

Phonetics Lecture 3

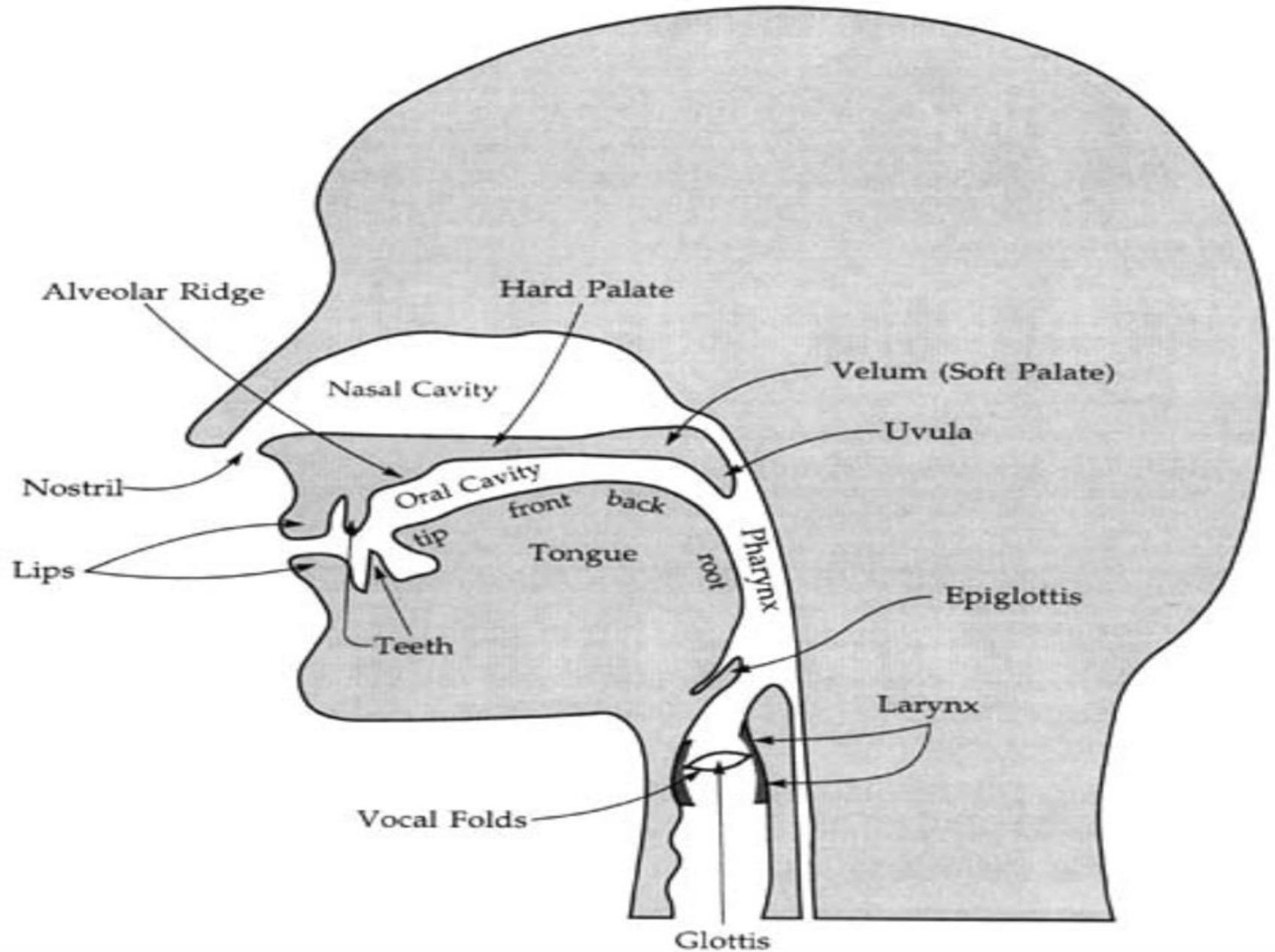
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Chapter TWO

The Organs of Speech

Part 2

The Vocal Cords



- **The Vocal Cords:** two bands of elastic tissue located opposite each other in the larynx (in Adam's Apple in particular).
- Texture: elastic, rubbery, moveable, flexible.
- Movement: they vibrate by moving **sideways** towards and away from each other.
- **Glottis**: the gap or space between the vocal cords through which the air moves in and out.

a- When breathing: the vocal cords are in their rest position being wide-apart and do not move to allow air to move between them.

b- When speaking: the vocal cords vibrate in all vowel sounds and most consonant sounds but they do not vibrate in some of the consonant sounds.

Having vibration or not is one of the features of sounds called voicing (**voice**). According to this feature sounds are divided into **voiced** and **voiceless**.

- **Voiced sounds:** sounds produced with vibration in the vocal cords.
- **Voiceless sounds:** sounds produced with no vibration in the vocal cords. This state is similar to that of breathing where the vocal cords are wide-apart and do not move. This feature is only found in consonant sounds.

c- *Making a Narrow Passage*: there is also a case where the vocal cords themselves produce a sound by bringing them close to each other, but not completely touch, enough to make a narrow passage. This is the case of producing the sound /h/.

d- *Glottal Stop*: this is when the vocal cords come together to make a complete closure, i.e. close the air passage, so all air coming from the lungs is trapped below them (under pressure) for a short while until they move apart from each other. When they move apart they open the air passage and the air that was trapped underneath is released with a slight explosion. This case is called the **glottal stop** because the air stops under the closed glottis.