1.1: First Preliminary Lesson

Pronunciation of Brazilian Portuguese

Learning Objectives - Objetivos da Lição

• In the following discussion of the sounds of Brazilian Portuguese we will use phonetic symbols for the purpose of orientation and reference. In all other cases, however, your learning will proceed from the usual written form of the word. This makes for certain difficulties in learning Portuguese.

• Ideally, spelling should always follow pronunciation in any language, since, after all, letters are merely a method of making a written record of the spoken word. But many languages fall short of this ideal. Spanish is very good in this respect: you can look at a word and almost without exception you know exactly how it is pronounced. English, on the other hand, is notoriously difficult, since it often spells the same sound in many ways (the vowel in date, freight, bait, say) and spells different sounds in the same way (though, through, cough, hiccup).

• In Portuguese there are some, though not many, of these same difficulties. As you will see in a moment, the traditional orthography does not indicate all the significant sounds with 100 per cent accuracy. You will see statements such as “Portuguese é is like the English e in bet.” This comparison is meant to be only a rough approximation to suggest the general nature of the Portuguese sound in question for your beginning stages. This does not by any means imply that the sound is the same in the two languages.

• Dialectal variation in Brazilian Portuguese allows for varied pronunciations of both vowels and consonants, especially with regard to the sequences di/det/te and s and z in syllable final position. The pronunciation presented below is a neutral Southeastern one, typical in states such as São Paulo or Minas Gerais.

Vowels - As vogais

Brazilian Portuguese has seven basic (oral) vowel sounds.
1.1 [a] the “front a,” the most common sound represented by the letter a. Similar to the a of father.

há  má

cá  pá

lá  vá

dá  chá

[e] the “central a,” which occurs in unstressed syllables. Similar to the English sound o in money or some. Note the sound [e] in the final syllable of the following words.

nada  vaca  cama

mala  bala  dama

fala  casa  fulana

dava  sala  manha

1.2 [i] the “high front” vowel, usually spelled i. Similar to English i in machine.

si  tia

vi  titia

ti  ída

li  fila

mimi  fita

In unstressed final syllables (and occasionally elsewhere), this same sound [i] is also spelled e.

ide  tive

bife  desfile

disse  limite

1.3 [u] the “high back” vowel, usually spelled u. Similar to English oo in too.

tu  tutu

nu  cru

lulu
In unstressed final syllables (and occasionally elsewhere), this same sound [u] is also spelled o. This means that all words, that end in unstressed o one of the most frequently endings in Portuguese, will be end with the [u] sound.

mudo  luto

tudo  suco

subo  uso

1.4 [e] the “closed e,” sometimes spelled ê but more often e. Similar to English pronunciation of the second é in résumé.

dê  bebê  treze

lê  crê  você

vê  que  mês

sê  ele  sede [thirst]

1.5 [o] the “closed o,” sometimes spelled ô but more often simply o. Similar to English o in open.

vovô  dor  ovo  novo

sob  bobo  povo  vôo

pós  fofo  fogo  moço

cor  todo  osso  logo

1.6 [e] the “open e,” sometimes spelled é but more often simply e. Similar to English e in bet or the first é in résumé.

é  Zé  sete

pé  café  sede [headquarters]

fé  neta  ela

1.7 [o] the “open o,” sometimes spelled ô but more often simply o. Similar to English aw in law.

dó  só  ova

nó  avó  nota

pó  nós  volta
Nasals- As vogais nasais

In Portuguese the vowels a, e, i, o, u may also occur nasalized. The nasalization is indicated in one of three ways: by m or n after the vowel or by the til (˜) over it. The letter m is used at the end of a word and before p and b; n is used in other places.

2.1 [ɐ̃] nasalized “central a,” spelled am, an, or á.
   lá  maçã
   sã  samba
   fã  tanta
   cã  cansa

2.2 [ẽ] nasalized “close e,” spelled em or en.
   penso  cento
   denso  vendo
   lenço  tempo
   senso  dente
   venço  sempre
   tensão  lenha

2.3 [ĩ] nasalized “high front i,” spelled im or in.
   fim  assim  cinta
   sim  latim  cinza
   mim  pudim  trinta
   gim  linda  rim
   vim  limpa  quindim

2.4 [õ] nasalized “closed o,” spelled om, on, or ô.
   com  tom  fonte
   dom  batom  conta
Diphthongs - Os ditongos

Diphthongs - Os ditongos orais

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds. The follow vowel combinations constitute the 11 different pronunciations of the 8 oral diphthongs in Portuguese: **ai, au, ei, eu, oi, ou, iu,** and **ui.**

3.1 [ai] spelled **ai.** Similar to the English **i in ice.**
- pai  saiba  passai
- vai  falai  aipo
- cai  levai  laico

3.2 [au] spelled **au.** Similar to the English **ow in cow.**
- mau  vau  auto
- pau  pauta  Macau
- nau  cauda  causa

3.3 [ei] spelled **ei.** Similar to the English **ai in faith.**
- meiga  feira  sei
- teima  hei  dei
- feito  lei  Madeira

2.5 [ũ] nasalized “high back u,” spelled **um or un.**
- um  comum  fundo
- num  nunca  fungo
- zunzum  tumba  assunto
- algum  junto  bumbum
3.4 [ei] spelled éi.

papéis _hotéis  _tonéis

anés  pincéis  cordéis

3.5 [eu] spelled eu.

eu  seu  museu

deu  teu  meu

leu  temeu  adeus

3.6 [εu] spelled éu.

céu  chapéu

véu  troféu

léu  réu

3.7 [oi] spelled oi. Similar to the English oi in moist or hoist.

boi  sois  noiço

foi  oito  dois

pois  dois  foice

3.8 [oi] spelled ói.

mói  sóis  anzoís

dói  jóia  lençóis

dodói  bóia  faróis

herói  espanhóis  jibóia

3.9 [ou] spelled ou. For many speakers ou denotes merely a “closed o” [o] as in the English oh!

ou  vou  falou

dou  outro  levou

sou  soube  usou

3.10 [iu] spelled iu.
Nasal diphthongs- Os ditongos nasais

There are five nasal diphthongs in Brazilian Portuguese. Nasalization is indicated by m after the vowel or by the til (¨) placed over the first vowel of the diphthong. Both elements of the diphthong are nasalized.

4.1 [ɐ̃ũ/ɐ̃w] spelledão or am. In unstressed position, the intensity of the nasality is slightly reduced.

hão tãofalam passam
nãopãotocamsabão
sãovãoficam fogão
dãocaolevammamão

4.2 [ɐ̃i] spelledem.

dem tem quem também
bem vem além refém
cem nuvem viagem sem

4.3 [ɐ̃i] spelledãe.

mãe capitães
cães alemães
pães

4.4 [õĩ] spelledõe. Similar to theoi in the English oink or boing.
4.5 [ũĩ] This nasal diphthong occurs only in one Portuguese word (muito) and its variations. Note that the spelling does not indicate nasalization.

muito  muitos
muita  multas

4.6 Combinations of vowels other than those listed above do not constitute diphthongs in Portuguese.

dieta (di-e-ta)  óleo (ó-le-o)  teatro (te-a-tro)
Caetano (Ca-e-ta-no)  Maria (Ma-ri-a)  sueco (su-e-co)
miolo (mi-o-lo)  diabo (di-a-bo)  rua (ru-a)

Consonants- As consoantes

5.1 [p] voiceless bilabial stop, spelled p. Similar to English p in pine but without aspiration (extra air that accompanies initial voiceless stops (p, t, k) sounds in English).

papai  piano
pampa  palpita
limpo  poupa

5.2 [b] voiced bilabial stop, spelled b. Similar to English b in bet.

baia  bem-bom
bebê  bomba
bife  Biblia

5.3 [t] voiceless dental stop, spelled t. Similar to English t in time.

tateia  tanto
teto  atento

testa  Tóquio

total  matuto

[t] before [i] spelled either i or e is pronounced by many Brazilians as a voiceless affricate [tʃ], similar to the ch of the English word chief.

time  tios  parte

tigre  nordeste  ótimo

teatro  presente  contente

5.4 [d] voiced dental stop, spelled d. Similar to English d in date.
dali  duelo  poder
dedo  desenho  vender
domingo  dólar  morder

[d] before [i] spelled either i or e is pronounced by many Brazilians as [dʒ], similar to the j or the dg of the English word judge

dia  Dinamarca  verdade
diálogo  disciplina  pode
Diogo  tarde  de

5.5 [k] voiceless velar stop, spelled c, –qu. Similar to English k.
cada  classe  quem
carioca  aqui  quer

carioca  aqui  quer

5.5a [ks] voiceless velar stop, spelled x. Similar to the x in the English taxi.
reflexo  táxi
tóxico  complexo

5.6 [g] voiced velar stop, spelled g, gu. Similar to English g in gate.
gato  algum  água
algó águia engana

5.7 [f] voiceless labio-dental fricative, spelled f. Similar to English f in fate.
- fome fora
- fogo foguete
- fluido defendo

5.8 [v] voiced labio-dental fricative, spelled v. Similar to English v in vein.
- vaca vovô
- avenida vento
- envolver você
- envia vaivém

5.9 [m] voiced bilabial nasal (when syllable initial), spelled m. Similar to English m in mad. Remember when m is
syllable final it indicates nasality in the vowel that precedes it.
- mais mimoso
- mamãe mim
- moço manga

5.10 [n] voiced dental nasal (when syllable initial), spelled n. Similar to English n in not. Remember when n is syllable
final it indicates nasality in the vowel that precedes it.
- nono nena
- ninguém nunca

5.11 [ɲɲ] voiced palatal nasal, spelled nh. Similar to English ni in onion.
- banho minha
- sonho manhã
- tenho montanha
- venho nenhum
- ganhar vinho
5.12 [s] voiceless dental sibilant, spelled s, ss, sc, and c (before e, i), sc and ç (before o, a, u), xc, x. Similar to English s in sat.

sala desço
cansa façamos
posso excesso
piscina trouxe
cinema máximo

5.13 [z] voiced dental sibilant, spelled z, s, x. Similar to English z in zone. Z is always pronounced this way. S is pronounced this way when it appears between two vowels.

zanga preciso
azul exame
dúzia exemplo
casa êxito

5.14 [ʃ] voiceless palatal sibilant, spelled ch or x. Similar to English sh in show.

chamo roxo
acho xamã
xicara chave
deixa lixo
abacaxi chuva

5.15 [ʒ] voiced palatal sibilant, spelled j, g (before e, i) Similar to English s in treasure.

gente hoje igreja
gelo janela Tejo
giro jardim feijão

5.16 [l] voiced dental lateral, spelled l. At the beginning of a syllable, l is a sound like English l in leap.

lado leite
alemão limão
bele logo

***At the end of a syllable, l is like English w at the end of a word, a semi-vowel, as in the words caw, few, mow.

mal mel sol

Portugal Brasil calvo
anel fácil azul
filme calmo Anselmo

5.17 [ʎ] voiced palatal lateral, spelled lh. Similar to English ll in million.

velho olho
bilhete toalha
filho valho

5.18 [ɾ] voiced dental flap, spelled r. Similar to English d in heeding or the t in heating. R is pronounced this way between vowels or as part of a consonant cluster (cr, tr, gr, etc.).

gora criança
caro escreve
embora frente
geral obrigado
treze gravata

7.19 [h] voiceless glottal fricative* spelled r, rr. R is pronounced this way when it is rr between vowels, or word initial.

rio bairro
rapaz sorriso
rua honra
Raquel correr
arroz forró

*** When syllable or word final, either [ɾ] or [h] are possible pronunciations, depending on dialect. Portuguese allows for still other dialect variants.
Summary of the consonants of the Portuguese alphabet and their sound values in Brazilian Portuguese-
Resumo das consoantes do alfabeto português e seus valores sonoros em português brasileiro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>bobo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>1) [s] Before e, i.</td>
<td>cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) [k] Before a, o, u; Before another consonant.</td>
<td>cada; classe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ç</td>
<td>[s] Found only before a, o, u.</td>
<td>faço</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>cheio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>[dʒ] Before [i].</td>
<td>dia, tarde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[d] Elsewhere.</td>
<td>dado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>[f]</td>
<td>fofó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>1) [ʒ] Before e, i.</td>
<td>gente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) [g] Elsewhere.</td>
<td>gato, glória</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gu</td>
<td>[g] Before e, i.</td>
<td>água</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[gw] Before a, o, u.</td>
<td>guardar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>[Ø] Found only at beginning of words and represents no sound</td>
<td>hora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>jardim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>1) [l] Word, syllable initial.</td>
<td>lado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) [w] Syllable final.</td>
<td>fel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lh</td>
<td>[ʎ]</td>
<td>bilhete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>1) At beginning of syllable.</td>
<td>mimoso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) At end of syllable indicates nasalization of preceding vowel.</td>
<td>gim, samba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1) At beginning of syllable.</td>
<td>nono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) At end of syllable indicates nasalization of preceding vowel.</td>
<td>onze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nh</td>
<td>[n]</td>
<td>tenho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>pipa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qu</td>
<td>1) Before e, i.</td>
<td>quem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Before a, o.</td>
<td>quatro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>1) Between vowels; Following another consonant at the beginning of a syllable; Final.</td>
<td>agora, pronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Word initial; After n, l; Preceding another consonant; Final.</td>
<td>rio; honra, melro; aberto; falar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rr</td>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>arroz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>[s] Word initial; After another consonant; Final.</td>
<td>sala; cansa; flores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[z] Between two vowels; Before voiced consonants.</td>
<td>casa; desde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sc</td>
<td>[s] Before e, i.</td>
<td>desce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scz</td>
<td>[s] Before a, o, u.</td>
<td>desçô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ss</td>
<td>[s] Found only between vowels.</td>
<td>professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
t [tʃ] Before [i].
[t] Elsewhere.

v [v] vaca

x 1) [ʃ] Initial; Before voiceless consonants*; After another consonant; Often between vowels (This is the most common pronunciation of x between vowels). xícara; sexto; enxuga; roxo

2) [s] Between two vowels in a few words; Before voiceless consonants.* próximo, máximo; sexto

3) [z] In initial ex plus vowels. exame, exército

4) [ks] Between two vowels, mainly in words of foreign or Greek origin. táxi, tórax, complexo

xc [s] excesso

z [z] zanga, azul, voz

*Either of these pronunciations of x are appropriate in this particular context, either as a palatal sibilant or an alveolar sibilant. Individual Brazilian use either or both in their speech.

Practice i.1- Prática i.1

Pronounce the following words:

• adeus
• bom
• Brasil
• caro
• carro
• casa
• cinema
• chapéu
• dente