

Don't go there

A first-time visitor to Brazil might come away with the mistaken impression that all Brazilians learn English at West Point military academy. I thought so, too, at first. I mean, I would be teaching and a student would say, "Teacher! Come here!" or "Repeat, teacher!" and "Wait, teacher! Don't erase!". But upon reflection I realized that these students weren't speaking like that to be rude; it's just that they didn't know that they were sounding that way.

Brazilians use intonation in Portuguese to achieve what native English speakers do with words. It is very difficult to say "Come here" in English in any combination of intonation patterns and not sound rude. So what do we say?

1. "Come here, **please**."
2. "**Could you** come here?"
3. "**Could you** come here, **please**?"
4. "**Could you** come here **for a second, please**?"

I can hear Brazilians saying "But that's an exaggeration!". No, it isn't. Brazilians do not realize how important these expressions are. I know this because, as a person who has lived in Brazil for six years now, I've come to understand that it sounds a little strange in Portuguese to say "por favor" all the time. But even if you use the most polite of the expressions (No. 4), you will not sound anything but polite.



Visitante	Equívoco	Brasileiros	Militar
Eu achei que sim	Percebi	Mal educado	Parecendo
Ouvir	Exagero	Estranho	Educado

There's an additional problem when Brazilians say things like "Repeat, teacher!" and "Don't erase, teacher!" and it goes beyond simply adding "please". It reminds me of when my wife and I first started dating. She would "ask" me to hold her bag: "Hold here." I realized that one of the problems, aside from not saying "please" or something similar, is that she was translating literally from the Portuguese, "*Segure aqui*." The word "hold" is a transitive verb in English (like "repeat" and "erase"). In other words, in Portuguese if you say "*Segure aqui*," I'll understand implicitly the object to which you are referring. But in English you need to be more explicit: "Could you hold **this**, please?"

So it's not enough to just add "please" in cases like "Don't erase!" – you also have to include the word that represents the "object". For example:

"Just a second. Don't erase **that**, please."

And, of course, it never hurts to add a "Thank you" at the end.

Como	Vai além	Me lembra
Bolsa	Literalmente	Em outras palavras
Suficiente	Incluir	Claro

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Escreva abaixo o que você entendeu do texto:

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Há um segundo problema apresentado no segundo texto: Qual é? E o qual a solução para resolvê-lo?

1. (01) All first-time visitors to Brazil think **that** Brazilians are soldiers.
(02) Brazilians use the Imperative Mood very frequently when they're speaking in English.
(04) The English that Brazilians speak is based on the language used in West Point military academy.
(08) Brazilians don't realize they're being rude when they overuse the Imperative Mood.
(16) Sentences like "Teacher! Come here!" or "Wait, teacher!" are very polite in English.

2. (01) English speakers use intonation and Brazilians use words to soften the Imperative Mood.
(02) Brazilians exaggerate in the use of the word "please".
(04) Brazilians consider an exaggeration the use of the word "please" by English native speakers.
(08) When a Brazilian says in English "Come here!" he or she has no intention to be rude.
(16) Brazilians think it's strange to use the word "please" all the time in English.

3. 01 *Hold* and *erase* are transitive verbs, that is, they must be followed by a direct object.
02 The text compares English and Portuguese in relation to the way of expressing orders, invitations and requests.
04 The expression *Thank you* is little used in everyday English.
08 Instead of saying "Come here", a more polite sentence would be "Could you come here, please?".
16 Instead of saying "Don't go there" to an English native speaker, a better choice would be "Please, don't go there" or "You shouldn't go there".