

Suzanne's Quick Tips

Episode #2: Articulate to make your English great



Culips English Podcast

Transcript

Hey guys, this is Suzanne and you're listening to Culips. So today we're going to cover a Quick Tip and we're going to be talking about adding articulation in your speech. Something really simple, but something that many people forget to do. Before we get started, remember to subscribe to Culips Podcast on Apple Podcasts or wherever you find your podcasts. Also, remember the best way to study English is to become a member of Culips. You'll have access to so many materials including study guides and practice exercises. So go to [Culips.com](https://culips.com) and become a member.

All right, now let's get started talking about adding articulation. In our first Quick Tip we talked about slowing down, right? That fast is not fluent. What happens most of the time whenever we speak quickly is that we also do not give ourselves enough time to properly articulate our sounds and this is kind of like the sister or brother of slowing down. So if you speak quickly and you lose your articulation, it's gonna be quite difficult for you to effectively communicate and be comprehensible, which is our goal right-to understand and to be understood in our second language? So what does that mean, to add articulation? Well, any time that you say a sound or a word you are articulating. You're moving the muscles in your mouth around a sound, adding voice from your vocal folds in order to make an utterance, in order to make a word or sentence. Now, if we were to add something, we're going to increase our efforts in the sound that we're making. So for example, if the sound we're making is an "M" we might since we're using our two lips to push them together and create a vibration, we would maybe add to that push, right? So instead of saying "my" we might say "my" we might add a little extra effort, a little more muscularity to that connection between the two lips. If we're doing a "D" maybe we might use the tongue up against our hard palate and we would have a little bit more intention with that muscle with the tongue, right? As if it were a mallet that we're banging on a drum with. So "D" D "D" the same thing goes for our vowels.

Now vowels are a little tricky because vowels don't really have a lot of shape to them. Meaning we don't really have two parts of our mouth coming together to create friction like we do in consonants. So like for example, with a "B" we'll have the two lips hit each other "B" with a "D" we have our tongue and hard palate going "D" with a "Z" we have our teeth and

our tongue, reaching up to the top of our palate and all the way down to the bottom behind our lower front teeth and we're going "ZZ". So we're creating friction, we're creating a place of tension. With vowels we don't have that much to go with. **So we have to use our lips and use our jaw and use our tongue in a little bit in an over exaggerated way, in order to create more articulation.** So for example, if we take diphthongs right? I think we talked about diphthongs a while back, they're two sounds that when they come together they create one sound so if we're saying the word "oh" or "no" using the sound "O" as in "no" we want to really get those lips around the sound, really bring them forward, round them forward and create movement.

So we're adding more articulation, we're adding more muscularity and intention in our pronunciation. We might do the same thing with "I" instead of "my" you might say "my" instead of time, you say time. So in our diphthongs we have this kind of movement from one sound to the next and it's important that we move our lips and tongue and jaw both in the first sound and in the second sound. This way we're keeping the integrity of that diphthong instead of just saying the first sound or just saying the second sound. So for example instead of "pay" we say "pay" instead of "my" we say "my" instead of "boy" we say "boy" "go" "go" "now" "now". So just by adding a little bit of muscularity kind of turning up the volume if you will instead of having an articulation level of two, we turn it up to like seven. Whenever we have any kind of presentation or an interview, this way we can be sure that the interviewer or maybe our students or colleagues know exactly what we're saying. **No one is ever going to fault you for taking your time and adding articulation because then they'll actually understand what you're saying.**

All right, so your Quick Tip and mission this time is to add a little bit of muscular movement so that you can add articulation to your speech. Try it, go out. Order a coffee in English, maybe make a phone call or video chat and really over pronounce just a little bit, turn up the volume on your articulation.

All right guys, hope you had as much fun as I have and remember if you have any questions or ideas, please let us know at contact@culips.com. And remember to find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, on everything. All right. Bye.

Quick tip takeaways

1. Adding articulation relates to increasing the movement of your moveable articulators like the lower jaw, the tongue, and the soft palette.
2. It's important to know the manner of articulation of the sounds you want to increase effort on. In other words, are you adding more explosion of air, or are you adding more vibration?
3. Diphthongs are two vowels or sounds that come together to create one longer sound. These are like moving vowels.



Writing and discussion questions

1. Have you ever been misunderstood by a listener and told to repeat a word or phrase? When you repeated the word, did you use over or added articulation to help get your message across?
2. Do you think over articulating is weird? Meaning, do you feel like you look strange, moving your lips and jaw too much? How does it feel when you try adding more articulation?
3. What are some components – or adjustments to your breath and vocal tract- that you think go in to adding articulation? For example, would you just move your mouth muscles more, or would you maybe add more breath and air?

Study challenges

1. Find an excerpt from an article or something you like in English – you can even use the transcript from this podcast – and read the line or lines out loud looking in the mirror. Think of articulation as a scale from 1-10. Try articulating or moving your mouth and breath at a level of 2, then 5, then 8. See if you can tell the increase in articulation!
2. Have you ever tried warming up your articulators? Before you do a presentation or an interview, try moving your lips and tongue in circles in order to get the mouth moving more.
3. In your next English conversation, try adding a bit more range to your motion and articulation, so over pronouncing a bit. Did you find the listener understood you better?

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