



These notes accompany the Podcast lesson that you may access by going to <http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/lesson.php?p=13>.

Lesson #12 and #13: Pronunciation of "s" and "z" sounds Eating At Movie Theaters

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

Dialog

Valdo: Acho que vou te visitar à noite. Não quero ficar em casa.

Creo que voy a visitarte esta noche. No quiero quedarme en casa.

I think I'll come visit you tonight. I don't want to stay at home.

Michelle: Eu estou com dois ingressos para o cinema que tenho que usar antes que o prazo esgote.

Tengo dos boletos para el cine que tengo que usar antes de que se venzan.

I've got two tickets to the movies that I have to use up before they expire.

Valdo: Sabe que seria massa! Saiu um filme que eu queria mesmo ver desde a semana passada.

Sabes que sería chévere! Salío una película que quería ver desde la semana pasada.

You know what would be cool? There's a movie that just came out that I've wanted to see for a week now.

Michelle: Se você quiser, a sessão de hoje começa às seis. E podemos comer alguma coisa lá.

Si tú quieres, la función de hoy comienza a las seis y podemos comer alguna cosa ahí.

If you'd like, there's a movie that starts at six o'clock. And we can eat something there.



Valdo: Ah, é mesmo. Dentro de alguns cinemas aqui eles servem comida. Gostoso, né?

Ah, es cierto. Dentro de algunos cines aquí se sirve comida. Qué chévere, ¿no?

That's right. In some of the theaters they serve food. That's cool, right?

Michelle: Então tá. A gente come massa com espinafre e toma umas bebidas enquanto assiste o filme.

Está bien. Nosotros comemos pasta con espinacas y tomamos unas bebidas mientras miramos la película.

OK then. We'll have pasta with spinach and we'll have a few drinks while watching the movie.

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.

What an interesting cultural issue! Valdo and Michelle note that there are some movie theaters that have regular menus where you can order burgers, pizza, and all other types of foods. This clearly is not your traditional popcorn and candy. Their conclusion is that this happens to be one of the differences between North American and Brazilian cultures. The challenge is, of course, how Valdo and Michelle would know if this is typical of North American culture? Is ordering food from a menu a normal part of the American moving going experience? Well, probably not. But here at the University of Texas we are proud of things that make Austin a unique city. So, three cheers for Austin, and throw a few more jalapeños on that burger!

Pronunciation Notes

There really are rules as to how a word spelled with an "s" is pronounced. The problem is knowing the rules. Let's see if we can help things out a bit. First of all, all words spelled with "ci", "ce", "ça", "ço" and "çu" are pronounced [s]. Well, that is interesting, but has nothing to do with our lesson about "s", so let's move on to the real rules.



- Rule #1: A word that begins with an "s" is pronounced [s], no matter what, e.g., **s**anto, **s**ábado, **s**enhor.
- Rule #2: Within a word, if there is an "s" between vowels, it is pronounced [z], e.g., ca**s**a, Jo**s**é, coi**s**a.
- Rule #3: Whenever a word is written with a double "ss" between vowels, it is pronounced [s], e.g., pa**ss**ar, ma**ss**a, a**ss**im

In order to understand Rule #4 and Rule #5 one needs to know about voicing and syllable position. We won't get technical, but let's take this side road before providing Rules #4 and #5.

Syllable position: When "s" follows a vowel at the end of a word or before another consonant, it falls in what is called "syllable-final position", e.g. liv.ros, car.tas, Lis.boa, es.tá.

Voicing: Some sounds are made while the vocal chords are vibrating. These are called "voiced". Some sounds are made while the vocal chords are not vibrating. These are called "voiceless". There are many sounds that differ only in their voicing. For example, the only difference between "s" and "z" is their voicing. Try an experiment. Hold your fingers next to your Adam's apple and repeat the sound "ssssss" and then repeat the sound "zzzzz". Notice that your tongue, lips, and mouth stay the same during both sounds. The only difference is the vibration of the vocal chords (which you feel at your Adam's apple). Some of the "voiced" sounds are: a, e, i, o, u, m, n, r, l, b, d, g, j, v, and z. Some of the voiceless sounds are: p, t, k, ch, f, and s. So, on to rules #4 and #5.

- Rule #4: When there is a "voiced" sound after a syllable-final "s", the "s" also becomes voiced (that is [z]): Lis.boa, Os.valdo, mes.mo, des.de. In fact, Rule #4 is so powerful that it even applies between words: os **s** meninos, os **s** meninos bonitos
- Rule #5: When there is a "voiceless" sound after a syllable-final "s", the "s" remains voiceless (that is [s]): es.tá, es.po.sa, es.for.ço, es.que.ce. And yes, Rule #5 is so powerful that it also applies between words: os **s** tigres, os **s** tigres felizes

These five rules may sound complicated, but all are simply a matter of "voicing". Nearby voiced sounds make the Portuguese "s" become voiced too. For Spanish speakers, the



challenge is to pronounce words with a [z] sound, even if it sounds a little strange, e.g., visita, rosa, peso, Brasil.