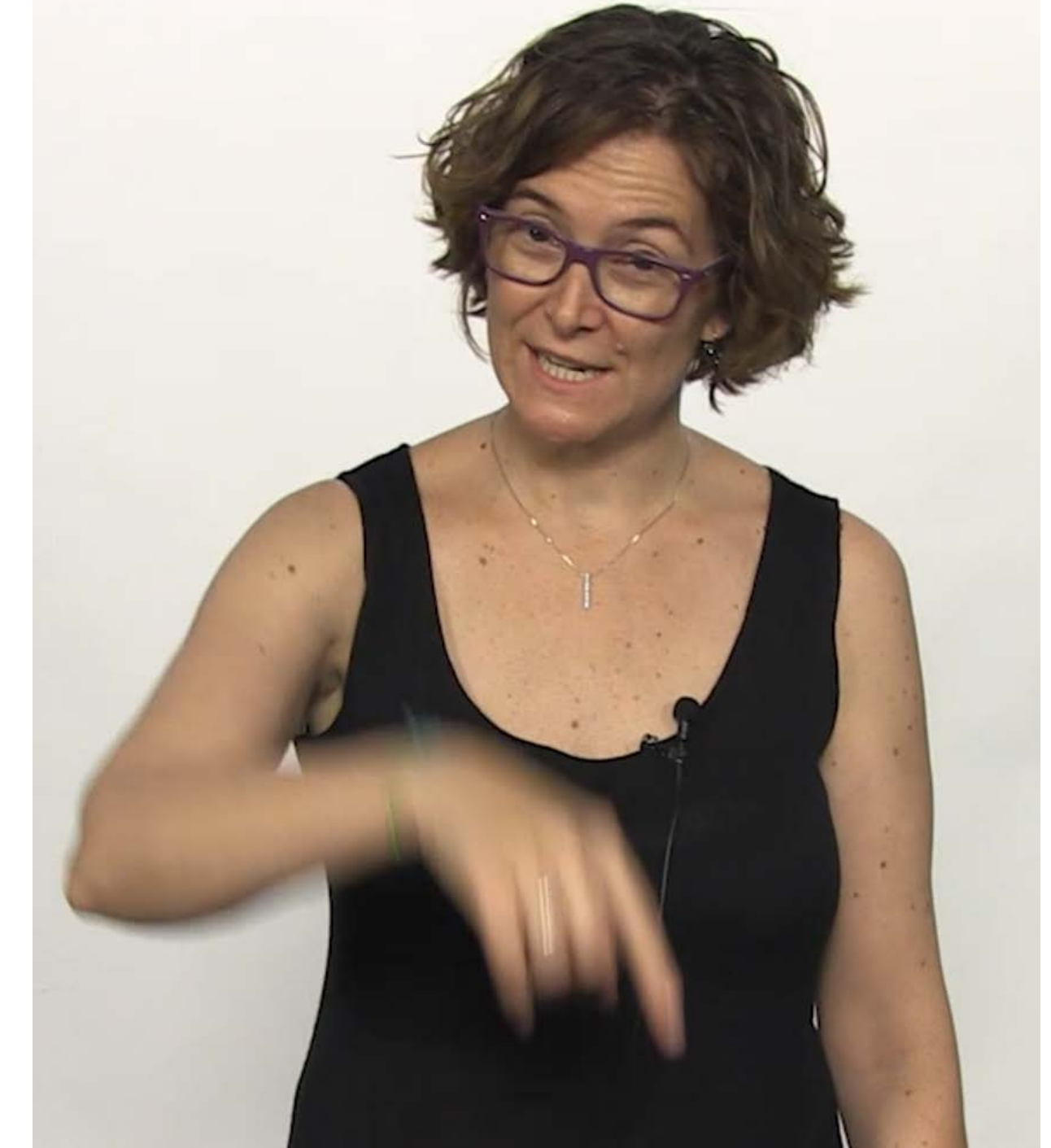
https://www.guiesdepronunciacio.cat/sites/default/files/videos/a_fr1.mp4



La Laia sembla un cirerer.
'Laia seeds a cherry tree.'



https://www.guiesdepronunciacio.cat/sites/default/files/videos/e_fr8.mp4



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the feedback given by some of the learners, the proprioception during the utterances of several sounds helped them enhance their pronunciation. Moreover, when the practice included either gestures performed by the guiding person, or imitated or just carried out by the learners together with the sounds, especially if they resembled the drawing of the intonation contour, the learning of those sounds resulted in 85% of appropriate productions, whereas it was of just 45% when gestures and body movement were not involved.

REFERENCES

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CONCLUSIONS

The major finding of this exploratory study is that L2/LE sounds are easily pronounced with the help of body movement and proprioception. Body gestures are a way to make pronunciation visible, tangible, and to make learners more aware of the learning process. Apart from that, by visualizing the prosody and the sounds production, teachers and learners can highlight the movement of the body engaged in the production of sounds. Therefore, it would be necessary to examine the influence of other factors like rhythm in depth.