

BETTER ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

J.D.O. CONNER

LECTURE NO.4

PAGES: 17-22

LECT. KARRAR HAIDER

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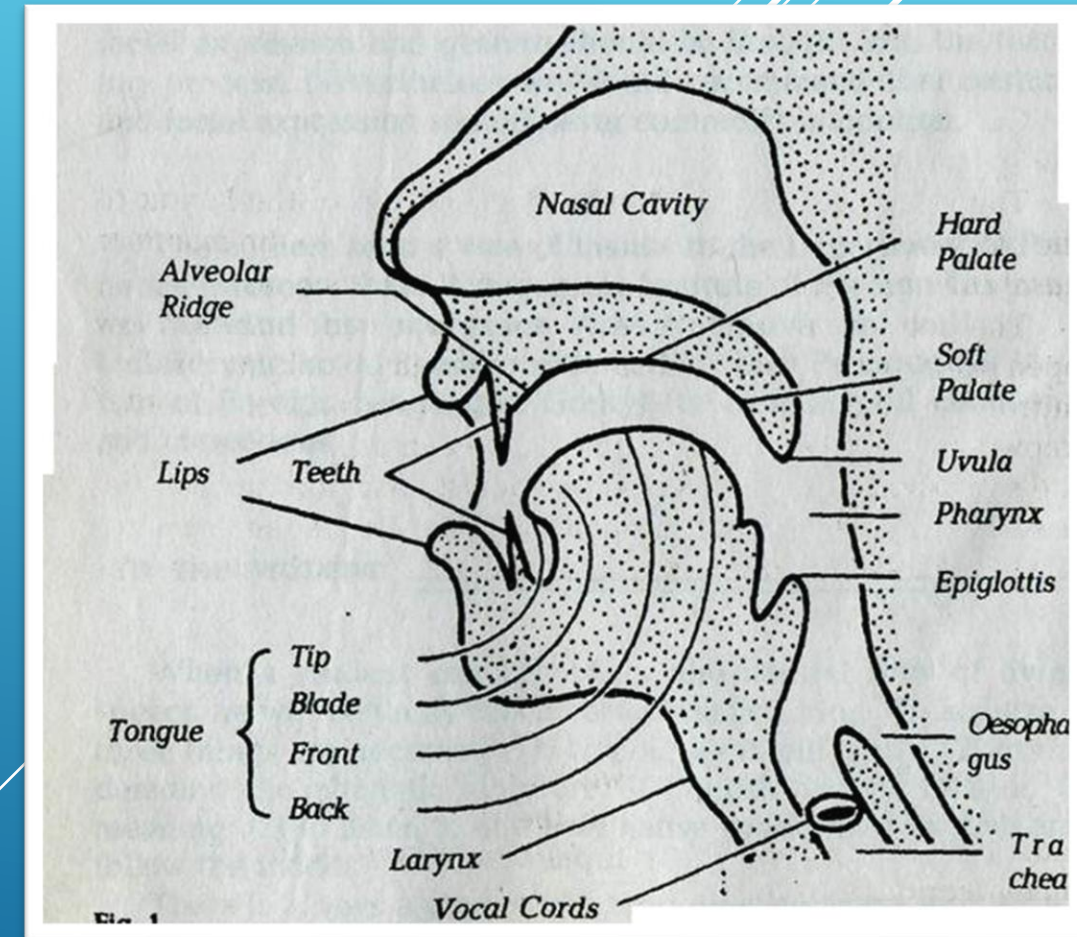
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The Tongue

The tongue is the *most important of the organs of speech* because it *has the greatest variety of movement*.

Although the tongue does not contain natural divisions, it is useful to divide it into *four sections* as follows:

- ❖ The *back of the tongue*: lies under the soft palate when the tongue is at rest
- ❖ The *front*: lies under the hard palate
- ❖ The *blade*: lies under the alveolar ridge
- ❖ The *tip*: lies under the alveolar ridge



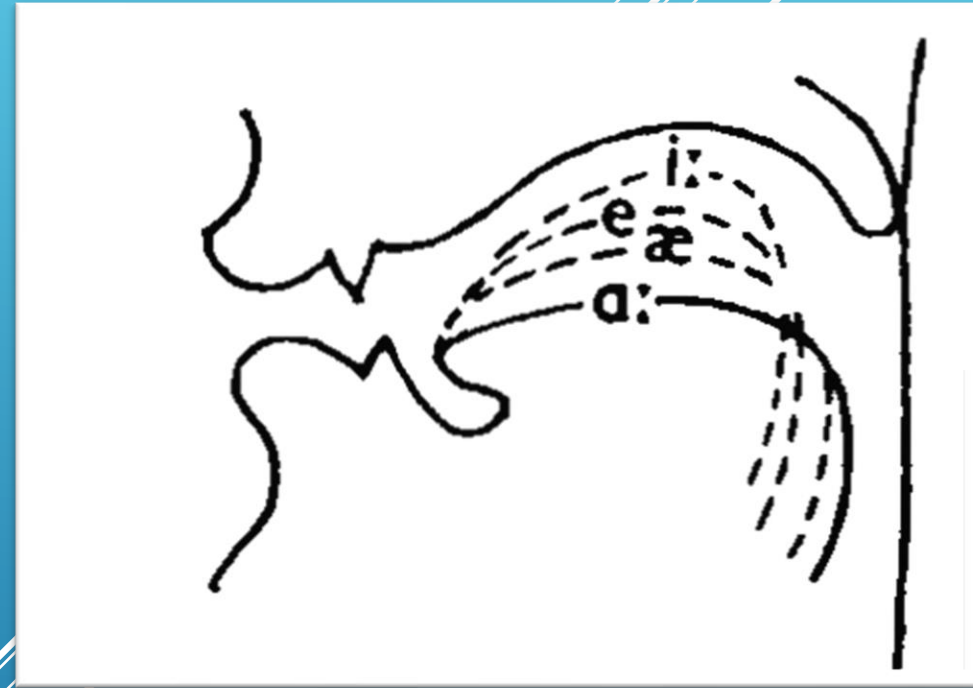
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The Tongue

The tip and blade are particularly mobile and they can touch the whole of the lips, the teeth, the alveolar ridge and the hard palate.

The front can be flat on the bottom of the mouth or it can be raised to touch the hard palate, or it can be raised to any extent between these two extremes. Say the vowel /a:/ again and look into your mirror: the front is flat on the bottom of the mouth; now say /æ/ as in cat: the front rises a little; now say /e/ as in met (still keep your mouth as wide open as you can): the front rises again; and if you go on to say /i:/ as in see you will see that the front rises to a very high position, so high that it is hidden behind the teeth and the front of the tongue comes very close to the hard palate.



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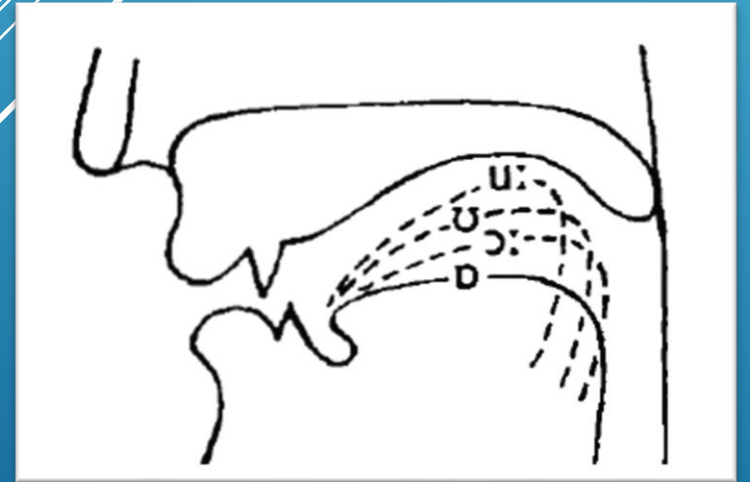
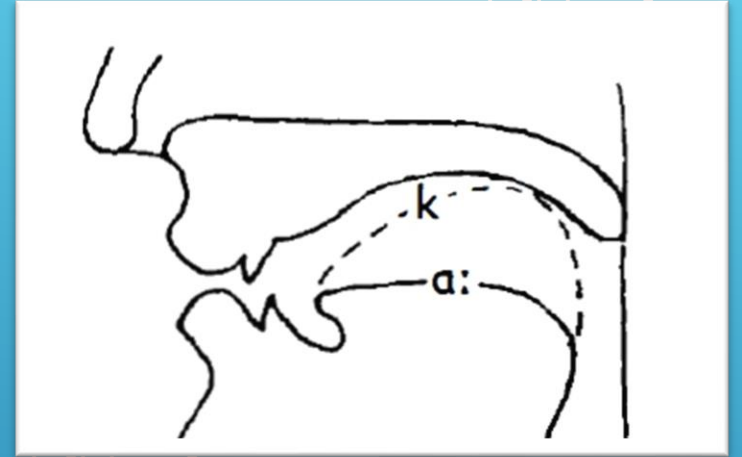
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The Tongue

The back of the tongue too can be flat in the mouth, or it can be raised to touch the soft palate, or it can be raised to any position between these two extremes.

If you say /a:k/ and hold the /k/-sound with your mouth wide open. You will see in your mirror that the back of the tongue rises from a very flat position for a: to a position actually touching the soft palate for the /k/.

The back of the tongue is in various positions between these two extremes for the vowels /ɒ, ɔ:, ʊ, u:/ in pot, fought, put, boot; say them in that order and feel the back of the tongue rise gradually towards the soft palate.



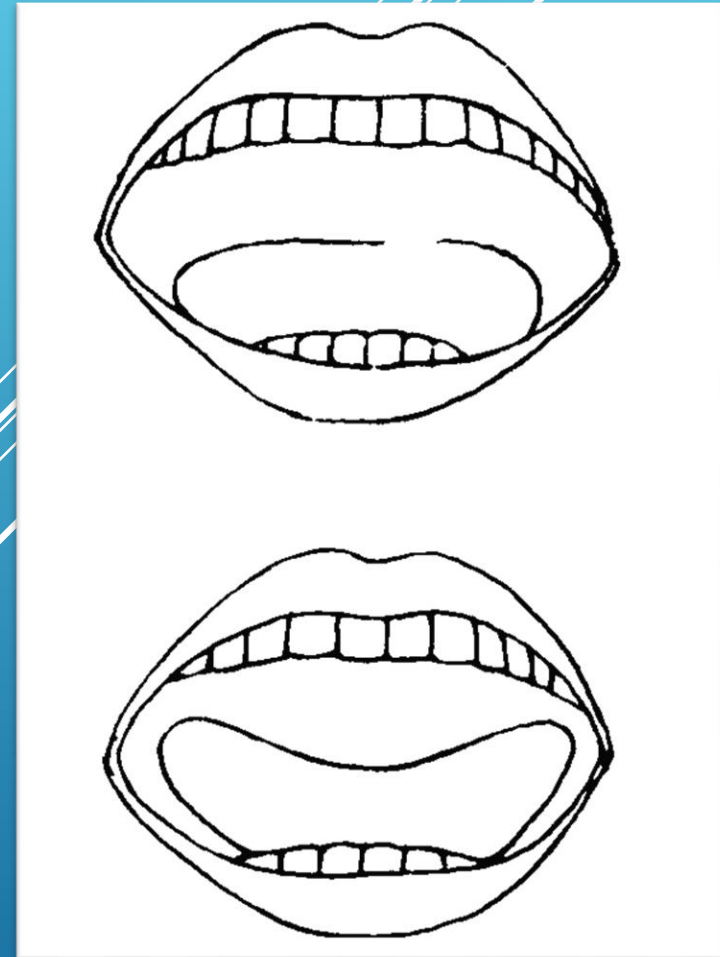
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The Tongue

The tongue can change its shape in another way so the sides of the tongue may be either curved upwards to meet the sides of the palate or left flat so that they do not touch the sides of the palate:

- ❖ The sides of the tongue can be pressed firmly against the sides of the palate so that the breath is forced to pass down the narrow central passage between the blade of the tongue and the alveolar ridge such as in pronouncing the sound /s/.
- ❖ The centre of the mouth can be blocked by the tip and blade of the tongue pressed firmly against the alveolar ridge and the air passes instead between the sides of the tongue and the sides of the palate such as in pronouncing the sound /l/. This position is important because most English sounds are produced using it.



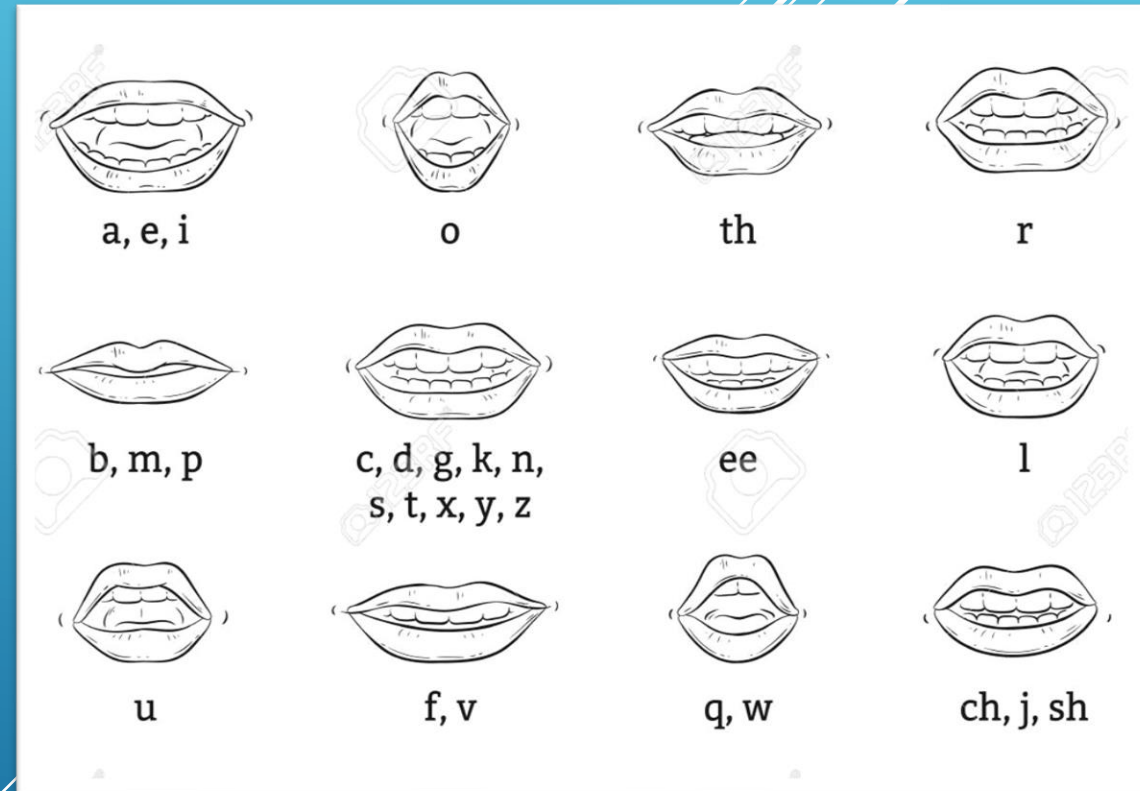
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The Lips

The lips can also take various different positions:

- ❖ They can be brought firmly together as in /p/ or /b/ or /m/ so that they completely block the mouth
- ❖ The lower lip can be drawn inward and slightly upwards to touch the upper front teeth as in the sounds /f/ and /v/
- ❖ They can be kept apart either flat or with different amounts of rounding
- ❖ and they can be pushed forward to a greater or lesser extent.



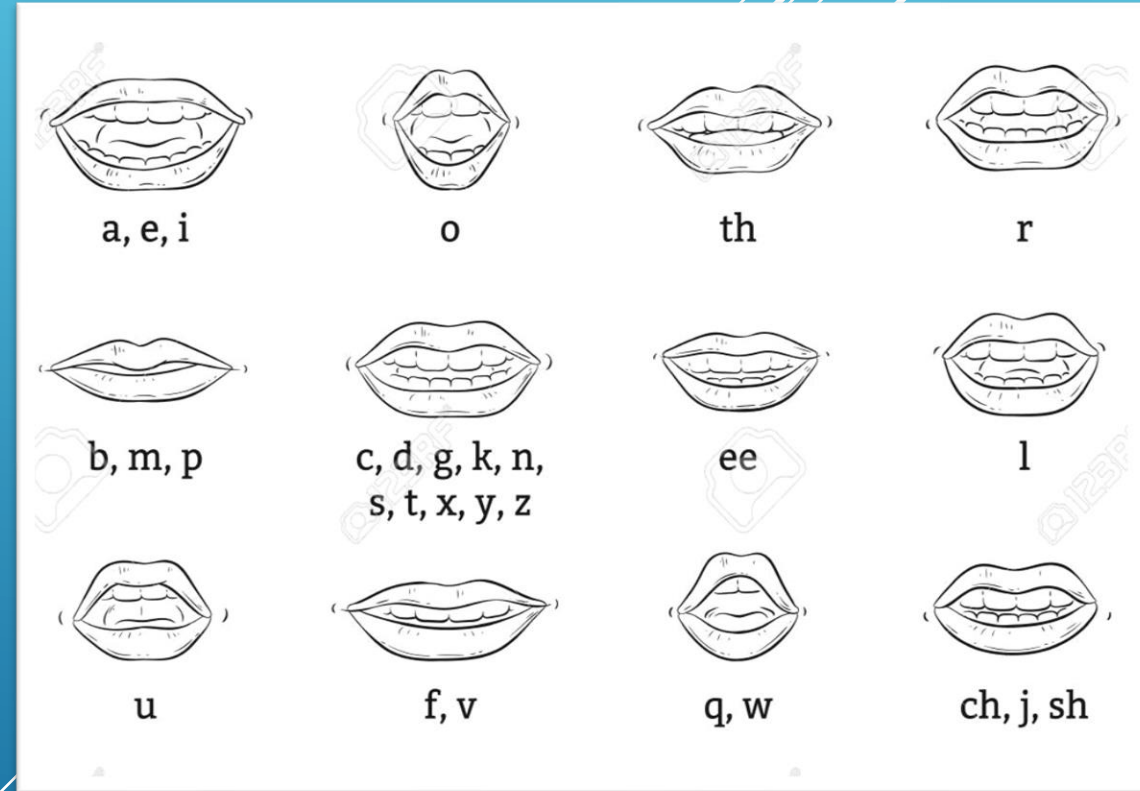
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The Lips

The English do not move their lips with very much energy: their lips are never very far apart, they do not take up very rounded shapes, they are rarely spread very much and almost never pushed forward or protruded. The same is true for movements of the jaw.

We shall see how the movements of the organs of speech combine together in forming the sounds of English.



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Thank you for your listening!