



FINAL S IN RIO DE JANEIRO: INNOVATION OR IMITATION?

1. The evolution of Latin *s* among the various Romance languages provides a wide panorama of unique and diverse phonetic developments. Louis Michel¹ declares: "c'est que l'*S* intervient dans les problèmes les plus ardues de la phonétique latine . . . et que son évolution est un des traits les plus originaux du consonantisme latin." Particularly striking among these developments is the evolutionary scope of *s* in syllable-final position. Michel divides the range of developments undergone by Latin *-s* into three major categories (p. 100):

1. le conservatisme parfait: catalan, espagnol, gascon, languedocien, gévaudanais et héraultais, dialecte haut et bas-alpin, sarde.
2. le conservatisme altéré: *S* a été altéré régulièrement en *š*, *ž* en portugais; devant cons. sonore en languedoc . . .
3. l'amuissement complet: en français, en provençal, en italien, et en roumain.

It is to the second category that the attention of this study is turned, namely to the change of Latin syllable-final *s* to [š] in various Portuguese dialects. The *chianta* pronunciation of syllable-final *s* and *z* is the general rule in the speech of most dialects of Portugal, including those spoken in the area between the two cultural centers, Lisbon and Coimbra.² In certain more or less rural areas of the extreme north and south of Portugal, the older pronunciation

¹ L. Michel, *Etude du son "S" en latin et en roman* (Paris, 1955), p. 8.

² For a description of these "standard" dialects, see, for example, A. de Lacerda and G. Hammarström, "Transcrição fonética do português normal," *RLFE*, 1 (1952), 119-35.

is preserved. The situation is radically different, however, in Brazil, where palatalization of syllable-final *s* and *z* occurs, in its most general form, only in the *carioca* dialect of Rio de Janeiro. Even in this city, this phenomenon, although considered standard, does not reach all speakers, and both the palatalized and the non-palatalized variants have been considered acceptable by the Congresso de Língua Falada no Teatro and the Congresso Nacional da Língua Cantada, which adopted the Carioca pronunciation as the Brazilian standard. In certain areas of northeastern Brazil, particularly in Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte, and also in small areas of Portugal, palatalization of syllable-final *s* and *z* occurs only before *t*.³

The restriction of this palatalization, so common in Portugal, to the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro, has seemed curious to many investigators. To date, however, no detailed study has been undertaken to determine the causes of this peculiar distribution, although the logical possibilities have been, of course, mentioned throughout the literature. The first possibility is that the shift to the palatalized variants was a spontaneous development, occurring independently in Portugal and Brazil, presumably arising from the earlier apicoalveolar pronunciation of *s* and *z*.⁴ The second possibility is that the transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro from 1808 to 1822 provided sufficient impetus for the sound shift.⁵ Another possible explanation for the restriction of syllable-final palatalization to Rio de Janeiro lies in a more recent linguistic linkage between the speech of Rio and the *língua-padrão* in Portugal.⁶

A definitive study of the problem appears to be beyond the scope of the present state of our knowledge. It is possible, nonetheless, to survey the relationships between Brazilian and Iberian Portuguese throughout the history of Brazil, in an attempt to localize certain details and to place the problem in a narrower perspective. Such an attempt is offered in the remainder of this study.

³ See, for example, E. Farias de Lacerda, "O tratamento do fonema 'S' em português," *RBF*, 6 (1961), 43-50: 47.

⁴ See S. da Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa no Brasil: Problemas* (Rio de Janeiro, 1960), pp. 40-41.

⁵ Silva Neto, in *A Língua Portuguesa*, also considers this possibility, but refrains from further comment.

⁶ See, for example, P. Vázquez Cuesta and M. A. Mendes da Luz, *Gramática Portuguesa* (Madrid, 1961), p. 161: "Rio de Janeiro palataliza la *s* y *z* finales como Lisboa (tal vez por influencia de la lengua transatlántica)."

2. Almost from its inception, Brazil was Portugal's most valuable and productive colony, and hence enjoyed a great deal of social, economic and linguistic intercourse with the mother country. From its discovery in 1500 to its independence in 1822, Brazil was characterized by a Portuguese influence which extended into every aspect of its society, and whose traces have not been obliterated even today.

The first settlers in Brazil typified the patterns of European colonization: pardoned criminals, soldiers and adventurers. Geographically, they came from all regions of Portugal, and from the Açores and Cape Verde Islands.⁷ The linguistic heterogeneity of such a population was soon tempered by the growing influx of more cultured Portuguese speakers, spurred largely by evangelistic sentiments. Figuring prominently in the Christianizing of Brazil, and later also inextricably intertwined with its economic situation, were the Jesuits, a fervently devoted missionary order whose task was to instruct the native population in the dogmas of Christianity, in Portuguese. The ever-increasing presence of the learned Jesuits in Brazil provided one of the first instances of a more cultured influence on the new colony.⁸ Later, the wealthy Brazilian landholders, living within their transplanted European lifestyle, provided further contact with the mother country.

As the natural resources of Brazil were increasingly exploited, the Brazilians began to feel a sort of national unity, together with a realization of their potential political and economic independence from the Portuguese monarchy. These sentiments came to a head during the eighteenth century, in the face of an ever-growing spirit of economic nationalism. Dissatisfied with the subservient status to which they were relegated by the Portuguese government, the Brazilians became outwardly hostile in their relations with Portugal, a situation culminating, in several instances, in open revolt.⁹ Needless to say, during these turbulent periods, the continental Portuguese ideal was toppled from its pedestal in Brazil. A further move toward the dilution of Portuguese influence in Brazil stemmed

⁷ See Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, p. 6, for a more precise idea of the origins of the earliest Brazilian settlers.

⁸ A good picture of the economic influence exercised by the Jesuits in colonial Brazil is provided by D. Alden, "Economic aspects of the expulsion of the Jesuits in Brazil: A preliminary report," in *Conflict and Continuity in Brazilian Society*, ed. H. H. Keith and S. F. Edwards (Columbia, 1969), pp. 25-71.

⁹ A good survey of colonial revolts may be found in E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil* (New York, 1970), pp. 98-99.

from the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais in 1695. Gold fever caused a wave of immigration of treasure seekers from all parts of the world, among whom the continental Portuguese were in a decided minority, thus removing cultured Portuguese speech even further from the spotlight in Brazil.

The relevance of the above facts becomes immediately apparent when examining the diversity of opinion regarding the date of palatalization of syllable-final *s* and *z* in Portugal. Williams,¹⁰ drawing a few examples from the *Cancioneiro da Ajuda*, states that this palatalization was initiated in the thirteenth century, centuries before the colonization of Brazil. While sporadic occurrences of palatalization may perhaps be attested for the thirteenth century, its widespread occurrence at this time is belied by the total lack of a parallel situation in the later emerging Brazilian dialects. The palatalized pronunciation was never attested in any Brazilian dialect other than the Carioca, and the sporadic occurrences mentioned above, and the palatalization in Rio de Janeiro did not develop until much later. In view of the extensive influence of the continental dialects on the speech of Brazil, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it therefore appears impossible to place such an early date on the emergence of the palatalized pronunciation in Portugal.

Moving the date up somewhat, Hart¹¹ is of the opinion that syllable-final *s* and *z* were not yet palatalized in Portugal during the sixteenth century. This statement is offered on the grounds that such a pronunciation is not attested by any sixteenth century Portuguese grammarian, although the phones [š] and [ž] had already appeared in the language. Hart's opinion is consistent with the historical data, since Portuguese influence was at its peak in Brazil during the sixteenth century, and if the syllable-final sibilants had been palatalized in Portugal during this time period, we should expect to find vestiges of such a phenomenon in all the Brazilian dialects.

A still more recent date has been favored by other investigators. Bourciez¹² maintains that syllable-final *s* and *z* did not exhibit the palatal pronunciation until well into the eighteenth century. In

¹⁰ E. B. Williams, *From Latin to Portuguese*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 93.

¹¹ T. R. Hart, Jr., "Notes on sixteenth-century Portuguese pronunciation," *Wo*, 11 (1955), 404-15: 415.

¹² E. Bourciez, *Eléments de linguistique romane*, 5th ed. (Paris, 1967), pp. 416-17.

fact, the first attestation of such a pronunciation comes in 1746 from the grammarian Verney. Silva Neto¹³ places the change in the first third of the eighteenth century, "quer de Portugal (Lisboa), quer do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro)," although without substantiation in the latter case, since it is not attested in Brazil until much later. If the change had occurred prior to the eighteenth century, we could well expect to find vestiges of it throughout the Brazilian and other colonial Portuguese dialects, as well as attestations by the often quite perceptive Portuguese grammarians. On the other hand, a shift during the midst of the eighteenth century could be expected to register very tardily, if at all, in Brazil, since it was during this century that hostility toward Portugal reached its all-time peak, and consequently that linguistic contacts between the two nations were at a minimum.

3. In the early part of the nineteenth century, a move of great political and linguistic importance to the budding nation of Brazil took place, the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil. The political import of the move is widely recognized, and may be encountered in any history of Brazil. The impact of the regal transplantation on the linguistic structure of Brazilian Portuguese has, however, received almost no mention.

Pressed by Napoleon's ever-increasing demands and his eventual invasion of Portugal, prince regent João (later King João VI) and his court fled to Brazil in 1807. In January of the next year, the royal family sailed into Salvador da Bahia, due to a storm which had forced them to swerve from their original destination, Rio de Janeiro. João's stay in this city, although marked by colorful celebration and history-making decrees, was very short, for in a few weeks the court sailed for the new seat of the Portuguese empire, Rio de Janeiro. Bahia, like most of the rest of Brazil, exhibits no palatalization of syllable-final *s*.

The overall effect of the court's presence in Rio de Janeiro has been aptly summed up by a historian: "The cultural changes wrought by the presence of the Crown metamorphosed the intellectual and professional life of Brazil. That was emphatically true of its capital. When the court arrived, it found a beautifully located but somnolent city of approximately 60,000 inhabitants. Within a decade after the arrival of the court, the city's population doubled

¹³ S. da Silva Neto, *História da Língua Portuguesa* (Rio de Janeiro, 1952), p. 566.

. . . the influx of an estimated 24,000 Portuguese, a large contingent of Frenchmen and Englishmen, and some European diplomats lent a certain cosmopolitan air to the capital."¹⁴ After 1808, the situation of Rio de Janeiro was thus dramatically altered, as is made obvious by this statement. Instead of being merely another colonial city, Rio was now the residence of the monarch, an unheard-of precedent in Latin American history. With the proclamation of the Kingdom of Brazil in 1815, Rio acquired further prestige by becoming the seat of the entire Portuguese empire, and Brazilians now looked to Rio rather than to Lisbon for the voice of authority. Brazilians, particularly residents of Rio de Janeiro, no longer felt like colonists, but rather as rightful subjects of the kingdom, and the long overseas sojourn of the court resulted in a period of intense Portuguese influence on the thought, word and actions of the citizens of Rio de Janeiro.

In the light of these facts, it is useful to consider once again the origin of the palatalization of final *s* and *z* in the Carioca dialect. The emergence of this phenomenon, while impossible to pinpoint exactly, is definitely a nineteenth-century development. Révah,¹⁵ attempting to use the Brazilian dialects as a prototype of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Portuguese pronunciation, cites Jeronimo Soares Barbosa, who, arriving in Brazil at the turn of the nineteenth century, noted that the *sibilante* pronunciation of syllable-final *s* and *z* was the only variant to be found. Such a statement, together with the lack of syllable-final palatalization in any Brazilian dialect other than the Carioca, strongly suggests an intimate link between the presence of the court in Rio de Janeiro and the presence only in this dialect of the palatalized variants. It is not so difficult to imagine the mechanism of such a sound change, considering the effects on the citizens of Rio of the reestablishment of the Portuguese government in their midst. With the arrival of the court, the European ideal, while still the property of the upper social classes,¹⁶ was no longer an ephemeral entity approached only by studying at Coimbra, but a living model which walked about on the streets of the city

¹⁴ Burns, *A History of Brazil*, pp. 102-03.

¹⁵ I. S. Révah, "Comment et jusqu'à quel point les parlers brésiliens permettent-ils de reconstituer le système phonétique des parlers portugais des XVI^e-XVII^e siècles?," *Actas do III Colóquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros* (Lisbon, 1959), pp. 273-91: 284.

¹⁶ For a sketch of the social stratification of Rio de Janeiro and the rest of Brazil during the presence of the Portuguese court, see W. Pinho, *Salões e Damas do Segundo Reinado* (São Paulo, 1970), pp. 15-23.

and governed the country from within. Toward the end of the Brazilian reign of the monarchy, well over a third of the city's total population consisted of European citizens, mostly from Portugal. An awareness of the effects of the presence of the Portuguese court in Rio did not escape the citizens of that city. In 1823, during a debate of the Brazilian Assembly over the proposed location of a national university, José da Silva Lisboa defended the linguistic purity of the Carioca dialect in the following words:

Uma razão muito poderosa me ocorre de mais para a preferência da Universidade nesta Corte e é para que se conserve a pureza e a pronúncia da Língua Portuguesa . . . Sempre em todas as nações se falou melhor o idioma nacional nas Cortes. Nas províncias ha dialectos com os seus particulares defeitos: o Brasil os tem em cada uma que é quase impossível subjugar, ainda pelos mais doutos do país.¹⁷

The re-infusion of Portuguese pronunciation into the speech of Rio de Janeiro was thus felt to have provided a rejuvenating impetus toward a new linguistic standard for Brazil, a fact amply demonstrating the linguistic importance of the Court's duration overseas.

João soon began distributing positions as well as a large number of titles of nobility and distinguished service awards among native Brazilians, in addition to members of his Portuguese following. Competition for the coveted prizes was keen, and to insure maximum favorability toward a petition, a status-seeking Brazilian could be expected to conform as much as possible to the speech habits of the people he wished to impress. It would seem natural, therefore, that imitation of the European pronunciation would take place more frequently among the higher social classes, who were in a position to seek advancement, while the lower classes would remain indifferent to such motives. To date, no evidence has come to light which would conclusively document the social stratification of the palatalized variants in nineteenth century Rio de Janeiro. It is probably not coincidental, however, that today, more than 150 years later, the palatalization of syllable-final *s* and *z*, which reaches all social classes in Portugal, is felt by many speakers of Rio to represent an affected or "status" pronunciation.

4. If a linguistic transfer mechanism between the European standard and the Carioca dialect was indeed operative during the court's residence in Brazil, it is to be expected that other salient features characterizing the nineteenth-century European dialect might also

¹⁷ Cited in Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, pp. 43-44.

have seeped into the Carioca pronunciation. The direct results of any such additional borrowing will be extremely difficult to trace, however, since they will require the existence of a precise chronological and linguistic configuration. One must search for defining characteristics of the Lisbon / Coimbra dialects which developed during the eighteenth century, and whose existence in the Brazilian dialects is easily traceable, certainly a condition difficult to satisfy. Such a criterion is further complicated by the fact that during a period of dialect imitation, not all features of the donor dialect will necessarily be adopted, but only those felt most adequately to achieve the desired pronunciation. Whereas the palatalization of *s* and *z* is noteworthy enough to warrant recognition,¹⁸ certain other more subtle differences may well have escaped perception, or at least active imitation. The scanty documentation on the emergence and spread of sound change in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Portuguese and Brazilian dialects renders even more formidable the task of establishing conclusive parallels between the speech of the two countries during the reign of the court in Brazil. One avenue of investigation, however tenuous, does suggest itself: namely the raising of unstressed *e* and *o*, a phenomenon of sufficient distinction to figure in the dialect imitation postulated for Rio de Janeiro in the early nineteenth century.

Attempts at tracing the history of unstressed *e* and *o* in Portuguese are numerous, the most recent and most complete being the excellent study of Naro.¹⁹ No study has touched, however, on the influence of the European dialects on the Brazilian manifestations of unstressed vowel raising. Quite the opposite view, in fact, is sustained by Naro (p. 638): "Directly causative influence of post-16th-century Metropolitan developments on the Overseas dialects seems unlikely, because of the great distances and relatively small number of European Portuguese involved . . . contrary to the situation found in other languages exported to the new world, in Portuguese the European pronunciation . . . seems never to have constituted a prestige standard."

While such a statement is undoubtedly valid for all of eighteenth-century Brazil, as well as for many Brazilian dialects ever since the sixteenth century, it is belied in Rio de Janeiro by the tremendous

¹⁸ Cf. J. Lipski, "The survival of a 'marked' segment in Portuguese," *GL*, 13 (1973), 1-15.

¹⁹ A. J. Naro, "The History of *e* and *o* in Portuguese," *L*, 47 (1971), 615-45.

influx of Portuguese speakers and Portuguese influence which accompanied the removal of the court to Brazil.

While some investigators have placed the date for the raising of final atonic *e* and *o* to [i] and [u] as early as the sixteenth century,²⁰ such claims are generally untenable (cf. Naro, pp. 616–23). The first explicit attestation of the raising comes in 1734, from Luis Caetano de Lima; Verney's 1746 grammar lists the shift as alarmingly widespread and, by 1799, an anonymous French translator of Vieyra's normative *New Portuguese Grammar* of 1768 warns his readers that, despite the reactionary statements occurring in the text proper, the raising of *-e* and *-o* is an accomplished fact in Portugal.

The generalization to the raising of *e* and *o* in pretonic position is a poorly understood process, apparently evolving along several more or less disjoint paths. The only true consensus of opinion, and one not without exceptions, is that the raising of *e* and *o* in final atonic position occurred before the general raising in other atonic positions. Coupling this observation with the tentative dates for the raising of final unstressed vowels places the raising of pretonic *e* and *o* somewhere in the eighteenth century. This raising process, then, may serve as a candidate for investigating the effects of early nineteenth-century Iberian Portuguese on the speech of Rio de Janeiro. If the raising was imitated by the inhabitants of this city, then the contemporary Carioca dialect should exhibit a marked tendency toward raising of unstressed *e* and *o*, as compared with a retarded or nonexistent raising in the other Brazilian dialects. Determining the distribution of unstressed vowel raising among the various modern Brazilian dialects is hampered by the fact that modern mass communication, together with the prestige status accorded to the Carioca dialect, have diffused the Rio linguistic standard throughout Brazil, and have blurred many of the defining characteristics of the various dialects. By a recent census,²¹ only half of the citizens of Rio de Janeiro were natives of that city, thus indicating the spread of the Carioca dialect throughout Brazil, and underlining the difficulties to be anticipated in delimiting the bounds of the Rio pronunciation.

²⁰ For example, J. G. Herculano de Carvalho, "Nota sobre o vocalismo antigo português," *RPFil*, 12 (1962), 17–39. Also Hart, "Notes on sixteenth-century . . .," p. 408.

²¹ Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, p. 44.

With the exception of the Carioca dialect, the raising of *e* and *o* in pretonic, and in many instances in posttonic, position, occurs only sporadically among the Brazilian dialects. Describing the situation at the turn of the twentieth century, Leite de Vasconcellos,²² apparently speaking of the dialect of São Paulo, lists no occurrences of pretonic raising and only scant examples of raising in final position. In the analysis of Reed and Leite,²³ undertaken in 1942–43, unstressed *e* and *o* are listed as being raised only in final position, and even in this position the phenomenon does not occur with complete regularity. Révah,²⁴ considering the speech of São Paulo to represent a fossilization of the sixteenth-century European pronunciation, states explicitly that *no* unstressed vowel raising is to be found, even in final position, indicating, however, a generality inconsistent with most other observations. The phonetic transcription of the phonetician Dahl²⁵ shows almost no raising in unstressed position other than word-finally.

Among the other Brazilian dialects, the situation is similar to that found in São Paulo. The dialect of Espírito Santo shows little or no raising in pretonic position and only sporadic raising of word-final *e* and *o*.²⁶ The complete lack of unstressed vowel raising has also been cited for many southern Brazilian dialects, including those of Mato Grosso, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul.²⁷

While differing in details, the works cited above delimit the very marginal extent to which the raising of unstressed *e* and *o* occurs in Brazil outside of Rio de Janeiro. Within the Carioca dialect, however, one encounters a widespread raising of *e* and *o* in all atonic positions, tending toward a total generalization of the process of

²² J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *Esquisse d'une dialectologie portugaise*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon, n.d.), p. 13 (1st ed., Paris-Lisboa, 1901).

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²⁵ I. Dahl, "The Pronunciation of Brazilian Portuguese," in *In Honour of Daniel Jones*, ed. D. Abercrombie (London, 1964), pp. 313–19: 318.

²⁶ R. A. Hall, Jr., "The Unit Phonemes of Brazilian Portuguese," *SIL*, 1, no. 15 (1943), 1–6.

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unstressed vowel raising.²⁸ Interspersed throughout the superbly detailed study of Houaiss²⁹ are numerous citations of a completely general unstressed vowel raising process in Rio de Janeiro. This is quite significant, since this study was destined for a congress bent on establishing the norms for Brazilian speech based on the Carioca dialect and hence did not consider truly "substandard" styles of pronunciation. These same general tendencies are reflected in the transcription of Dahl (p. 318) and even in the carefully-spoken utterances contained in the contrastive study of Lacerda and Rossi.³⁰

The situation in contemporary Brazil, even considering the widespread influence exercised by the Carioca standard on other dialects, shows the general raising of atonic *e* and *o* focusing on Rio de Janeiro. While it is probable that the initial tendency toward raising of unstressed vowels developed independently in various Portuguese dialects scattered throughout the world, the striking parallels between the nineteenth-century Iberian standard and the modern Carioca dialect strongly argue for more than a fortuitous similarity.

5. Before attempting a reconstruction of the posited period of dialect imitation in Brazil from 1808 to 1822, it is necessary to consider the possibility of a more recent influence of the European standard on the speech of Rio de Janeiro. While a small amount of linguistic transference is continually taking place, due to the immigration of Portuguese citizens to Brazil, a considerable influence would be required in order to account for the phenomenon of palatalization. Therefore, an examination of several sound changes which have apparently taken place in Portugal subsequent to the return of the court in 1822, and the parallel search for traces of such sound changes in the contemporary Brazilian dialects, should aid in assessing the

²⁸ Naro ("The History of *e* and *o* . . .," p. 642) ascribes this distribution to a recent generalization of the rule raising vowels only in final atonic position. In view of the amply documented widespread occurrence of vowel raising in Rio de Janeiro, together with the lack of corresponding developments in the other Brazilian dialects, an earlier date for the generalization to all atonic positions seems more probable.

²⁹ A. Houaiss, "Tentative de descrição do sistema vocálico do português culto na área dita carioca," *Anais do Primeiro Congresso Brasileiro de Língua Falada no Teatro*, pp. 217-317.

³⁰ A. de Lacerda and N. Rossi, "Particularidades fonéticas do comportamento elocucional do falar de Rio de Janeiro," *RLFE*, 4 (1958), 5-102: 89-91.

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unstressed vowel raising.²⁸ Interspersed throughout the superbly detailed study of Houaiss²⁹ are numerous citations of a completely general unstressed vowel raising process in Rio de Janeiro. This is quite significant, since this study was destined for a congress bent on establishing the norms for Brazilian speech based on the Carioca dialect and hence did not consider truly "substandard" styles of pronunciation. These same general tendencies are reflected in the transcription of Dañl (p. 318) and even in the carefully-spoken utterances contained in the contrastive study of Lacerda and Rossi.³⁰

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possible effects of the European dialects throughout the history of Brazil.

One of the salient characteristics of the modern Lisbon and Coimbra dialects is the reduction of unstressed *e* from [i] to [ə], and the further reduction of unstressed *o* from [u] to a practically inaudible [ʊ]. These reduced forms are so weakly articulated that they often disappear in casual conversation. The first documentation of such vowel reduction comes in 1799, in the anonymous translation of Vieyra's Portuguese grammar. At this time, the reduced pronunciation of atonic *e* and *o*, while noticeable, was, in the translator's opinion, far from common. The reduction process apparently spread rapidly, however, for in 1829, in the revised edition of Hamonière's *Grammaire Portugaise*, the reduced pronunciation is listed as common in the received pronunciation, as opposed to the observation of the first edition in 1820, to the effect that a stronger pronunciation was still in effect. By the time that Gonçalves Vianna³¹ studied the standard Lisbon pronunciation at the end of the nineteenth century, the reduction of atonic *e* to [ə] and of atonic *o* to [ʊ] was a completely general phenomenon, occurring in all social classes.

The reduction of atonic vowels, completely general in many European Portuguese dialects, is totally unknown to the Brazilian dialects, thus strongly counterindicating an intensive influence of the modern European standard. It is also to be noted that, during the years of the court's stay in Rio de Janeiro, the complete reduction of atonic *e* and *o* in Portugal had not yet acquired sufficient momentum to reach the speakers of all social classes. In particular, the conservative and isolationistic speech habits of the highest social level, which included the court and its followers, developed the process of vowel reduction at a much slower rate than was evidenced by the lower classes, and thus at the time of the crossing to Brazil, no significant traces of such a pronunciation were to be found in courtly speech. The Carioca dialect was consequently unaffected by the process, which later acquired the status of received pronunciation in Portugal.

Another phenomenon of apparently recent provenance in the received speech of Portugal is the centralizing of the diphthongs *ei*

³¹ A. R. Gonçalves Vianna, "Essai de phonétique et de phonologie de la langue portugaise d'après le dialecte actuel de Lisbonne," *Romania*, 12 (1883), 29-98.

[ej] and *-em* [ēj] to [ɐj] and [ɛj], respectively. Thus, *leite* becomes [léjtə], and *também* is [tɛbɛ́j]. Evidently of nineteenth-century origin, the change is first indicated among the elevated social classes in a letter from the Brazilian poet Gonçalves Dias, visiting in Lisbon, to a friend in Brazil.³² Towards the end of the century, Gonçalves Vianna (p. 61) considered the phenomenon to be general in Portugal. Writing at the turn of the century, however, Leite de Vasconcellos (pp. 81–82) notes considerable vacillation within Portuguese speech, and advises "on doit remarquer que *ei* peut être prononcé *ei* ou *âi*."

The contemporary Brazilian dialects do not exhibit the slightest trace of centralizing of *ei* and *em*; in fact, this lack is one of the fundamental factors differentiating Portuguese on both sides of the Atlantic, and is often cited as evidence that Brazil speaks a more archaic form of Portuguese.

A further European development is the lowering of *e* to [a] before a palatal consonant. Common in received Lisbon pronunciation are *abelha* [ɐbála], *seja* [sáʒɐ], *lenha* [láɲɐ], *fecho* [fásʰu], etc. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, José Ignácio Roquete cited a tendency among the lower classes to lower *e* to *a* before palatal consonants in certain words.³³ By the last quarter of the century, Gonçalves Vianna (pp. 70–71) reported that the lowering had become completely general. Leite de Vasconcellos (p. 103), writing only a few years later, however, showed the lowering of *e* before palatal consonants to be confined to Lisbon, where it predominates today. As is the case with the other developments referred to above, the lowering of *e* before palatals is not found among the Brazilian dialects.

One possible point of controversy concerns the emergence of the velarized variant [x] of the strong /r/ phoneme in Rio de Janeiro, paralleling similar dorsal articulations in Lisbon and Coimbra. The shift to the dorsal variants in the latter cities is a mid- to late nineteenth-century development,³⁴ originating among the lower social classes, while the velar articulation in Rio de Janeiro appears to have occurred later. Most investigators feel, however, that the

³² Cited in Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, p. 37.

³³ Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, p. 32.

³⁴ Cf. J. Morais Barbosa, *Études de phonologie portugaise* (Lisbon, 1965), pp. 189–205.

change is due either to purely spontaneous phonetic development³⁵ or to structural evolution seeking to maximize the difference between the phonemes /r/ and /r̄/, by eliminating the distinctive feature of length.³⁶ A direct imitation by citizens of Rio de Janeiro of the European variants is rendered less likely by the appearance of velarized variants in other, more rural parts of Brazil, and also by the differences in point articulation between the European and the Brazilian strong *r*.

Since it is quite reasonable to suppose that, if the palatalization of syllable-final *s* and *z* in the Carioca dialect were a recent imitation, at least some traces of the other recent Iberian sound changes would be manifested in Brazil, the corresponding lack of such parallel developments highlights the conclusion that no significant linguistic transfer mechanism is presently active between the two countries.³⁷ Added to the earlier conclusions, this fact suggests that the palatalized variants in Rio de Janeiro are the direct result of dialect imitation during a historically unprecedented period of great national significance.

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³⁵ For example, G. Hammarström, *Etude de phonétique auditive sur les parlers de l'Algarve* (Uppsala, 1953), pp. 175–76.

³⁶ For Portugal, see Morais Barbosa, *Etudes*, pp. 189–205; for Brazil, Silva Neto, *A Língua Portuguesa*, p. 48, and J. Mattoso Câmara, Jr., *Para o Estudo da Fonêmica Portuguesa* (Rio de Janeiro, 1953), pp. 105–110.

³⁷ It is of course possible, as mentioned earlier, that the recent Portuguese sound changes escaped detection in Brazil, thus accounting for their non-occurrence in the Brazilian dialects without necessarily refuting the possibility of imitation of other features of European pronunciation. That this is probably not the case is demonstrated by the general awareness among educated Brazilian speakers of these and other salient features which separate their speech patterns from those of Portugal.