

The LoCALL App: learning to “read” the world while playing with linguistic landscapes

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Linguistic Landscapes (LL) are visible signs of multilingualism that pervade our everyday lives. They include public and commercial shop signs, street and place names, and advertising billboards, but also images, colors, sounds and smells in the physical surroundings. Research conducted in the school context shows that effectively exploring LL can contribute to language learning, foster multimodal learning experiences and text-to-world connections, and help students (and teachers) develop critical thinking, while engaging in meaningful conversations about their own identities. Drawing on these principles, in 2019, a group of researchers from five European universities started the LoCALL project¹ to collaboratively create pedagogical resources that use LL to bridge in and out-of school learning. One of the outputs of the project, conceived by the University of Aveiro team with the support of the multimedia and design company Criamagin, is the LoCALL App, an educational resource that invites students, teachers and the community to “read” and explore LL, while playing a multiple-choice question game. This resource includes:

- a web platform that allows users to create routes with several points of interest associated with LL, build questions about these points of interest, as well as to add answer options and feedback.
 - an App that runs on a mobile device where users can play the games created for a given route.
- The App is currently being tested by students and teachers in the project’s partner cities and is already available on Google Play and Apple Store.

[1] LoCALL – “Local Linguistic Landscapes for Global Language Education in the School Context” is a three-year Erasmus+ project (reference 2019-1-DE03-KA201-060024) between five universities: the University of Hamburg in Germany (coordinator), the Autonomous University of Barcelona in Spain, the University of Aveiro in Portugal, the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, and the University of Strasbourg in France.

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FIGURE 1

The “I love Aveiro” stairway: an example of the city’s linguistic landscape.

FIGURE 2

Launch screen of the LoCALL App. To download the App to a mobile phone, please use the following address: <http://localproject.web.ua.pt/LoCALL.apk>

