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ICT, BRANDING AND ADVERTISING IN AIRLINES VIDEOS

The article highlights new approaches to safety videos demonstrated by leading airlines to inform passengers about their behavior on board, to promote their brands and services aboard. Major communication strategies in safety videos which are the components of branding, marketing and advertising, include multiculturalism, technological approach, promotion of cultural heritage, infotainment.

Key words: *branding, infotainment, multiculturalism, safety video, visualization.*

IT, which gradually evolved into ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), changed communication fundamentally. ICT entailed shift of significant communication amount to virtual domain as Internet, social networking became very popular not only within interpersonal communication but in business, commerce, politics, show business as well. Many brands, companies, world-known people (politicians and celebrities) have their sites and accounts in social nets. ICT made virtual communication more sophisticated and diverse, multimodal and creolized, more visual and entertaining. ICT pushed both virtual and conventional communication in the direction of *visualization* and *infotainment*.

Creolization, visualization, infotainment, branding in modern communication have become objects of research in linguistics during the last decade [1-10].

ICT visualization potential demanded creation of visual effects – icons, favicons, other signs which can serve as symbols, eye-catchers and provide easy visibility and therefore recognizability of virtual agents. Signs with symbolic elements serve as anchors in modern communication and linguistic landscape. Therefore, creation of such symbols has become a turning point for branding as a communication strategy.

Many years ago airlines started marking their airplanes with particular symbolic elements associated with national symbols, values, animals, plants. Airplanes became “flying” symbols of the countries. That was a noticeable fact of branding implementation. Following the IT proliferation, airlines initiated further branding in line with the ICT potential and commissioned favicons for their sites with appropriate associations [7].

Internet, YouTube, in particular, gave more opportunities for promotion, advertising, sharing experience and entertaining. YouTube has become a channel and storage pool for numerous airlines videos, safety briefing including.

Technological improvements in airplanes changed the approach to safety instructions aboard. Traditionally, airhostesses demonstrated safety rules before the flight. It has become a routine for both, the cabin crew and passengers. Nowadays the best airlines shifted to a more technological and entertaining variant – safety video. Every passenger or a group of them have the screens in front of them and watch a safety briefing. The safety video is shot in the studio where the airplane interior is imitated. It has already become a cinema genre

which often combines cinema, 3D design, animation and other effects. In YouTube one can watch the video where producers of the safety video for *American airlines* are interviewed [13-14]. They admitted it was a challenge and an absolutely new experience. Safety video as a genre is the present-day vogue which is as known is not about clothes, accessories and footwear only. It is about technologies, communication, marketing as well.

Safety videos include much more than pre-flight instructions, they are components of advertising and entertaining. Noteworthy, safety videos tend to convey national culture, traditions, symbols, images etc. in present-day globalized world. It is a global strategy of branding the airlines and the country it belongs to.

In advertising discourse the cabin crew are the embodiment of the airline, of its corporate culture. In pre-Internet era, the epoch of printed ads, an airhostess was always chosen for a poster. That was the universal advertising strategy. Now airlines logo and beautiful flight attendants of stereotyped national appearance very often go together in advertising and marketing strategies.

Well-known designers work on the uniform of the cabin crew which is a component of airlines branding. For instance, the uniform for *Singapore Airlines* cabin crew was designed in the 1960s in France on the basis of traditional Malay flower pattern for fabric and traditional Malay female clothes design. The uniform of *Singapore Airlines* cabin crew has become internationally recognized symbol of the airlines and of Singapore.

In all safety videos flight attendants welcome passengers aboard. There is an opportunity to select the most beautiful, the most handsome, the most charismatic and photogenic personnel for the video. In the *American airlines* safety video the flight attendant said it was great honor for her to become the image of all American airlines and she was happy that she had been selected for the pre-flight video.

Different airlines select different strategies to convey safety procedures and, simultaneously, promote their companies.

- **Multiculturalism** can be viewed as one of the strategies.

American airlines, mentioned above, have lots of faces in the video – cabin crew and airport personnel give instructions in turn, one by one. The mosaics of faces demonstrate that American society is multiracial and multicultural. The *Emirates* airlines employ members of the crew from different countries to ensure the global positioning of the company and multiculturalism standard. In *Lufthansa* video the cabin crew welcome passengers near the plane in different languages spoken worldwide. In oriental languages passengers are being invited aboard by the native speakers who are also members of the cabin crew. They are hired to provide comfort and equality for all passengers, from all corners of the world, and to confirm the adherence of *Lufthansa* to multiculturalism and multilingualism standards [20].

- **Technocratic approach** is another strategy demonstrated by *Lufthansa*. *Lufthansa* after the invitation of the cabin crew shifts to computerized visualization, 3D images.

Singapore airlines and *Thai airlines* combine technological innovations with comfort for all categories of passengers providing multisemiotic translation: pre-flight instructions are translated into sign language.

- **Promotion of cultural heritage** is the strategy used by many companies. Blue and white Delft ceramics is one of the symbols of the Netherlands together with tulips,

bikes, cheese, diamonds, wind mills. *KLM* localized their safety video at Delft pottery which is one of the two china and ceramics factories out of hundreds left in the Netherlands in the 21st century. *KLM* used 1000 blue and white tiles – traditional craft of Holland- to paint safety instructions. The flight attendant is also stereotypically Dutch - blond and blue-eyed [19].

Thai airlines demonstrate orchids as a national symbol and a logo of the company – Royal Orchid Service.

Air France shot a feminine video, as only 6 ladies participated in the shooting (one flight attendant in the latest *Air France* uniform and five female passengers in harmoniously combined stylish suits who demonstrate synchronized movements and gestures) [22]. Not accidentally the video is gender-marked as femininity is the concept associated with France together with other 4 F's – Food, Fashion, Fragrance and Frivolity. Femininity is emphasized by pink gadgets with the title *France is in the Air*. Beautiful flight attendant speaks English with audible French accent which is a marker of Frenchness. She utters very French-like phrases: “Fasten your seatbelt. It will elegantly emphasize your waistline.” This video is shot in a very French manner, French lifestyle and therefore it is not just a safety video, it is promotion of *Air France*, French lifestyle brand and France. It is an invitation to France in the Air. That Frenchness has become a component of infotainment which is a new strategy of airlines videos.

- **Infotainment** is the most attractive and curious strategy. Animals or birds as passengers bring humor to the video. Their anthropomorphic behavior immediately attracts attention. These zoo-passengers are true travellers of the 21st century – they are familiar with all modern gadgets and devices (headsets, phones, vacuum-cleaners etc). In *American airlines* a cat cleans the plane with the vacuum cleaner making anyone smile.

Air New Zealand created the safety video with the animated character – goose speaking NewZild [16]. The goose is curious, intelligent, charismatic, funny, enjoying every minute of the flight (lots of room for the passenger, vegetarian menu, opportunity to have a comfortable sleep). Another safety video for this airlines is *Men in Black*, where one can also see the animal – a dog, real not computerized, in a safety jacket [21]. *Air New Zealand* commissions more and more creative in-flight videos [23].

But the leading brand in terms of infotainment and promotion is the *Emirates*. *Emirates* positions itself as the global company which can bring you to any country of the world. They have international cabin crew, they shoot video interviews and video stories of the individuals from different countries of the world who work for this airline (pilots, flight attendants from Poland, Singapore etc.). Ashley Klinger, female captain, is a superb ad for the airlines: she is a high-caliber professional and a cool fashion-obsessed girl. She visits Milano during fashion week, Osaka, other cities [11, 12]. She a perfect sample and stimulus for anyone to apply for *Emirates*.

One can find *Emirates* videos with perfect service onboard, cabin tour, Business Class Seat preview, videos where top managers speak about the company. *Emirates* also works within co-branding. They partnered with *Real Madrid* and footballers appear at the stadium in T-shirts with the slogan *Fly Emirates*. Footballers photos decorate the planes of the airlines.

But infotainment occurs at other repeated events. For example, a team of the flight attendants – “the multi-talented crew” – appears at the stadium greeting *Benfica*. The behavior instructions for football fans about the behavior at the stadium are given in Portuguese and exercises of the cabin crew really entertain the audience. Thus pre-flight video is used as a matrix for other instructions [15].

Another event occurred in Hamburg when *Emirates* cabin crew in seasonal uniform entertained football fans [18]. At US Open multi-talented crew demonstrated other movements, typical for tennis players. *Emirates* cabin crew flew to India to use Bollywood cricket match to entertain the public with Indian dance and promote their company [17].

To sum up, safety video is a new approach to visualization of pre-flight briefing and a new trend in branding and promotion of airlines, a new sample of infotainment which is an indispensable component of the 21st-century-communication.

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ІСТ, БРЕНДИНГ И РЕКЛАМА В ВИДЕОИНСТРУКЦИЯХ ВЕДУЩИХ АВИАКОМПАНИЙ МИРА

Статья посвящена анализу видео о правилах безопасности на борту самолета, снятых для самых известных авиалиний мира с целью информирования пассажиров о правилах поведения и сервисе на борту самолета. Коммуникативные стратегии в предполетных видеoinструкциях, которые уже стали компонентами брендинга, маркетинга, рекламы, включают мультикультурализм, технологический подход, продвижение национального культурного наследия, информирование развлекательного характера.

Ключевые слова: брендинг, информирование развлекательного характера, мультикультурализм, видеoinструкция о правилах безопасности на борту самолета, визуализация.

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ІСТ, БРЕНДИНГ І РЕКЛАМА В ВІДЕОІНСТРУКЦІЯХ ПРОВІДНИХ АВІАКОМПАНІЙ СВІТУ

Стаття присвячена аналізу відео про правила безпеки на борту літака, які демонструють найбільш відомі авіакомпанії світу з метою інформування пасажирів про правила поведінки і сервіс на борту літака. Комунікативні стратегії у відео безпеки, що стали компонентами брендингу, маркетингу, реклами, охоплюють мультикультуралізм, технологічний підхід, рекламу національної культурної спадщини, розважальний характер інформування.

Ключові слова: брендинг, розважальний характер інформування, мультикультуралізм, відеоінструкція про правила поведінки на борту літака, візуалізація.

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РОЛЬОВА АСИМЕТРИЯ ПЕРСОНАЖНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ У ДЗЕРКАЛІ ТЕОРІЇ МОВЛЕННЄВИХ ЖАНРІВ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ БРИТАНСЬКОЇ ДРАМИ XX СТОЛІТТЯ)

Стаття присвячена дослідженню рольової асиметрії персонажного мовлення у дзеркалі теорії мовленнєвих жанрів. Розглянуто сучасний етап лінгвістичного аналізу дискурсу дра-