

ELIA

Languages through lenses

Multilingual Europe

Summary

'How can I put it?' is an experimental performance, which explores different ways of European interaction. It will be a three-minute film about how twelve characters only speaking their own language have to communicate and work together to achieve a final outcome.

Set in a simplistic youthful learning environment they have to work out what to do. Inside the room are six cassette players with double-headed jacks and twelve sets of headphones. Each cassette player has two different flags on its front so that the characters have to work out that they need to pair up. To determine who pairs up with whom, they have to use the cassette player with the flag of their country on.

Split into six pairs they now have to work on a one to one basis and listen to the same piece of audio to complete the exercise. Recorded on each player will be a set of separate instructions for both characters. Each sentence split so that half the message is in one language and half is in the other. Resulting with the two characters listening, only able to understand half the message each.

This exercise will encourage the characters to listen closely to each other's languages, make sense of their own and then try to interpret the other half through communication and team work. The instructions are all about getting the characters to describe the basics of each others languages, making them describe the objects around them, the form of shapes, different types of colour and numbers. To help them they will have the use of a chalkboard to visually communicate thoughts through illustration along with a simple poster about primary colours.

Each character wearing all blue will be navigated around the room, asked to pick up a numbered yellow star of a particular size and finish in a set position facing a precise direction. From the perspective of the camera the final shot will be of twelve characters forming the circle of stars seen on the European Union flag, a symbol of unite and perfection.

The finished piece will express the qualities of European interaction capturing each characters hand movements, body language and communication techniques. It will demonstrate that learning directly from each other can help the learning process of any language.

Hopefully the film can show that with strong communication skills, Europeans of all different languages can still communicate and interact together to create a perfect arrangement of stars.

Script

Multilingual Europe

Title

How can I put it?

Duration

3 Minutes

Location

Filmed in the life drawing room at Loughborough University.

Cast

Twelve characters from twelve different European countries. Mixed sex. Each character representing a separate star in the EU flag.

Set

- Six cassette players with double headphone jacks,
- Twelve pairs of headphones,
- Chalkboard,
- Chalk and eraser
- Low square table with four different coloured stools,
- Low circular table with three different coloured chairs,
- Coloured circular rug,
- Twelve numbered plastic yellow stars graduating in size,
- Wall clock,
- Poster - Primary colours,
- Poster - Simplified map of Europe,
- Twelve blue t-shirts and trousers worn by the cast.

Simplistic set that consists of brightly coloured furnishings symbolising a young learning environment. The set will be enclosed with white walls and a white floor. The simplicity of the set design is to put all the focus on how the characters communicate with each other. The twelve characters will be asked to enter the set and closed in.

Film

European interaction and communications experiment

It will be clear that there is an abundance of European language being spoken with the room filling with the sounds of different European accents. To capture all the conversations, I will attach a clip on microphone to each person and place microphones around the set.

On the circular table will be six cassette players, each one with a double headphone jack. On the front of the player will be two different flags. These flags will represent the origin of a different person in the room and on the square table will be twelve sets of headphones.

The characters will have to work out they need to pair up, with there being twice as many headphones as cassette players. To determine who pairs up with whom, they will need to interact with each other and look for the cassette player with the flag of their origin.

The opening shot will encapsulate all twelve characters introducing themselves trying to communicate with one another. To dictate us through the film and introduce the characters a voiceover will play over the footage in the tone of a 'learning languages' audiotape. The chatting of the characters will be muffled out slightly, as if headphones have just been put on. You will hear the sound of a button being pressed, (play) then a short pause followed by the soothing sound of a man's voice dictating to you "Today we will learn how to work together. (Pause) Here we have twelve different people who only speak their own language, (pause) Spanish, (footage cuts to the Spanish character with his/her voice level increased, until the next language is mentioned. This repeats for all the characters) English, Swedish, Czech, Portuguese, Danish, Italian, French, Romanian, German, Finish and Dutch", finishing with the sound of a button being pressed, (stop).

"Together they have to work out what to do with them selves by listening to these with these" (shot of cassette players followed by shot of headphones), "Now, because there are twice the amount of these (shot of headphones), they will have to share these (shot of cassette players)", with the use of a double headed jack in each cassette player.

"Each one of these (shot of cassette players) will dictate a set of instructions for each individual, however, (pause) the instructions are split (pause) into two languages. Working together they have to work out what it is they have to achieve".

After deliberation we will have twelve characters split up into six pairs. The visual connection received from two characters of different origin linked together by headphone wires and sharing a cassette player should be quite strong. It immediately shows us that they will be listening to the same piece of audio and will need to bond in order to complete the exercise.

Recorded on each player will be a set of instructions. Each sentence split so that half the message is in one language and half is in the other. Meaning the

two characters listening will only understand half the message. Working together they will need to communicate with each other to the best of their ability and try and figure out what to do.

Example 1: The two people listening to one cassette player are Italian and Danish. The first instruction is, "If you are Italian / collect star number 12". This would be split into Italian / Danish. So the pair would have to interact and work out what to do. This exercise encourages the characters to listen closely to each others languages, make sense of they're own, then try to interpret the other half through communication and team work. The instructions are all about getting the characters to describe the basics each others language. Describing the objects around them, the form of certain shapes, types of colour and numbers through interpretation.

Example 2: "Then sit on the square table / face the wall clock" This sentence is about shapes, objects and direction with it testing the communication skills of the pair. It's a more descriptive sentence and encourages interpretation through body language and movement. Again, it would be split into two languages.

Example 3: "Explain to your partner that he/she has to pick up a yellow stool". This would be dictated in just the one language, e.g. French. This way one person would understand the whole sentence and the other would understand nothing. In this case the one who can understand the message has to explain to his/her partner what to do. The French character will have to explain what action to take, what object to pick up and the colour of it.

To help the characters they will have the use of the chalkboard to visually communicate through illustration along with a simple poster about primary colours. I want to capture the different ways of human interaction and record body language, hand movements and various expressions.

All characters will be navigated around the room with the use of the cassette player, ending in a finished position either standing up or sitting down on different objects facing the wall clock, with the chalkboard behind them. Each character will wear blue t-shirts along with blue trousers and will be asked to pick up a numbered yellow star from one to twelve of a specific size. Once in their final position they will be asked to hold out the star in front of them, so that the yellow contrasts well with the blue for the final shot.

From the perspective of the wall clock the twelve characters will form the circle of stars seen on the EU flag, a symbol of unite and perfection. To get the desired circular shape of the stars, each characters finished position will have to be precisely positioned at different heights and depths from the final stationary position of the camera in front of the wall clock. Each star is a different size, but once in the final arrangement, and in perspective they will appear to be the same size. The largest star will be at the back of the group with the character standing on a chair, and the smallest star at the front of the arrangement with the character sitting down on the circular rug. This perspective shows how some countries in Europe are bigger than others but

together we unite equally. The finished choreographed arrangement with the white set, brightly coloured primary school props, twelve different nationalities all wearing blue and holding out yellow stars will send off quite a powerful message.

The film is an interactive experimental performance, which will explore ways of European interaction. The finished piece will express the qualities that Europe has to offer by showing off its many languages. Learning a new language can be difficult, but when you are thrown into a situation like this you have to test your communication skills. Learning a language directly 'straight from the horse's mouth' to put it bluntly, will help the characters pick up and learn faster, a message I want to express to the audience.

I want to capture the characters learning off of each other and I'm intrigued to see how the pairs will break down the instructions and piece them back to explain what to do.

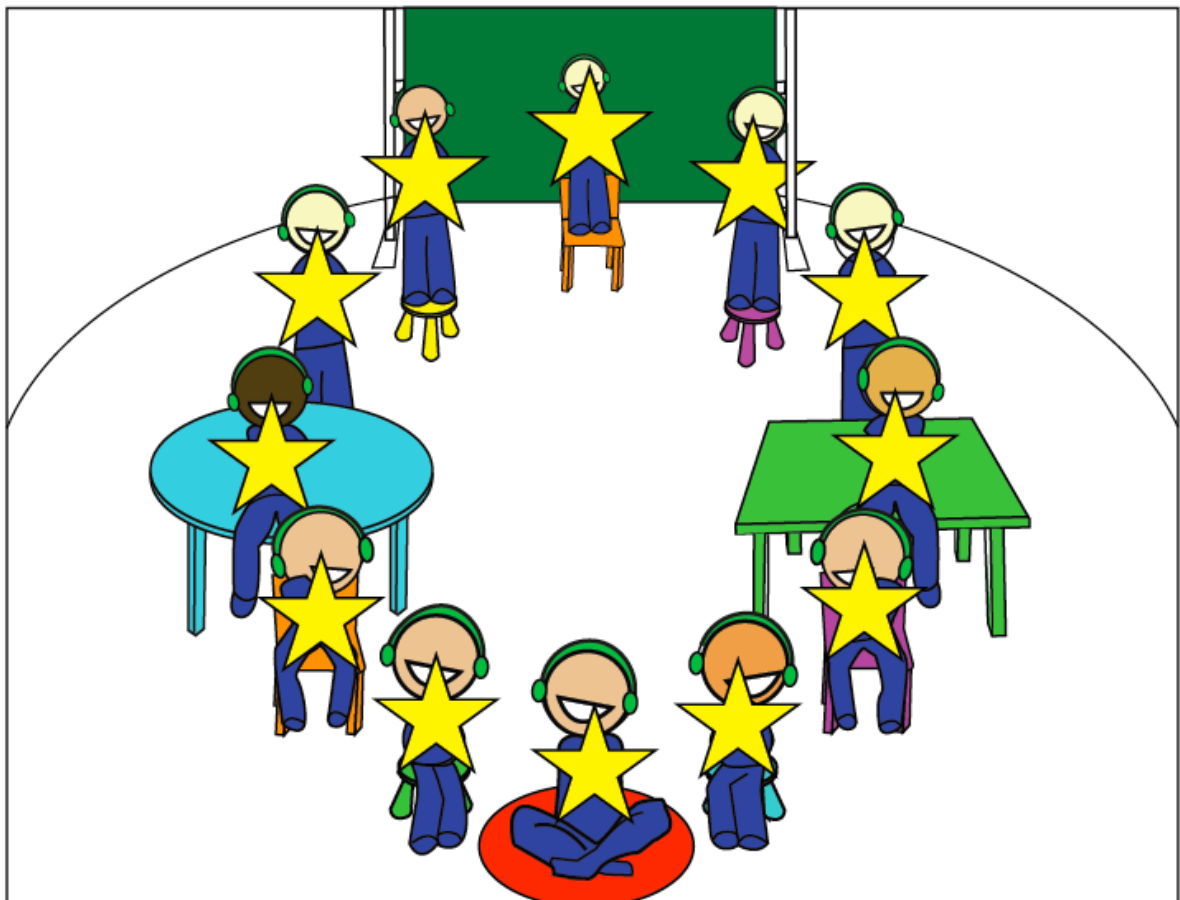
To record the twelve different instructions, I would like to actually go out to all twelve countries and literally record the instructions myself 'straight from the horse's mouth'. I would prefer to put the time and effort in rather than spend a heap load of money on hiring twelve separate voiceovers in the UK. This would give me a incite into different European cultural interactions and would allow me to choose the perfect voices and accents for the film. This experience would give me a chance to listen and learn to the languages that will be spoken by the twelve characters and seeing I don't speak many languages myself, experience similar conditions to what the characters in the film will have to go through on set.

Hopefully I can promote the idea that even though there are numerous European languages, it still isn't that hard to communicate with one another even though we come from different cultural backgrounds. Hopefully my film can prove that with strong communication skills we can still co-ordinate and work together to create something of perfection, with the creation of the EU flag.

To film the project I want a consistent theme surrounding the circular form of the stars on the EU flag. Therefore I want to circulate the characters using smooth and steady shots with cameras attached to a circular track. The circle will represent solidarity and harmony between the people of Europe. As the film goes on you should be able to see a growth in confidence between each pair as they build up a better understanding of each other, finishing with a sense of achievement and a confident smile. I've decided to use three evenly spaced cameras with the use of curved track. Each camera will have the option of shooting from low angles or high vantage points. This will enable me to capture the interaction from a variety of angles with the track providing a smooth and steady flow for the cameras to move around.

The final shot will be of the twelve characters either standing up or sitting down on different objects holding out a yellow star, with all cameras smoothly slowing until stationary. The last shot will be the first time you see the full arrangement in perspective, with the camera stopping until directly in front of

the twelve characters. The message expressed to the audience will be that together Europeans of all different languages can still communicate and interact to create this perfect arrangement of stars.



Above: The final shot with all twelve characters holding their different sized stars in perspective.