



## Languages in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro: educational potential to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity

### Línguas na Avenida Lourenço Peixinho em Aveiro: potencial educativo na sensibilização à diversidade linguística e cultural

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#### Abstract

Acknowledging the educational potential of linguistic landscapes, this paper sets out to: - identify the foreign languages present in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro (Portugal) and the linguistic landscape signs in which they appear; - propose an interdisciplinary set of activities for the exploration of the linguistic landscape in the Avenida. To address these aims, an exploratory case study was conducted. Photographic data was collected in the Avenida and it was subject to content analysis. The analysis of the linguistic landscape displayed shows that English is the foreign language with the greatest presence and that the diversity of languages is low with a scarce presence of immigration languages such as Chinese. This exploratory experience was the basis for the creation of an interdisciplinary set of pedagogical activities (involving English, Spanish, History and Geography subjects) aimed at secondary education, providing some suggestions to explore linguistic landscapes as educational resources for the purposes of increasing students and educational community's awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Linguistic landscape; pedagogical activities; interdisciplinarity; linguistic and cultural diversity

#### Resumo

Reconhecendo o potencial educativo das paisagens linguísticas, o presente artigo propõe-se a: - identificar as línguas estrangeiras presentes na Avenida Lourenço Peixinho em Aveiro (Portugal) e os signos de paisagem linguística em que as línguas aparecem; - propor um conjunto de atividades pedagógicas interdisciplinares que visa uma exploração educativa da paisagem linguística da avenida. De modo a alcançar a consecução destes objetivos, foi conduzido um estudo de caso exploratório, sendo recolhidos dados fotográficos que foram, posteriormente, sujeitos a uma análise de conteúdo. A análise da paisagem linguística da avenida revela que o inglês é a língua estrangeira com maior presença e que a diversidade de línguas é baixa, havendo uma escassa presença de línguas de populações imigrantes em Aveiro, como é



o caso do chinês. Este estudo exploratório serviu de base à construção de um conjunto de atividades pedagógicas interdisciplinares (envolvendo as disciplinas de Inglês, Espanhol, História e Geografia) dirigido ao ensino secundário, as quais fornecem algumas sugestões de exploração de paisagens linguísticas como recursos pedagógicos, com o intuito de fomentar nos alunos e na comunidade educativa a consciencialização relativamente à diversidade linguística e cultural.

**Palavras-chave:** Paisagem linguística; atividades pedagógicas; interdisciplinaridade; diversidade linguística e cultural

## Resumen

Reconociendo el potencial educativo de los paisajes lingüísticos, el presente artículo se propone a: - identificar las lenguas extranjeras presentes en la Avenida Lourenço Peixinho en Aveiro (Portugal) y los señales en los que las lenguas aparecen; - sugerir un conjunto de actividades pedagógicas interdisciplinarias que tiene como objetivo una exploración del paisaje lingüístico de la avenida. Con el objetivo de concretar estos objetivos, se realizó un estudio de caso exploratorio, recogiendo datos fotográficos de la avenida, los cuales fueron posteriormente sujetos a un análisis de contenido. El análisis del paisaje lingüístico exhibido en la avenida denota que el inglés es la lengua extranjera con mayor presencia y que la diversidad lingüística es baja, con una presencia baja de lenguas de inmigrantes, como por ejemplo el chino. La experiencia de exploración de la avenida se ha constituido como la base para la creación de un conjunto de actividades pedagógicas interdisciplinarias (que incluye las asignaturas de Inglés, Español, Historia y Geografía) dirigido a la enseñanza secundaria, que provee algunas sugerencias de exploración de paisajes lingüísticos como recursos pedagógicos, con el objetivo de promover en los alumnos y en la comunidad educativa la concienciación a la diversidad lingüística y cultural.

**Palabras clave:** Paisaje lingüístico; actividades pedagógicas; interdisciplinariedad; diversidad lingüística y cultural

## Introduction

This paper is based on the assumption that linguistic landscapes (LL) can be used as educational resources contributing to the development of language awareness. Research has been revealing that cities are superdiversity public spaces where different languages and cultures meet and where different identities are displayed (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). The educational potentials of cities' LL are related to: the increase of awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity (Clemente, 2015; Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre & Armand, 2009); the development of metacognitive, metalinguistic and critical thinking skills (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough & Gee, 1996); the development of critical literacy (Sabatier, Moore & Dagenais, 2013); and the development of visual literacy (Mor-Sommerfeld & Johnson, 2012).

Considering this framework, this paper sets out to describe the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro (Portugal) and proposes an interdisciplinary set of sequential pedagogical



activities (including the subjects of English, Spanish, History and Geography), for the exploration of that LL at secondary education, aiming at increasing students and school community's awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity. The paper begins with the theoretical framework that sustains the research with a focus on cities as pedagogic places and on the educational potentials of LL. In the next section, the research methodology is presented followed by the main findings on the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho. Afterwards, an interdisciplinary set of pedagogical activities aimed at secondary education is proposed. In the concluding remarks, findings are discussed in relation to the need to look at languages and cultures in cities and to reflect about the (social, economic, political,...) meanings and effects of their presence/absence, highlighting the educational potentialities of LL. The limitations of the study are also addressed.

## Cities and linguistic and cultural diversity

Cities are constructed by people who bring with them their languages, their cultures and their beliefs which contribute to shape urban areas (Simpson, 2017). According to Cenoz and Gorter (2006), the languages displayed on streets say a lot about the culture and the social organization of the community who inhabits there. Those languages, if explicitly represented, can suggest the power and vitality of communities and the role of different languages and cultures within societies (Tan, 2011). Indeed, more than mere communication tools, languages and cultures represent ideas of the world and ways of expressing and changing the world. The visibility of languages in urban landscapes suggests the way society values (or not) linguistic and cultural diversity and sheds light on the identities that meet and are negotiated at the city (Bekar, 2015; Loth, 2016).

Considering that cities are “social constructs” (*Toledo Declaration*, EU, 2010, p. 6) where the impact of globalisation and mobility is more visible and where multiple scenarios of linguistic diversity are present, they are considered spaces of renovation and innovation with multiple possibilities for human development (Clemente, 2015). In this sense, the city, which is “a network of circulation and communication” and a “centre of information and decision-making”, is a “symbol of urban society in general” (Lefebvre, Kofman & Lebas, 2000, p. 98) that can be analysed and interpreted.

As highlighted by Clemente (2015), in an increasingly globalised world “as línguas tornam-se o elemento transversal destes processos [de globalização], fazendo parte da dimensão cultural, política, económica, espacial [...]e social (que inclui fenómenos demográficos como é o caso dos movimentos migratórios) que se verificam nos contextos urbanos” (p. 58), becoming vehicles of social, cultural, political and economic causes.

Because of these features, cities have been regarded as spaces encompassing diverse educational potentialities, namely concerning the development of language awareness within an education for linguistic and cultural diversity. In the *Charter of Educating Cities*, the International Association of Educating Cities (2004) underlines that the city can serve educational purposes, contributing to the development of capacities of coexisting, integrating, intervening



and creating as the foundations of an education oriented to the Otherness and to the Self in contact with the Other. In this line of thought, and according to Silva and Cavalcanti (2008), from an educational point of view, the city can be the *locus* of education, it can be a *content* and an *educational agent*. The city may assume these roles in what education for linguistic and cultural diversity is concerned, contributing to the development of a “critical pedagogy of place” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3) that may enhance

*“experiential learning, contextual learning, problem-based learning, constructivism, outdoor education, indigenous education, environmental and ecological education, bioregional education, democratic education, multicultural education, community-based education, critical pedagogy itself, as well as other approaches that are concerned with context and the value of learning from and nurturing specific places, communities, or regions.” (idem)*

## Linguistic landscapes in the city – educational potential

Linguistic landscape (LL) is understood as the visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory, namely the “language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). More recently, researchers have been debating over this definition (for an overview of the main developments in the field of linguistic landscape studies, see Gorter, 2013) and, for instance, Gorter underlines that the field of LL should not limit itself to the study of written language and to the variation in text types, considering also images, colours and “other visuals, as well as voices, music and sound and to dynamic changes in the physical (mainly urban) surroundings” (2012, p. 11).

LL is considered the scene where the public space is symbolically constructed showing characteristics of the sociolinguistic context (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht, 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Cenoz and Gorter (2006) emphasise the bidirectional nature of the relationship between linguistic landscape and the sociolinguistic context. This means that not only do linguistic landscapes reflect sociolinguistic circumstances, but they also shape and construct the sociolinguistic context. Therefore, social and cultural features may determine the predominance of some languages and the inexistence of others, giving evidence of language vitality (Barni & Extra, 2008; Tan, 2011), of what languages and cultures are locally relevant (Bekar, 2015), and showing collective identity markers (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Hence, as underlined by Dagenais et al., LL “signals what languages are prominent and valued in public and private spaces and indexes the social positioning of people who identify with particular languages” (2009, p. 254).

Over the last ten years, research on the role of LL as a pedagogical context and a didactical resource for educational purposes has been emerging (Gorter, 2013), although, as highlighted by Clemente, Vieira, Martins and Andrade (2013), “There is still a long way to go on the research of the urban LL as a pedagogical context and as a tool [...] (p.130). The educational exploration of LL consists in the pedagogical use of texts that are not pedagogical in their purpose which are present in the public space and that may be used for educational purposes in order to contribute to the development of several competences (Clemente, Andrade & Martins, 2012; Dagenais et



al., 2009; Dooley, 2013; Rowland, 2012). Shohamy and Walksman (2009) underline that LL may be capitalised in order to develop students' knowledge of the surrounding environment: "LL arenas can be considered the textbooks [...] or the gates to open meanings" (p. 327).

In this sense, LL are considered important resources to the existence of interdisciplinary learning across the curriculum. The multimodality inherent to LL increases their educational potentialities, and research has been showing that taking LL as a pedagogical context and didactical resource may contribute to the development of interdisciplinary competences and multiliteracies (Street, 2003) such as: critical literacy compelling students to see the world through the eyes of a sociolinguist and questioning the use of languages (Dagenais et al., 2009; Sabatier et al., 2013; Rowland, 2012); visual literacy (Mor-Sommerfeld & Johnson, 2012); critical thinking (Cazden et al., 1996); and communicative competences (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Chern & Dooley, 2014; Rowland, 2012). Hence, leading students to look at their surroundings to search for languages, and, most importantly, to search for their meaning in the place they inhabit, promotes interdisciplinary pedagogical work that facilitates the development of crucial competences (Clemente, 2015; Dagenais et al., 2009; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017).

The potentialities of LL educational exploration for increasing awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity – the focus of this paper – have been underlined by some researchers who have been perceiving LL as a "new approach to multilingualism representing a way to understand it" (Clemente et al., 2013, p. 116). Dagenais et al. (2009) give us account of a study developed in Montreal, Quebec, and Vancouver involving elementary school students in which LL were used as research and pedagogical tools to analyse students' representations of languages and speakers. The authors concluded that "attending to the LL in language awareness activities provides a promising avenue for teaching about language diversity and literacy practices from a critical perspective" (p. 266).

Clemente et al. (2012) developed an exploratory project entitled "Learning to read the world, learning to read the linguistic landscape: a study in the first years of formal education", and concluded that the students involved in the project developed "an ability that allows them to recognise and read the LL, to begin observing the world in all its complexity and diversity, understanding the interactions between natural phenomena and human activity and the relations between sustainability and language extinction" (p. 281). Hancock (2012) investigated how students and teachers respond to the LL in Edinburgh. The research allowed identifying students' perceptions of linguistic and cultural diversity and revealed that it can be characterised as avoidance, acceptance and awareness. The author concluded that the use of LL as a pedagogical tool in education contributes to students and teachers' awareness of multilingual settings, heightening their awareness of linguistic diversity in the communities.

In a study involving primary school teachers and children, Clemente (2015) concluded that the exploration of the public space through its LL contributes to the deconstruction of stereotypes and previous ideas about the Other and about linguistic and cultural diversity. The author concludes that LL are "recursos educativos com valor para uma educação para a diversidade linguística e cultural, para a alteridade e para a cidadania" because they allow "despertar a curiosidade e interesse dos alunos em relação a outras línguas e culturas, contribuindo também para incentivar a aprendizagem de línguas" (p. 335).



These studies show that an educational exploration of LL can be easily related to the assumptions of intercultural and plurilingual education, which, among other aspects, intend to raise linguistic and cultural diversity awareness (Candelier, 2004).

## Methodology

### Research objectives and data collection

Taking into account the issues summarised above, this study aimed to:

- identify the foreign languages present in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro (Portugal) and the LL signs in which they appear;
- propose an interdisciplinary set of sequential pedagogical activities, aimed at secondary education, capitalising on the LL in the Avenida to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity.

To address the first objective, an exploratory case study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Yin, 2003) was undertaken and photographic data was captured in the Avenida in November 2018. As Clemente et al. (2013) point out, some crucial questions have to be answered before starting a linguistic landscape study. Those questions are presented below and answered in relation to this study:

*Where is the data collection going to take place?*

Data collection took place in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro (Portugal). According to the census of 2018 (PORDATA, 2018), the demographic context of Aveiro presents a total number of 77.773 inhabitants. The immigrant population in 2018 was of 4.104 inhabitants. The immigrants in Aveiro came from: Brazil (1.425); undifferentiated European countries (524); Ukraine (368); China (274); undifferentiated American countries (241); undifferentiated Asian countries (191); Angola (182); Spain (140); Guinea-Bissau (116); São Tomé and Príncipe (108); Cape Verde (104); undifferentiated African countries (99); France (85); Mozambique (52); United Kingdom (45); Romania (41); Moldavia (30); India (59); Nepal (15). Considering its main economic areas, Aveiro is an important commercial area due to the production of salt, its water channels and ceramic tiles. Moreover, one of the main sources of economic profit of the region is tourism (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2018). The Avenida Lourenço Peixinho is the central historic avenue of Aveiro, with economic, touristic and social importance. Its proximity to the water channels, the train station and the bus terminal grants it a privileged location, which justifies the presence of many banks, shops and hotels.

*Which LL objects are going to be photographed and which are not?*

Photographs were captured of foreign languages that were visible on public and commercial building names (shops, banks, bakeries, hotels, supermarkets, restaurants), advertising signs, and





informative signs, when walking along the Avenida (signs that are only visible when entering buildings were not considered). The focus was, then, on objects with languages apart from Portuguese.

*What is going to be 'read' in the LL?*

The analysis of LL in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho concentrated on verbal written text. Some questions were formulated in order to guide the data collection: which are the foreign languages present on building names, advertising signs and informative signs along the Avenida? This characterisation of the LL of the Avenida is not meant to "indicate the linguistic composition of the city as a whole, but simply an illustration of the range of linguistic diversity" (Huebner, 2006, p. 50).

*Who is going to produce meanings about a specific LL?*

At a first moment, the researchers conducting this study are the ones to produce meanings of the linguistic landscape. The interdisciplinary set of activities proposed will provide teachers and students from secondary education in Portugal the opportunity to also produce meanings.

## Data analysis

Defining the unit of analysis in linguistic landscaping is one of the most complex stages of LL studies (Clemente et al., 2013; Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006). In this study, and following Backhaus (2006), the unit of analysis is "any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame" (p. 55). Considering this, the corpus is constituted of 117 units of analysis. These units of analysis appeared within diverse LL signs. In the sequence of the study of Jerusalem LL, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) propose a taxonomy of LL signs: street signs; advertising signs; warning notices and prohibitions; building names; informative signs; commemorative plaques; objects (postbox, police call box); and graffiti.

Photographs were subject to a deductive content analysis (Krippendorf, 2013), based on knowledge from previous studies by other researchers. Considering the objectives of this study and the taxonomy of LL signs proposed by Spolsky and Cooper (1991), two categories of analysis were created:

- Identified foreign languages - identification of visible and perceived linguistic diversity in the LL signs of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho;
- LL signs with foreign languages - presence of foreign languages in: - building names (shops; banks; bakeries; hotels; supermarkets; restaurants); - informative signs (signposts related to the availability services such as online shopping, MasterCard and Wi-Fi; smoking permission/prohibition signs; opening and closing hours signs; and signposts related to monuments and historic places of the responsibility of the City Hall); - advertising signs (for clothing; beauty products; food products; car rental; jewellery products; financial products).



## Results – The LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in Aveiro (Portugal)

In this section, the findings concerning the description of the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho are presented. Findings are structured according to the main categories of analysis: *identified foreign languages* and *LL signs with foreign languages*.

### Identified foreign languages

The foreign languages displayed in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in November 2018 were seven, as shown in the following table.

**Table 1. Languages displayed in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho, November 2018**

Languages	References
English	89
French	18
Italian	5
Chinese	3
Spanish	2
German	1
Dutch	1

English clearly has a major presence in the Avenida, with 89 references. The presence of all the other six languages considered altogether is much lower: French - 18 references; Italian - 5 references; Chinese - 3 references; Spanish - two references; German and Dutch - one reference each. Considering that the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho is the most important avenue in Aveiro and bearing in mind the numbers and variety of backgrounds of the immigrant population in the city (see above), the conclusion is that the diversity of languages is low. This is perceived, for instance, in the scarce presence of Chinese and the absence of other immigrant languages such as Ukrainian, Romanian and Hindi. The hegemony of English is not unexpected. The studies of Clemente et al. (2013) and Clemente (2015) had already shown this hegemony in diverse streets of Aveiro. Undoubtedly, this prevailing presence, which shapes LL, is related to the current role of English as a “lingua franca” due to globalisation, and socio-economic and political factors such as the rise of the United States of America as the world’s dominant economic and political power, especially after the two World Wars (Jenkins, Baker & Dewey, 2017; Phillipson, 2017).

### LL signs with foreign languages

Regarding the presence of foreign languages in LL signs, signs concerning building names are those with more diversity in terms of foreign languages used: 27 signs in English, 3 in





French, 2 in Italian, 1 in Dutch, 1 in German and 1 in Chinese. Informative signs are the most numerous using foreign languages, even though the diversity of languages is lower, with only five foreign languages represented: 43 in English, 12 in French, 2 in Chinese, 2 in Spanish and 1 in Italian. As far as advertising signs are concerned, the diversity of languages is the lowest: 19 signs in English, 3 in French and 2 in Italian. Table 2 systematises these findings:

**Table 2. Signs displaying foreign languages in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho, November 2018**

LL signs	Languages
Building names	English (27); French (3); Italian (2); Dutch (1); German (1); Chinese (1)
Informative signs	English (43); French (12); Chinese (2); Spanish (2); Italian (1)
Advertising signs	English (19); French (3); Italian (2)

A more refined analysis crossing the languages displayed and the type of LL signs allows identifying the specific contexts in which foreign languages are used. Table 3 criss-crosses the foreign languages displayed with the types of buildings:

**Table 3: Building names signs displaying foreign language**

	English	French	Italian	Spanish	Dutch	German	Chinese
Shops	19	3	1	--	1	--	1
Banks	3	--	--	--	--	1	--
Bakeries	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hotels	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Supermarkets	--	--	1	--	--	--	--
Restaurants	1	--	--	--	--	--	--

With regard to *building names*, the table above allows concluding that English prevails in shops' names (e.g. Lefties, Peekaboo, Knot), most of them being transnational companies of diverse nationalities of origin. French appears in the names of three shops (Antoine, C'est Chouette, Blanc et Noir). Three banks also have English names (Best Bank, Big, Active Bank), as well as three hotels that combine English and Portuguese (Dona Dores Guesthouse, Aveiro Train Studios, Soldouro Guesthouse). In this last case of hotels, the conjugation of English and Portuguese is related to what Friedrich calls "Englishization of business" (2002, p. 22), within which English naming is a resource to attract tourists, mainly in urban areas.

As far as the Chinese language is concerned, none of the shops from Chinese owners in the avenue had its name in Chinese characters: one had its name in English and only one shop had its name in Chinese, but written in Latin alphabet (see photograph 1):



Photograph 1: Chinese shop with Chinese name in Latin Alphabet

Nevertheless, in all these shops there are typographic features and colours that symbolically represent Chinese language and culture, as can be perceived in photograph 2:



Photograph 2: Chinese shop with typographic features and colours related to Chinese language and culture

Concerning informative signs, Table 4 (below) shows that the majority of the signs in English are private signs on store fronts related to services offered by shops, such as the possibility of shopping or paying with a credit card online shop and the possibility of using credit cards.

Table 4: Informative signs displaying foreign languages

	English	French	Chinese	Spanish	Italian
Signposts on store fronts related to financial services	23	1	1	2	1
Smoking permission/prohibition signs	9	9	--	--	--
Opening hours signs	4	2	1	--	--



Availability of Wi-Fi signs	6	--	--	--	--
Signposts related to monuments and historic places	1	--	--	--	--

Regarding the other private signs – smoking permission/prohibition, opening/closing hours and Wi-Fi availability – English also prevails over all the other foreign languages identified. It is noteworthy that concerning public signs, the researchers could only find one sign in English related to monuments and historic places (see photograph 3).



Photograph 3: Sign related to historic places translated into English

With respect to advertising signs, Table 5 systematizes the crisscrossing analysis between the foreign languages and the type of products advertised.

Table 5: Advertising signs displaying foreign languages

	English	French	Italian
Clothing	6	--	1
Beauty products	4	--	--
Financial products	4	2	--
Food products	2	--	1
Car rental	2	1	--
Jewelry	1	--	--



Most advertising signs are in English and are related to clothing, beauty products and financial products, as illustrated in the following photographs:



Photograph 4: Example of advertising sign in English related to clothing and beauty products



Photograph 5: Example of advertisement sign in English related to financial products

This result is not surprising since English is the most widely used language in advertising in non-English speaking countries (Gerritsen, Nickerson, van Hooft, van Meurs, Nederstigt,



Starren & Crijins, 2007), representing a connection to the world and the global community. As highlighted by Friedrich (2002), English has a privileged position in global advertising not only because it has become the language of globalisation, which makes individuals relate it to modernity, progress and Western culture, but also because it comprises some linguistic properties that make it attractive, such as the word size.

The analysis allows concluding that, apart from the obvious privileged status of Portuguese (the official language of the state, law, education, and official public information), English is the most foreign language in the linguistic landscape of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho in building names signs, informative signs and advertising signs. As underlined previously, due to its global use, English is considered by individuals as a more attractive language for tourism, hence for economic growth. The presence of other foreign languages is very reduced, and some languages spoken by immigrants living in Aveiro are totally absent.

According to the Instituto Nacional de Estatística (2018), over the last five years Aveiro has been registering a growth of almost 40% in tourism, which is one of the city's main sources of economic profit. The influx of foreign tourists has reached almost 20%, and the inhabitants of Aveiro acknowledge the creation of new business and jobs related to this increase. The statistical data from the Turismo Centro de Portugal (2017, <https://turismodocentro.pt/institucional/>) shows that Spanish tourists are the most numerous, which is due to geographical proximity, but the Spanish language is practically absent from the Avenida.

Hence, apart from international globalised brands (such as MoneyGram, Lycamobile) and international institutions (such as Best Bank, Big), the use of English in LL signs show the globalised character of the language. The presence, although scarce, of other foreign languages, such as French, Italian, Dutch and Chinese, may show that shop owners want to give their shop a name whose language represents their cultures or the products that can be found in the shop. To find out more about this assumption, more information about the shop owners and products would be needed.

## **Educational exploration of the LL in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho**

Although the findings show that the diversity of languages in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho is low and that some important immigrant languages are little represented or absent, the researchers believe this exploratory description can be capitalised to increase awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity, by proposing an interdisciplinary set of sequential pedagogical activities, aimed at secondary education. Thus, this proposal takes LL as a pedagogical context and a didactic resource as explained in the theoretical framework.

The target audience of this proposal are secondary school students (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and teachers of English, Spanish, History and Geography. The curricula analysis of these school subjects (<https://www.dge.mec.pt/lingua-estrangeira-i-ii-ou-iii-formacao-geral>) allowed understanding that all of them comprise specific learning objectives that could be developed by the educational exploration of the Avenida's LL:



- English: to develop sociocultural and sociolinguistic knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow interacting with otherness, showing openness and respect towards languages and cultures;
- Spanish: to develop positive attitudes towards foreign languages and sociocultural universes within an intercultural perspective;
- History: to develop skills of problematization and participation in group activities; to develop respect for minorities; to be able to apply analysis instruments and formulate explicative hypothesis;
- Geography: to read maps; to identify fundamental elements in a landscape; to relate demography with social and cultural questions.

The concept of learning by doing (Chern & Dooley, 2014) is a cornerstone of this proposal. Students would be asked to contact with real manifestations of languages in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho and to reflect on the presence/absence of languages in the LL. By leading them to read the world, the main educational purpose of the activities and strategies is to increase their awareness concerning linguistic and cultural diversity.

The interdisciplinary proposal comprises 5 activities, distributed as shown below:

**Table 6. Activities proposed**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Estimated time per activity</b>
Activity 1- Learning about linguistic landscapes	English	90 minutes
Activity 2 - Exploring the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho	Geography	120 minutes
Activity 3 - Observing linguistic landscapes to understand the history of Aveiro	History	120 minutes
Activity 4 - Reflecting on LL: a doorway to further questioning	Spanish	90 minutes
Activity 5 - Planting the seeds of linguistic and cultural diversity awareness in the school community	English, Geography, History and Spanish	180 minutes

### *Activity 1 - Learning about linguistic landscapes*

The first activity, in English lesson, aims at providing students with the possibility of getting acquainted with the concept of “linguistic landscape”, making them aware that LL are





composed of different languages (and family languages) and cultures. Moreover, with this activity, students are expected to reflect on presence and absence of languages in certain contexts and to on the importance of languages and linguistic diversity in LL.

This activity consists in an initial contact with the LL that students will themselves explore afterwards. This first contact would be provided through the observation and analysis of some photographs of the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho. Students, in groups, would be challenged to look at written linguistic manifestations, reflect upon the contexts of their appearance and identify relations between the space, the languages and the people and cultures inhabiting it. After this analysis, each group would present and discuss their conclusions with the class using English language to communicate. After this, students would be asked to elaborate an observation grid comprised of what they considered would be important to observe in the Avenida (e.g. What languages are present? In which contexts do languages appear? In which contexts would it be useful for them to appear? Which cultural manifestations do we see? ...).

### *Activity 2 - Exploring the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho*

With the second activity, in Geography lesson, students are expected to develop orientation and map reading skills, observe and describe the LL of the Avenida (languages present and contexts of their appearance) and relate the described LL with demographic issues.

The activity consists of in exploring the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho with the support of the observation grid elaborated in the previous activity and with cameras to take pictures of linguistic and cultural manifestations. Once again in groups, students would be asked to read maps and interpret geographic coordinates as a way to arrive to the specific parts of the Avenida previously selected by all the teachers involved in the activities. As soon as they arrived to the selected parts of the Avenida, they should take photographs of the linguistic and cultural diversity evidences and answer the questions on the grid.

### *Activity 3 - Observing linguistic landscapes to understand the history of Aveiro*

The third activity, in History lesson, is planned as a continuation of the second activity, since each group would continue exploring a part of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho. Students are expected to recognize elements of national and international history in the Avenida, identify historical backgrounds that can explain their presence and relate history and culture to linguistic manifestations.

In this activity, the History teacher would hand out to each group images of monuments and historical buildings in the Avenida (such as the monument to the soldiers of WW2, the central office of the Communist Party, Casa Paris, the Bakery Guiné-Bissau, Arte Nova architectural style buildings). The students should find these buildings, take photographs of them, look for linguistic manifestations within those buildings and identify languages connected to them in informative and advertising signs. Each group should write a bilingual report on this activity (using English and Spanish).



## *Activity 4 - Reflecting on LL: a doorway to further questioning*

The main objective of the fourth activity, in Spanish lesson, is for students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students should also be able to communicate and debate orally in Spanish concerning the topic they investigated.

Within this activity, the observation grid filled in the second activity and the report written in the third activity would be discussed as a way to compare the different groups' experiences in the Avenida. Students would interact, sharing their discoveries and their remaining questions related to the LL of the Avenida and its relationship with cultural, historical and demographic aspects. The teacher would guide this interaction, leading students to discuss and problematise the absence of some languages, asking for "language-friendly" (cultural, social, political, ...) solutions in order to enrich the LL of the Avenida within an intercultural perspective.

## *Activity 5 - Planting the seeds of linguistic and cultural diversity awareness in the school community*

The fifth activity, involving all subjects and teachers engaged in the previous activities, aims at sharing the work and the conclusions drawn by students concerning LL and linguistic and cultural diversity with the school community. This activity contributes to develop students' communicative and argumentative competences, autonomy, creativity, collaborative skills, among others.

Hence, students would share their conclusions with the school community (students, teachers, parents, staff, City Hall representatives) by organising a photo exhibition at school, showing the LL of the Avenida. This exhibition would be the kick-off to a round-table discussion involving students (from different nationalities), teachers, city council representatives, and shop owners, within which several aspects could be discussed: the role of cities as spaces of superdiversity in education; the meanings and outcomes of languages presence/absence in urban landscape; the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in LL; the potentialities of LL educational exploration (...).

These activities acknowledge the importance of including voices from different actors as essential for the interpretation and discussion of LL (Gorter, 2013). Moreover, by giving visibility to students' work, the activities can contribute to increase school community's awareness towards linguistic and cultural diversity at school, in the city and in the world.

## **Concluding remarks**

The first aim of this study was to identify the foreign languages present in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho (Aveiro, Portugal). For this matter, an exploratory case study was conducted based on photographic data, which was subject to content analysis. Results show that English prevails in the Avenida's LL and that other foreign languages are barely present, such as Chinese, Spanish and French. Moreover, some important immigrant languages such as Ukrainian and Romanian are totally absent.

This exploratory study reiterated the researchers' assumption that cities' LL are public arenas where the choice of languages reflects social, economic and political issues and dynamics,



being “mechanisms of language policy that can perpetuate ideologies and the status of certain languages and not others” (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017, p. 239). In this sense, through the display of brand names, information and advertisements in certain languages, shops and companies in the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho contribute to the construction of the LL, acting as micro-level actors of language policy and planning in the city (Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008), and reinforcing the economic importance of some languages.

Acknowledging the education potential of LL in raising linguistic and cultural diversity awareness (Gorter, 2013), the second aim of the study was to propose an interdisciplinary set of activities for the exploration of the LL in the Avenida, aimed at secondary education, namely the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Students would be asked to observe the reality, to analyse it, and to reflect on it, problematising and hypothesising about the presence and the absence of certain languages. This proposal, which includes English, Spanish, History and Geography subjects, has not yet been implemented at the time of writing this paper. The researchers intend to further underpin and develop this pedagogical proposal and to implement (and assess) it in an educational context in Aveiro. Although this proposal capitalises on the features provided exclusively by the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho, the researchers believe that the activities proposed are broad enough to be adapted to other educational contexts, possibly using the LL of other cities.

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations, which are mainly related to the researchers' limited experience in conducting LL studies, which eventually had an impact on methodological issues. The first limitation concerns the exclusion of some elements in the LL of the Avenida Lourenço Peixinho due to the research objectives initially outlined and to the definition of the unit of analysis, which directed the researchers' attention to certain manifestations of LL to the detriment of others (such as moving signs, printed leaflets, touristic guides, restaurant menus, ...). The inclusion of other LL manifestations could have led to different findings. This confers the study a substantial level of arbitrariness and subjectivity which is, however, acknowledged in LL research (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Hence, the findings concerning the Avenida's LL are a mirror of the researchers' signage reading, which was influenced by inclusion/exclusion criteria. The second limitation concerns the fact that this study focused on a specific context of the city of Aveiro, providing a partial view of the languages and cultures present in the city. Even so, and considering that this was an exploratory study, it contributed to the researchers' knowledge and skills to develop further broader studies.

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