



These notes accompany the Podcast lesson that you may access at <http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/lesson.php?lt=gra&p=11>.

Grammar Lesson #11: Topic-Comment Patterns Privileges for Elderly and Pregnant Women

Dialog

Michelle: **Você acredita que eu fiquei quase duas horas na fila do correio ontem? Lá no Brasil, as grávidas, elas têm preferência.**

¿Tú crees que tenía que esperar casi dos horas en la fila del correo ayer? En el Brasil, las mujeres embarazadas tienen preferencia.

Can you believe that I had to wait nearly two hours in the line at the post office yesterday? In Brazil pregnant women are given preferred treatment.

Valdo: **Mas aqui os idosos, as grávidas e as mulheres com crianças de colo, eles não têm prioridade nenhuma.**

Pero aquí los mayores, las embarazadas y las mujeres que tienen niños pequeños no tienen ninguna prioridad.

But here the elderly, pregnant women, and women with small children don't seem to have any priority.

Michelle: **Pois é, ainda bem que no Brasil isso é lei. Meu pai, por exemplo, ele sempre pega a fila dos idosos no banco.**

Así es, lo bueno es que en el Brasil eso existe por ley. Mi papá, por ejemplo, siempre entra en la fila de los mayores de edad que hay en el banco.

Right, it's a good thing that in Brazil this is the law. My father, for example, always gets in the elderly line at that bank.

Valdo: **Por falar nisso, no Brasil um amigo meu, ele sempre leva a mãe idosa pro banco só pra não pegar fila.**



Hablado de eso, en el Brazil un amigo mío siempre lleva a su mamá al banco para no tener que esperar en la fila.

Speaking of which, I have a friend in Brazil who always takes his elderly mother to the bank with him so that he won't have to wait in line.

Michelle: Eh, no Brasil **as pessoas**, às vezes, **elas usam e abusam desse direito**.

Sí, en el Brazil, hay personas, a veces, que usan y abusan de ese derecho.

Yea, in Brazil sometimes there are people who use and abuse this right.

Valdo: Mas por outro lado, **os cidadãos americanos**, **eles não têm essas facilidades**.

Pero por otro lado, los ciudadanos americanos no tienen estas facilidades.

But on the other hand, Americans don't have these options.

Cultural Notes

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

Clearly both countries have traditions where help is given to the elderly, to pregnant women, and to women who have small children. The perception, however, is that certain privileges are more formalized in Brazil. For example, these individuals do not need to stand in line in any public places in Brazil.

Grammar Notes

When we hear of topic-comment constructions, we are talking about word order and how sentences are put together. The basic pattern is as follows:

Minha mãe, ela é muito inteligente.
My mother, she is very intelligent.
(Topic) (Comment on this topic)



One of the major characteristics of a topic-comment sentence is the repetition of the subject pronoun. Notice in the example above that the topic is 'My mother' and the topic begins with a repetition of the pronoun 'she'. The standard way of saying this sentence in English would be something more like 'My mother is very intelligent' without the repetition of the pronoun. Speakers of Brazilian Portuguese use this topic-comment pattern a lot. Of course it is possible to do the same in both Spanish and English, but it is less common. Where it might seem forced in Spanish and English, all of the sentences from the dialog in this lesson sound normal and natural in Portuguese.