7. Organs of Speech

BVPT-104: English & Communication

Unit 2: Fundamentals of English Communication

Chapter 3: Organs of Speech

Topic: Understanding Speech Production and Articulation

What Are Organs of Speech?

Organs of speech are the body parts that help us **produce and articulate (shape)** sounds to form speech. They work together to turn **air and vibration** into **language** that others can hear and understand.

Speech is made possible by **coordinated movements** of several muscles and structures in the **respiratory**, **phonatory**, and **articulatory systems**.

Three Stages of Speech Production

1. **Respiration** – breathing out air from the lungs
2. **Phonation** – vibrating vocal cords in the larynx (voice box)
3. **Articulation** – shaping the sound into letters and words using the mouth

Major Organs of Speech and Their Functions

Organ / Structure	Location	Function in Speech Production
Lungs	Chest cavity	Push air out through the windpipe (trachea)
Larynx (Voice box)	Top of trachea	Contains vocal cords that vibrate to create sound
Vocal cords	Inside the larynx	Vibrate to produce **voiced** sounds (like /z/, /b/, /m/)
Pharynx (Throat)	Behind the mouth and nose	Helps control airflow and resonance
Nasal cavity	Above the roof of the mouth	Creates nasal sounds like /m/, /n/, /ŋ/
Oral cavity (mouth)	From lips to the back of the throat	Main space for shaping and modifying sound
Tongue	Inside the mouth	Most important articulator; changes shape/position to form different sounds
Lips	Outer boundary of mouth	Help create bilabial sounds (/p/, /b/, /m/) and vowels
Teeth	Upper and lower jaws	Help form sounds like /f/, /v/, /θ/
Alveolar ridge	Just behind upper front teeth	Helps in producing sounds like /t/, /d/, /s/, /z/
Hard palate	Roof of the mouth (front)	Forms high-pitched sounds; helps the tongue strike properly
Soft palate (Velum)	Back of the roof of the mouth	Raises to block nasal cavity during oral speech
Uvula	Small hanging tissue at soft palate	Controls nasal airflow in some languages

Diagram: Organs of Speech

- [Upload or insert a labeled diagram showing: lungs, larynx, pharynx, tongue, lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, hard & soft palate, uvula]*
  (Let me know if you want this as a printable chart or in PDF format.)

Articulation of Sounds

Articulation refers to how **sounds are shaped using specific combinations** of the organs above.

Examples of Articulation:

Sound	Articulators Involved	Type of Sound
/p/	Lips	Bilabial, voiceless
/t/	Tongue + Alveolar ridge	Alveolar, voiceless
/m/	Lips + Nasal airflow	Nasal, voiced
/f/	Lower lip + upper teeth	Labiodental, voiceless
/ŋ/	Soft palate + nasal airflow	Velar nasal, voiced

Why This Matters in Physiotherapy

- Clear communication with patients depends on **proper pronunciation and articulation**.
- Understanding speech organs also helps in **speech therapy**, **neurological rehab**, and **post-stroke rehabilitation** where speech is affected.
- You will work with **speech therapists**, so knowing these terms helps interdisciplinary teamwork.

Quick Self-Test

1. Which organ controls **nasal vs oral** sound flow?
2. What's the main **articulator** for the /t/ sound?
3. Where is the **alveolar ridge** located?

Answers:

1. The **soft palate (velum)**
2. The **tongue**, touching the alveolar ridge
3. Just behind the **upper front teeth**

Take-Home Summary

- Speech is created through **air + vibration + articulation**
- The **tongue**, **lips**, **palate**, and **larynx** work together to shape sounds
- Understanding speech organs is essential for **clear, professional communication** in physiotherapy

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