The Dots on the I's of Intercultural, Interpersonal, and Internet:
A Case Study of Portuguese as Pluricentric Language in the USA Pandemic Aftermath

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Frustration is not unheard of when it comes to the observation that foreign language virtual classes fall short in meaningfulness and spontaneity during oral practice. Equally impactful, Portuguese as Pluricentric Language (PPL) classes face the challenge of bringing in authenticity and purposefulness remotely. As an overnight market response to the current scenario, instructors got flooded with blended tools promising engagement and effectiveness (Banditvilai, 2016; Crawford et. al, 2020). Yet, despite the lack of longitudinal data regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online foreign language education, many new resources claim to have proven ways into discussion-based features, empowering strategies, and retention power (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). The problem is that this overflow of technological assets can lead to issues of ownership and control, or content propriety and class management myriads, respectively. To illustrate, Chen et al. (2020) point out that personal factors do not influence users' satisfaction as much as platform availability does. Thus, it is of pressing importance to align available corpora and technological tools. Corpora analysis is effective in showing that engagement in the short run and students' retention in the long run are compromised because problems are not sorted out in real time, on spot, during live classes. In fact, this is our main purpose at dotting the I's of Internet, Interpersonal, and Intercultural.

To our knowledge, no case study has yielded Portuguese as Pluricentric Language (PPL) evidence in a troubleshooting fashion to provide culturally relatable and communicatively meaningful virtual interaction. The motivation for this methodological case study is to describe the standpoint of phenomenological instances from a USA southeastern university population sample to develop alternatives. According to Hoadley (2004), a methodological study is not intended to exhaust academic debate or to draw upon existing foundations as review and theoretical articles are. Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczy (2004) also explain that the methodology rationale addresses questions empirically. Based on that, we compare, test, and present corpora advances in systematic review and evidence synthesis of intercultural competence for interpersonal communication designed backwards. After all, two-way interaction is the hardest mode to be reached in (a)synchronous instruction, as it lacks spontaneity, among other factors. To illuminate this uncharted area of interpersonal communicative tasks, numerous authors present the literature pertaining to the backward design to foster awareness, an effective remedy for the problems of ownership and control (Hosseini, Chalak & Biria, 2019; Paesani, 2017; Richards, 2013; Sollai et al., 2018). A backward design starts with the definition of the learning objectives as the desired goals of a course. After that, the assessment tools are developed so as to gather acceptable evidence throughout the teaching and learning process, at formative or summative formats. Finally, day-to-day instruction is created as the embodiment and illustration of the two previous phases of desired goals and acceptable evidence gathering.

At the core of backward design are the three modes of communication – interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. The figure below arranges communication in FL learning as:

Communication				
Interpretive		Interpersonal	Presentational	
Listening	Reading	Two-Way Speaking	One-Way Speaking	Writing

Figure 1: Communication Modes. Adapted from ©ACTFL (2012). Image for research purpose with appropriate educational objectives in nature, amount, and effect. No copyright required under the guidelines of fair use.

Considering that text is every communication process that is endowed with meaning, one acknowledges there are one-way and two-way communication modes (GUIMARÃES, 2009). On the one hand, presentations and writings, or readings and video and audio extracts are samples of one-way communication as they are either directed to an audience or to the interpretation of information. Although the presenter may answer a question from the audience, the presentational mode does not provide equal opportunity of interaction or negotiation of meaning. Similarly, there is no recourse of interaction in the understanding from within the cultural mindset or perspective in the interpretive mode (ACTFL, 2012; Kissau & Adams, 2016). On the other hand, a dialogue, a text, and a conversation on social media are examples of two-way communication. They offer both interaction and an active exchange of information. Whereas interpretive focuses on what learners understand, interpret, and analyze from what is heard, read, or viewed on various topics; presentational focuses on learners' exhibition of information, concepts, and ideas to inform, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers (Duncan & Met, 2010; Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007). *Negotiation of meaning* is where this study converges the interpersonal mode, intercultural competence, and Internet – the learners' *cultural equivalence* and *accommodation* in spoken, signed, or written texts aide them to acknowledge the other while sharing information, reactions, feelings, and opinions remotely.

The results show that interpersonal communication is hindered in online classes because learners lack spontaneity. They fear making grammar mistakes. This data reinforces Krashen's (2002) tenet that output is rare, and comprehensible output is rarer. So, they can be provided with a fixed, rehearsed speaking task and proper feedback (Ferreira, Moore & Mellish, 2007). One troubleshooting point gathered in this study is to adapt the learning objective and output. For the effect of this data collection, learning objective is a broadly conceived goal, learning output is an intent, and learning outcome is an observed sample. From the literature review above pointing that speaking tends to be the main focus of most foreign language acquisition processes, key findings emerge herein regarding the alignment of objectives, output, and outcome. In face to face classes, oral tasks are usually played as imitative performances with a gradual release of responsibility. In other words, the instructor models a task out; then, the instructor performs it with a learner, and, finally, learners work in pairs (I do – We do – You do, respectively). It can be advocated that the disadvantage of having minimum to medium opportunity to create in fill-in dialogues is outnumbered by the advantage of having two-way communication online. Even the opportunities to experiment with spontaneous language, outside highly controlled fixations can be meticulously designed. In virtual classes, this cost of spontaneity should be used favorably, considering there is closely supported accurate outcome. The present findings confirm that output outside fixed structure is rare. However, they reinforce that communicative learning objectives should be realigned in relation to their intriguing potential to initiate language use that transcends improvisation in order to welcome imitation. When students are asked to practice from a modeled dialogue with a classmate, for example, they will switch roles: alternating between being second person of the discourse (while modeling with the instructor) to first person (taking the position once used by the instructor). This generates opportunities to practice verb conjugation, adjective possessives and gender, to mention a few. A way to bring in a less controlled scenario is by adding expressions such as "in your routine", "based on your experience", "in your daily schedule", for instance. Even though the initial topic is artificially introduced, the manipulation of lexicon, grammar structures, and variables related to personal experiences shall bring unexpected but necessary negotiation of meaning, which, on the other hand, will fetch spontaneity to the interaction. To pinpoint our empirical data, we explore how learners interact, elaborate questions to

demonstrate engagement. Lastly, when it comes to research implications, this study only begins to reveal the potential of online teaching and learning of Portuguese as Pluricentric Language.