

Pronouncing Brazilian Portuguese (review)

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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Teschner, Richard V. and Antônio R. M. Simões. *Pronouncing Brazilian Portuguese*. Newark: Linguatext Limited, 2007. CD-ROM. 332 pp.

Pronouncing Brazilian Portuguese is a clearly written textbook based on the most sophisticated and up-to-date scholarship on Phonetics, Phonology, and Pedagogy. Among the many strengths of the book, it is worth mentioning its flexibility at all levels. It appeals to several types of audiences including first-year and advanced college students, independent students, and graduate students who are considering a career in teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language. As the book seriously embraces a comparative approach by systematically and coherently integrating abundant examples of English, French, and Spanish, it engages a much broader public than the traditional monolingual English speaker. Anyone working in the field of Portuguese Language Teaching will agree that this is a major asset since students tend to come to Portuguese after mastering another foreign language, mainly Spanish. Yet *Pronouncing Brazilian Portuguese* does not presuppose a bilingual or even trilingual target audience. Its structural flexibility and organizational consistency allow the user to disregard the French and the Spanish comparisons without any pedagogical harm. The accompanying CD-ROM, with 200 exercises read by native Brazilian speakers, mirrors the models from the textbooks and includes comparisons with English, French, and Spanish. Voices are pleasant, varied, and there are neither distracting nor useless and polluting cosmetic sounds.

The book is divided in seven chapters, plus a Preliminary chapter and an Appendix with nearly 7,000 words that pose pronunciation difficulties. The Preliminary chapter presents an interesting chart that compares the basic sounds of Brazilian Portuguese with English. Although the chart is well thought-out and helpful as a first step in demystifying Portuguese as a language “hard to pronounce,” it is unfortunately not recorded. As its title indicates, chapter 1 focuses on “Six Brazilian Portuguese consonant sounds also found in English, [End Page 214] French, or Spanish.” As in the rest of the book, the authors seek to keep the linguistic terminology at a minimum. However, whenever it is necessary they introduce some concepts in a practical and accessible manner. For example, they always provide the reader with not only an abstract explanation but also with pedagogical sounding examples as the one on page 15 “s = [ʃ] at the end of a syllable is what is called the **coda** (i.e., the post-vocalic post-nuclear position).” In this chapter, as well in the others and in the companion CD-Rom, images of the vocal apparatus are rarely shown. This is regrettable considering that students have different learning styles and many of them are visually oriented. It would be ideal if the publisher could, in a second edition, include more visuals and images to illustrate the chapters.

Chapter 2 engages the reader in a discussion about single and oral vowels. It is really impressive how the authors approach this complicated theme in just twenty-eight pages. The topic is presented in a concise and clear manner with plenty of examples and statistics

that are helpful in orienting readers. For example, in the subtopic “Rules for when the stressed e is a closed [ê],” the authors alert the readers, in page 35, that the e is closed “Before z in combinations –ezo (100%) and –eza (98%) appearing in nouns.” Even though the authors make clear in the beginning of the book that they will limit themselves to the carioca (from Rio de Janeiro) accent, one might feel a little frustrated that there is no reference to the important role regional variation plays in the production of single and oral vowels in Brazilian Portuguese. Maybe a paragraph or two on the general features of regional variation of single and oral vowels would enrich a second edition of this book without compromising its invaluable coherence and clarity.

Chapter 3 makes an in-depth discussion of oral diphthongs without overloading the reader with heavy linguistic jargon. In addition, the authors constantly reiterate definitions of the few linguistic terms that are indispensable for the development of the topic presented. For example, a definition of **coda**, already provided in chapter one, is repeated in page 58 “When appearing in...

by different narrators as an individualized alternative to the reductive generalizing of the masses (98) or the single gaze of a *flâneur* who contemplates a crowd (94). Nelson H. Vieira writes about space and belonging in the novel, stating that EEMC's driving force is to offer varied intimate experiences of the space in which people live (122) and their desire to belong to places, even when, as marginalized citizens, they are warehoused to the periphery of the city (130).

Uma cidade em camadas acutely examines both the themes and styles of one of the most dynamic Brazilian novels of the decade. The contributions offer diverse viewpoints, ranging from esthetic to historical analyses of EEMC that honor the novel's complexity and defiance of clear definitions.

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