

## Terminological Challenges in Discourse on Sight Translation: A Cross-Linguistic Study

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**Abstract:** This article investigates terminological variation in the discourse on sight translation across five scholarly traditions: Polish, German, English, Italian, and Russian. Through definitional analysis, corpus-based investigation of online and academic usage, and critical examination of terminology, the study reveals notable inconsistencies in how this translation mode is named and conceptualised. These discrepancies reflect broader divergences in whether sight translation is categorised as translation, interpreting, or as a hybrid form, which challenges theoretical coherence in the field. The article contends that terminological precision is crucial for the epistemological integrity of translation studies and for enabling meaningful comparisons across linguistic and cultural contexts. It calls for the adoption of standardised, linguistically grounded terminology to promote conceptual clarity and facilitate international scholarly dialogue. By mapping and critically evaluating current terminological practices, this study advances efforts to harmonise translation studies terminology and reinforce the field's conceptual foundations.

**Keywords:** sight translation, terminological inconsistency, academic discourse, accuracy of knowledge, linguistic and semantic adequacy

### Introduction

Terminological consistency and precision constitute fundamental prerequisites for the development and coherence of any academic discipline. In translation studies – where theoretical reflection and professional practice intersect, and where core concepts traverse linguistic and cultural boundaries – the demand for terminological unity and definitional rigour becomes particularly acute. The more consistent and transparent a discipline's terminology, the more effectively its theoretical models can be formulated, communicated, and validated. Conversely, terminological inconsistency obscures conceptual distinctions and constrains the cumulative and comparative potential of scholarly inquiry.

One domain in which such inconsistency is especially evident is sight translation. Despite its long-standing presence in both professional practice and translator training, the term itself – and the conceptual scope it denotes – remain the subject of considerable variation across linguistic and academic traditions. Furthermore, the absence of consensus regarding its classification as translation, interpreting, or an intermediate form has resulted in significant terminological and definitional indeterminacy. This situation complicates scholarly communication and undermines the epistemological precision of translation studies.

The present article addresses this issue by undertaking a systematic terminological analysis of sight translation across five linguistic traditions, including Polish, German, English, Italian, and Russian. The discussion is guided by the conviction that terminological clarity and consistency are not merely matters of linguistic convention but essential determinants of the accuracy and reliability of disciplinary knowledge. It argues that the systematisation of the translation terminology – exemplified here through the case of sight translation—constitutes an indispensable scholarly task.

Accordingly, the study seeks to organise the discourse on sight translation by critically reviewing existing terminological usages, assessing their linguistic and semantic adequacy, and proposing terminological solutions that enhance definitional coherence. Through this analysis, the article contributes to ongoing efforts toward standardisation of translation terminology and, more broadly, to the strengthening of the conceptual and epistemological foundations of translation studies as a field of knowledge.

### **1. The dual nature of sight translation**

Sight translation is a translation act that consists in source-text reception (when a translator reads a message and reconstructs the meaning given to it by a sender) and production of a new text that is adequate to the source text (when a translator creates the specific signal/a message that expresses the specific meaning adequate to the meaning expressed in the original message). In general language, the translator reads a written text while simultaneously reproducing its content orally. I treat the act defined here as “sight translation” as a specific kind of communicative act. The term “act” refers both to mental processes (occurring in the translator’s brain and engaged in the translation activity) and to the language activity/action, i.e., the production of the translated text.

The duality or two-dimensionality of the act – involving the perception of a written source text and production of an oral target text – has certainly contributed to the lack of clarity as to whether sight translation should be considered a type of written translation or a type of interpretation, or whether it is a mixed or maybe intermediate separate form, and how to call it on this account. The following article deals with terminological incongruities prevailing in the academic considerations on the translation type discussed herein, and which are not limited to Polish translation studies. I will also reference terminology applied in German, English, Italian, and Russian translation studies. For most schools of translation studies, the debate about sight translation – both substantively and in terms of terminology – is unambiguous and far from being clear-cut.

To distinguish nominally what constitutes the object of my interest, I will apply the following designations: “sight translation” and “sight translation act”. The results of the terminological analysis of the names appearing in the source literature will be justification in favour of the option I chose and will serve to systematise the academic debate on this matter. Therefore, the aim of the presented considerations is to systematise the terminological debate, i.e., the debate referring to the designations for the discussed translation process.

First, I will present existing modes of naming and approaching the scope of cognition, which I denote as “sight translation”, and in particular by presenting my attempt to form an evaluation of the adequacy and correctness of the designations used for this translation, and the attempt to assess the semantic scope attributed to this type.

## 2. The need for terminological systematisation

Generally speaking, analysis of the source literature that addresses the issue of sight translation proves the lack of unanimity and clarity as to the nominal recognition of what we call “sight translation”, but also about the determination of the semantic scope of the phrase “sight translation”. In brief, it is characterised by far-reaching terminological and definitional inaccuracy. Let me add that many authors do not even venture to find an answer to the question of how the term they used is to be understood, assuming instead that its semantic scope has already been settled, is clear, and commonly known. Such a state of affairs makes the translation discourse on sight translation difficult and also hinders its academic recognition.

Paraphrasing the remark on the “quality” of legal languages made by S. Grucza (2011)<sup>1</sup>, one may say that qualitative relations between the language and cognition in translation studies may be described by saying that the denotative accuracy of the language determines the accuracy of knowledge/cognition in translation studies. Of course, as was justly noted by S. Grucza (2008), even though the denotative accuracy of specialised languages cannot be limited to the denotative accuracy of terms (understood as lexical components of specialised languages), they nonetheless constitute a significant coefficient of the denotative quality of specialised languages. This means that the systematisation of the translation terminology (here concerning sight translation) has become an urgent metatranslational need, since the scope of this systematisation will directly affect the quality and precision of specialised language, which, in turn, affects the “accuracy”, as it is called by S. Grucza, of scientific knowledge and, crucially, the “value” of academic discourse in translation studies and thus also the extension of their cognitive limits.

By accommodating the postulate on systematising the debate, I will present terminological propositions, referring to the nominal distinction of what I mean when using the phrase “sight translation”, and I will venture to analyse them according to the degree of denotative precision and language accuracy.

## 3. Terminological designations used in Polish for sight translation

I shall open my remarks with a discussion of naming propositions developed in the Polish linguistic context. Particular attention will be given to those recorded in terminological dictionaries of translation studies, whose entries and accompanying comments represent a synthesised outcome of scholarly debates in this domain. Next, I will proceed to discuss the naming propositions presented in monographs, treatises, and articles devoted to translation studies. I will also take into account the observations included in “Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego z komentarzem” (Eng. *Code of the Sworn Translator with Commentary*; see Kierzkowska, ed. 2005), a compendium outlining permissible actions in specific translation contexts and serving as a practically oriented source of professional translation knowledge. Also, the normative propositions regarding the terminological distinction of sight translation, provided in dictionaries of the Polish language, shall be the object to a critical review. The aim of this review is, among others, to verify whether the entries in dictionaries of translation terminology were built according to (normative) rules of the Polish language. Next, I will discuss the results of the terminological analysis of online

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<sup>1</sup> The author phrases it thusly in his article of 2001: “Denotative accuracy of legal languages determines the accuracy of legal expertise and texts” (Grucza 2011: 32, transl. MP).

text material concerning (directly or indirectly) the nominal distinction of sight translation, although I will take into consideration only those statements that can be seen as being academic at least to some degree.

The “Słownik dydaktyczny terminologii translatorycznej” (Eng. *Didactic dictionary of translation terminology*), edited by J. Lukszyn and published in 1991, includes the Polish term  *tłumaczenie a vista* (Lukszyn 1991: 91). The “Tezaurus terminologii translatorycznej” (Eng. *Thesaurus of Translation Terminology*), also edited by J. Lukszyn and issued by PWN two years later (reprinted in 1998), which to some extent expands and complements the earlier dictionary, likewise contains the entry  *tłumaczenie a vista* (Lukszyn 1998: 351)<sup>2</sup>.

In contrast, the Polish version of “Translation Terminology” (2004, UAM Press), edited by J. Delisle, H. Lee-Jahnke, and M. C. Cormier, and translated and adapted for the Polish context by T. Tomaszewicz, does not include any entry corresponding to the Polish term for sight translation ( *tłumaczenie a vista*). The term is also absent from the list of translation types. This omission is somewhat surprising, especially given that the Polish edition of “Translation Terminology” contains other entries such as  *tłumaczenie dydaktyczne* ( *didactic translation*) and  *tłumaczenie szkolne* ( *pedagogical translation*) (Delisle/ Lee-Jahnke/ Cormier 2006: 104, 108).

As regards the “Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego z komentarzem”, published by the Polish association of economic and legal translators and interpreters in 2005 (renewed and extended considerably in 2011, published by Translegis<sup>3</sup>) and edited by D. Kierzkowska, it constitutes a guide not only of translation norms, but also for terminological usage norms, and this source, too, fails to feature a separate entry for sight translation. Although the authors (in both editions) register the existence of sight translation (and they even use the term:  *tłumaczenie a vista*), they treat it dismissively. It is merely mentioned in Section II, titled “Zasady praktyki zawodowej” (Eng.  *Rules of professional practice*)<sup>4</sup>, in the second chapter “Tłumaczenie ustne” (Eng.  *Interpretation*) (Kierzkowska 2005: 78, 2009: 112) as a side note to the presented practices of sworn translation. It means, the authors of “Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego z komentarzem 2011” allocate sight translation to the category of interpretation, thus adhering to the tradition of the past:

A sworn translator has the right to ask for a copy of the text to be read by the participant of a proceeding, so as to interpret it using the sight translation technique, or to ask for adjusting the pace and execution of the statement (speech volume, clarity of articulation) to his individual translation capacity, so as to facilitate for him to keep up with the translation of the text, especially if there are elements that are difficult to remember, such as numbers or names (§ 70) (Kierzkowska 2011: 112, transl. MP).

<sup>2</sup> On a side note: “Tezaurus terminologii translatorycznej” suggests as the foreign language equivalents the phrases  *translation at sight* for English (though rather uncommon) and  *Avista-Übersetzung* for German (a phrase not in use in that language). However, the proposition provided for the Russian language equivalent is correct, as it is the phrase  *перевод с листа*. Commonly used in Russia-speaking countries.

<sup>3</sup> The exact title of this item is: “Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego z komentarzem 2011”.

<sup>4</sup> In the version of 2005, the section is titled “Zasady etyki zawodowej” (Rules of professional ethics).

In the next passages, the authors expound that it pertains to a situation where the judge or prosecutor read the text of a decision, or judgement or where, during the trial, a long and difficult text is read out loud. That is how, in the code of professional practice for court interpreters, sight translation is treated as an additional and auxiliary translation technique that may be applied during an interpretation in court. However, in this particular case, we may arguably speak of a specialised type of sight translation.

Before that, source literature used the term *thumaczenie z kartki* (literal translation in English: *translating text from a sheet*)<sup>5</sup>. The phrase poses certain problems, mainly because it is outdated and does not cover all possible forms of source text. The Polish expression *thumaczenie a vista* refers to a specific translation act in which the source text is received in visual form, whereas the text of the translation is materially executed in oral form. At present, advances in digital media mean that the source text does not have to exist in printed form. It may equally likely be displayed on the screen of a tablet, smartphone, computer, or an interactive whiteboard. Quite frequently, it is a text that forms an integral part of a multimedia presentation. Hence, we ought to consider the semantic scope of the expression *thumaczenie z kartki* as too narrow, and even anachronistic. In other words, using this phrase as the nominal distinction of the part of reality named sight translation is impossible, as it has become outdated. What is more, the phrase *thumaczenie z kartki* as such is not working really, for substantive reasons. We translate texts, so the reading device is less important, but also in a written translation we sometimes also happen to translate a text printed out on paper (even if the prevailing mode of translation involves electronic files or CAT tools, which is tantamount to translating texts on a computer screen).

Based on the above-quoted names alone, we see that, fortunately, the Polish language has not developed an excessive number of terms to describe the analysed translation activity – contrary to German nomenclature. In Polish, the term used most frequently to denote the scope of translation reality of sight translation is *thumaczenie a vista*. The problem of the Polish term starts on a wholly different level – the multitude of spelling forms of the loan word component of the phrase, meaning the part *a vista*.

The orthographic dictionaries “Wielki słownik ortograficzny PWN”, edited by E. Połański (2012: 43), and the “Nowy słownik poprawnej polszczyzny PWN”, edited by A. Markowski (1999/2002: 38), both provide the term “a vista”, though they list also the variant spelling form “awista”. The latter is defined as meaning “on demand,” as in examples such as, e.g.: “konto awista – na każde żądanie, wkłady awista – na żądanie” [Eng. “current account – on demand, demand deposit”], although these entries are not connected to the concept of “translation”. In a dictionary published in 2007: “Język polski. Wielki słownik wyrazów obcych i trudnych”, A. Markowski and R. Pawelec (2007: 83) write: “awista: 1. O wekslach: płatny wtedy, gdy zostanie przedstawiony, okazany. [About bills: payable on sight, bill of demand] *Przedstawił weksel awista i zażądał pieniędzy* [He presented a bill of demand demanding payment]; 2. O wkładach bankowych, kontach: taki, na który wpłaca się dowolne sumy w dowolnym czasie i można je w całości odbierać na żądanie: wkład awista. [About bank deposits accounts: one that one may pay any kind of amount at any given time and which may be withdrawn in total on

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<sup>5</sup> There is a similar expression in Russian, namely *перевод с листа*, which I will write more about in a subsequent passage.

demand: demand deposit.] *Wpłacił 10 00 zł na konto awista i wypłacił je po czterech dniach.* [He paid up 10 PLN onto his current account and withdrew the money after four days.] Wł. ‘a vista’ ‘za okazaniem’’. [Italian ‘a vista’ ‘at sight’] At any rate, the latter information - “wł. a vista – za okazaniem” [Italian ‘a vista’ ‘at sight’] is also provided in the dictionary “Słownik wyrazów obcych PWN z przykładami i poradami” (Bańko 2009: 92), as well as in “Słownik wyrazów obcych” (Kamińska-Szmaj 2009: 49).

All of the above-mentioned dictionaries list the two spelling variations “a vista” and “awista” as equivalent forms, explaining the meaning in an economic context. Only W. Kopaliński goes beyond those purely business-related explications, writing in his “Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych z almanachem” [Eng. *The Dictionary of Words and Phrases of Foreign Origin*] (see Kopaliński 2007: 55) “‘a vista’ – wł. (wykonanie utworu z nut) bez przygotowania; (a) prima vista; por. ad aperturam libri”. [‘a vista’ - It. (performing a piece of music or song in music notation) at sight; (a) prima vista; see ad aperturam libri’.] This explanation is closer to the semantic scope expressed by the phrase “sight translation”.

Let us underscore in summary that the spelling forms “a vista” and “awista” are the only possible forms in Polish, since in line with the rules of adapting language borrowings to the Polish language, it is necessary to: (a) either leave the phrase or fragment of the phrase in its original form, making it an exotic borrowing (which would be the form “a vista”); (b) or naturalise the expression, meaning adjust it to the rules of Polish spelling and pronunciation, which means it is a naturalised borrowing (in this case we would use the form “awista”, which is even more appropriate than the version “a wista”, since we do not, in the Polish language, separate vowels from a word, meaning we naturalise the borrowing). Because both *a vista* and *awista* are permissible under current orthographic norms, actual usage (*usus*) determines which form prevails. Corpus data (see Table 1) show that the phrase *thumaczenie a vista* occurs far more frequently and that its use has increased in recent years. This indicates not only a growing preference for the correct nominal expression but also a broader rise in interest in sight translation. The evidence also demonstrates that *usus* is gradually displacing the polonised variant *awista*.

It must be emphasised that merging both components of the expression into a single word while retaining the Latin grapheme *v* (*avista*) is linguistically incorrect in Polish. This hybrid form—apparently the result of an attempt to domesticate the structure—has nevertheless appeared sporadically in academic publications. More commonly, it is found on translators’ discussion forums, personal websites, and, regrettably, even on the webpage of one university. Particularly disconcerting is the fact that this erroneous form has also appeared in the *Polonistics Bulletin*<sup>6</sup>.

Other incorrect spelling forms can also be found, most notably *thumaczenie à vista*. Alarmingly, such variants appear even on university websites. For instance, the website of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn includes information about an interpreting course featuring *thumaczenie à vista* exercises<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, the University of Silesia uses both the correct and incorrect variants (*thumaczenie à vista*) in its USOS system when

<sup>6</sup> URL: [https://biuletynpolonistyczny.pl/pl/institutions/pdf?institution\\_id=2902](https://biuletynpolonistyczny.pl/pl/institutions/pdf?institution_id=2902)

<sup>7</sup> URL: [https://usosweb.uwm.edu.pl/kontroler.php?\\_action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz\\_kod=98S2O-TUTNT](https://usosweb.uwm.edu.pl/kontroler.php?_action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz_kod=98S2O-TUTNT) (access 8.11.2025)

describing interpreting classes<sup>8</sup>. Even Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań did not avoid this mistake when describing its courses and learning outcomes<sup>9</sup>. The same applies to the Pomeranian University in Słupsk<sup>10</sup>. My intention is not to criticise but to advocate for greater consistency, correctness, and the standardisation of terminology used for sight translation. The rest of the search engine results are for translation agencies that use the incorrect name. Regarding the phrase *tłumaczenie à vista*, the mistake lies in the use of an apostrophe, which is alien to the Polish language and thus incomprehensible. Putting all else aside, even if we assume that this spelling results from the use of an exoticism, we still have no answer to the question of what language the apostrophe was borrowed from – we may presume it stems from Portuguese, since that is how the phrase is spelt in that language. Let us recap: the rules of creating exoticisms apply to loan words derived from source languages. The expression “a vista” used in Polish was derived from the Italian language<sup>11</sup>, which in turn inherited it from Latin, featuring the spelling “a vista” without diacritic signs. The form “à vista” should thus be considered incorrect for the Polish language, irrespective of the fact that it is (sporadically) used on websites (mostly in short descriptive texts about the activity of translation offices, but also in descriptions of university courses and subjects, and on rare occasions in academic publications as mentioned above).

Another incorrect spelling of the phrase *a vista* involves the use of an apostrophe to separate the letter “a” from the rest of the expression — as in *a' vista* (immediately after the letter “a”), *a 'vista* (with the apostrophe before *vista*), or *a'vista* (without a space). Numerous examples of such spellings could be found in the past<sup>12</sup>. Fortunately, some of the websites that used them have since corrected the error or are no longer active, although others still feature the incorrect form. These spellings are unjustified for the same reasons that the previously discussed form *à vista* is considered incorrect. It is, however, concerning that such variants continue to appear on websites describing courses in translation and translation studies offered by Polish universities.

Below, I present the findings of research based on an analysis of the relevant literature on the subject, which I have been conducting since 2012. Since 2015, this research has been complemented by systematic monitoring of the frequency of selected phrases on the internet — both in academic publications and on translators’ websites and blogs – to ob-

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<sup>8</sup>URL:[https://usosweb.us.edu.pl/kontroler.php?action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz\\_kod=W1-S1FG-T-TU-6](https://usosweb.us.edu.pl/kontroler.php?action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz_kod=W1-S1FG-T-TU-6) (8.11.2025)

<sup>9</sup> URL: [https://bip.amu.edu.pl/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0034/496069/US-453-2023-2024-Zal.3.pdf](https://bip.amu.edu.pl/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/496069/US-453-2023-2024-Zal.3.pdf) (8.11.2025)

<sup>10</sup>URL:[https://cms.upsl.edu.pl/content/download/65559/file/Program%20studi%C3%B3w\\_FG\\_SDS\\_2022.pdf](https://cms.upsl.edu.pl/content/download/65559/file/Program%20studi%C3%B3w_FG_SDS_2022.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> A. Markowski/ R. Pawełec 2001, W. Kopaliński 2007, I. Kamińska-Szmaj 2001.

<sup>12</sup> See i.e. URL: <http://www.tlumaczenia-ustne-miw.pl/blog/tlumaczenie-ustne-przysiegle-u-notariusza/> (accessed: 9.07.2012, repeated: 26.09.2015); <http://www.sjk.umcs.lublin.pl/sylabus/2271/print> (accessed: 09.07.2012); [http://informatores.uw.edu.pl/pl/courses/view?prz\\_kod=3223-Z2PT](http://informatores.uw.edu.pl/pl/courses/view?prz_kod=3223-Z2PT) (accessed 09.07.2012); <http://sjk.umcs.lublin.pl/sylabus/2379/print> (accessed: 09.07.2012); <http://www.viaverbis.pl/tlumaczenia/tlumaczenia-ustne> (accessed: 09.07.2012); <http://www.lingwistyka.edu.pl/upload/podyplomowe/podyplomoweStudiumTlumaczyLiterackich-informacje.pdf> (accessed: 20.11.2015).

serve emerging trends and determine whether they indicate a movement toward terminological standardisation or further diversification I have also aimed to assess the overall level of interest in this topic within translation studies and professional translation practice. The Polish designations for sight translation are as follows:

DESIGNATION	ACADEMIC SOURCES	FREQUENCY OF USE ON THE INTERNET
<b> tłumaczenie a vista</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Gorszczyńska 2012; Lukszyn (ed.) 1991, 1998; Kierzkowska (ed.) 2005/ 2011; Kamińska-Szmaj 2009; Markowski (ed.) 1999/ 2002; Markowski/ Pawelec 2007; Kopaliński 2007; Kubacki 2012; Nader-Cioczek 2022; Pieńkos 1993; Płużyczka 2011a, b, 2012, 2013a,b, 2015</li> <li>2) TEPIS (Polskie Towarzystwo Tłumaczy Przyjętych i Specjalistycznych – Eng. Polish Association of Sworn and Specialised Translators): <a href="http://www.tepis.org.pl/pdf-doc/home//r-jtpk.pdf">http://www.tepis.org.pl/pdf-doc/home//r-jtpk.pdf</a></li> <li>3) many university websites</li> </ol>	<i>very frequent:</i> Google hits <sup>13</sup> 1,040 (26.09.2015) 3,600 (3.11.2021) 2,960 (8.11.2025)
<b> tłumaczenie awista</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Kamińska-Szmaj 2009, Markowski (ed.) 1999/ 2002; Markowski/ Pawelec 2007; Kopaliński 2007, Żmudzki 2002.</li> </ol>	<i>very rare:</i> 6 (26.09.2015) 31 (3.11.2021) 10 (8.11.2025)
<b> tłumaczenie avista</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Nader-Cioczek 2015, 2016<sup>14</sup></li> <li>2) some university websites<sup>15</sup></li> </ol>	<i>not so frequent:</i> 821 (26.09.2015) 243 (3.11.2021) 169 (8.11.2025)
<b> tłumaczenie à vista</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Żmudzki 2015 (paper in German)<sup>16</sup></li> <li>2) some university websites</li> <li>3) some translators' websites, translation blogs<sup>17</sup></li> </ol>	<i>rare:</i> 114 (01.06.2015) 57 (3.11.2021) 105 (8.11.2025)

<sup>13</sup> The number of online hits indicates the number of occurrence of a given phrase (only in such a combination and order as marked in the search field, without search results for separate parts of the phrase) in the most popular search engine: Google ([www.google.pl](http://www.google.pl))

<sup>14</sup> In later publications, the author uses the term *tłumaczenie a vista* (Nader-Cioczek, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> URL: [https://usosweb.umcs.pl/kontroler.php?action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz\\_kod=H-TA1J-LS.T-1S.1](https://usosweb.umcs.pl/kontroler.php?action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot&prz_kod=H-TA1J-LS.T-1S.1) (accessed 9.11.2025).

<sup>16</sup> The article is written in German, but it also provides Polish terminology. It is therefore difficult to say where this spelling comes from. However, it should be emphasised that conceptually, this author (J. Żmudzki) contributed greatly to the description of sight translation and placing it in the broader context of the translation system.

<sup>17</sup> URL: <https://www.prolingua.com.pl/blog/67-na-czym-polega-tlumaczenie-a-vista> (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://www.tlumaczenia-miw.pl/wordpress/2012/03/15/tlumaczenia-avista/> (accessed 9.11.2025).

<b> tłumaczenie a' vista/ a 'vista/ a 'vista</b>	1) some university websites (listed above in the description) 2) some translation agency websites	<i>very rare</i>
<b> tłumaczenie z kartki</b>	1) Źmudzki 2002, Kubacki 2012 2) some university websites	750 (26.09.2015) 573 (3.11.2021) 368 (8.11.2025)

Table 1. Designations for sight translation found in Polish-language literature.

The examination of Polish terminology for sight translation demonstrates a clear trend toward terminological consolidation. Among the various expressions identified,  *tłumaczenie a vista* emerges as the only form that is both linguistically correct and conceptually adequate from the perspective of translation studies. Other variants—such as  *tłumaczenie awista*,  *à vista*,  *avista*, and  *z kartki* – should be regarded as erroneous or outdated, either because they violate Polish orthographic norms or fail to reflect the full semantic scope of the phenomenon in question.

Quantitative data confirm that  *tłumaczenie a vista* has gained increasing dominance in both academic and professional usage. Earlier or alternative designations, such as  *tłumaczenie awista*,  *tłumaczenie à vista*,  *tłumaczenie avista*, and  *tłumaczenie z kartki*, have proven inadequate. Their shortcomings stem from either semantic inaccuracy, orthographic impropriety, or the anachronistic restriction of meaning to printed texts. Although such variants still sporadically appear in non-academic contexts (notably on university websites and translators' pages), their declining frequency indicates growing terminological awareness and points to a broader process of standardisation and conceptual clarification within Polish translation studies. Such stabilisation of nomenclature not only facilitates scholarly communication but also enhances the epistemological precision of the discipline.

I would like to conduct a critical assessment of the phrases used in other languages to denote sight translation. After all, the lack of terminological clarity and precision in this regard is not something limited to Polish translation studies. I shall commence my remarks by presenting Italian phrases and discussing the scope of meaning they refer to, to explain the origin of the phrase itself and its initial meaning. I will limit myself to listing only particular designations and a short description of these as I am not a native speaker of the languages in question. My goal is to approximate the current state of affairs.

#### 4. Terminological designations used in Italian for sight translation

It should be emphasised that the term  *a vista* derives etymologically from Italian. The Italian  *a vista* is quite a specific phrase. The word  *vista* itself refers us to “view, sight”. The word is often encountered in many phrasemes and established collocations, e.g.  *amore a prima vista* (“love at first sight”),  *essere fuori di vista* (“be out of sight”),  *punto di vista* (“viewpoint”). However,  *a vista* is also used to signify: “in view range”, “due to”, “on sight”, “on account of”, “in the presence of”, as well as “at first glance” (often used  *a prima vista*), which is where the meaning “without preparation” stems from, e.g. the well-known phrase “ *a vista*” meaning in Polish “(performing a musical piece from

a musical score) at first sight” (Kopaliński 2007: 55)<sup>18</sup>.

Concerning the use of *a vista* in translation studies, the Italian language applies it in the phrases *traduzione a vista* and *interpretazione a vista*. The word *traduzione* denotes translation, whereas *interpretazione* – signifies interpretation (oral translation). This means that the phrase “traduzione a vista” basically means sight translation, i.e. translating by receiving the source text in written form and producing the target text in oral form. And yet, the semantic scope of *traduzione a vista* does not mean that sight translation is categorised as either written or oral translation because the word *traduzione* denotes simply “translating” in general. Contrary to that, the phrase *interpretazione a vista* does imply such a category attribution, as *interpretazione* means basically “interpreting”. This division of semantic scopes would thus overlap, more or less, with the division of semantic scopes we see in English, between the phrases *sight translation* and *sight interpretation*. However, for the moment being, I shall not delve deeper into how much such differentiation is justified for translation studies, and instead, I will limit myself to the level of purely terminological reflection.

DESIGNATION	SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF USE
<i>traduzione a vista</i>	1) in academic publications <sup>19</sup> : Gran/ Viezzi 1995; Ballardini 1998; Bendazzoli 2010; Ross 2020 2) recommendation of AITI – Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti <sup>20</sup> 3) on the websites of universities presenting their curriculum <sup>21</sup> .	very frequent: Google hits 4,750 (3.06.2015) 8,480 (3.11.2021) 5,720 (8.11.2025)
<i>interpretazione a vista</i>	1) in academic publications: Di Molfetta 2019; Bendazolli (2010) <sup>22</sup> ; Mack/ Leibbrand (2021)	increased application recently 85 (9.07.2012), 1,150 (3.06.2015) 2,580 (26.09.2015) 3,000 (12.10.2021) 2,480 (8.11.2025)

Table 2. Designations for sight translation found in Italian-language literature<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> See URL: <http://www.slownik-online.pl/kopalinski/647388103FFAC1F6C12565CC004E5BE9.php> (accessed: 09.07.2012).

<sup>19</sup> URL: <http://www.intralinea.it/intra/vol1/ballardini.htm> (accessed: 09.07.2012).

<sup>20</sup> URL: <https://scuolaeconomia.unich.it/home-mediazione-lingua-francese-i-11593> (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://docenti.unimc.it/s.fusari3/courses/2022/27453> (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://www.unica.it/it/didattica/corsi-di-studio/corsi-di-laurea-magistrale/traduzione-specialistica-e-interpretazione-di> (accessed: 9.11.2025).

<sup>21</sup> URL: <https://aiti.org/it/raccomandazioni-di-aiti-traduttori-e-interpreti-giuridico-giudiziari>.

<sup>22</sup> URL: The author uses the double phrase: *traduzione/interpretazione a vista*.

<sup>23</sup> I forward the category of correctness for the analysis in languages other than Polish, since native expert linguists should be the first to comment on the issue of correctness of applying a phrase in their native tongue.

The Italian designations for sight translation – *traduzione a vista* and *interpretazione a vista* – form a relatively unified and stable terminological system, particularly when contrasted with the greater lexical and orthographic variation observed in Polish and German. Their coexistence reflects a functional differentiation rather than terminological inconsistency: *traduzione a vista* predominates in translation studies (academic) contexts, while *interpretazione a vista* is mainly used in the description of interpreter training and didactic materials.

According to the quantitative data presented in Table 2, *traduzione a vista* appears approximately twice as frequently as *interpretazione a vista*, confirming its stronger position in both academic and general usage. Both terms are orthographically stable and consistently formed with the phrase *a vista*, which distinguishes Italian as a linguistically coherent system where variation is conceptual rather than formal.

To ensure terminological alignment with international usage, *traduzione a vista* should be recognised as the preferred equivalent of English sight translation and Polish  *tłumaczenie a vista*. The Italian case thus exemplifies a comparatively unified terminological tradition, in which variation serves primarily to indicate typological orientation – translation or interpreting – rather than instability or inconsistency.

## 5. Terminological designations used in English for sight translation

Similar to Italian source literature, English-speaking academics enlist the two most popular phrases used to denote the type of translation we are dealing with, namely *sight translation* and *sight interpretation*. The word *sight* itself is synonymous with “perception, vision, view”. However, just like in Italian, using one word, we may establish a category attribution. Namely, the word *translation* refers both to a translation in general (covering written and oral acts) and to one translation type - the written one. In the case of *sight translation* no categorisation is implied because we assume that the word *translation* has been used in the general sense. However, the word *interpretation* refers to oral translation, thus when using the phrase *sight translation*, we immediately allocate this translation act to the category of oral translations. At the same time, though, *sight interpretation* tends to be used to denote a different type of translation, namely simultaneous interpretation with text (see Lambert 2004, 1991: 590). S. Lambert writes that *sight interpretation* is closer to simultaneous interpretation because the interpreter first receives a written text, which he works with, and later he is asked to perform an interpretation simultaneously to it being presented, i.e., he receives the message concurrently in audio form.

However, the term *sight translation* is more popular in English academic literature, as evidenced by the works of such prominent academics in the field: Lambert (1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 2004), Gile (1995, 2009), Viezzi (1989a,b), Weber (1990), Agrifoglio (2004), Brady (1989), Martin (1993).

On a few occasions, you may also encounter another option, *translation at sight*, but only sporadically. We will find this phrase in the “Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies” edited by M. Baker and published in 1998 (and also, I may add, in the Polish “Tezaurus terminologii translatorycznej” of 1998 and the “Słownik dydaktyczny terminologii translatorycznej” of 1991):

Interpreting is the oral or signed translation of oral or signed discourse, as opposed to the oral translation of written texts. The latter is known as sight translation or translation-at-sight (Baker 1998: 40).

This statement was illogically placed in the chapter on interpretation, even though the authors stress that sight translation is not in the same category as interpreting. The reprint of the “Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies” of 2008 provides on page 51 the same definition of interpreting, once again juxtaposing it to the oral translation of a written text, but this time the authors forgo the designation *translation at sight*.

A similarly laconic remark on sight translation is featured in the “Dictionary of Translation Studies” ed. by M. Shuttelworth and M. Cowie, of 1997:

Sight translation (French *Traduction è vue*). A term in general use which refers to the unprepared, usually oral translation of written text (Shuttelworth/ Cowie 1997: 153 and next).

The phrase translation at sight appears most frequently in Spanish- and Portuguese-influenced literature, often used interchangeably with sight translation. From the 2010s onward, sight translation largely supplanted translation at sight in international academic usage, though the latter persists in some older pedagogical or regional traditions (e.g. Iberian or Latin American contexts).

Let us take a look at the usage of the terms for sight translation in English source literature:

DESIGNATION	SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF USE
<b><i>sight translation</i></b>	1) academic publications, i.e.: Lambert 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 2004; Gile 1995, 2009; Viezzi 1989a,b; Weber 1990, Agrifoglio 2004; Brady 1989; Martin 1993; Shuttelworth/ Cowie 1997; Gorszczyńska 2010, 2020; Pöchhacker 2004; Lijewska/ Chmiel/ Inhoff 2022; Chmiel/ Mazur 2013; Havnen 2022; Matalu 2024; Liu 2025, etc. 2) university websites <sup>24</sup> .	<i>most frequent:</i> 81,000 (17.03.2013) 85,900 (01.06.2015) 82,100 (8.11.2025)
<b><i>sight interpretation</i></b> (also in the sense of simultaneous interpretation with text)	1) academic publications, i.e.: Sampaio 2007; Lambert 1991, 2004 <sup>25</sup> ; Sandrelli 2003; 2) translator and interpreter association websites <sup>26</sup> ; 3) university websites (earlier more common, now not) <sup>27</sup> .	<i>frequent:</i> 6,100 (17.03.2013) 5,260 (01.06.2015) 5,090 (26.09.2015) 9,980 (12.10.2021) 9,480 (8.11.2025)

<sup>24</sup> URL: <https://www.unco.edu/project-climb/toolkit/skill-development/legal-sight-translation.aspx> (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://extension.ucr.edu/course/60515522> (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://uclouvain.be/en-cours-2025-lintp2220> (access: 9.11.2025).

<sup>25</sup> Sylvie Lambert (2004: 299) states that *sight interpretation* occurs when the message is presented both orally and visually.

<sup>26</sup> URL: <http://www.abpt.com/escort-12-1.html> (accessed: 17.03.2012).

<sup>27</sup> URL: <http://www.senecacollege.ca/cc/classes/LNI103.html> (accessed: 17.03.2012); <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwmcl/7043.html> (accessed: 17.03.2012).

<i>sight interpreting</i>	1) Gorszczyńska 2010; Pöchhacker 2004	<i>frequent:</i> 6,490 (17.03.2013) 5,820 (01.06.2015) 4,830 (26.09.2015) 6,990 (12.10.2021) 10,700 (8.11.2025)
<i>translation at sight</i>	1) Baker 1998; Lukszyn 1998, 1991; Ivars (1999); Villanueva 2012; 2) university websites (earlier) <sup>28</sup> .	<i>very frequent:</i> 15,200 (1.06.2015) 22,600 (26.09.2015) 13,200 (8.11.2025)
<i>interpreting at sight</i> <i>interpretation at sight</i>	1) Pöchhacker 2004 – interpreting at sight 2) Guliyants/ Guliyants – interpretation at sight	417 (8.11.2025) 2,350 (9.11.2025)
<i>ex tempore translation</i>	Van Hoof 1962	<i>rare:</i> 121 (01.06.2015) 112 (26.09.2015) 540 (12.10.2021) 101 (8.11.2025)

Table 3. Designations for sight translation found in English-language literature.

The English terminological repertoire referring to sight translation is exceptionally rich in variants. Despite this diversity, the term sight translation has achieved clear conceptual and quantitative dominance. Its prevalence in both research and pedagogical discourse – confirmed by the works of Lambert (1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 2004), Gile (1995, 2009), Viezzi (1989a,b), Weber (1990), and Chmiel with collaborators (2013, 2022) – demonstrates its status as the standard and internationally recognised designation. Empirical data (Table 3) reinforce this observation, recording more than 80,000 occurrences of sight translation, in contrast to the significantly lower frequencies of competing forms.

Variants such as translation at sight and interpretation at sight, documented in earlier pedagogical and reference sources (Baker 1998; Shuttleworth/ Cowie 1997), have become largely obsolete, while sight interpretation and sight interpreting survive as peripheral alternatives, occasionally employed to highlight the interpreting-oriented dimension of the activity. The phrase *ex tempore translation*, though historically present, remains rare and terminologically imprecise.

In conclusion, the English system—while lexically rich and historically diverse—has undergone a process of consolidation, resulting in the unambiguous dominance of the term sight translation. This stable and widely accepted designation serves as the terminological model for equivalents in other linguistic traditions, notably  *tłumaczenie a vista* in Polish and *traduzione a vista* in Italian.

## 6. Terminological designations used in German for sight translation

German terminology is the most prominent example of nomenclature chaos with regard to sight translation. I have found the following phrases used in German source literature

<sup>28</sup> URL: <http://www.aucegypt.edu/sce/ATSD/Pages/CACS.aspx> (accessed: 17.03.2012).

to denote sight translation (14 in total): *Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen*, *Vom-Blatt-Übersetzen*, *Vom-Blatt-Übersetzung*, *Dolmetschen vom Blatt*, *Übersetzen vom Blatt*, *Blattdolmetschen*, *Blattübersetzen*, *Blattübersetzung*, *Ab-Blatt-Dolmetschen*, *Spontanübersetzen*, *Spontandolmetschen*, *Stegreifübersetzen*, *Stegreifübersetzung*, *Sichtdolmetschen*.

Similar to Italian and English translation studies, the German school of translation studies, too, may, with the help of one word, attribute sight translation to the category of either written translation or interpretation, or it may suggest a separate category status. The word *Übersetzen* signifies “written translation” or “translation in general”, while *Dolmetschen* denotes only “interpreting”. The first 9 of the 14 phrases listed above mean literally “translating from a sheet”, only in differing grammatical-lexical variations. Some of the nine names containing the component *Dolmetschen* (or *-dolmetschen*) attribute the act of sight translation to the category of interpretation. The next two designations (*Spontanübersetzen*, *Spontandolmetschen*) mean basically “spontaneous translation”, whereas the variants *Stegreifübersetzen* and *Stegreifübersetzung* mean literally “unprepared/ *ad hoc* translation”, while the last one – *Sichtdolmetschen* – means “visual/sight translation”.

The phrases that are most popular and most widely used in German source literature are *Stegreifübersetzen* (also applied in the curriculum of translation study courses to describe the referenced subject) and *Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen*:

DESIGNATION	SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF USE ON THE INTERNET
<b><i>Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen</i></b> <sup>29</sup>	1) academic publications, i.e., Pöchhacker 1999; Jüngst 2008; Driesen/ Petersen 2011; Kadrić/ Kaindl/ Cooke 2011; Gross-Dinter 2009; Żmudzki 2004, 2012; Jereščenkova 2014; 2) university websites <sup>30</sup> ; 3) websites of translator and interpreter associations <sup>31</sup> , such as the German Association of Conference Interpreters (VKD), which is part of the Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators (BDÜ) <sup>32</sup> ; websites for translators <sup>33</sup> .	<i>frequent</i> : 584 (12.07.2012) 566 (3.06.2015) 1 550 (12.10.2021) 1 290 (8.11.2025)
<b><i>Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschung</i></b>	Pöllabauer 2005.	very rare: 0 (3.06.2015)

<sup>29</sup> I entered each phraseme enclosed in quotation marks into the Google search field, so as to ensure that only this particular phrase, and not its component, is considered in the search results.

<sup>30</sup> URL: <https://ufind.univie.ac.at/de/course.html?lv=340133&semester=2025S> (accessed: 9.11.2025); [https://usosweb.uni.opole.pl/kontroler.php?\\_action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokaz-Przedmiot&kod=1.S2.GRM.LTIK.6](https://usosweb.uni.opole.pl/kontroler.php?_action=katalog2/przedmioty/pokaz-Przedmiot&kod=1.S2.GRM.LTIK.6) (accessed 9.11.2025).

<sup>31</sup> URL: <http://konferenzdolmetscher-bdue.de/en/termin/aufbauseminar-simultandolmetschen-gerichten> (accessed: 12.07.2012).

<sup>32</sup> URL: <http://konferenzdolmetscher-bdue.de/en/termin/aufbauseminar-simultandolmetschen-gerichten> (accessed: 12.07.2012).

<sup>33</sup> URL: <http://www.dgsd.de/info/allgemein/arbeitsweise.htm> (accessed: 12.07.2012).

		0 (26.09.2015) 819 (8.11.2025)
<b><i>Vom-Blatt-Übersetzen</i></b>	1) academic publications, i.e., Pöchhacker 1997; Kalina 2003; Driesen 1998; 2) university websites <sup>34</sup> ; 3) EU documents (in German language) <sup>35</sup> ; websites of translator associations (i.e., Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators)	<i>frequent</i> : 869 (31.05.2015) 1 070 (8.11.2025)
<b><i>Dolmetschen vom Blatt</i></b>	1) academic publications, i.e., Feldweg 1996; Ploetz 2001 <sup>36</sup> ; Lauterback 2007; Kutz 2002; 2) university websites: Leipzig University <sup>37</sup> , Saarland University <sup>38</sup> .	281 (12.07.2012) 903 (3.06.2015) 793 (26.09.2015) 500 (8.1.2025)
<b><i>Übersetzen vom Blatt</i></b>	1) academic publications, i.e.: Salevsky 2007; 2) university websites: Leipzig University <sup>39</sup> , Saarland University <sup>40</sup> .	206 (12.07.2012) 524 (3.06.2015) 544 (26.09.2015) 493 (8.11.2025)
<b><i>Blattdolmetschen</i></b>	Pöchhacker 1997; Żmudzki 2004, 2015.	<i>rare</i> : 41 (12.07.2012) 84 (3.06.2015) 338 (26.09.2015) 1 320 (8.11.2025)

<sup>34</sup> URL: <http://www.aww.uni-hamburg.de/dolmetschen-uebersetzen-gerichte-behoerden.htm> (accessed: 12.07.2012);

also: [http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/studium/angebot/studienangebot/studiendetail.html?ifab\\_id=209](http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/studium/angebot/studienangebot/studiendetail.html?ifab_id=209) (dostęp: 12.07.2012);

Humboldt University in Berlin: <http://www.amb.hu-berlin.de/2010/50/502010> (accessed: 12.07.2012);

<https://www.zfw.uni-hamburg.de/weiterbildung/sprache-kunst-kultur/dolmetschen/material/00053-201113-dolm-flyer.pdf> (9.11.2025).

<sup>35</sup> Report “Language variety vs. educating interpreters” (p. 10,13). URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/docs/finall\\_de\\_reflection\\_forum\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/docs/finall_de_reflection_forum_report.pdf) (accessed: 12.07.2012).

<sup>36</sup> URL: <http://www.bdue.de/index.php?page=050101> (accessed: 12.07.2012).

<sup>37</sup> URL: [http://www.translationconcepts.org/pdf/Ploetz\\_Zuerich\\_04.04.08.pdf](http://www.translationconcepts.org/pdf/Ploetz_Zuerich_04.04.08.pdf) (accessed: 17.03.2013).

<sup>38</sup> URL: [http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/studium/angebot/studienangebot/studiendetail.html?ifab\\_id=209](http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/studium/angebot/studienangebot/studiendetail.html?ifab_id=209) (accessed: 17.03.2013);  
<http://www.uni-leipzig.de> (accessed: 17.03.2013).

<sup>39</sup> URL: <http://fr46.uni-saarland.de/atrc/atrc/de/ueberuns.html> (accessed: 17.03.2013).

<sup>40</sup> URL: <http://www.archiv.uni-leipzig.de/wp-content/uploads/druckschriften/KMU-DS%200806.pdf> (accessed: 17.03.2013).

<b>Blattübersetzung</b>		<i>very rare:</i> 1 (12.07.2012) 3 (3.06.2015) 3 (26.09.2015) 10 (8.11.2025)
<b>Sontanübersetzen</b>	academic publications, i.e., Kalina 1996, 2003; Reiss/ Vermeer 1984.	125 (12.07.2012) 176 (3.06.2015) 161 (26.09.2015) 90 (8.11.2025)
<b>Stegreifübersetzung</b>	1) Pöchhacker 1999 2) online dictionaries 3) university websites, e.g. Humboldt University <sup>41</sup>	<i>very frequent:</i> 1125 (3.06.2015) 1080 (26.09.2015) 1 370 (8.11.2025)
<b>Stegreifübersetzen</b>	1) Pöchhacker 1999; Kutz 2002; Kalina 2003,; Parkin 2012; Kautz 2013; 2) universities websites <sup>42</sup>	<i>very frequent:</i> 2180 (31.05.2015) 1030 (3.06.2015) 1020 (26.09.2015) 1 520 (8.11.2025)
<b>Sichtdolmetschen</b>	Feldweg 1996.	2 (3.06.2015) 9 (26.09.2105) 82 (8.11.2025)
<b>Abblattübersetzen</b>	1) translator websites PL-DE <sup>43</sup> ; 2) homepage of police in Luzern <sup>44</sup> .	<i>very rare:</i> 20 (31.05.2015) 7 (26.09.2015) 10 (8.11.2025)

Table 4. Designations for sight translation found in German-language literature.

The German nomenclature referring to sight translation is characterised by pronounced lexical diversification and conceptual indeterminacy, which distinguishes it from the more standardised English and Italian systems. Numerous competing designations coexist, including *Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen*, *Vom-Blatt-Übersetzen*, *Blattdolmetschen*, *Stegreifübersetzen*, and *Stegreifdolmetschen*. These variants reflect differing conceptual orientations: while the Dolmetschen forms emphasise the oral and performative dimension, the Übersetzen variants highlight the general (translation) or textual (or even printed-textual – Blatt) aspect of the activity.

<sup>41</sup> URL: <http://www.saar.de/~spence/courses/problemorientiert/1001text3/problemorientiert1001text3.pdf> (accessed: 17.03.2013) and URL: <http://2saarbrueckerfremdsprachentaugung.blogspot.de/> (access: 17.03.2013).

<sup>42</sup> URL: [https://usosweb.uni.opole.pl/kontroler.php?\\_action=katalog2/przedmiot/pokazPrzedmiot&kod=1.2.4-G-T-TV](https://usosweb.uni.opole.pl/kontroler.php?_action=katalog2/przedmiot/pokazPrzedmiot&kod=1.2.4-G-T-TV); [https://lfuonline.uibk.ac.at/public/lfuonline\\_lv.de-tails?sem\\_id\\_in=25S&lvnr\\_id\\_in=613157](https://lfuonline.uibk.ac.at/public/lfuonline_lv.de-tails?sem_id_in=25S&lvnr_id_in=613157) (accessed: 9.11.2025); <https://www.verwaltung.uni-halle.de/STUDIUM/Stualf/alt/fachueb.htm> (9.11.2025).

<sup>43</sup> URL: [http://www.tlumacz-niemiecki.com/pl/de\\_index.php](http://www.tlumacz-niemiecki.com/pl/de_index.php); (access: 17.03.2013);

<sup>44</sup> URL: <http://www.sz.ch/documents/DolmetschenDefinitionenundTechnikenDolmetscherwesen1388653574739.pdf>; access: 17.03.2013).

Quantitative data (Table 4) indicate that no single term has achieved absolute dominance. However, *Stegreifübersetzen* currently represents the most frequent and recognisable term in both academic and general usage. Its increasing prevalence in recent years indicates a gradual consolidation of this expression as the dominant German equivalent of *sight translation*, even though several parallel variants remain in circulation. The formerly widespread *Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen* and *Vom-Blatt-Übersetzen* continue to appear in scholarly and pedagogical contexts but are gradually being overshadowed by *Stegreifübersetzen*, which is perceived as stylistically neutral and conceptually inclusive.

As is evident from the breakdown in the table above, in Germany the debate on how to denote the discussed type of translation is multi-faceted, inconsistent, and requires systematisation. All the more so because some German academics specialising in translation studies use the aforementioned designations to denote sight translation in general, while others single out sub-types, depending on the situation in which the translation occurs, or according to criteria of preparing and familiarising with the source text (see Parkin 2012).

In summary, the German nomenclature for sight translation is linguistically rich but terminologically unstable. Although terminological fragmentation persists, recent usage patterns point towards the emergence of *Stegreifübersetzen* as the most standardised and widely accepted form. This development suggests a slow but discernible shift towards greater terminological coherence, aligning German practice more closely with the international model exemplified by English sight translation.

S. Reinart (2014), faced with this incongruous terminological status in German translation studies, goes as far as considering also the possibility of coining a completely new phrase, so as to overcome this stalemate.

## 7. Terminological designations used in Russian for sight translation

Among the languages examined, Russian source literature appears to be the most consistent in its use of terminology denoting *sight translation*. Russian scholars employ the expression *перевод с листа* (literally: “translation from a sheet”) systematically to describe this form of translation. It can therefore be assumed that *перевод с листа* has become a fixed and conventionalised term in Russian translation studies. The designation can be found in the writings of prominent Russian scholar R.K. Minyar-Beloručev, among others, in his work of 1980, titled “Общая теория перевода и устный перевод” (see Minyar-Beloručev 1980), where he proposed a typology of translation modes.

The only point of critique that may be raised with regard to Russian terminology concerns the lack of reflection on the continued validity of this expression. Although firmly established, the phrase *перевод с листа* has become somewhat anachronistic, as contemporary sight translation is no longer confined to the translation of texts printed “on a sheet.” In current practice, the source text may just as well appear on a computer monitor, tablet, or other electronic device. Moreover, the literal meaning of “translation off a sheet” could be regarded as conceptually misleading. Nevertheless, terminological change is notoriously difficult to achieve once a term has gained disciplinary acceptance and historical continuity.

DESIGNATION	SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF USE
<i>перевод с листа</i>	1) in academic publications, including: Min'âr-Beloručev 1980; Barhudarov 1975; Fraš/ Maksûtina 2010; Pakulova 2012; Al-ikina 2011; Primak 2023; Najmušyn 2013; Gruzdev/ Biktimirov 2022; Govorova 2023	19 300 (01.06.2013) 21 100 (26.09.2015) 42 300 (8.11.2025)
<i>письменно-устный перевод</i>	Barhudarov 1975; Primak 2023	427 (3.06.2015) 945 (26.09.2015); 1 020 (8.11.2025)
<i>зрительно-устный перевод с листа</i>	Min'âr-Beloručev 1980	951 (3.06.2015) 875 (26.09.2015) 1 110 (8.11.2025)

Table 5. Designations for sight translation found in Russian-language literature.

The Russian terminological system referring to *sight translation* is distinguished by its stability, internal consistency, and conceptual clarity, making it the most uniform among the languages analysed in this study. Russian scholars consistently employ the expression *перевод с листа* (literally: “translation off a sheet”) to denote this specific form of translation. This designation, widely attested in academic and pedagogical sources, functions as a fixed, conventionalised term in Russian translation studies and has been in use for several decades. The term appears in foundational works by Minyar-Beloručev (1980), who incorporated it into his typology of translation modes, and it continues to be systematically used in contemporary publications (e.g., Fraš 2010; Najmušyn 2013; Biktimirov 2022; Govorova 2023).

In contrast to the variation observed in German nomenclature, Russian terminology shows no significant lexical diversification: other potential expressions, such as *письменно-устный перевод*, appear only occasionally, primarily in theoretical discussions on translation typology rather than as competing designations. This lexical and conceptual consistency testifies to the strength of Russian academic tradition and its emphasis on terminological precision.

Nevertheless, as noted earlier, the expression *перевод с листа* may be considered somewhat outdated in literal meaning, since contemporary practice often involves the oral translation of texts displayed on electronic screens rather than printed sheets. Despite this semantic anachronism, the term remains deeply entrenched and functionally transparent, and any attempt at its replacement would likely encounter substantial resistance within academic and pedagogical usage.

In conclusion, the Russian nomenclature for *sight translation* exemplifies a rare case of terminological consolidation and continuity. The phrase *перевод с листа* has maintained its status as the uncontested and universally recognised equivalent of *sight translation*, ensuring conceptual coherence within Russian translation studies.

## Conclusions

Based on the terminological considerations above, we may conclude that:

- different schools of translation studies use different phrases to denote the described scope of translational reality;
- this variety results in terminological chaos;
- the variety of terms correlates with a variety of attitudes about what the designations in question refer to. This state of affairs becomes even clearer when we analyse the proposed descriptions of sight translation presented in the source literature.

The comparative examination of terminologies used to denote sight translation across five linguistic traditions—English, Italian, German, Russian, and Polish—reveals notable differences in both lexical uniformity and conceptual interpretation of this activity situated between translation and interpreting.

Among all analysed systems, the Russian terminology has the highest degree of consistency, although the name that is used is already outdated. However, it is so deeply rooted in academic and professional tradition that it is unlikely that other terms will be created to describe this activity. As for English terminology, it appears to be scattered, but the term “sight translation” is so widely used that it can be assumed that English terminology in this area is moving towards unification and standardisation. The term is firmly rooted in academic discourse, and consistency in its continued use will certainly bring greater precision to knowledge regarding this type of translation. Polish terminology only needs consistency and awareness of the correct version. In fact, there is no real multiplicity or diversity of terms, only incorrect spellings that should not appear in academic publications. However, over the years, we are seeing more and more unity in the use of the correct term.

In contrast, the German nomenclature remains the most diversified and terminologically unstable, encompassing multiple competing forms such as *Stegreifübersetzen*, *Vom-Blatt-Dolmetschen*, and *Vom-Blatt-Übersetzen*. Despite this heterogeneity, recent usage indicates a discernible tendency towards partial convergence, with *Stegreifübersetzen* emerging as the most frequently attested and conceptually inclusive equivalent.

In summary, the cross-linguistic examination of terminological practices related to sight translation confirms that terminological precision is not merely a matter of linguistic form but also a reflection of epistemological discipline. The discrepancies identified among the examined linguistic traditions highlight the necessity of ongoing terminological reflection within translation studies, particularly in those areas that lie at the intersection of translation and interpreting. By exposing inconsistencies and tracing tendencies toward consolidation, this study underscores the importance of coordinated efforts aimed at terminological standardisation at both national and international levels. Ultimately, only through the systematic cultivation of precise, consistent, and contextually grounded terminology can translation studies reinforce its theoretical foundations and foster effective intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue.

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