

Brazilian Portuguese

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Portuguese, a language of the Ibero-Romance subgroup of the Romance languages, has a variety which is spoken in Brazil, a country with circa 170 million inhabitants, of whom about 161 million speak Portuguese and 138 million live in cities. For this illustration of Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth BP), we have recorded a speaker whose choice was guided by two demographic criteria, namely, to represent the most populous dialectal region, that of São Paulo, and the most frequent age range (15–29 years, corresponding to 28% of the Brazilian population. Source: IBGE, Demographic census 2000). The speaker was a female undergraduate student at the University of Campinas at age 21 at the time of the recording. She was born in the city of São Paulo, where she lived up to age 10. From then on she has been living in Valinhos, a city on the outskirts of Campinas.

BP comprises several regional dialects, which can be roughly identified with the boundaries of the States of the federation. It is further possible to subcategorise these dialects into urban and rural. The following illustration is based on an urban variety of the São Paulo State dialectal region.

In the transcriptions that follow, stress marks are omitted in penultimately stressed words, since this stress pattern is canonical in Portuguese.

BP is distinct from European Portuguese (EP) in several respects. One of the most striking differences concerns vowel reduction, including the extreme case of deletion. Both phenomena are far less extreme in BP (cf. *pagar* pa'gar 'to pay' in BP vs. pə'gar in EP), which does not present the long sequences of consonants typical of pre-stressed position in EP (cf. *depen'ikar* 'to pluck', in this variety of BP vs. *depenicar* dɐni'kar in EP). By contrast, BP exhibits vowel epenthesis, breaking most two-obstruent sequences. For phonotactic reasons common to both BP and EP, one of the consonants is always an apical: *psicologia* pisikoloziɐ or pisikoloziɐ 'psychology' in BP vs. psikoloziɐ in EP. The epenthetic vowel is always [i] or [ɪ], a fact which follows in part from the high front position of the tongue body at the (apical) consonant release, since the tongue front is involved in raising the tongue tip.

In the consonant table and in the vowel inventory, allophones are indicated by parentheses. When not explicitly signalled, all transcriptions of this illustration are phonetic, in order to give a detailed account of the dialect presented here. For brevity and convenience, capital roman letters between slashes are used to indicate archiphonemes.

Consonants

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosive	p b		t d				k g
Affricates			(tʃ) (dʒ)				
Nasal	m		n			ɲ	
Tap				r			
Fricative		f v		s z	ʃ ʒ		ɣ
Lateral approximant				l		ʎ	

p	pate	<i>pata</i>	'paw'	b	bate	<i>bata</i>	'knock!'
t	tate	<i>tata</i>	'kind of house for African chiefs'	d	date	<i>data</i>	'date'
tʃ	tʃite	<i>Tita</i>	a proper name	dʒ	dʒite	<i>dita</i>	'said (fem.)'
k	kate	<i>cata</i>	'(s/he) picks out'	g	gate	<i>gata</i>	'she-cat'
f	fakɛ	<i>faca</i>	'knife'	v	vakɛ	<i>vaca</i>	'cow'
s	sakɛ	<i>saca</i>	'sack'	z	zakɛ	<i>zaca</i>	'Buddhist high priest'
ʃ	ʃagɛ	<i>chaga</i>	'open sore'	ʒ	ʒakɛ	<i>jaca</i>	'jackfruit'
m	matɛ	<i>mata</i>	'woods'	n	nate	<i>nata</i>	'cream'
l	galu	<i>galo</i>	'rooster'	ɲ	gɛɲu	<i>ganho</i>	'profit'
ɣ	kayu	<i>carro</i>	'car'	ʎ	gaʎu	<i>galho</i>	'branch'
				r	karu	<i>caro</i>	'expensive'

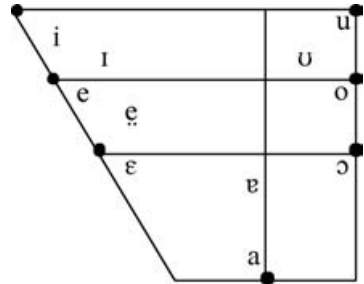
Voiceless plosives are unaspirated, as in other Portuguese varieties, and their contrast with the voiced series is ensured by clear, early voicing and shorter total duration of [b d g]. In BP, unlike EP, voiced plosives are seldom realised by their homorganic fricatives in intervocalic position (e.g. *acabar* akabar 'to finish' in BP vs. *əkəβar* in EP). Dental plosives are realised as affricates before [i] and [ɪ] in the variety illustrated here (see transcribed passages). This affrication apparently follows from extensive coarticulation between the consonant and the vowel (see Albano 2001: 68–86 for details). Affrication is quite common in the State of São Paulo, but still more widespread in other states, such as Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. The palatal nasal very frequently reduces to a nasalised palatal approximant. In intervocalic position there is a phonemic contrast between the so-called strong and weak 'r's', /r/ vs. /r̥/. While the latter phoneme is always realised as a tap ([ɾ]) in this position, the former varies considerably across the Brazilian territory. In the variety described here, it is a velar fricative, usually voiced between voiced sounds and voiceless elsewhere (which justifies the use of the symbol [ɣ] to indicate the realisation of /r̥/). It can nevertheless be realised as a glottal fricative, usually in weak prosodic positions, particularly in casual speech.

In coda position, four archiphonemes are allowed in BP: /R/, /S/, /N/, /L/ (cf. D'Angelis' (2002) reanalysis of Câmara's (1970) treatment of the issue). If complete contrasts such as *carta* /kaRta/ kartɛ 'letter' vs. *casta* /kaSta/ kastɛ 'chaste (fem.)' vs. *canta* /kaNta/ kɛ̃tɛ '(s/he) sings' vs. *calta* /kaLta/ kaɣtɛ 'marsh marigold' are rare, a three-archiphoneme contrast is frequently found. As regards /R/, its phonetic realisation is extremely variable in BP, and it may even include a tap. Within the framework of Labovian sociolinguistics, Callou, Moraes & Leite (1996) showed, on the basis of phonetically transcribed data, that an isogloss for /R/ realisations can be established between the States of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro: a higher frequency of the tap from São Paulo southwards, as opposed to a higher frequency of the velar and glottal fricatives from Rio de Janeiro northwards (this result still awaits confirmation by means of instrumental phonetic analysis). The tap is the preferred realisation for /R/ in the variety presented here. In infinitives, however, this sound usually drops word-finally

except if followed by a vowel. The archiphoneme /S/ surfaces either as a voiced or as a voiceless alveolar fricative. As in most varieties, it tends to assimilate the voicing of the following sound. The archiphoneme /N/, in words such as *canta* /kaNta/ ‘(s/he) sings’ or *irmã* /iRmaN/ ir’mã ‘sister’, triggers the nasalisation of a preceding vowel, as detailed in the next section. Moreover, it also surfaces as a reduced nasal taking the place of articulation of a following, non-fricative sound. The archiphoneme /L/, which some generations ago used to be a velarised lateral approximant, is changing into a labial-velar approximant throughout the entire Brazilian territory, producing homophones such as *mau* maʊ ‘bad’ and *mal* maʊ ‘evil’.

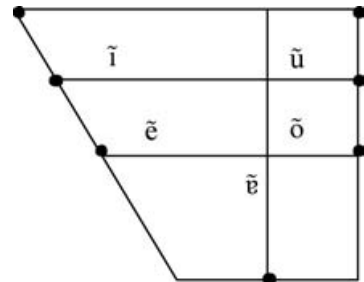
Vowels

i	siku	<i>sico</i>	‘chigoe’
e	seku	<i>seco</i>	‘dry’
ɛ	seku	<i>seco</i>	‘(I) dry’
a	saku	<i>saco</i>	‘bag’
ɔ	sɔku	<i>soco</i>	‘(I) hit’
o	soku	<i>soco</i>	‘hit (noun)’
u	suku	<i>suco</i>	‘juice’
<hr/>			
(i)	sakɪ	<i>saque</i>	‘withdrawal’
(ɛ̃)	ˈnũmɛrɔ	<i>número</i>	‘number’
(ø)	sakɐ	<i>saca</i>	‘sack’
(u)	saku	<i>saco</i>	‘bag’



Nasalised vowels

(ĩ)	sĩ ⁿ tu	<i>cinto</i>	‘belt’
(ẽ)	sẽ ⁿ tu	<i>sentto</i>	‘(I) sit’
(ẽ̃)	sẽ̃ ⁿ tu	<i>santo</i>	‘saint’
(õ)	sõ ⁿ du	<i>sondo</i>	‘(I) probe’
(ũ)	sũ ⁿ tu	<i>sunto</i>	‘summed up’



The most intuitive way to analyse the Portuguese vowel inventory is by reference to the lexical stress pattern (see next section for details), as proposed by Câmara (1970). Portuguese phonemically contrasts seven oral vowels in stressed position: /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/, as illustrated above. There is a phonetic contrast of five nasalised allophones in stressed position before the archiphoneme /N/ (which induces the so-called phonological nasalisation, illustrated by the preceding list), as well as before heterosyllabic nasal consonants (which triggers the so-called phonetic nasalisation): [ĩ ẽ ẽ̃ õ ã]. The latter condition is exemplified by the following list: (*em*) *cima* sĩmɐ ‘above’, *sema* sɛmɐ ‘seme’, *sama* sɛmɐ ‘pine tree leaf’, *soma* sɔmɐ ‘sum’, (*em*) *suma* sũmɐ ‘to sum up’. This yields a total of twelve contrasting vowels in stressed position. In pre-stressed position, there is a ten-vowel phonetic contrast, where the quality of the corresponding stressed vowel is roughly preserved: [i e a o u ã ẽ̃ ẽ õ ã]. Nasalised vowels in this position surface either before /N/ (e.g. *temporal* tɛ^mpoˈraʊ ‘temporal’) or before /ɲ/ (e.g. *ganhar* gɛ̃ˈnar ‘(to) win’). In post-stressed position, the variety studied here contrasts four oral vowels, including a centralised version of [e] (in this variety, only in non-final post-stressed position under antepenultimate stress, as in *ópera* ɔˈpɛrɐ ‘opera’ and *número* ˈnũmɛrɔ

‘number’): [ɪ v ɔ ɛ]. There is also a five-nasalised-vowel opposition after lexical stress, as illustrated by *imã* ‘imẽ ‘magnet’, *hifen* ‘ifẽĩ ‘hyphen’, *próton* ‘prɔtõ ‘proton’, *interim* ‘ĩterĩ ‘interim’, and *álbum* ‘aũbũ ‘album’, even though minimal pairs cannot be found.

A large list of oral diphthongs can be formed by combining the stressed oral vowels above with the offglides [ɹ] and [ɥ], * [iɹ] being the only impossible diphthong in the dialect illustrated here (a similar-sounding sequence, however, is found in dialects in which a palatal approximant often substitutes for the palatal lateral, e.g. *filho* fĩʝu ‘son’). Nasalised diphthongs are formed by combining [ẽ ẽ õ õ ũ] with the offglide [ɹ]. With [ɥ], on the other hand, the only possibility is [ẽõ]. There are two post-stressed nasalised diphthongs: [ẽõ], as in *bênção* ‘bẽsẽũ ‘blessing’, and [ẽĩ], as in *hifen* ‘ifẽĩ ‘hyphen’. Due to the realisation of /L/ as a labial-velar offglide, which has a vocalic quality in BP, it is possible to add an inventory of phonetic diphthongs to the preceding list, which yields a larger diphthong inventory than that of EP (see, for instance, *sol* sɔũ ‘sun’ and *sul* suũ ‘South’ in the transcribed passages). Following [k], the onglide [ɥ] can form additional diphthongs such as *quando* kũẽũdu ‘when’ (including sequences of diphthongs, traditionally called triphthongs in BP, e.g. *quais* kũaĩs ‘which ones’). In casual and fast speech, adjacent heterosyllabic vowels usually turn into diphthongs, triphthongs or sequences of them (e.g. *o menino e o amigo* u minĩnũĩũamĩgu ‘the boy and his friend’). Diphthongs also emerge in this variety from yodisation of vowels (with the exception of [i]) followed by /S/, as in *arroz* aũɔĩs ‘rice’ and *mas* maĩs ‘but’ (see Albano 2001: 86–91 for details).

Prosodic features

Lexical stress

Lexical stress in BP can fall in final, penultimate or antepenultimate position, penultimate being the most frequent pattern. Minimal triplets such as *sábia* ‘sabĩrẽ ‘wise (fem.)’, *sabia* ‘(s/he) knew’ and *sabiá* ‘sabĩa ‘a Brazilian thrush’ can be found. In a rather formal and conservative style, it is further possible to find stress on the fourth syllable leftwards, as in phonological words such as *falávamo-nos* fa‘lavẽmunõs ‘(we) talked to each other’ (however, in BP, the proclitic position for the pronoun *nos* ‘us’ is by far preferred). In post-stressed position, vowels are realised as non-peripheral allophones. The main acoustic correlates of lexical stress are a longer duration of a syllable-sized unit in stressed position (Massini 1991, Barbosa 1999) and an intensity fall from stressed to post-stressed position (Fernandes 1976) where applicable.

Rhythm

Duration is also the main acoustic correlate for phrasal stress. Peaks of duration of V-to-V units followed by a duration reset are the main acoustic events for the delimitation of stress groups in BP (see Barbosa 1999). Lexical stress that is not phrasally prominent introduces perturbations (local oscillations) in a general tendency for duration to increase rightwards in the direction of phrasal stress. The alleged stress timing of BP has been disputed in Barbosa (2000), who found a strong component of syllable timing, within the framework of a coupled-oscillators theory of speech rhythm production. Intonation serves mostly to signal major boundaries within the utterances, at least in lab speech.

Transcription

A narrow phonetic transcription is given below, in order to highlight BP specificities, mainly in relation to EP (for this purpose, the first orthographic version of the passage is the same as in the EP illustration). Stress is indicated with the appropriate symbol except if not penultimate.

Orthographic version

O vento norte e o sol discutiam qual dos dois era o mais forte, quando sucedeu passar um viajante envolto numa capa. Ao vê-lo, põem-se de acordo em como aquele que primeiro conseguisse obrigar o viajante a tirar a capa seria considerado o mais forte. O vento norte começou a soprar com muita fúria, mas quanto mais soprava, mais o viajante se aconchegava à sua capa, até que o vento norte desistiu. O sol brilhou então com todo o esplendor, e imediatamente o viajante tirou a capa. O vento norte teve assim de reconhecer a superioridade do sol.

Narrow transcription

u vēⁿtu nɔrtʃ̃ | u sɔʊ dʒiskutʃ̃iẽu̯ kɥaʊ duz doɪz ɛrɐ u maɪs fɔrtʃ̃ | kɥẽⁿdu suse'deʊ pa'sar ũ viazẽⁿtʃ̃i voʊtu 'nũma kapɐ || aʊ velu pɔɪsɪ dʒiakordu̯ ɿ kɔmakeli ki primeru kɔsɪ'giʃ obr'i'gar u viazẽⁿtʃ̃iɐ tʃ̃i'rar a kapɐ seriɐ kɔʃde'radu maɪs fɔrtʃ̃ | || u vēⁿtu nɔrtʃ̃i kome'soʒ so'prar kɔ 'mũita furɪɐ | mas kɥẽⁿtu maɪsopravɐ maɪz u via'zẽⁿt sɪakɔʃe'gava suɐ kapɐ | a'tɛ kiʊ vēⁿtu nɔrtʃ̃i dʒizistʃ̃iʊ || u sɔʊ bri'loʊ ɿ'tẽu̯ kɔⁿ todɔɪsplẽⁿdor i:medʒɪatamẽⁿtʃ̃ | u viazẽⁿtʃ̃ tʃ̃i'rou̯ a kapɐ | u vēⁿtu nɔrtʃ̃ tevɹa'sɪ dʒi ʒekɔɲe'ser a superioridad̃i du sɔʊ

An alternative translation of the North Wind passage is offered below, which not only replaces EP idioms with BP ones, but also makes some adjustments taking the southern-hemisphere position of Brazil into consideration.

Orthographic version

O vento sul e o sol discutiam qual dos dois era o mais forte, quando passou um viajante envolto num casaco. Ao vê-lo, apostaram que aquele que primeiro conseguisse obrigar o viajante a tirar o casaco seria considerado o mais forte. O vento sul começou a soprar com muita força, mas quanto mais soprava, mais o viajante se embrulhava no seu casaco, até que o vento sul desistiu. O sol brilhou então com toda intensidade, e imediatamente o viajante tirou o casaco. O vento sul teve assim de reconhecer a superioridade do sol.

Narrow transcription

u vēⁿtu suɹu sɔʊ dʒiskutʃ̃iẽu̯ kɥaʊ duz doɪz ɛrɐũ maɪs fɔrtʃ̃ | kɥẽⁿdu pa'soʊ ũ viazẽⁿtʃ̃i voʊtu nũ kazak^ɔ || aʊ velɔ apostarẽu̯ kiakeli ki primeru kɔsɪ'giʃ obr'i'gar u viazẽⁿtʃ̃ a tʃ̃i'rar u kazak^ɔ seriɐ kɔʃderadu maɪs fɔrtʃ̃ | || u vēⁿtu suʊ kome'soʒ so'prar kɔ 'mũta forsɐ | mas kɥẽⁿtu maɪsopravɐ maɪz u via'zẽⁿt sɪ^mbruɹavɐ nu seʊ kazaku̯ | a'tɛ kiʊ vēⁿtu suʊ dʒizistʃ̃iʊ || u sɔʊ bri'lo: ɿ'tẽu̯ kɔⁿ todeĩⁿtẽsidad̃ɹi | i:medʒɪata'mẽⁿtʃ̃ | u via'zẽⁿtʃ̃ tʃ̃i'rou̯ kazaku̯ || u vēⁿtu su tevɹa'sɪ dʒi ʒekɔɲe'ser a superɹoridad̃i du sɔʊ

There are four noteworthy aspects of the typical variation of this dialect, brought up by different realisations for the same word or by particular words across both passages. First, even though /o/ is pronounced as [u] in post-stressed position, e.g. *velo* (first passage), a much more conservative pronunciation for this phoneme can be found, as in *velo* (second passage). Second, the sequence /eN/ is often pronounced as [ĩ], in pre-stressed, word-initial position, as in the words *ĩ'tẽu̯* and *ĩ^mbruɹavɐ* (first and second passages). Third, the diphthong [uɹ] and its reduction to [u] are both instantiated in the word *sul* in the second passage. Fourth, the extreme reduction of post-stressed /u/ emerged in the pronunciation of the Brazilian word for 'coat', *casaco*, in its first and second repetition (second passage). All four processes are probably conditioned by prosodic factors, in addition to sociolinguistic factors.

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