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“Does anybody here speak Finnish?” – Linguistic first aid and emerging translational spaces on the Finnish-Russian Allegro train

The object of this study is the Allegro train that shuttles between St. Petersburg, Russia and Helsinki, Finland. It is an international, cross-border train on which the passengers, personnel and border officials come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This article examines how they interact in the multilingual, mobile train environment. I study the translational spaces of the Allegro from a top-down direction, meaning the officially established multilingual policy of the Allegro as it appeared in organizational documentation and in the spatial repertoire of the Allegro, and from a bottom-up direction, meaning the real, on-the-ground translational practices as they appeared through observation and interviews with passengers, train personnel and officials. Translational spaces of the Allegro emerge, on the one hand, from the multilingual spatial repertoire of the train, and, on the other hand, from the spontaneous ad hoc interpreting self-administered by participants.

Keywords: translational spaces, multilingualism, train, ad hoc interpreting, translation from below, metrolingualism

Introduction

The theoretical inspiration for this study comes from relatively recent works that have explored multilingual and translational spaces (e. g., Cronin 2006; Koskinen 2013; *The City as Translation Zone* 2014). Multilingual spaces may be described as preliminarily determined physical spaces in which there co-exist several languages. In contrast to translational spaces, in multilingual spaces languages do not necessarily come into contact with each other but exist separately, as for instance, in various city suburbs (Cronin and Simon 2014, 119). Multilingual spaces are nevertheless mobile because they follow the trajectories of people moving in and out of them (Blommaert 2010, 21). In contemporary multilingual societies, communities and families, languages are used simultaneously, even in the same sentence, and they may be mixed, but they do not necessarily form translational relationships with each other. Translational spaces, on the contrary, presuppose the existence of at least some equivalence relationship between messages in different languages (Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo 2015). Translational spaces are linguistic and cultural encounters, which involve everyday as well as institutionally organized interaction between individuals and communities with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Koskinen 2013, 12). In more general terms, translational space is a space where natural (cf. Harris 2009), non-professional, as well as professional translation and interpreting take place. Translational spaces may occur in a particular society, city, community, organization, or even inside an individual when s/he mediates between different languages, cultures or modalities. Multilingualism, and translation as an activity that derives from it and, furthermore, sustains it, is associated with people's mobility, migration, and multinational communities.

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The object of the present study, the Allegro train that shuttles between Helsinki, Finland, and St. Petersburg, Russia, represents people's mobility, migration and multilingualism in a very concrete way. It is a multilingual, cross-border community in which the train personnel, border and customs officials and passengers represent different linguistic and cultural communities. Interaction between them creates spontaneous as well as institutionalized translational spaces. In this study, I investigate how the translational space on the train works, how it is organized, who the agents of this space are, and what kinds of translation and interpreting practices exist on the train. This article proceeds in a somewhat unconventional order in that the empirical part comes first, after which I try to put the Allegro practices into a theoretical framework and consider how they can be described in theoretical terms. At the end of this article, I consider the relevance of this study to "traditional" translation studies.

The Allegro train as a research object

The train has been a popular scene of action in literature and in cinematography (see von Bagh 2011). It has a powerful symbolic value. The train is a between state, a movement between time and space with accidental encounters and disconnected narratives. This in-between state is a familiar notion in translation and interpreting studies, generally referring to the neutral and impartial state of the interpreter/translator between cultures. In the current case, practically anybody occupying the in-between space of the train may become an ad hoc interpreter/translator, as will become evident later.

To my knowledge, the train has not yet been researched as a translational space. Sociolinguists, on the other hand, are rather interested in the linguistic landscapes of trains, buses, and other public transport in multilingual cities, and in how those landscapes vary depending on time of the day and on the suburbs through which trains and buses move (see Pennycook and Otsuji 2015, 45–50). Translation and travelling are usually intertwined in studies pertaining to travel writing, anthropology, eurocentrism, migration, and cultural power issues (see Polezzi 2006). In these studies, translation is seen metaphorically as a mode of representation of "the other" rather than a mundane communicative tool.

The focus of this paper, the Allegro train, started running in December 2010. It is a joint venture of the two railway companies, Russian Railways RZD and Finnish Railways VR (Karelian Trains Ltd.). The name *Allegro* refers to its high speed and to the Italian origin of the vehicles. Four Allegro trains run four times a day, back and forth. All Finnish and Russian customs and border formalities happen "on the move". Half of the train personnel are Russian and the other half Finnish. According to 2015 statistics, 49% of the passengers were Russians, 34% Finns, and 17% representatives of other nationalities. The rest of the passengers (17%) represent more than 120 different nationalities (according to Finnish border guard statistics). The biggest groups come from China, South Korea, the United States, and Brazil.

Research method and data

In order to fully comprehend it, the translational space of the Allegro must be divided into how it is officially organized and how it works in practice. A similar method has been applied in the research project *In Search of Military Translation Cultures*, in which I was involved and which was conducted at the University of Eastern Finland (2011–2014). This project studied translation and interpreting practices during the Second World War in Finland, and also partly in Germany and in the Soviet Union.¹ The key concept of that research was *translation culture*, borrowed from Prunč (1997), which, on the one hand referred to the

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official policies, norms, and rules governing translation/interpreting and, on the other hand, the real translation/interpreting practices on the ground. A similar research model of exploring official language policy from top-down management and employees' practices as a bottom-up language policy has been applied in studies on multilingual workplaces (see Kingsley 2013; Lüdi, Höchle, and Yanaprasart 2010). In the latter studies, however, the translational aspect has not necessarily been taken into account. Koskinen (2015) has recently presented a model for studying translational spaces. In her interpretation, translational spaces may be examined on three levels: 1. the institution and culture in general which produce the spaces, including language policy, 2. the situational context of translation/interpreting, and 3. the level of translation/interpreting actors/agents. Applied to this translation culture concept, the first level of Koskinen's model approximately resembles an official policy of translation/interpreting and the other two translation/interpreting practices.

In accordance with the abovementioned research models, I first examine the Allegro's organizational instructions and manuals pertaining to the multilingual environment and interaction on the train in order to discover how the organization has embedded translational spaces. This offers an answer to my research question as to how the translational space of the Allegro is institutionally organized. Second, I observe communication practices "on the move" by personally travelling on the train and executing "train walking". I also interview passengers, the train personnel and customs officials on the train. The observation and interviews provide an impression of how the translational space of the Allegro works in practice and who the agents of this space are. Video or audio recording is not possible in this context because of the delicate nature of cross-border travel. First, border control and customs inspection as such make passengers nervous. Some passengers asked me, a researcher, if I represented some official authority, because normally it is only officials who ask questions on the cross-border train. Second, video or audio recording is difficult to accomplish due to privacy regulations. For the same reason, I was neither allowed to interview nor to observe the work of border guards. My research permission application to the Finnish Border Guard was denied on the grounds that interaction between the border guard and the passenger is a matter of privacy and confidentiality. Nevertheless, two border guards agreed to answer my questions in general terms. In addition to all this, translational spaces on the train emerge to a large extent spontaneously, which makes them difficult to record.

For the field research I have made four round trips between Helsinki and St. Petersburg – in March 2015, in June 2015, in October 2015, and in June 2016 – during which I have randomly interviewed 54 Russian passengers, 20 Finnish passengers, 13 passengers of other nationalities, 11 train conductors, 9 restaurant car workers, 1 currency exchange worker, 2 border guards and 6 customs officials. Two of the restaurant car workers turned out to be students of translation studies who were doing part-time work in the restaurant car. From them I received a deeper written analysis of the ad hoc interpreting that takes place on the train as compared to what they have learnt about professional interpreting in their studies. The interviews were semi-structured, including the following broad questions: Have you used a foreign language or translated or been translated on the Allegro train? What languages have been used and in what situations? Have you had or witnessed any language related problems on the Allegro? What kind of problems? What risks deriving from multilingual communication can you indicate? I asked these questions in Russian, Finnish, or English, depending on the recipient. In the next sections, I present the results of the research.

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Officially established multilingualism

According to the Allegro service manual and the operational agreement between the Finnish and the Russian Railways, the Allegro is officially trilingual, with Finnish, Russian and English as its announcement and service languages. This means that all passenger information, signs, newspapers, feedback forms, and catering services must be provided in these three languages. In addition, the Allegro publishes its own Allegro magazine, which contains material in the three languages. Actually, the Allegro has in addition a fourth official language, namely the language of symbols, as demonstrated below:

Figure 1. Sign in the Allegro toilet.

The cultural meaning of these symbols and the relationship between the different language versions and the picture would be an interesting theme for another study. Finnish is the graphically dominating language in all signs, as can be seen in Figure 1. This dominant position is deceptive since Finnish is not the original language of the translation. According to organizational information, English was the original one in spite of its position on the last line of sign. In other words, the visual dominance of a language in multilingual writing may be misleading. In the restaurant car, however, according to the personnel, Finnish is the original language of all food-related signs, and Russian and English are translations. This makes sense because the train catering company is Finnish.

On the Russian side of the border, announcements are first given in Russian, and then in Finnish and English. On the Finnish side, the order is reversed – Finnish comes first, then Russian and English. The order of languages emphasizes the sovereignty and equality of the languages involved and accordingly the states. The same language policy is applied in bilateral agreements between states – in each language version the state whose official language it is comes first (Probirskaja 2009). English functions in this respect as a *lingua franca*. The required language skills for Finnish conductors are Finnish and English, and for Russian conductors Russian and English. Thus, at least officially, English appears to be the common work language of Russian and Finnish conductors. Even though not all staff speak all three languages, realizing the significance of languages in creating a sense of comfort and security in the passengers travelling on the international train, the organization promotes itself on its website as trilingual: “The onboard staff speak Finnish, Russian and English” (https://www.vr.fi/cs/vr/en/allegro_juna_en). These language requirements do not, however, concern border and customs officials, who have their own requirements.

Officially established multilingualism on the Allegro train is, in Reh’s (2004, 8)² typology, *duplicating* in nature, that is, the same information and services must be equally provided in Finnish, Russian and English. Nevertheless, these languages are not equally present in practice. English is always the third language of announcements whereas Finnish and Russian alternate depending on whose side of the border the train is moving. The order can be different, however, if the announcement system is malfunctioning, and conductors have to make live announcements. According to the Allegro service manual, newspapers must be provided in Finnish and Russian, English not being mentioned. Also, children’s books in the playroom are only available in Finnish and Russian. The newspapers and books in Finnish and Russian are not translations of each other but independent texts. In other words, they do create multilingual space but not translational space. Russian customs forms and Russian entry cards are available only in Russian and English. A Finnish

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passenger particularly mentioned that the Russian entry card might be odd for those who do not know its purpose.

The *Allegro* magazine as such would be an interesting object of study. It contains articles and advertisements in Russian, Finnish, and English, and it represents all types of multilingual writing in Reh's (2004, 8–15) typology: some articles are duplicating, that is, translations of each other; some are fragmentary, that is, the full article is provided only in one language, and a short summary is given in another language or languages; some are overlapping, that is, some information is duplicative in different language versions and some is different; and some are complimentary, that is, different information is provided in different language versions. The articles and ads are obviously cross-targeted for different readerships, so that the articles that concern Finland are written mainly in Russian, while those which concern Russia are written mainly in Finnish, and the English version contains summaries of both. According to the translational continuum proposed by Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo (2015), duplicating, fragmentary and overlapping multilingual writing contain a translational element, whereas complementary writing does not contain any perceivable translational element.

Officially established multilingualism on the *Allegro* train creates, for its part, spatial repertoires – “the linguistic resources at people's disposal in a given place” (Pennycook and Otsuji 2014a, 162). Pennycook and Otsuji make a distinction between spatial repertoires “as the resources available in particular places” (2014a, 165) and individual repertoires as the resources embedded in an individual. Spatial and individual repertoires are nevertheless intertwined: “people bring linguistic resources into particular places and those places provide linguistic resources that can be taken up” (Pennycook and Otsuji 2014a, 167). The interrelationship between language practices and urban spaces is called *metrolingualism* (Pennycook and Otsuji 2014a, 164). The metrolingualism concept suits our case well, as the *Allegro* is an urban space with its own spatial repertoires informed by various texts and people who bring with them their individual linguistic resources. The next section examines how people use the linguistic resources that they bring with them onto the train, and how these linguistic resources inform spatial repertoires and can be mobilized.

Dynamics of multilingualism and translational spaces in practice

Passengers

The majority (43 of 54) of Russian passengers interviewed on the *Allegro* report that they have used a foreign language – English, Finnish or both – on the train. The situations in which foreign languages are usually used include communication with the train personnel, with the border and customs officials, with the restaurant car workers, and with the co-passengers. The communication with foreign-language-speaking co-passengers usually arises from a need to provide some help or some additional information, for instance, about the train route, about a train change or about the cultural offerings of the destination cities – Helsinki and St. Petersburg. The passengers repeatedly report that communication with foreign-language-speaking co-passengers concerns mundane matters. Thirteen passengers report that they have sometimes acted as ad hoc interpreters between Russian officials and foreign passengers or between Finnish officials and Russian passengers, or between co-passengers in some extraordinary situations, such as the train being late or not functioning, and information about this event for some reason having not reached all passengers.

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The initiative to speak foreign languages with border and customs officials or with the train personnel usually comes from the passengers themselves, rather than from the actual need. Motivation to use a foreign language may come from politeness reasons, from a will to practice foreign language skills, from an assumption that treatment may be better if one speaks the foreign language, from the need to emphasize a higher social status than those who do not speak foreign languages (Andronova 2014, 45–47) or from an assumption that the interlocutor does not speak one's own language. On the other hand, some passengers especially mention that they give Finnish officials the opportunity to practice their Russian language skills even though they could speak foreign languages themselves. The large number of Russians who speak foreign languages on the Allegro train may be explained by the fact that these passengers usually represent the Russian well-off middle class because, first of all, they are travelling abroad and, second, they are using the Allegro train, which is not the cheapest way to get from Russia to Finland. In addition, in to my experience, many of Russians travelling on the Allegro work or live abroad.

The problems and risks in multilingual communication pointed out by Russian passengers pertain to insufficient foreign language skills. According to them, many Russian tourists as well as officials do not speak foreign languages. The same problem occurs with Chinese tourists. Another problem and risk perceived by the passengers is that their language skills are only superficial and not enough in some extraordinary situations, such as a medical emergency, when specialized language skills are needed. A few passengers propose that an interpreter on duty on the train would be a good idea. On the whole, passengers are optimistic regarding multilingual communication because nowadays everybody speaks at least a little foreign language – Finnish personnel and officials speak some Russian, Russian personnel, officials and tourists speak some English, and “there is always someone who speaks foreign languages and can help with translation”³, “solutions are always found, for instance, by a combination of languages”⁴.

Of the twenty Finnish passengers interviewed, fourteen report that they have used foreign languages on the train – English, Russian or both. The situations in which languages have been used resemble those that the Russian passengers mention, that is, communication with officials and with the train personnel including in the restaurant car. Two passengers relate that they have acted as ad hoc interpreters between Russian customs officials and Finnish passengers. Two other passengers consider that there is no need for interpreters today because, unlike earlier, everybody – officials and passengers – speaks foreign languages. Still, problems may occur if someone speaks only one language, or if some obscurity in the documents arises. On the whole, Finnish passengers think that language issues are well arranged on the Allegro train, and “Finnish is enough to get by”, that is, one does not need to know other languages.

During my field work, tourist groups from the USA, Canada, China, and Columbia were travelling from Helsinki to St. Petersburg. A typical route for these groups encompasses Scandinavia in general, Tallinn, Estonia, Helsinki, Finland and St. Petersburg, Russia. Language issues are arranged in these groups so that at least one person in the group speaks English (or Russian) and acts as an intermediary between the group and the “outside world”. Chinese groups are an exception in this respect, because, according to other passengers and the train personnel, they often travel alone with no foreign-language-speaking guide. One of the conductors is amazed at how brave Chinese tourists are for travelling alone without foreign language skills. At the same time, she notes, however, that they are no braver than we are when we go to China presuming that everybody there will speak English. In fact, during my own trip, the Chinese group did have a guide with English language skills.

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Americans, perhaps not surprisingly, report that “English is enough”, and they do not speak other languages. In this case, they had, anyway, a Hungarian guide who spoke Russian and English, and she actually acted as an interpreter on this particular trip – she interpreted between Russian customs officials and an American tourist who carried medicines with him. The problem pertaining to multilingual communication mentioned by all three interviewed guides – a Hungarian, a Chinese, and a Columbian – is that not all Russian officials speak enough English. According to my observation, they do speak some English, but the problem might be with their accent and prosody, which might sound strange to those unfamiliar with it (cf. Andronova 2014, 44 on pronunciation problem of Finnish border officials and of Russian tourists). In addition, their English might be enough for handling routines but not enough for solving problems or for providing additional information.

Besides tourist groups, I came across a few multilingual cosmopolitan passengers during my research. These included a Spanish businessman who speaks English, Finnish, and Russian in addition to Spanish, and who claims that he has acted as an ad hoc interpreter on the train in English–Russian, Spanish–Russian, and Spanish–Finnish language combinations between passengers and officials; an Arabic speaker who speaks Russian and Finnish; a Japanese guide who masters English and Russian, and has interpreted from Russian to Japanese between tourists and Russian officials; a retired Chinese journalist who speaks English and French; a Russian–American family whose members use mixed Russian–English language amongst themselves and whose father is, in addition, a university lecturer in Greek. These instances show that various language resources as embodied in different passengers create the one-trip spatial repertoires of the train and may be mobilized when needed. These people are like “switchers” that enable communication between different networks if necessary (Castells 2009, 20 on networks and switchers). Many Finns and Russians travelling on the Allegro may also be characterized as “switchers” as they have connections in both countries.

Personnel

There are usually two conductors working on the train at a time – a Finn and a Russian. A third Finnish conductor leaves the train in Kouvola, on the Finnish side of the border. Notwithstanding the required language skills, in practice Russian conductors know some Finnish in addition to English and, correspondingly, Finnish conductors know some Russian in addition to English. According to the interviews, conductors speak foreign languages with clients, and with colleagues they use a mixed language of English, Russian and Finnish. Sometimes they act as mediators between officials and passengers because, in addition to languages, they know the routines of border formalities. This is what Pennycook and Otsuji (2014a, 2014b) call *metrolingual multitasking*, i.e. the interrelationship between everyday tasks and linguistic resources in a particular social space. In metrolingual multitasking, particular repertoires are intertwined with particular tasks or artefacts or objects. For instance, conductors know how to ask for passports and tickets and how they look. In other words, passports and tickets form part of communicative activity. Instances of metrolingual multitasking can be identified in translation studies as well in cases where the translators’/interpreters’ tasks extend beyond interpreting and translation as such and form an integral part of other activity (one might call such translation/interpreting *paraprofessional*). For instance, military interpreters combine “soldiering and ‘languaging’” (Footitt and Kelly 2012, 239), and in-house translators can be involved in the overall production process of a company and perform all kinds of multilingual commercial mediation (Kuznik 2016).

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If some communicative problems occur, conductors call for the help of a colleague who speaks another language. Besides that, in some insoluble communicative situations they can call by phone someone in the Finnish Railways personnel who speaks Russian for remote interpreting. Finnish border guards report that they also have the possibility of remote interpreting in difficult cases. The problems and risks conductors note in multilingual communication arise from their own insufficient language skills, which can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, and from passengers who speak no language other than their own (in this connection they especially mention Chinese tourists, and misbehaving passengers who do not obey orders). It is interesting that some communicative problems do not concern interaction between conductors and passengers as one might expect, but occur between colleagues. For instance, in the case of technical malfunction a conductor needs to know special language terminology to explain to another language-speaking colleague what is going on, and this might be problematic.

Finns, Russians, and Estonians work in the restaurant car of the train, two persons at a time. Consequently, Finnish, Russian, Estonian, Swedish (as the second official language of Finland), and English are all included in the spatial repertoire of the restaurant car. Probably because of the wide array of languages and advanced language skills, the restaurant car workers report that they frequently act as interpreters between officials and passengers, between conductors and passengers, and/or between Russian and Finnish conductors. They are especially called for help when the train is delayed or defective and further connections must be explained to passengers. At the same time, their own translational skills may not be sufficient enough in all situations. For example, one of them mentions that she informs counterparts when something is too difficult for her to interpret. She also considers that a risk deriving from multilingual communication might be a misunderstanding in a work community and, as a consequence of this, a work conflict. Other problems mentioned by the restaurant workers are the passengers' lack of English (for example, Chinese tourists) and that sometimes it is difficult for them to combine their own duties with interpreting.

The students of translation studies working in the restaurant car especially mention that, compared to the practice of professional interpreting taught at the university, it is difficult for them to stay absolutely neutral and impartial when interpreting ad hoc on the train. This is because on the train they are part of the personnel team, active participants who are expected to provide advice and solutions to problems in addition to interpreting. Thus, they perform a kind of multitasking, as described above. As a consequence of their dual role as team members and as ad hoc interpreters they abandon interpreting in the first-person, the mode that has been taught at the university, because, according to them, it would be far too confusing for all participants. Nor do they interpret in the third-person, because situations on the train encompass many participants – passengers, conductors, and officials – and it is often unclear who must be interpreted to whom in what language, in other words, who is the source and who is the recipient of the interpreting. Therefore, they resort to the passive voice and to a summary interpreting, that is, they provide a kind of description of the situation to all participants. Another point one of them mentions is that when she interprets between colleagues, for instance conductors, she takes into account their knowledge of some Finnish and Russian. This manifests in a recipient design in which she adjusts her interpreting to their level of foreign language knowledge so that they hear familiar words and phrases in another language and become active participants in the whole communication process, including interpreting. Thus, her interpreting has a complementary, supportive, and language learning function.

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It is interesting that passengers often mention the restaurant car as a place where they use foreign languages even though the restaurant personnel represent different languages to a good extent. This phenomenon may be described as a kind of linguistic oversupply and as a difficulty in choosing which language to speak to whom. According to my observation, this is a very typical situation on this international train – participants switch language when they notice they have chosen the wrong code. This code-switching sometimes leads to reiteration, that is, repeating the same or similar message in another language, an act that may be considered as a (self-)translation (see Kolehmainen and Skaffari 2016 on the interfaces between code-switching, translation and reiteration). On the whole, in relation to multilingual communication, the restaurant workers are as optimistic as the passengers are – in the words of one, “everybody helps each other, and together we find a solution”.

Finnish customs officials report that the only foreign language skill requirement they have is Swedish as it is the second official language of Finland. In practice, officials also know English and some of them Russian. The problem is that Russian-speaking officials are not always on duty in all shifts. In the words of one interviewed customs official, “we do not speak Russian, and Russians do not speak English”, and that is a problem. Finnish officials’ Russian skills may be limited to some phrases, which is not enough in all situations. It is interesting that one of Finland’s domestic topics of public discussion, namely the obligatory Swedish language in education and administration of Finland, manifests itself on the train as well. Thus, Finnish customs officials mention the problem that some Swedish-speaking passengers are not willing to speak in Finnish.

Russian customs officials report that there is always someone on duty who speaks English and/or Finnish. They also mention that communicative problems sometimes occur with Chinese tourists who speak no other language than their own. Officials usually find a solution, nonetheless, by using gestures or pictures. In other words, they apply metrolingual multitasking, which encompasses the train space, the customs control routines and easy-to-show objects, such as luggage, passports, or seats, all of which support the communicative activity on the train.

Putting the multilingual practices of the Allegro train into a theoretical framework

To provide a theoretical description/explanation of translational space on the Allegro train, one has first to allocate concepts and phenomena related to the examined case. In this case, we are dealing with multilingual space in which spontaneous ad hoc interpreting and self-translation take place, thus producing translational spaces. In their article, Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo (2015) present their continuum of translational action, at the one end of which is the recognized, institutionalized and often professional translation/interpreting, while at the other end is the occasional, fragmentary and usually not perceivable translation/interpreting pursued by multilinguals in mundane situations. In Wolf’s (2015, 49–66) terms the former end would be the *institutionalized* translation/interpreting, and the latter *habitualized* translation/interpreting, that is, practiced during the course of everyday life. Translational action on the Allegro train belongs precisely to the latter end of the continuum. According to Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo (2015), translational action differs from mere multilingualism in that in translation/interpreting at least some equivalence exists between messages in different languages. The notion of equivalence is nevertheless problematic in so far as evaluating what level of similarity is sufficient to be considered equivalent, and it becomes even more uncertain when we approach languages as resources (see below for more discussion).

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Furthermore, when a person speaks a foreign language, it is difficult to determine whether it is self-translation or direct speech in a foreign language. Does s/he have any original message in another language in mind beforehand or does s/he produce a foreign language message directly in that language? The same question arises on the receptive side. When a person reads a message in a foreign language, does s/he translate it in his/her mind or perceive it as such? These questions are rather objects of study in the fields of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics (see Pavlenko 2014). From the philosophical point of view, everything is translation, but from the more empirical view, some relationship must be identified between messages in different languages. For instance, a situation in which a passenger conveys to another passenger some information announced earlier in another language may be seen as an interpreting act notwithstanding the time and distance span between the original and translated messages. So, translational space emerges from an assumed equivalence relationship between messages in different languages.

Translation and interpreting are argued to be an integral part of multilingualism, and the natural communicative resources of a multilingual person (Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo 2015). Harris provocatively argued in the 1970s that “*all* bilinguals are able to translate, within the limits of their mastery of the two languages; therefore translating is coextensive with bilingualism” and that “the basic ability to translate is an innate verbal skill” (Harris and Sherwood 1978, 155). Nowadays, the terms bilingual and bilingualism would be replaced by multilingual and multilingualism. The important notion here is the phrase, “within the limits of their mastery [...]”, that is, a bi-/multilingual person can to some extent translate/interpret without any training in translating/interpreting, but this ability is apparently not enough in demanding circumstances, as the responses of the informants in this research also show.

Research perspectives on multilingualism have changed from being purely linguistic (such as, e.g., code-switching), to more social-oriented, that is, how multilingual communication is organized and how communicative goals are achieved in particular situations (Apfelbaum and Meyer 2010, 2–3). It is not simply about language but about “getting things done” (Pennycook and Otsuji 2014a, 171). In this view, language is not seen as a discrete repertoire that an individual must master on a complete basis but rather as a set of communicative resources which may be good enough for specific purposes while not enough for others (Apfelbaum and Meyer 2010, 2–3; Angelelli 2015, 34; Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005, 199). In Blommaert’s (2010, 197) words, the focus of sociolinguistics must be shifted from “immobile languages” to “mobile resources”. These linguistic resources move in, out of and within places, and can be mobilized when needed (Pennycook and Otsuji 2014a, 165). Thus, the movement and mobility do not only conceptualize the train but also the linguistic resources and spatial repertoires, which in turn will vary depending on the constellation of passengers and train personnel.

Approaching languages as resources entails a need for a reconceptualization of the translation concept, because the traditional dichotomies of translation – the source language and the target language – are not valid in this framework. The translation of mobile linguistic resources and of multilingualism in general requires the flexible use of available linguistic resources. One useful approach can be to treat translation as a resource as well. Translational resources are akin to communicative resources as conceptualized above in that they are mobile (sometimes literally mobile in the mode of various applications); they are spatial, provided in particular spaces, as well as individual; they may be good enough for some purposes, albeit not

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enough for others; they may be exploited to translate just some bits of information, depending on a communicative goal. In our case, the translational resources of passengers, conductors and officials are good enough for handling routines. If something extraordinary happens, they can turn for help to other colleagues or passengers whose translational resources are more advanced, and in the most extreme cases they can turn to a remote interpreter. In other words, translational resources are distributed among different participants and may be invoked on request. The request for translational help may come from any participant in a communicative event. Some passengers report that they offer help if they perceive a communicative problem related to foreign language skills, while others, on the contrary, explicitly state that they do not want to intervene. The motivation for providing help in foreign languages, in addition to the above-mentioned politeness reasons, practice in foreign languages, expectation of better treatment, and emphasizing higher social status, may be mere good will, and a personal interest in a smooth trip without obstacles, because the common goal of all passengers and personnel is obviously to arrive on time at the destination. The request for help coming from officials is, according to my observation, usually presented in the following form: "Does anybody here speak Finnish (or English)?" This request may be interpreted as binding considering the officials' and passengers' roles as subjects asking questions and subjects obliged to answer, accordingly. It is interesting that the need for ad hoc interpreting prevails in these cases over the issues of confidentiality and privacy, since lay passengers acting as ad hoc interpreters are obviously not bound by the rules of conduct and codes of ethics of professional interpreters.

Non-professional translation/interpreting is a relatively new research area in translation and interpreting studies (see Martínez-Gómez 2015; Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva 2012), and it is still "in search of theory" (Toury as quoted in Müller 1989, 713). Non-professional translation/interpreting is mainly associated with community interpreting, especially with healthcare interpreting, where a family member, a nurse, or a cleaner may act as ad hoc interpreter (see Lesch and Saulse 2014; Meyer et al. 2010; Meyer, Kliche and Pawlack 2010; Pawlack 2011; Pöchhacker and Kadric 1999), with child language brokering (Antonini 2010), and with volunteer interpreting and crowdsourcing (McDonough Dolmaya 2012; O'Hagan 2009; Olohan 2014). In all these instances a non-professional interpreter has at least some ties with the participants, with the institution where interpreting takes place or with the subject of interpreting. The Allegro personnel may be compared to non-professional healthcare staff interpreters in that they represent the institution and are familiar with the substance, but do not necessarily have any training in interpreting, with the exception of the translation studies students. Unlike the described cases in non-professional healthcare interpreting, the train interpreting has a collective nature in terms of both the agents and recipients of interpreting. Traverso (2012, 166) exploits the term *collaborative translation* for this type of interpreting in multilingual work meetings, where several participants produce the interpreting together, intervening and searching together for the right word or expression in another language. For their part, passengers acting as ad hoc interpreters may be characterized as complete outsiders of the situation of interpreting, because they do not necessarily have any connections with the participants, institution or subject of the interpreting. If non-professional interpreting were to be put on a continuum of how close a relationship the interpreters have with an interpreting situation, then the passengers would be on a completely ad hoc edge. The only connection they might have is metrolingual multitasking, including the experience of train travel and border control routines, and the linguistic repertoires connected to them. Indeed, the Allegro is a temporary, one-trip "community of experience" (in Susskinds' [2015] terms), in which different participants will share their knowledge and experience with others.

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Conclusions and further research

The multilingual environment and spatial repertoire of the Allegro train produces translational spaces, which emerge through code-switched reiteration, through the request of someone needing translational help or through a volunteered offer of help. The translational spaces of the Allegro are mobile, and will vary every time depending on the constellation of passengers and train personnel. Translational resources are distributed among the different passengers, train personnel and other “switchers”, and are employed in a stepwise manner: first, the participants try to get along with their own resources; if they are not enough, they can turn for help to other passengers and colleagues; as a last resort, they can call for the help of a remote interpreter. Lay people become agents of translational space spontaneously and act in a collaborative, solidary manner, performing what can be called *translation from below* (by analogy with multilingualism and multiculturalism from below, see Pennycook and Otsuji 2014b, 258), that is, a situational everyday translation initiated and self-administered by the participants in an encounter. Translational help provided by train personnel or by passengers can be characterized as linguistic first aid. The definition of medical first aid (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_aid) applies well to linguistic first aid in that it is also initial help given prior to professional help in serious conditions, or complete help in minor conditions; it is often performed by untrained lay people with no prior knowledge, and it can involve improvisation. Trusting that linguistic first aid is available when needed creates a sense of security among participants in a given situation. As they say in the current study, “There is always someone who can help with translation”.

Furthermore, studying the mundane translational performances of multilinguals brings new perspectives to traditional translation studies, for instance, in regard to the modes and functions of translation/interpreting (see Kolehmainen, Koskinen, and Riionheimo 2015). As this research has shown, ad hoc interpreters rely on the various spatial and individual repertoires of other participants, thereby making interpreting a supportive, applied-on-demand, collaborative, and flexible activity. Observations could also be made the other way round from the perspective of traditional translation studies embedded in new non-professional settings. Thus, an uncharted research area is the question of how professional interpreters act in settings usually associated with non-professional interpreting, such as healthcare interpreting for family members, crowdsourcing or, pertaining to our case, ad hoc interpreting on trains. The present study simply takes the first steps in this new research direction because two of the restaurant car workers also happened to be future professional interpreters and were acting as ad hoc interpreters on the train. According to their observations, traditional interpreting tenets such as interpreting in the first-person, neutrality, and impartiality do not function well in ad hoc interpreting situations with many participants, and especially when the interpreter is a member of a team and performing other tasks besides interpreting. These issues are worth studying further in regards to in-house interpreters who are engaged in multitasking.

Another issue worth consideration in translation studies relates to the ethics of the professional interpreters who find themselves in ad hoc interpreting situations. For instance, should a professional interpreter be the first to offer translational help on hearing the request “Does anybody here speak English?” The request for translational help is comparable to the in-flight request “Is there a nurse/doctor on board?” Writers in medical journals have held discussions on the responsibilities, liabilities, and limits of action of doctors called to render aid in in-flight emergencies (for instance Peterson et al. 2013). Similar discussion could be raised regarding the responsibilities, liabilities, and limits of action of professional

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interpreters in the situation of a “linguistic emergency”. Whereas lay people generally offer their help spontaneously and intuitively, professionals might stop to consider the consequences of their intervention in the situation. In other words, their professional consciousness, the limits of their professional competence, and, paradoxically, their professional ethics might prevent them from acting spontaneously and from providing immediately translational help. The parallels between medicine and translation have been drawn before. In fact, Chesterman (2001, 151) has written: “Translators are like doctors in that their task is to intervene in certain cases of communicative suffering: those involving language and culture boundaries”. At the time, he proposed a Hieronymic Oath for translators and interpreters but, apparently, his proposal has remained without response. This and other research questions related to ad hoc interpreting could be examined in the future or dug out of the past.

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Notes

1. See the project website <https://translationinww2infin.wordpress.com/>
2. Koskinen (2012) first applied Reh's typology in her study of translational spaces of the suburb of Hervanta in Tampere, Finland.
3. All translations from Russian and Finnish are the author's unless otherwise specified.
4. "Combination of languages" refers to relay-interpreting in professional terminology.

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