



These notes accompany the Podcast lesson that you may access by clicking <http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/lesson.php?p=04>.

Lesson #4: Pronunciation of open /ó/ and closed /ô/ Getting on a City Bus

Dialog

Valdo: Lá vem o **n**osso **ô**nibus! Vamos **c**orrer!

Ahí viene nuestro autobús. Vamos a correr

Here comes our bus. Let's run.

Michelle: **C**orre, **s**obe **l**ogo!

Corre, súbete luego.

Run, let's get on up.

Valdo: **C**adê o **c**obrador? **C**omo **p**odemos pagar?

¿Dónde está el colector? ¿Como podemos pagar?

Where's the fare collector? How do you pay?

Michelle: **A**quí **s**ó se **p**ode pagar passando um cartão ou **c**olocando dinheiro na máquina.

Aquí sólo se puede pagar pasando una tarjeta o poniendo dinero en la máquina.

Here you just pay by inserting your card or by putting the bills or coins in the machine.

Valdo: **Q**ue máquina?

¿Qué máquina?

What machine?

Michelle: **A**quela do lado do **m**otorista.

Aquella al lado del conductor.

That one next to the bus driver.



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.

Public transportation in Brazil is dependent on an incredible system of busses. All busses in Brazil have a "cobrador", a person who takes your money and gives back your change as you get on the bus (and you better have small bills). This dialog keys on the situation where it is challenging to know how to pay your fare if no "cobrador" is there to take your money. Of course, foreigners in Brazil have the added challenge of not only knowing that they should give the money to the "cobrador", but additionally whether one gets on the bus through door in the front or through the door at the back, something that changes from one city to another.

Pronunciation Notes

This dialog illustrates the sounds for /ô/ (also called "closed o") and /ó/ (also called "open o"). The "closed o" is similar to the sound of English words "hoed, bode, boat" and exactly like the vowel "o" in Spanish, as in words like "como, tonto, bobo". The "open o" is similar to the regional pronunciation from East Coast speakers who say "caught, hot dog, ball" and this open sound is not generally found in Spanish.

As a general rule of thumb, the "open o" is only found in stressed syllables in Portuguese. Of course in actual pronunciation things are more complicated, but as a general rule, if the syllable is not stressed, the "o" will be closed. If the syllable is stress, the "o" may be either open or closed. Here are a few tendencies to keep in mind:

- Words written with a circumflex accent are closed: ozônio, avô
- Words written with an acute accent are open: ótimo, história
- Many words that have the diphthong "ue" in Spanish have an open pronunciation in Portuguese: duerme > dorme, puede > pode
- Nasal consonants that follow "o" produce a closed sound: encontro (despite SP "encuentro")
- There are many word pairs that differ only in the pronunciation of "o" and frequently the verb form is pronounced with the "open o" and the noun form is pronounced with the closed "o": eu gosto – seu gosto, eu olho – seu olho
- Adjectives that end in "oso" (masculine and singular) have a closed "o", but all other forms are open: gostoso, gostosa, gostosos, gostosas



The challenge for learners who speak Spanish is to recognize that not every instance of "o" is pronounced with the closed "o". They need to learn to also use the open "o". Spanish speakers do not have any difficulty saying "todo" with a closed "o" but they find it more difficult to remember to say "toda" with an open "o".