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Intonation in European and Brazilian Portuguese

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1. Introduction: Intonation and its functions in Portuguese

Intonation is the use of phonetic features, namely pitch, to express phrase-level meanings in ways that are linguistically structured (Gussenhoven 2007, Ladd 2008, a.o.). The roles played by intonation in language have long been described in terms of three main functions of intonation (e.g. Halliday 1967): demarcation, that is the chunking or phrasing of the speech stream into intonation-based units; highlighting, that is the placement of prominence within an utterance; and the distinction of utterance types, i.e. statements, questions, imperatives, vocatives. Grammaticalizations of all or some of these functions may be found in different languages, with different realizations, and define the language-specific phonology of intonation. In this chapter, we describe the intonation system of Portuguese, concentrating on the analysis of the three main functions of intonation. The framework adopted is the auto-segmental metrical theory of intonational phonology (e.g., Gussenhoven 2004; Ladd 2008; Jun 2005, 2014), along the lines of previous descriptions of the intonation of Brazilian and European Portuguese (Viana 1987; Frota 1997, 2000, 2002, 2014; Mata 1999; Frota & Vig rio 2000, 2007; Tenant 2002; Fernandes 2007a,b; Moraes 2008; Serra 2009, inter alia).¹

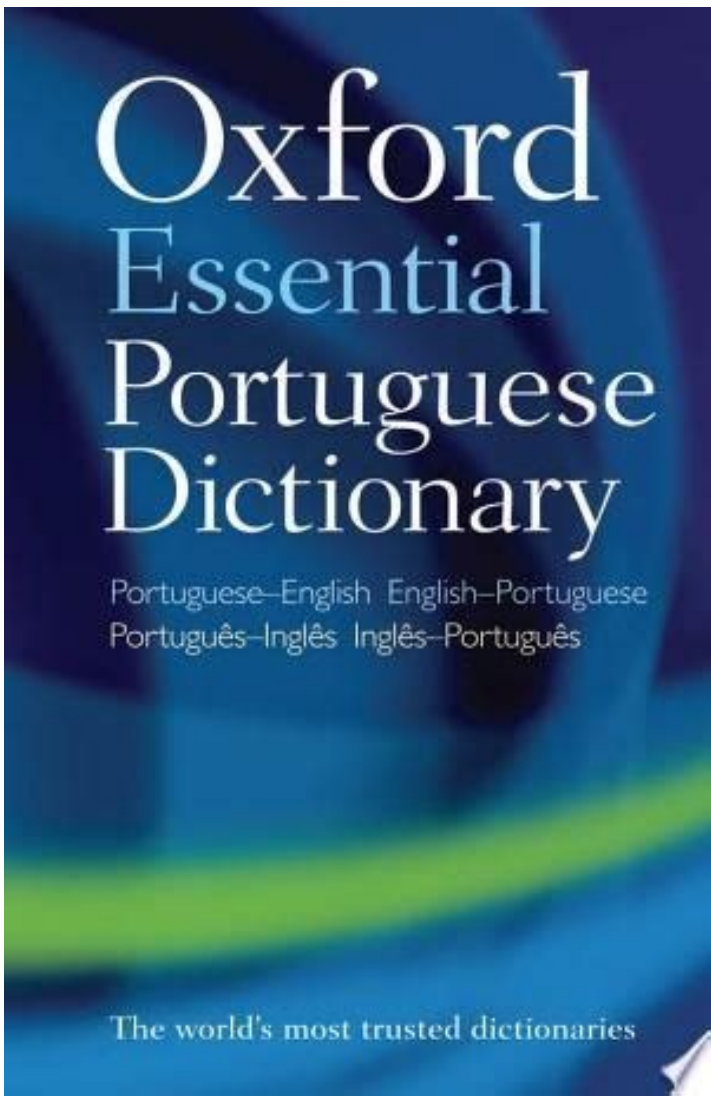
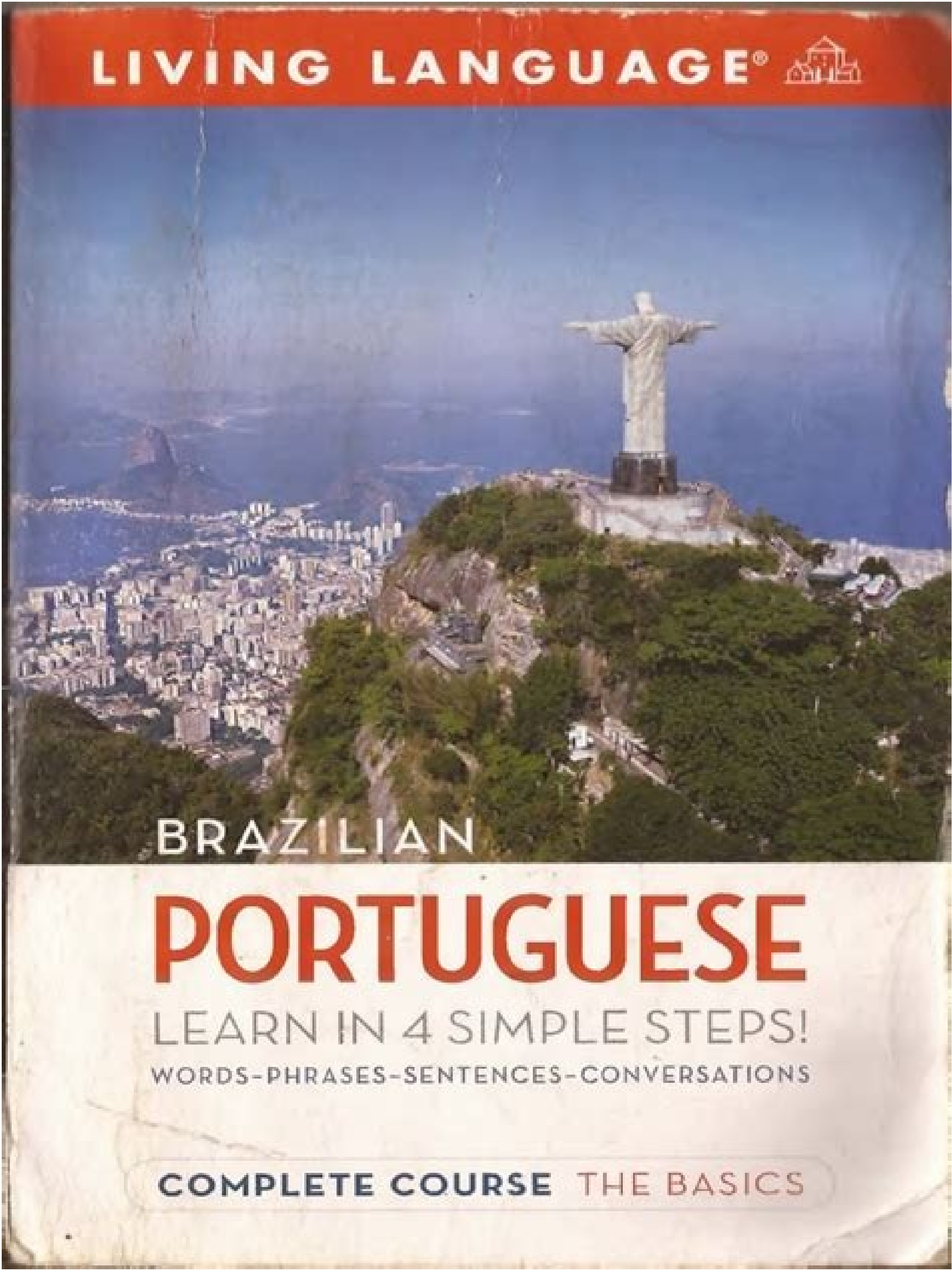
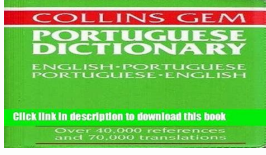
We begin by the chunking function of intonation in section 2, where intonational phrasing in Portuguese is described. Tonal marking of intonational phrases is discussed, as well as the distribution of tonal events within the intonational phrase. Other levels of prosodic phrasing that are intonationally relevant are also discussed.

Section 3 addresses the highlighting function of intonation in Portuguese, namely the strategies used to mark focus prosodically. Several strategies are discussed, like pitch accent placement, pitch accent type, phrasing markers, expanded pitch range for the focal accent, pre-focal and post-focal deaccenting or pitch range compression.

Section 4 is devoted to the contribution of intonation to sentence type distinctions. The nuclear contours of four main sentence types are described: statements, questions (wh-questions and yes-no questions), imperatives (commands and requests), and vocatives (greeting call and insistent call). Together with a basic intonational inventory of pitch accents and boundary tones, other key features of the intonation system of Portuguese are discussed, namely the ways the language explores tonal alignment to convey meaning distinctions and the preferred tune-text accommodation strategies.

Unless otherwise stated, the present chapter is based on the description of a single variety: the Lisbon variety for European Portuguese (hereafter EP), and the Rio de Janeiro variety for Brazilian Portuguese (hereafter BP). In section

¹ Other work on the intonation of Portuguese within different frameworks of analysis includes Cruz-Ferreira 1998, Moraes 1998, and Lucente 2012.



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