

HANDOUT 3: THE MECHANISM OF SPEECH

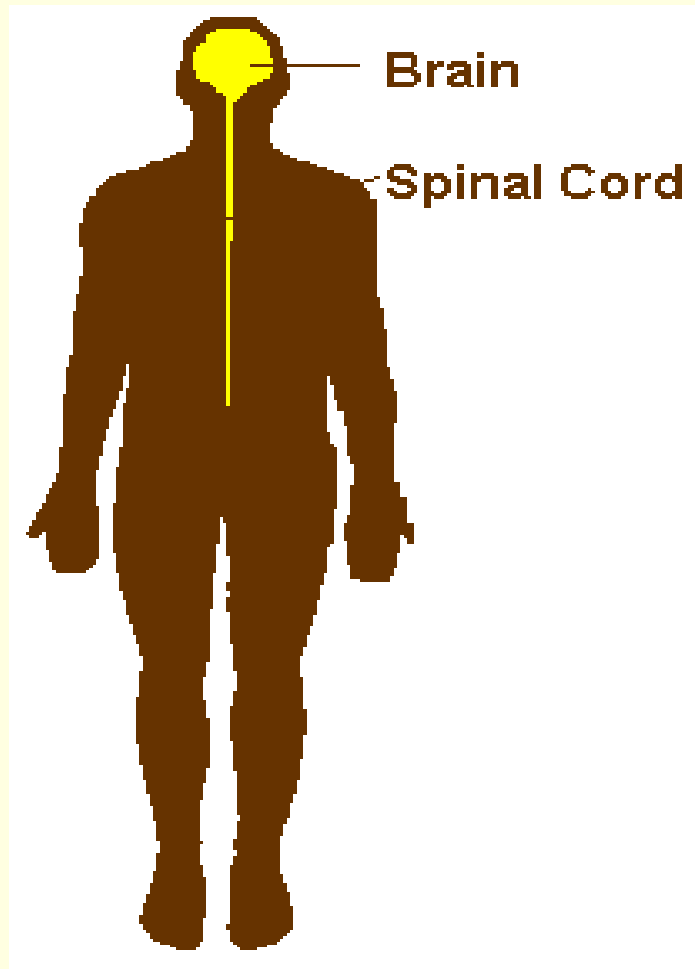
The role of the organs of speech.

1. The articulatory stage of speech.



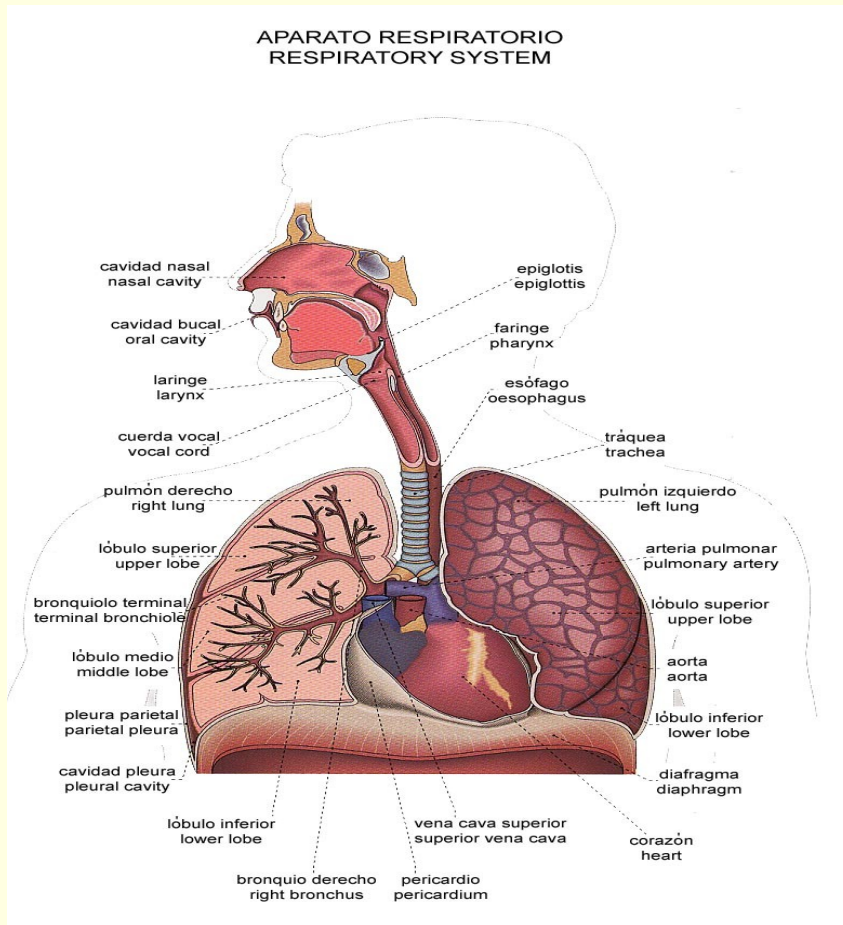
- The psychological stimulus, conveyed to the organs of speech by the nervous system, activates the speech articulatory system.

2. The reception or auditory stage of speech.



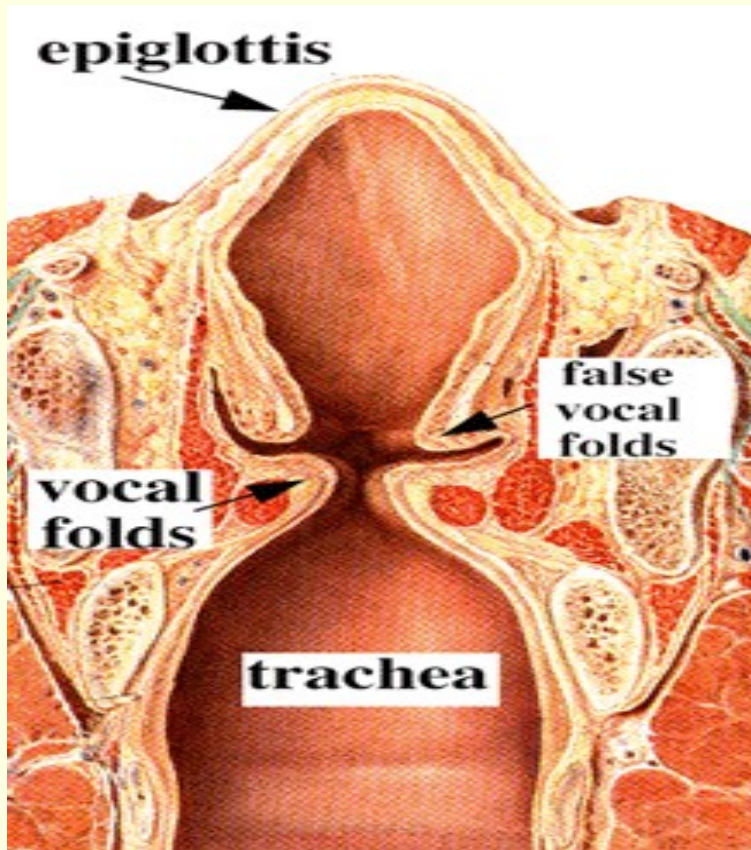
- Sounds are perceived by the listener's hearing apparatus and transmitted through the nervous system to the brain, where the linguistic interpretation of the message takes place.

3. The role of the organs of speech.



- Lungs:
 - The lungs supply our most usual source of energy in speech.
 - The air-stream is directed outwards through the mouth, the nose, or both.

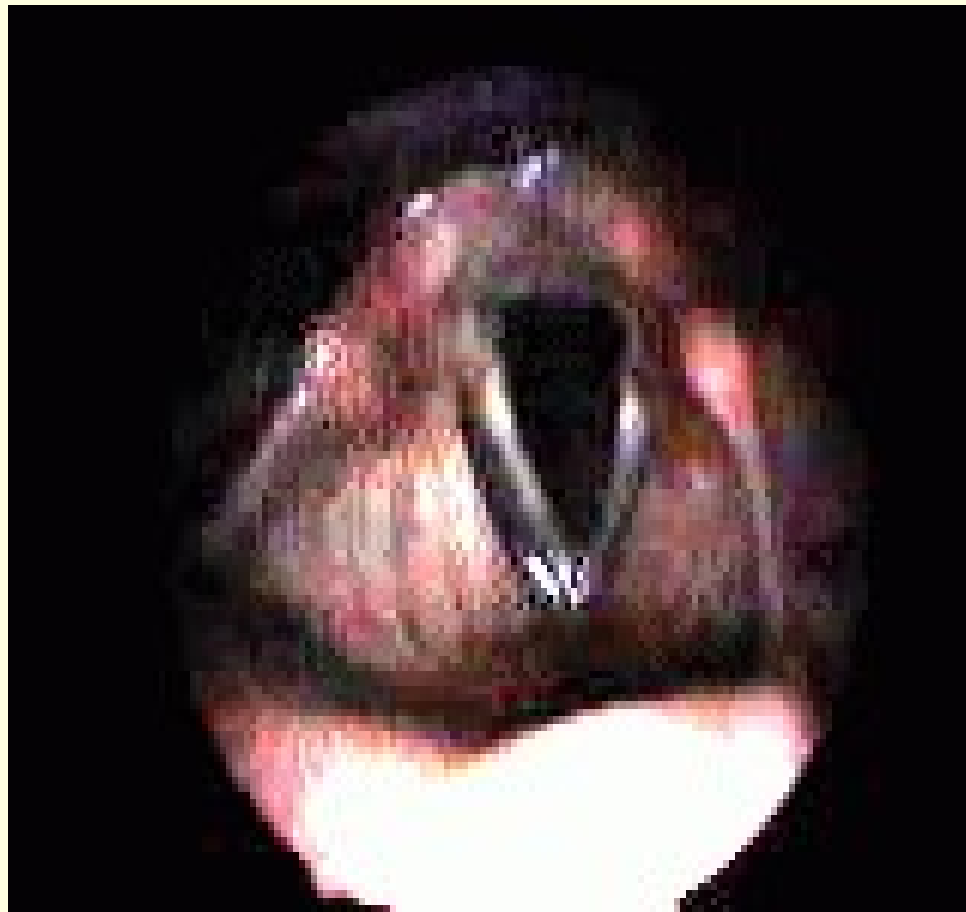
3. The role of the organs of speech.



- Vocal cords:
 - They are contained in the larynx.
 - They consist of two folds of ligament and elastic tissue which may be brought together or parted.
 - The opening between the vocal cords is called the glottis.

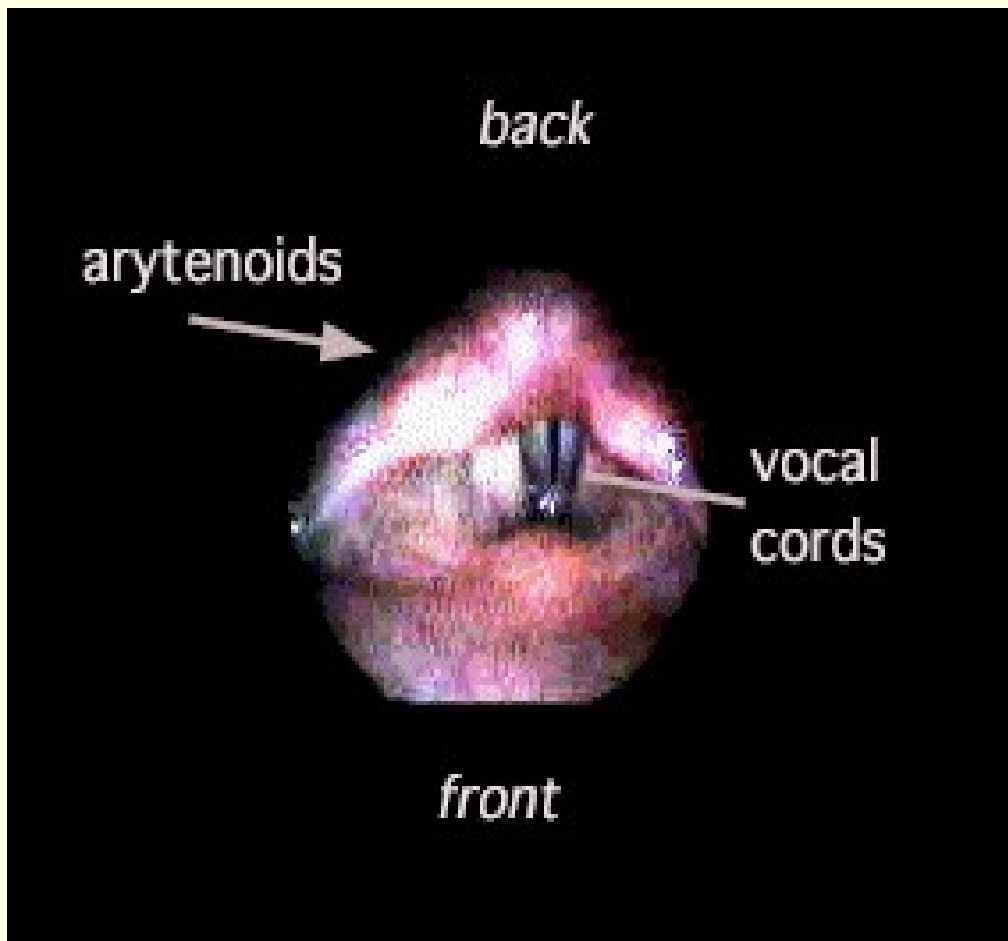
3.1 The positions of the vocal cords.

- Wide open, allowing the air to escape freely as in breathing, as when we say [s], or when the air-stream is expelled with sufficient energy, producing audible glottal friction, as in a strong [h].



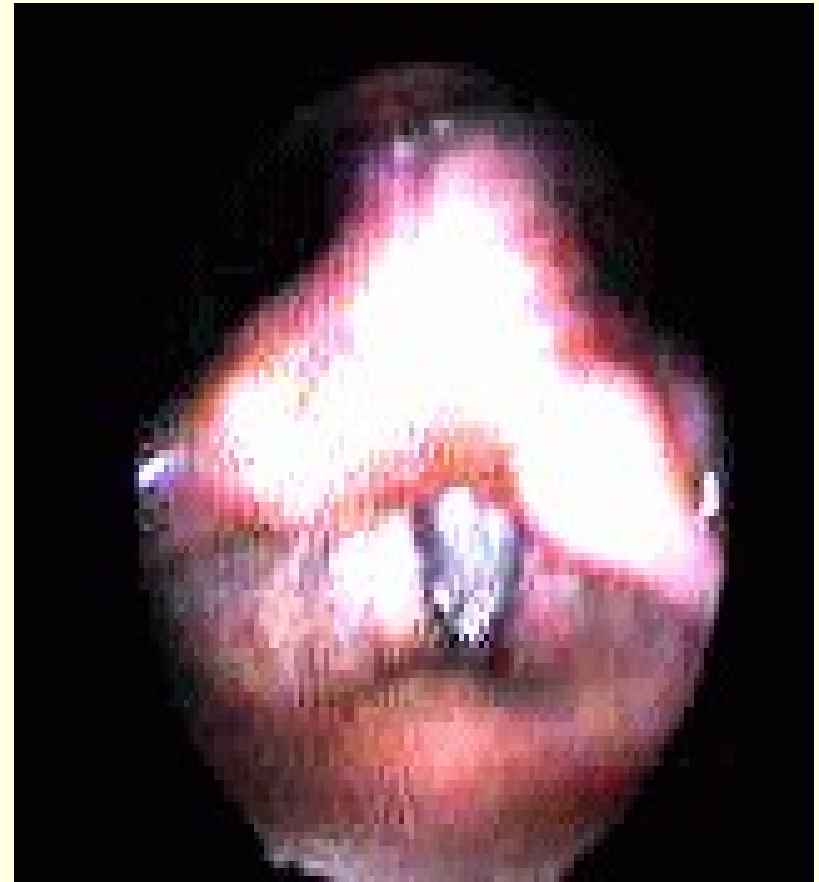
3.2 The positions of the vocal cords.

- Close together and vibrating, producing voice, as when we say [ah], or [z].
 - The more rapid the vibration, the higher the pitch of the note.

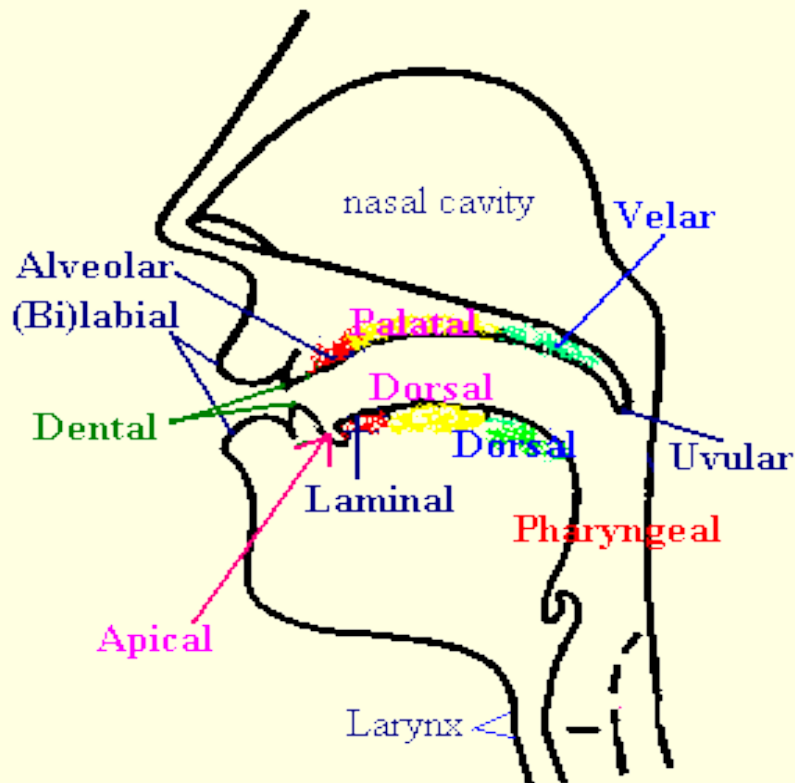


3.3 The position of the vocal cords

- 3. Tightly closed, so that the air-pressure from the lungs is pent up behind the close: the *glottal stop*.
 - The *glottal stop* may occur initially in a very emphatic pronunciation (*i.e. anyone*), and sometimes in middle position (*i.e. getting better*), especially in *Cockney*.

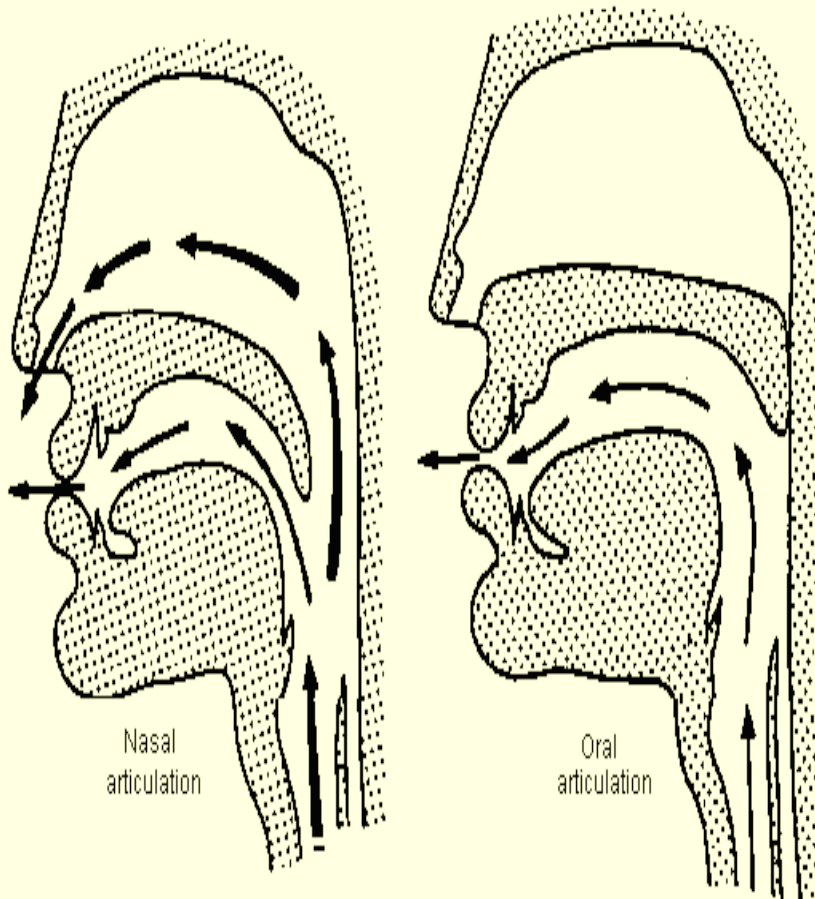


4. Pharynx and upper cavities.



- These upper cavities, by assuming different shapes, give a variety of qualities and resonances to the sound produced.

5. Nasal cavity.



- [m], [n] [ng] are said in English with the soft palate in its lowest position, allowing the air to escape through the nose, as in normal breathing.
- All other English sounds are said with the soft palate in its raised position, the nasal cavity being shut off.