

**Aleksey A. Streltsov**  
**Southern Federal University**  
**Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation**  
al-astr@yandex.ru

## **Blazon in prose: Translation peculiarities of a heraldic description in a fiction book**

### **Abstract**

The article aims to examine the usage and translation of heraldic terms in fiction. An excerpt from “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain and its six translations into Russian were chosen as the material for this study. The excerpt presents a fabulous description of a coat of arms, designed for one of the characters – Jim, a runaway Negro. Firstly, the paper identified the syntactical patterns of the original excerpt and the techniques of their translation into Russian. It was found that some translators preserved the patterns whereas others transformed them. Then the excerpt was divided into tokens, each containing one or several connected translation challenges – special terms used in heraldry. On the one hand, it is clear that many of them are used inconsistently since the designer is a teenager who knows heraldry only from historical adventure novels. On the other hand, translators might not have a thorough understanding of heraldry, i.e. the description of a coat of arms, and dictionaries often do not provide certain terms or specific meanings which may cause inaccuracies and errors concerning the blazoning of heraldic achievements. Both reasons determine the peculiarity of heraldic language in regard to fiction: a terminology-rich text composed by a layperson, translated by people who are no experts in the field, aimed at a wide audience. The paper shows the means the translators resorted to in overcoming the difficulties. It was found that the most frequent translation methods were contextual replacement and generalization, as well as equivalent translation. Some translators omitted or added words or interpreted some passages freely. The translation of N. Daruzes may be considered as the most adequate one, although it is not devoid of shortcomings.

**Keywords:** imaginary heraldry, blazoning, emblem, translation of terms, descriptive code, literary translation

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**For citation:** Streltsov, A. A. (2023). Blazon v proze: osobennosti perevoda geraldicheskogo opisanija v hudozhestvennom proizvedenii [Blazon in prose: Translation peculiarities of a heraldic description in a fiction book]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika* [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics], 9 (3), 121–131. [https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190\\_2023\\_9\\_3\\_121](https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190_2023_9_3_121)