



These notes accompany the Podcast lesson that you may access by going to <http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/lesson.php?p=11>.

Lesson #10 and #11: Pronunciation of Palatalization Cellular Phones and Driving

Note: This lesson is repeated to hear different regional dialects.

Dialog

Valdo: Um dia desses minha tia, que já é de idade, veio me visitar aqui em Austin.

Un día de estos mi tía, que ya es de edad, vino a visitarme aquí en Austin.
A few days ago my aunt, who is getting older, came to visit me here in Austin.

Michelle: Ela conversou contigo sobre a cidade? O que ela disse?

¿Ella conversó contigo sobre la ciudad? ¿Qué dijo ella?
Did she talk to you about the city? What did she say?

Valdo: Ela gostou, mas desde que chegou decidiu falar mal de quem usa celular no trânsito.

A ella le gustó, pero desde que llegó decidió hablar mal de los que usan el celular en el tráfico.
She liked it, but ever since she arrived she has decided to talk bad about those who use their cell phone while driving.

Michelle: Não acredito. Por que?

No lo creo. ¿Por qué?
I can't believe that. Why?

Valdo: É que ela perdeu os dentes num típico acidente de carro em que o motorista estava usando o celular enquanto dirigia.



Es que ella perdió los dientes en un típico accidente de carro en que el conductor estaba usando el celular mientras conducía.

She lost her teeth in a typical car accident where the driver was using a cell phone while driving.

Michelle: **Que coisa triste! Eh, diante disso é até bom que no Brasil a gente seja proibido de usar o celular no volante. Você pode receber aquela multa!**

Qué cosa triste! A causa de esto, es bueno que en Brasil nosotros seamos prohibidos usar el celular en el volante. Usted puede recibir una multa!

How sad! Given that it's a good thing that in Brazil it's against the law to use a cell phone while driving. You could get a ticket!

Cultural Notes

Besides the lessons in pronunciation, all of the dialogs key on some cultural issue that Valdo and Michelle have noticed as Brazilians living in the United States.

Isn't it interesting to see that Valdo and Michelle both think of using the cell phone while driving as something that is against the law? In North American culture it is certainly dangerous and thought of as inconsiderate, but at least here in Texas, it is not against the law (although it is in other states, right?). In Brazil, if you are caught talking on the phone while driving you will be given a ticket.

Pronunciation Notes

If you were to ask a native speaker of English what sound the letter "t" makes in English, all would say [t]. However, if you then ask the native speaker about the pronunciation of "t" in "nature" and "nation" it surprises them to find out that "t" doesn't always sound like "t". The same thing happens with "s" and "d" in words like "mission" and "schedule". In all of these cases, "nature, nation, mission, schedule" we see a process called "palatalization". In Brazilian Portuguese whenever a word is spelled with a "ti" or a word final "te", it may be palatalized and it will sound more like the English sound "chee" as in "cheap". Whenever a word is spelled with a "di" or a word final "de", it again may be palatalized and will sound more like the English sound "jee" as in "jeep". In other words,

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whenever "t" and "d" come before the vowel sound [i] they may become palatalized. Note some of the following examples:

- **ti**nha – palatalized with "ti" anywhere
- **di**sse – palatalized with "di" anywhere
- **te**nte – only the final "te" is palatalized at the end of the word
- **de**sde – only the final "de" is palatalized at the end of the word
- talento – no palatalization because it is not a "ti" or word final "te"
- dado – no palatalization because it is not a "di" or word final "de"

Be aware that the whole issue of palatalization is one of the features of Brazilian Portuguese that varies from one region and dialect to another. (In fact, this is even true in English where some say ma[t]jure and others say ma[ch]jure.). Speakers from Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Bahia, and São Paulo tend to palatalize much more than speakers from the far Northeast, the interior of São Paulo, and the more southern portions of Brazil. There are clearly more people in Brazil that do palatalize than those who do not. We encourage students who learn Portuguese to palatalize, but do not confuse palatalization with "correct" versus "incorrect" Portuguese. It is simply a regional variation. It is for this reason that we are repeating this podcast lesson twice, once by repeating the dialog with lots of palatalization and then again by repeating the dialog without much palatalization.

So, for learners of Portuguese, we now have the extra challenge of palatalizing words that may sound strange to their Spanish-speaking ear. Look at the following examples where the Spanish and Portuguese words are written nearly the same way, but the presence or absence of palatalization makes them sound very different.

Words with "t": **ti**a, **triste**, **tigre**, **contigo**, **antes**, **diamante**, **partir**

Words with "d": **di**a, **desde**, **decidir**, **de**, **diamante**, **pedir**

One final observation, word final vowels in Portuguese tend to be weak. That is to say, they are frequently extremely short and reduced. In a very careful pronunciation, Brazilians pronounce the final vowels. But in everyday conversation those vowels nearly disappear. As a result, words like "gente" and "idade" do show palatalization, but then the final vowel may also drop. To North Americans this makes it sound like these word end in a consonant and not a vowel. It is almost as if the Portuguese "gente" rhymes with the English "bench".