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Navigating between 'global' and 'local': a transmodal genre analysis of flight safety videos

Abstract: Watching flight safety videos is a mandatory component of global air travel. While previous studies have primarily focused on using experimental techniques to assess passengers' information recall and strategies to increase passengers' level of attention, little has been done on the transmodal design aspects of these videos which can open up new spaces for branding. This paper first discusses how this genre has transitioned from solely delivering safety information, to increasingly being crafted as a space for airline and destination branding in a globalized context. Using the notion of *assemblage* and *transmodalities*, this study presents a comparative analysis of two airlines to investigate how they are similar or different in terms of how they communicate safety information and engage in airline and destination branding. This study aims to raise awareness of flight safety videos as not only an instructional genre but also a space for intercultural communication between airlines and passengers who may or may not have a shared understanding of cultural and safety knowledge. Taken together, the study contributes to a nuanced and evolving understanding of the flight safety video genre.

Keywords: aviation; branding; transmodalities; genre; corporate communication

1 Introduction

Watching flight safety videos is a mandatory component of global air travel. As mandated by aviation authorities such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), all commercial airlines are required to provide a pre-flight safety briefing to passengers. Depending on the type of aircraft, some safety briefings are conducted as safety demonstrations in the aircraft by the cabin crew on board, while many others take advantage of the flight entertainment system installed on each seat

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and produce flight safety videos for passengers to watch. Increasingly, these videos are available on social media platforms such as YouTube for the consumption of a global audience to simply enjoy the videos in the comfort of their homes.

While these videos are important to ensure passengers' safety during the flight, many passengers often ignore them, citing reasons such as the repetitive nature of the message and a general lack of interest (Molesworth 2014). It is indeed understandable that passengers, especially frequent flyers, have over the years accumulated a wealth of semiotic knowledge of 'how to be an airline passenger' and thus find the safety message repetitive. It is therefore important for airlines to explore ways of creating the videos in creative ways to capture the attention of passengers, even for frequent flyers. Furthermore, Molesworth (2014) shows that there is a connection between passengers' trust in the airline and the level of attention they pay to the safety briefings, which brings to the fore the relationship between airline branding and safety. Coinciding with the need for different regions to recover from the drop in tourism in the post-COVID era, flight safety videos have often been used as a site for destination branding, defined as the set of marketing activities that (1) identifies and differentiates a destination, (2) conveys a memorable travel experience, and (3) consolidates and reinforces the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination (Blain et al. 2005). Such destination branding activities can be exemplified by the collaboration between flagship airlines and the local tourism boards in the production of these videos. For example, Cathay Pacific, the flagship airline of Hong Kong, has recently unveiled a new flight safety video in collaboration with the Hong Kong Tourism Board to "[celebrate] the pulsing energy of Hong Kong" (Cathay News Hub 2024). A similar initiative has also been done for Singapore Airlines which "takes viewers on a panoramic journey across various locations in Singapore" (Singapore Airlines News Releases 2017).

As indicated in Molesworth (2014), passengers' trust in the airline is one of the indicators of safety. Due to the interlaced relationship between the aviation industry and tourism, flight safety videos are increasingly used for airline and destination branding. It is within this context that we try to understand flight safety videos as an *interdiscursive* genre (Bhatia 2010) that fulfils both *transactional* and *interpersonal* functions of communication (Holmes and Marra 2004). In sum, flight safety videos are not merely a means of delivering safety instructions; they increasingly serve as a space for airline and destination branding, functioning as identity markers for an airline – especially in cases where a video becomes so successful that it goes viral with a global audience.[1] The above points to the importance of understanding flight

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1 Air New Zealand's 'The Most Epic Safety Video Ever Made' safety video released on 22 October 2014 has garnered 25 million views, and is one of the most-watched safety videos on YouTube. The video can be assessed via this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOw44VFNk8Y.

safety videos not as a genre that exists in isolation but as a genre that is part of a *semiotic assemblage* (Pennycook 2017) associated with discourses of flying, the aviation industry, and the broader tourism discourse, such as airline and destination branding (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010) which shows the airlines' positioning as *translocal* and *transglobal* (Hawkins 2021).

2 Literature review

2.1 Flight safety videos as an interdiscursive genre

Flight safety videos can be considered an emergent genre that has been evolving over the years to adapt to the changing times. Typical flight safety videos often embody the mixing, embedding, or even blending of "socially accepted communicative purposes conventionally served by two different genres to create hybrid (both mixed and embedded) genres" (Bhatia 2004, p. 99). The tripartite function of flight safety videos as primarily providing safety information, supplemented by airline and destination branding discourses, has increasingly turned flight safety videos into "hybrid genres", especially in the post-pandemic era when the entire aviation industry, as well as the tourism industry, are trying to recover from the loss in tourism during the pandemic. Such appropriation of generic resources from one genre to construct another (new) genre "invades" the "territorial integrity" of well-established genres, but is nevertheless a feature of modern-day communicative practices made even more salient by digital media (Bhatia 2004, p. 100). Such appropriation of generic resources is referred to as interdiscursivity – "innovative attempts to create various forms of hybrid and relatively novel constructs by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres and practices" (Bhatia 2004, 1997, 2010, cited in Bhatia 2010, p. 35). While flight safety video is not a new genre, the genre has been transitioning from solely delivering safety information a decade ago, to increasingly being crafted as a space for airline and destination branding. Such transitions have become vital since the COVID pandemic, as the imperative to brand air travel as a luxurious experience has intensified. Flight safety videos have increasingly displayed innovative attempts to push and transcend the boundaries of genre conventions with other established genre conventions, such as instructional and promotional videos, each of which has its own distinct genre norms, but their boundaries are increasingly blurred in flight safety videos. The 'blending' of these discourses thus turns flight safety videos into an *interdiscursive* genre. An examination of flight safety videos created by major airlines would find that they typically contain safety information, airline branding, and destination branding which includes branding of the country or region where the airline is

based, and could also include branding of the global and local destinations that the airline serves. Flight safety videos are therefore an emergent genre that is embedded within a particular professional practice (primarily the aviation industry, but also increasingly the tourism industry), and professional culture (aviation culture that prioritizes safety which also situates between branding and identity construction to appeal to both global and local passengers[2]). In particular, the dual need to appeal to and educate global and local passengers is one of the contributing factors to the hybridity of the flight safety video genre, resulting in a 'paradox'. In Catenaccio's (2008) examination of the hybridity of corporate press releases, the author documented the 'paradox' of the press release genre as the tension between overt promotion and maintaining the objectivity of disseminating information. Similarly, flight safety videos exhibit a similar 'paradox' between balancing entertainment and promotional content, such as the use of humor and celebrities (Molesworth 2014; Seneviratne and Molesworth 2015) while simultaneously having to ensure the clear and effective communication of safety information.[3] Furthermore, the change in medium, material affordances, as well as the expanding intended audience also play a crucial role in the development and shifting conventions of the genre, that flight safety videos are no longer exclusive to passengers inside an aircraft; the videos are often uploaded to the official social media channels run by the airlines which may have contributed to changes in the genre, such as the shift from purely transactional (i.e. conveying safety information), to more interpersonal (i.e. airline and destination branding).

2.2 Flight safety videos as a realization of 'banal globalization'

'Banal globalization' is a term coined by Thurlow and Jaworski (2010) to refer to "routinized enactments of global capitalism" (p. 21) that are "rooted in everyday communicative actions and textual practices" (p. 226). Examples such as route maps in in-flight magazines (Thurlow and Jaworski 2003) and tailfin designs (Thurlow and

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2 The inclusion of branding discourses in flight safety videos which prioritizes conveying safety information is an example of what Fairclough (1992) calls the "commodification" of discourse. Bhatia (2004) mentions that "[o]f all the genres which have invaded the territorial integrity of many professional and academic genres, 'advertising' clearly stands out to be the most predominant instrument of colonization" (p. 100).

3 These two objectives are seen as a 'paradox' and are parodied by another major airline. Emirates unveiled a new safety video on 3 July 2024 called "Our New No-Nonsense Safety Video" which prioritizes their concern for passenger safety, at the same time mocking other major airlines for their genre hybridity. The video can be assessed via this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCW5kH1G_1Y.

Aiello 2007) illustrate how seemingly mundane texts are sites to discursively construct how globalization is realized and enacted discursively 'from below' – not necessarily driven by institutional or top-down forces, but is enacted and reproduced through texts in everyday life. For instance, Thurlow and Jaworski (2003) found that route maps shown in in-flight magazines produced by airlines are designed strategically so that national boundaries are not depicted, hence showing a globalized world without borders. This semiotic realization of globalization is felt "at the level of 'innocent' texts and 'harmless' (inter)actions that globalization is actually realized" (Thurlow and Jaworski 2011, p. 308). At the same time, route maps also depict the country or region where the airline is based at the center of the globalized world, thus performing an image-building function. Hence, airline branding involves a complex tension between globalization and localization, international and national orientations, semiotic uniformity, and semiotic diversity (Thurlow and Aiello 2007; Thurlow and Jaworski 2003). Flight safety videos, as one of the most customer-facing and influential tourism discourses that allow airlines to communicate directly with passengers, are at the forefront of navigating this complexity. As Thurlow and Aiello (2007) point out, the key question at the core of airline branding is "how airlines are able to service national identity concerns through the use of highly localized visual meanings while also appealing to the meaning systems of the international market in their pursuit of symbolic and economic capital" (p. 305). The dual demand to position the airline as both global and local highlights the need to investigate how such 'banal globalization' rooted in mundane texts is realized semiotically, and how notions of 'global' and 'local' are simply inadequate to make sense of the highly complex and diverse world. From a 'trans-' perspective which advocates for the need to transcend boundaries, *translocal* and *transglobal* should be seen as mutually constitutive in the flows of communications, rather than seen as two binaries (Hawkins 2021).

2.3 Semiotic assemblage and transmodalities

The notion of semiotic assemblage allows us to understand how the different socioeconomic conditions brought together trajectories of aviation safety, airline and destination branding, as well as a desire for countries and regions to boost tourism and how such trajectories are represented in flight safety videos. This paper therefore considers flight safety videos as a site where a range of linguistic, cultural, historical, and spatial resources are "brought together in particular assemblages in particular moments of time and space" (Pennycook 2017, p. 278). The emphasis is not on identifying what constitutes an assemblage, but on how linguistic and transmodal resources intersect at a particular moment, forming *practices in place* (Pennycook and Otsuji 2017). Situating the notion of assemblage in flight safety videos, it can be

asserted that the three 'named' assemblages forming flight safety videos – safety information, airline branding and destination branding discourses – do not have clear boundaries and therefore cannot be neatly demarcated (see discussions above on the hybridity of the genre).

The notion of assemblage "not only questions the boundaries between languages, but also the boundaries between different modes of semiosis" (Pennycook 2017, p. 270). The concepts of 'transcending' and 'crossing' are captured by the 'trans-' turn in applied linguistics which is explained by Hawkins and Mori (2018):

> 'Trans-' can be understood to mean crossing borders or boundaries, and this move toward a 'trans-' disposition signals the need to transcend the named and bounded categories that have historically shaped our thinking about the world and its inhabitants, the nature of knowledge, and communicative resources. (p. 1)

The 'trans-' turn in applied linguistics seeks to "[destabilize] discretely defined resources" and "focus on the performativity of languaging and literacies, and the multiple, shifting resources that are fluidly intermingled and leveraged in communications" (Canagarajah 2013; Hawkins 2021; Hawkins and Mori 2018, cited in Hawkins 2021, p. 11). This approach allows us to move beyond the ideological superiority of written and spoken language as the most powerful resources and to recognize that other resources, such as images and sound, play an equally significant role in meaning-making. While the field of multimodality has already developed comprehensive analytical toolkits to account for how modes beyond language have different affordances and constraints in meaning-making, and how these modes orchestrate to form multimodal ensembles to generate new meanings (see, e.g. Kress 2010), the concept of transmodalities is rooted in a posthumanist perspective (Barad 2015; Pennycook 2018) which emphasizes the fluidity and interconnectedness of meaning-making resources (Hawkins 2018, 2021; Hawkins and Mori 2018). Modes are no longer seen as distinct and bounded, but as emergent and dynamic as the context changes. Transmodalities draw attention to the chain of semiosis across space and time which allows researchers to understand how meaning travels across different cultures and how they are interpreted and reinterpreted.

While flight safety videos have been extensively studied in aviation safety literature, a majority of which focuses on the use of experimental techniques to ascertain the relationship between the use of humour and celebrities and the effectiveness of the videos (see, e.g. Molesworth 2014; Seneviratne and Molesworth 2015), the effects of medium and mood in the recall of safety messages (see, e.g. Molesworth et al. 2018; Tehrani and Molesworth 2015), as well as the effects of distractors in information recall (see, e.g. Molesworth et al. 2019), there is a paucity of research in flight safety videos' potential in airline and destination branding within the specific professional practice and culture for which they are created, specifically

from the field of applied linguistics. Applied linguistics, as an interdisciplinary field, is well-positioned to contribute to a nuanced understanding of this emergent hybrid genre and how it can be further utilized to fulfil multiple communicative objectives that transcend its primary objective of communicating safety information (transactional goal), to fostering interpersonal goals by promoting airline and destinations' identities. Taken together, this paper seeks to address the following research questions:

(1) How does move analysis reveal the genre characteristics in flight safety videos, and what roles do transmodal resources play in this process?

(2) How does the design of flight safety videos construct banal globalization through the dynamic use of transmodal resources?

3 The study

The data featured in this study were part of a larger project which examines how flight safety videos created by world-renowned airlines are designed semiotically to fulfil multiple communicative purposes: conveying safety information, airline branding, and destination branding. This paper presents an analysis of two flight safety videos, one from Singapore Airlines[4] and one from Qatar Airways.[5] The videos were collected from the airlines' official YouTube channels, with 2.8M and 1.5M views, respectively, as of December 2024. The two videos were uploaded to YouTube on 8 August, 2017 and 10 January, 2023 respectively.[6] The video from Singapore Airlines is 5 min 49 s in length, and the one from Qatar Airways is 6 min 47 s long. The two airlines were chosen as they have consistently ranked the world's top two airlines in the Skytrax World's Top 100 Airlines ranking since 2017. These two videos can therefore be insightful case studies of the genre and are influential examples for the aviation industry as a whole.

In recent years, flight safety videos have moved from simply conveying safety information to increasingly featuring a narrative running alongside the safety information. In both the videos of Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways, a narrative can also be found. In the Singapore Airlines video, the broad narrative is that the

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4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25brQSPMORg.

5 At the time of revising the manuscript, the video is no longer available on the official YouTube channel of Qatar Airways.

6 A new safety video by Qatar Airways was unveiled on 3 December 2024, by which the analysis of the previous video (2023 version) was already completed in preparation for this paper. Nevertheless, the new safety video follows many of the same design principles as the 2023 video, therefore, newly added elements in the 2024 video are also incorporated and discussed in the paper. The 2024 version can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNtlxmtH3ZA.

cabin crew in uniform follows different groups of families and friends on a tour of different Singapore landmarks. The cabin crew plays the role of a guardian who is always available when their assistance is needed. In the Qatar Airways video, the narrative involves the cabin crew taking passengers to different tourist destinations (presumably the cities that Qatar Airways flies to), and different groups of travellers are enjoying the landmark locations in each city. Instead of having the same cabin crew going to different destinations, the Qatar Airways video features male and female cabin crew who appear in different destinations.

4 Methods

The two videos were transcribed multimodally using the multimodal annotation software ELAN developed by the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan). The software enables the research team to identify relevant resources for analysis and annotate them as the video progresses (see Figures 1 and 2 for a snapshot of the multimodal transcription conducted on the Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways videos respectively). As each video draws on a different range of resources with different degrees of salience, every time when a new video is transcribed, a different transcription template has to be designed. Table 1 shows the resources that each video mobilizes.
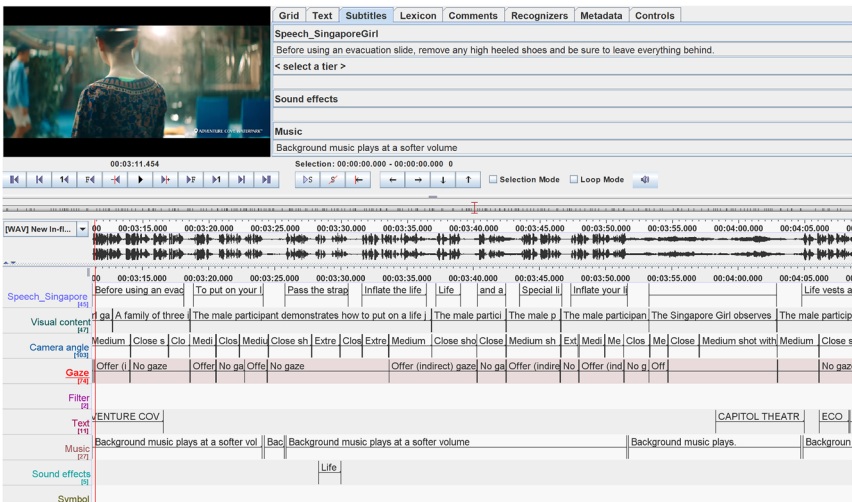
Figure 1: Multimodal transcription of Singapore Airlines safety video using ELAN.
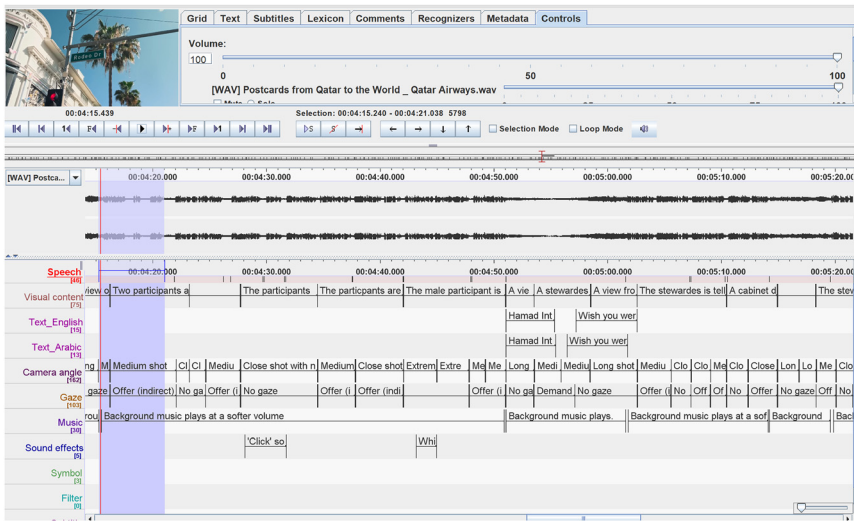
Figure 2: Multimodal transcription Qatar Airways safety video using ELAN.

Table 1: Resources used in the two videos.

Singapore Airlines	Qatar Airways
Speech	Speech
Visual content	Visual content
Text (in English)	Text (in English)
	Text (in Arabic)
Camera angle	Camera angle
Gaze	Gaze
Music	Music
Sound effects	Sound effects
Symbol	Symbol
Filter	Filter

To develop an understanding of the flight safety video genre, a qualitative multimodal move analysis was performed on the two videos to shed light on their generic structure. Following Swales (2004), a move is considered as "a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (p. 228), thereby also fulfilling the overall communicative purpose of the genre (Henry and Roseberry 2001). Multimodal move analysis is considered an enhanced version of move analysis which starts with the identification of the

rhetorical moves, the multimodal resources mobilized to realize each move, and how the moves realize the communicative purposes of the text (Hafner 2018; Xia 2020). A multimodal move analysis can help identify the functional units of the videos, and enable a systematic analysis of how transmodal resources shape the different parts of the video in terms of the construction of 'banal globalization', airline and destination branding. During the process of move identification, researchers need to identify the different resources involved in realizing each move (ibid).

5 Findings

5.1 Overview of the structure

The safety videos of Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways both follow a three-move structure: introduction (Move 1), demonstrating safety information (Move 2), and conclusion (Move 3) (see Figure 3), with sub-moves identified within each move (see Figures 4 to 6). As indicated in Figure 3, alongside the delivery of safety and branding information, a narrative develops in a parallel fashion and is tightly interwoven with the other, together fulfilling the communicative purpose of the videos. In both videos, the introduction (Move 1) aims to welcome the passengers and invite them to pay attention to the safety demonstration. Both videos realize this move in a similar way by utilizing semiotic artifacts that make the airline brand identifiable by showing a cabin crew in the airline uniform, or showing the logo of the airline (such as in Qatar Airways) (see Figure 4). In Move 2, demonstrating safety information, a similar set of sub-moves can be found, albeit in a slightly different order (see Figure 5). This uniformity is a result of the need for airlines to abide by regulations mandated by aviation authorities. Nevertheless, airlines have the flexibility to decide how each sub-move is realized, most notably by the use of different transmodal resources. Lastly, move 3 concludes the whole video and both videos invite passengers to pay attention to the safety card, thank the passengers, and conclude with the airline logos (see Figure 6).

5.2 Genre characteristics

This section introduces the features of the flight safety videos genre as exemplified in the two cases: (1) airline and destination branding, and (2) communicating safety information. The analysis compares some representative features within each move to demonstrate how the two airlines realize the same move with similar or different transmodal resources to fulfil the communicative purposes of each move, as well as those of the overall video.
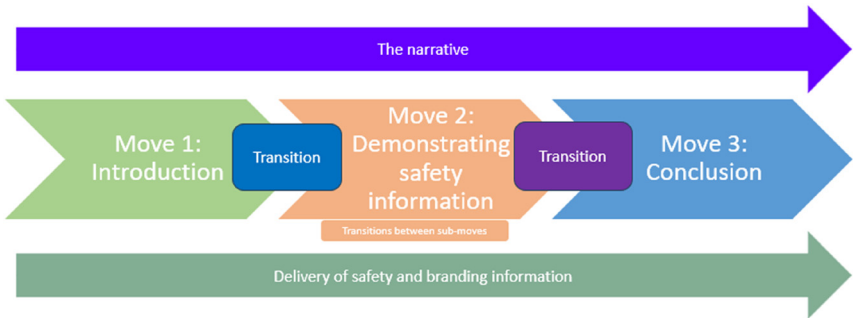
Figure 3: The overall structure of Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways safety videos.

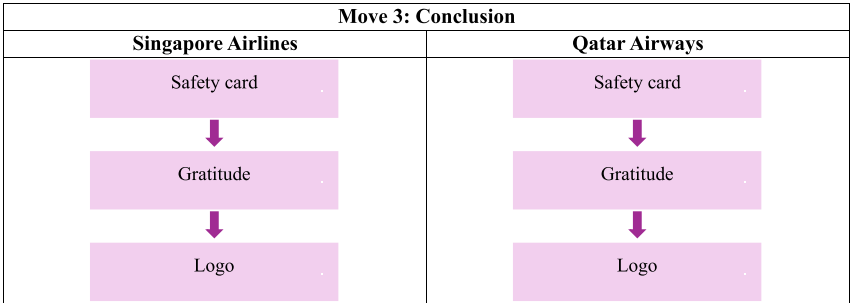**Figure 4:** Move 1 and its sub-moves identified in Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways safety videos.

5.2.1 Airline and destination branding

Airline and destination branding can be found in all three moves of the two videos, although most of the branding discourses are found in Move 1 and Move 3. In the first move ('Introduction'), both airlines start their safety video with an opening scene, one featuring the iconic Singapore skyline with landmark architecture and the other featuring a view from above the clouds without any recognizable features, but the airline logo is shown, with English text ('- Postcards – From Qatar to the world') (see Figure 7).

The opening sub-move identifies the destination either through visuals of iconic landmarks in the Singapore Airlines video, or through the use of the airline logo and directly indicating the name (and the country where the airline is based) through the

Move 2: Demonstrating safety information	
Singapore Airlines	**Qatar Airways**

Singapore Airlines:

Tray table → Seat & shoes → Luggage → Seatbelt → Oxygen masks → Emergency exits → Brace positions → Emergency evacuation → Evacuation slide → Life vests → Electronic devices → Smoking

Qatar Airways:

Exits & walkways → Luggage → Monitors → Seatbelt → Electronic devices → Emergency exits → Emergency evacuation → Smoking → Oxygen masks → Life vests → Seat & shoes → Tray table → Seatbelt

Figure 5: Move 2 and its sub-moves identified in Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways safety videos.

Move 3: Conclusion	
Singapore Airlines	**Qatar Airways**
Safety card ⬇ Gratitude ⬇ Logo	Safety card ⬇ Gratitude ⬇ Logo

Figure 6: Move 3 and its sub-moves identified in Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways safety videos.

Sub-moves	Singapore Airlines		Qatar Airways
Opening	The screen shows the Singapore skyline with background music.	Opening and showing logo	The screen shows a view above the clouds with text in English and text in Arabic. Background music can be heard.
Welcoming and inviting attention	A female wearing the iconic Singapore Airlines cabin crew uniform (sarong kebaya) welcomes the passenger with a short welcoming speech. The crew looks directly at the camera forming a demand image with a medium shot which shows her upper body. The background is Boat Quay in Singapore.	Welcoming and inviting attention	The screen shows a long shot from above zooming in on the National Museum of Qatar while an off-screen narration in English greets the audience. An Arabic translation can be found at the bottom of the screen.
			Towards the end of the welcoming speech, a female wearing the Qatar Airways cabin crew uniform greets the audience while holding a postcard from Cape Town. The female is seen gazing directly at the camera forming a demand image with a medium shot from a slightly low angle.

Figure 7: Move 1 of Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways.

use of written text. Both videos feature a female participant in their cabin crew uniform as part of realizing Move 1, and both create a demand image by looking directly at the audience. This is a way to create engagement and demand attention (Kress and van Leeuwen 2021). Such explicit identification of the airline brand and the location in which the airlines are based using transmodal resources fulfils the purpose of airline and destination branding by conveying the company name, logo, crew uniforms (Liu et al. 2024) and identifying and differentiating a destination (Blain et al. 2005) respectively. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that in the 2024 version of the Qatar Airways safety video, Move 1 is mainly accomplished by showing a celebrity (Keven Hart), and the cabin crew is seen playing a more supportive role (indicated by the direct gaze of Kevin Hart, and the lack of direct gaze by the rest of the crew).

In Move 2, the primary communicative purpose is to demonstrate safety information. The story takes the participants from the two videos on a journey to different parts of Singapore, Qatar, and other global destinations. Every time a new destination is reached, in addition to being shown visually, the name of the location is also shown on the screen to visually and textually identify a destination (Blain et al. 2005). In each destination, participants engaged in different activities, thus creating "a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination" (p. 337). The emotions of the participants in each destination seem to be positive, as indicated by the smile on their faces, thus serving the function of establishing and reinforcing the emotional connection to the destination. Furthermore, the second move of the videos also constructs different corporate images of the airlines. The 'backgrounded' presence of the cabin crew in both videos foregrounds the experience of the passengers as the airlines' priority, and they are always available to assist if passengers need help. The cabin crew uniform and the body of the aircraft are also shown at various points during the safety demonstration to construct a visual branding of the airlines.

Move 3 of both videos is marked by inviting passengers to read the safety card. The safety card shows the emergency escape routes. The introduction of the safety card offers a space for airline branding by featuring the cabin crew, either directly addressing the audience, as in the video of Singapore Airlines, or becoming a participant in the broad narrative, as in the video of Qatar Airways. Both videos end with the skyline of the country where the airline is based, with the airline logo (and the aircraft in the case of Qatar Airways) (see Figure 8).

5.2.2 Communicating safety information

The primary communicative objective of the genre of flight safety video is to communicate and instruct passengers about safety information. Hence, Move 2 ('Demonstrating safety information') is the most elaborate and important move in

Singapore Airlines		Qatar Airways	
Speech	Visuals	Speech	Visuals
Thank you for your attention. Refer to the safety card located in the seat pocket in front of you for more information	Soft background music in the background with a medium-length shot, showing Gardens By The Bay in the background.	To familiarize yourself with the safety aspects of this aircraft, please read the safety instructions card located in your seat pocket.	Soft background music in the background with a medium-length shot, showing a beach in the Maldives in the background.
On behalf of Singapore Airlines, we hope you have a great time on board as well as in Singapore, or anywhere else in the world we take you.	Soft background music gradually becomes louder, with a close-up shot focusing on the cabin crew.	If you have any questions, the cabin crew will be happy to help.	Soft background music in the background with a medium-length shot, showing a beach in the Maldives in the background.
	The airline name and logo appear on the screen superimposed on the Singapore skyline.	Now, all that's left to do is sit back, relax and enjoy 4000 plus entertainment options with Oryx One.	The text 'There's no place like QATAR' is shown on the screen
		Thank you for your attention.	The airline name and logo appear on the screen. Below the logo is a Qatar Airways aircraft flying above the clouds towards the direction of the sun.

Figure 8: Sub-moves of Move 3 in Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways videos.

the genre of flight safety videos. Unlike Moves 1 and 3 where airlines have more agency in customizing the content for branding purposes, the information conveyed in Move 2 is regulated by the guidelines of international and national/regional aviation authorities. Due to the limitation of space, this section compares the sub-move of putting on a 'life vest' (the term used in the Singapore Airlines video) and a 'life jacket' (a term used in the Qatar Airways video).[7] 'Life vest' is the tenth sub-move

7 'Life vest' and 'life jacket' both refer to personal floatation devices, although there are differences between the two in terms of design.

out of the 12 sub-moves in Singapore Airlines, and the tenth sub-move out of the 13 sub-moves in the Qatar Airways video.

The overall communicative purpose of this move is to demonstrate, using real objects, how to perform the safety instructions. The example of putting on a life vest/ life jacket was chosen as a representative example because it involves multiple steps, and this is likely to be one of the least familiar actions for airline passengers due to the low likelihood of them having to perform this in their daily lives (see Figure 9). In the Singapore Airlines video, a family of three prepares to go for a swim in a pool at the Adventure Cove Waterpark, thus creating a scenario where the need for a flotation device, such as a life vest, naturally arises in a water-based setting. The narrator gives instructions in English using an imperative structure, with soft background music:

> To put on your life vest, remove it from the plastic cover and slip it over your head. Pass the straps around your waist, connect the clip, and pull to tighten. Inflate the life vest by pulling the red tapes or blowing into the mouthpiece. (Singapore Airlines)

The participants demonstrated each step in front of the camera, creating an offer image (by not looking at the camera). The use of an offer image here positions the audience as a participant in the story rather than being addressed. The steps of putting on a life vest are, therefore, made salient by a close orchestration of the spoken and visual modes. The Qatar Airways video features a male and a female participant going on a shopping trip in Beverly Hills. The scene features them shopping in a boutique. Although they are not inside an aircraft, a graphic config-uration of an aircraft seat is shown on the bottom right corner of the screen to indicate the positions of the life jacket, and an arrow is used to indicate the direction of retrieving the life jacket (see Figure 9). The cabin crew appears and instructs the participants to sit down in the boutique, where they find a life jacket under the seat. Similar to the Singapore Airlines video, the narration gives instructions in English using an imperative structure:

> When instructed by the crew, remove it from its container and pull it over your head. Bring the tape around your waist and fasten in front, pulling firmly to secure. Only inflate the life jacket as you leave the aircraft by pulling the two red toggles sharply downwards. You can also inflate or top up the life jacket by blowing into the mouthpiece. (Qatar Airways)

The participants in both videos demonstrate each step in front of the camera, creating offer images which give salience to the steps of putting on a life jacket. Both videos use camera distance (i.e., close-up shots) to draw the audience's attention to the specific features of the life vest/jacket, such as the straps, the toggles, the light, and the whistles. In flight safety videos, camera distance is an important framing device to alternate between the narrative frame and the instructional frame. Medium-shots,
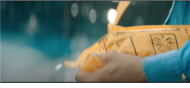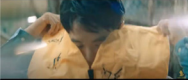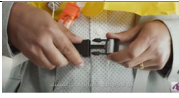
Singapore Airlines		Qatar Airways	
Speech	Visuals	Speech	Visuals
Before using an evacuation slide, remove any high-heeled shoes	A family of three is seen getting ready to swim at the Adventure Cove Waterpark. The mother removes her high-heeled shoes. A close-up shot is used to highlight this, aligning the visual content to the instructions given in speech.	Your life jacket is either beside you	A male and a female participant are shopping in a boutique in Beverly Hills. On the bottom-left corner of the screen shows the configuration of the aircraft seat, and yellow is used to indicate the location of the life jacket. A red arrow pointing to the left is used to indicate the direction to remove it.
and be sure to leave everything behind	A bag containing the belongings of the family is also placed on the chair. A medium-distance shot is used to align the visual content to the instructions given in speech.	next to you	A male and a female participant are shopping in a boutique in Beverly Hills. On the bottom-left corner of the screen shows the configuration of the aircraft seat, and yellow is used to indicate the location of the life jacket. A red upward arrow is used to indicate the direction to remove it.
To put on your life vest, remove it from the plastic cover	The male participant demonstrates step by step how to put on a life vest, first by removing it from the plastic cover as instructed. A close-up shot is used to give salience to the visual content and its orchestration with the speech.	or underneath your seat	A male and a female participant are shopping in a boutique in Beverly Hills. On the bottom-left corner of the screen shows the configuration of the aircraft seat, and yellow is used to indicate the location of the life jacket. A red arrow pointing opposite to the seat is used to indicate the direction to remove it.
and slip it over your head	A close-up shot is used to show how the male participant put on the life vest following the verbal instructions. An offer image is used to position the viewers as observers to learn how to put on a life vest.	When instructed by the crew, remove it from its container	A close-up shot of the male participant removing the life jacket from its container.
Pass the straps around your waist	A close-up shot is used to demonstrate how to pass the straps around the waist.	and pull it over your head.	A medium shot of both the male and the female participant putting on the life jacket. An offer image is used to position the viewers as observers to learn how to put on a life jacket.
connect the clip	A close-up shot on the clip.	Bring the tape around your waist and fasten in front	A close-up shot on the clip. A 'click' sound produced by fastening the clip can be heard.
and pull to tighten	A close-up shot on the clip and the tightening action.	pulling firmly to secure	A close-up shot on the clip and the tightening action.

Figure 9: Sub-move of Move 2 in Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways videos (Putting on a life vest/life jacket).

usually used alongside an offer image, are used to orient viewers to a narrative frame in which the story progresses. Close-up shots, usually used alongside an offer image, give salience to particular equipment in an aircraft and thus invite viewers to position themselves as 'learners.'

In the Qatar Airways video, the 'click' sound of fastening the tape, the sound of the inflation of the life jacket, the sound of blowing air into the mouthpiece, and the sound of the whistle are retained, while in the Singapore Airlines video, such sounds are filtered out to preserve the coherence of the narrative.

Both videos present such instructions with soft background music that conveys a soothing and calm feeling, creating an apparent 'dissonance' between the seriousness of the safety information and the relaxing atmosphere of going on a holiday. Such 'dissonance' is also created visually by portraying participants having a fun and relaxing time which appears to be contradictory to the potential risks and scenarios that the video aims to prepare passengers for. This could be seen as an attempt to brand air travel as a luxury experience, despite the potential risks associated with flying.

6 Discussion

This study aims to explore flight safety videos by first examining how the characteristics of this genre emerge through the use of transmodal resources and, subsequently, how banal globalization is constructed through the dynamic use of transmodal resources. The two videos adopt different destination branding strategies and strategically position themselves as translocal and transglobal. Singapore Airlines video takes the audience to eight local destinations, whereas the Qatar Airways video takes the audience to 13 destinations, seven of which are local destinations, and six are international destinations. Based on the locations featured, Singapore Airlines appears to give visual salience to promoting Singapore landmarks and heritage, whereas Qatar Airways uses the metaphor of postcards to showcase its global network and simultaneously promote different local and global destinations. Similar airline branding strategies have been used in the two videos, such as featuring the airline name and logo (see Figures 7 and 8) and highlighting the patience and care of the cabin crew. Such transmodal branding discourses are made salient in Moves 1 and 3, especially with the use of verbal narrative and visual images. In Move 2, such branding is done more subtly to give salience to the safety instructions, also achieved by the strategic use of close-up and medium camera shots (see Figure 9). The two videos demonstrate how the linguistic and transmodal elements work as an *ensemble* to convey information, with the former emphasizing safety information and the latter foregrounding branding and promotional discourses.

Nevertheless, the interdiscursivity of the genre renders the different purposes of the flight safety videos not distinctively identifiable. The 'identification' of the communicative purposes of flight safety videos – communicating safety information, airline branding, and destination branding, is represented transmodally and these purposes are inseparable. For instance, in Singapore Airlines' video, the cabin crew wearing the distinctive sarong kebaya blends seamlessly into the different sections of the video (see, for example, Figures 7 and 8 in which the cabin crew performs multiple roles as a brand ambassador and a guardian of safety). Her embodied action in the transitional scenes facilitates the coherence of the video, ensuring the parallel progression of the overall narrative and the moves within the video. Her presence also reflects the omnipresence of airline and destination branding. As Candlin (2006) mentions, "all discourses are concurrently in play at one and the same time" (p. 26), thus creating a shift in focus from focusing on the identification of purposes inherent in a genre, to an assemblage-oriented transmodal understanding of the flight safety video genre.

6.1 An assemblage-oriented transmodal understanding of the flight safety video genre

The analysis examines the fluid and dynamic interplay of transmodal resources in conveying safety information. Learning how to put on a life vest/jacket requires a transmodal understanding of how different resources such as the visual appearance of the life vest/jacket, the gestures and embodied actions required to put it on, together with the spoken narration which explains the functions of each part of the life vest/jacket and the sequence of activating them (see Figure 9). These resources interact and flow into one another, and not one resource can be taken away to effectively convey the message.

The concept of assemblage highlights that language and transmodal resources are constantly under construction as social conditions change, encouraging researchers to focus on understanding social action rather than language and transmodal resources as predefined categories (Pennycook 2024). Thinking of language and transmodal resources as assemblage can shed light on the fluidity and the dynamic nature of the flight safety video genre which undergoes development over time based on the socioeconomic needs of the aviation industry, tourism, and even passengers' beliefs. Evoking the concept of assemblage which highlights the situatedness of transmodal resources available at a given moment and place, we can see how the flight safety video genre cannot be seen as a static genre with fixed characteristics. Flight safety videos are understood within the multiple intersecting discourses of, for example, guidelines issued by the regulatory authorities, aircraft safety briefing cards, as well as cabin crews' safety demonstrations inside an aircraft,

forming what Hafner (2018) refers to as "a part of a larger intertextual system" (p. 26). Furthermore, when such videos are viewed outside of an aircraft, such as on YouTube, the meaning created would be a different one, and additional meanings are co-constructed through viewers' comments.

The medium in which flight safety videos are designed to appear has increasingly played a crucial role in shaping the genre, shifting its communicative purpose from predominantly transactional when viewed exclusively in an aircraft just before it takes off, to increasingly more interpersonal as these videos are increasingly being used by airlines and tourism boards to construct a positive national/corporate identity. In Catenaccio's (2008) examination of press releases, the author points out that the extension of the readership of press releases from the selected journalistic profession to a general audience afforded by web distribution "may have caused some textual conventions to shift", such as the "amount of promotional language allowable" (p. 15). Furthermore, the shift in the medium and material affordances has resulted in an extension of the targeted audience, from passengers inside an aircraft to the general public watching these videos at home. Taken together, genre characteristics emerge as a result of the flow of transmodal resources that each situation makes available at a given moment. A preliminary examination of the comments section of the two airlines shows that the videos can evoke mostly positive feelings from viewers' previous travel experiences with the airline, and prompt them to share their emotions about the country the airline is based in, as well as the destinations the airline flies to:

> As an expat living in Singapore, this [video] reconnects me with the times before travel ceased and makes me emotional. Singapore Airlines is the feeling of home, the feeling of safety and the feeling of adventure too (often going somewhere new from Changi). Beautiful airline, wonderful service and adore traveling them. Travel experience is seamless, but most important, consistent. (Comment from one viewer of the Singapore Airlines video)

> Awesome video 🧡 🤩. This debut was 10 says [sic] too late for our last trip on Qatar. Looking forward to future travels to Cape Town and Banana Island, in addition to return visits to Kuala Lumpur and the Maldives ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ (Comment from one viewer of the Qatar Airways video)

6.2 The construction of banal globalization as spatial transpositioning

As highlighted in Thurlow and Aiello (2007), airline branding involves navigating the complex tension between globalization and localization, international and national orientations, semiotic uniformity and semiotic diversity. Global and local elements

are realized transmodally and they are incorporated in the video seamlessly. For example, both videos seamlessly combine the use of globally-recognized gestures and symbols (such as fastening a seat belt, and putting on a life jacket) with visual content that indexes local cultural identity (such as the cabin crew uniform and local skyline and landmark buildings – see Figures 7 and 8). Such blending transcends the artificial divide between global and local semiotic elements to construct banal globalization, thereby problematizing the binary distinctions between 'global' and 'local'.

This paper argues that not only is banal globalization a bottom-up and trans-modal phenomenon that is rooted in everyday communicative actions and textual practices (Thurlow and Jaworski 2011), it is also a product of what Hawkins (2021) called *spatial transpositioning* in which communication occurs both translocally and transglobally, mediated through the assemblages of the flow of transmodal re-sources. Banal globalization is, therefore, a blending of the translocal and the transglobal, a product of the transpositioning of flows of communication. Such crossing, erasing and transcending arbitrarily-constructed boundaries is trans-formative as they allow for new identities to emerge (ibid). Li and Lee (2024) assert that transpositioning refers to the "flow-and-flux" state in which an entity can be released from given frameworks and generate new identities (p. 5). The genre of flight safety videos, therefore, creates a space for airlines and destinations to find new identities for themselves through the strategic deployment of transmodal re-sources, such as the alternation of camera distance to move between the instruc-tional and narrative frames, as illustrated in Figure 9.

6.3 Offsetting the risk of air travel

Subliminally, both videos draw on transmodal resources to create an atmosphere in which passengers are pampered and well taken care of, which gives the impression that air travel is a luxury and an elitist pursuit (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010). To be a tourist is a 'modern' experience and has become a marker of status (Urry and Larsen 2011), making travellers receptive to the luxurious branding of air travel because they are away from their everyday lives and have a certain level of anticipation of their travels. The use of soothing and calm background music in both videos also reinforces air travel as a relaxing and luxurious experience. However, such a transmodal orchestration appears to run against the (original) communicative purpose of the video, which is to instruct passengers on how to protect themselves should an emergency occur. Such a design is in line with Murphy's (2001) argument that "air travel performance is carefully designed to distract passengers from the potential risks of flight" (p. 31). Flight safety videos are therefore at the forefront of

navigating the tension between alerting passengers of the potential dangers of flying on the one hand, and promoting air travel as a luxurious experience on the other.

One way this tension is navigated is by representing air travel in a decontextualized way. Unlike other instructional genres where it is important to be as realistic as possible (see, e.g., Hafner (2018) on video methods articles), an increasing number of flight safety videos feature passengers outside of the aircraft and carrying out everyday activities while key safety objects such as seat belts and life jackets would appear unexpectedly, sometimes evoking humour. For example, in the Qatar Airways video, two life jackets can be found under the seats in a boutique in Beverly Hills in an unexpected way. Instead of putting on the life jacket inside an aircraft, the action is done in a boutique (see Figure 9). While filming the videos in a decontextualized setting could make the videos more appealing to watch and enable the airlines to creatively use the setting for branding purposes, whether the narrative of the flight safety video would become a distractor remains to be seen,[8] especially for first-time flyers who may not have the semiotic knowledge of flying in an aircraft.

7 Conclusion and implications

Unlike other studies which focus on testing the variables affecting information recall, this study focuses on exploring the features of the flight safety video genre, and how banal globalization is realized through the use of transmodal resources. By drawing on concepts such as assemblage and transmodalities, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the flight safety video genre by exploring how airline and destination branding discourses are blended seamlessly with safety discourses to construct banal globalization which transcends the artificial boundaries between global and local.

The study provides methodological implications for how such videos could be studied. In addition to examining their effectiveness by conducting questionnaires and experiments, a transmodal genre analysis can shed light on how videos can be designed so as to strike a balance between the delivery of safety information and exploring new potentials for other discourses, such as branding. Furthermore, this method emphasizes the transmodal nature of genre, which highlights how the genre is realized through the interplay of transmodal resources, where the employment of global and local semiotic resources flows across modes. It allows for a dynamic representation of genre which highlights its fluidity and evolving nature.

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8 Emirates unveiled a new "No-Nonsense Safety Video" on 3 July 2024. This is the link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCW5kH1G_1Y.

Transmodal genre analysis demonstrates how this 'everyday' genre has (the potential to be) morphed into a hybrid genre through time.

Lastly, viewing aviation safety communication as part of an assemblage, future research could explore how safety information in flight safety videos interacts with other mediums, such as the safety instruction cards, as well as the in-flight safety demonstration conducted by cabin crew, to better understand how these resources work in orchestration to convey safety information in a way that can more effectively capture passengers' attention to each of them. Moreover, a diachronic analysis can be conducted to examine how the flight safety video genre has changed before and after the COVID pandemic to reflect shifts in the priorities of the aviation and tourism industries, such as the framing of (air) travel as an authentic and luxurious experience in the post-pandemic era.

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