

The Speech Organs

We speak through the air from the lungs. This air, released by the lungs interferes with its passage in various ways and

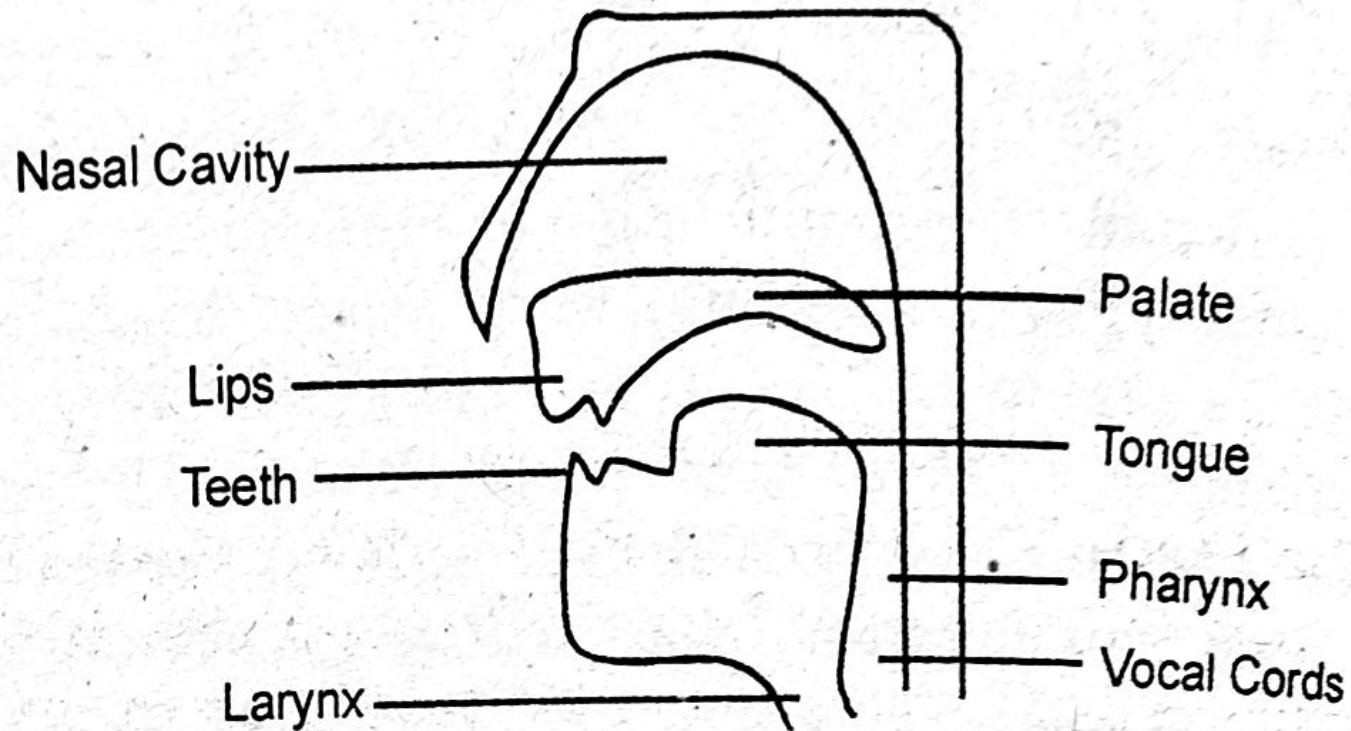


Fig. 7.1. The Speech Organs

1 V. K. Gokak : *English in India, Its Present and Future*, p. 81.

different place. In this way, sound is produced. The parts of the throat, mouth and nose which are important in English pronunciations are shown in Fig. 7.1.

The descriptions of the speech organs is as follows :

(1) **Vocal Cords.** Larynx is the first point where there is possibility of modification of air stream. It contains vocal-cords, which are two small bands of elastic tissue (Fig. 7.2.). The gap between them is called glottis. The inner edges of the vocal-cords can move towards each other. When air passes from open glottis, voiceless sound is produced. Voice sound is produced when the vocal-cords are move towards each other.



Fig. 7.2. The Vocal Cords

(2) **The Palate.** The roof of the mouth is formed by the palate. It has three parts :

- (a) Alveolar ridge,
- (b) Hard palate and
- (c) Soft palate (Fig. 7.3.)

The soft palate can be moved and raised, so that it makes a firm contact with the back wall of the pharynx. This stops the breath from going up into the nose. Apart from this important function of the soft palate, the whole palate is used by the tongue to intercept the air stream.

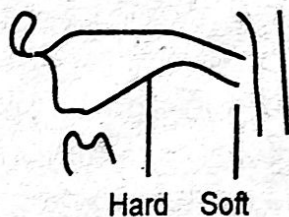


Fig. 7.3. The Palate

(3) **The Teeth.** The two upper front teeth are used in English. The lower front teeth are not important except that if they are missing, certain sounds, e.g., s and z, will be difficult to speak.

(4) **The Tongue.** It is the main articulating and most important of the organs of speech. By shaping the tongue differently, by raising or lowering different parts of it, we can modify the air

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passage and produce many different sounds. The four parts
tongue are shown in Fig. 7.4.

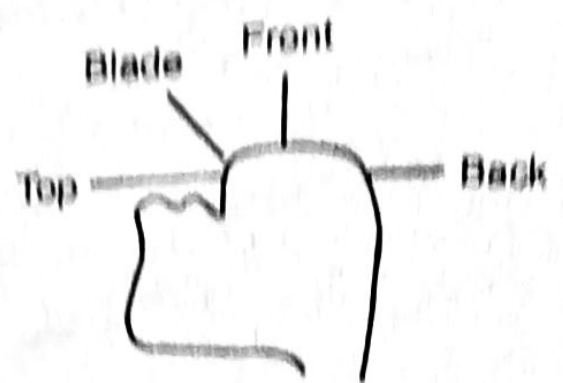


Fig. 7.4. The Parts of Tongue

(5) The Lips. Lastly, there are upper and lower lips which can take up various positions. Some of them are shown in Fig. 7.5.

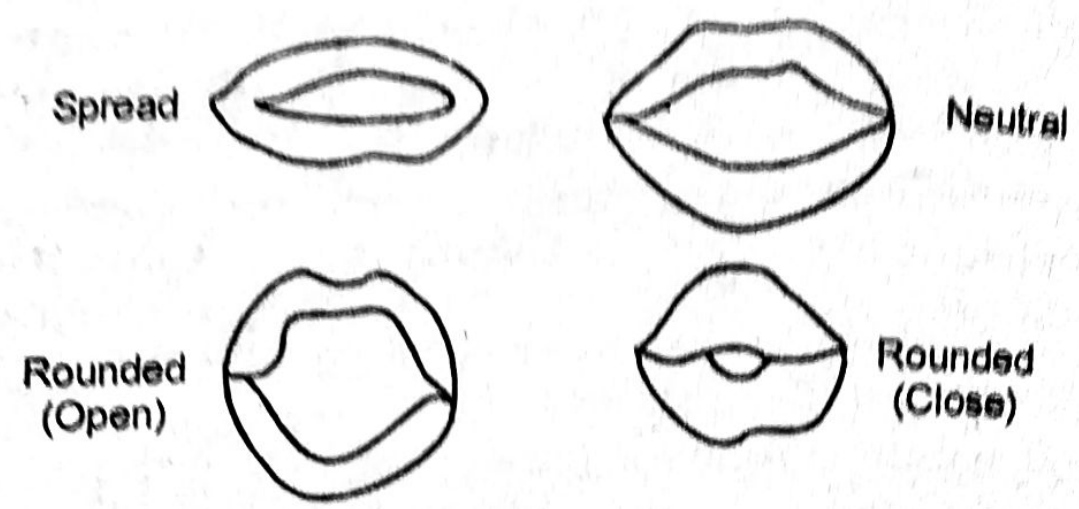


Fig. 7.5. The Lips