

Semantic Features of "A Few" in Vietnamese and Translation to English, Chinese

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Abstract: Through the survey result of the word "a few" in different roles in the process of its functions, this paper presents the semantic features of "a few" in Vietnamese on the semantic aspect from the perspective of functional linguistics. Also, compare the ways how to translate "a few" into English and modern Chinese rely on a corpus from To Hoai's work "Diary of a Cricket". Based on the results, summarize translation methods of "a few" into the same and different types of language, and propose recommendations and appropriate solutions to translation and related work.

Keywords: A few, semantics, translation, language.

1. INTRODUCTION

"A few" is a word that frequently appears in Vietnamese and was introduced quite early in curriculums of teaching Vietnamese to foreigners (2, Page 158; 4, Page 86). However, this explanation only stops at the annotation that "a few" is the word used to ask for quantity, which is usually minor but does not help learners fully understand and use it correctly. Although Hoang Phe's Vietnamese Dictionary – a very famous Vietnamese dictionary - has mentioned five meanings, equivalent to 5 different uses of "a few", it is still general. It has not solved all the difficulties posed for users. To solve this problem, in this article, we will consider how the word "a few" appears and is used, then surveys the status of the translation from "a few" into English and modern Chinese through the work "Diary of A Cricket". The obtained results will help us make appropriate recommendations for the translation of this word.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1 The role of functional linguistics in the study of Vietnamese semantics

From the early years of the twentieth century, the study of the functional aspect of language - the study of language associated with its function began to be focused. According to M.A.K. Halliday (one of the prominent representatives of functional linguistics), the ultimate explanation for linguistic phenomena lies in the use of language. In Vietnam, from the 80s to the 90s of the twentieth century, the problems of functional grammar have been interested in by several authors such as Hoang Phe, Cao Xuan Hao, Tran Ngoc Them, Do Huu Chau, etc. Seminars, specialized journals, or doctoral dissertations also have many authors writing about this content.

In a monosyllabic language like Vietnamese, a word can only define its semantics clearly when it is stood in a correlation with other words in the sentence. Therefore, a sentence/an utterance translated can be true in the event meaning but not standard in terms of modality meaning, thematic meanings (Halliday's term), or both the event meaning and the modality meaning are true, but the thematic meaning is not valid. What is true is the basis for creating a standard, but it is not enough to become a standard. For what is true in the semantic category to become a standard, it is necessary to consider that a sentence/an utterance in a specific communication context, in a specific functional style, with full meanings: event, modality, and thematic meanings. In the next part, we will analyze these meanings for the word "a few"

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- the object of the article's research, and survey the situation of translating this word into modern English and Chinese through the author's work "Diary of A Cricket".

2.2. About "Diary of A Cricket" by writer To Hoai

This is the most famous and unique prose work of writer To Hoai about animals for children. The story was originally titled "A Diary of A Cricket" (the first three chapters of the story) and published by Tan Dan Publishing House, Hanoi, in 1941. After that, with the enthusiastic support of readers, To Hoai wrote more stories. "The Adventures of A Cricket" (last seven chapters of the story). In 1955, he merged the two stories to form the story "Diary of A Cricket" as it is today. The language in the story is the words of everyday speech, a layer of simple speech suitable for the spatial context that the work refers to, the countryside. Since its inception, the work has been translated into many languages and is present in nearly 40 countries worldwide.

Research Methods Descriptive method: Using the descriptive method to highlight "a few" characteristics on the semantic aspect.

Survey method: Reviewing and evaluating the actual situation of translating the word "a few" in Vietnamese into English and modern Chinese through the work "Diary of A Cricket" to test the suitability of the translation technique. At the same time, through the survey results, compare the ways of translation method this word into an agglutinative and isolated language.

In addition, based on semantic similarities, this article compares how to translate the word "a few" into English and modern Chinese and summarizes the translation methods of "a few" into two languages of the same and different types.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. The semantics of the word "a few" in Vietnamese

To facilitate the detail of presenting, we will review the semantic items of "a few" in turn in order of common to uncommon: "a few" is used as pronouns, "a few" is used as quantifiers, numerals, and conjunction (dialect).

3.1.1. "A few" as a pronoun

Vietnamese teaching books to foreigners emphasize the role of interrogative pronouns used to ask the quantity of "a few". To ask about this issue, either "how many" or "how much" can be used in Vietnamese; The choice of which word to use depends on many other factors. To put it simply, "a few" is a common colloquial word for a small number, usually less than ten, and neutral in nuance.

For example:

- (1) Đi xa thế độ **mấy** hôm thì về được? (DMPLK)
- (2) Hông! **Mấy** hôm nay ăn cơm xong mà đi những đâu? (NNTA)

Trong sinh hoạt mua bán hàng ngày, **mấy** còn có thể hỏi cho giá tiền: Vài hôm nay bán **mấy**? (CP)
Đại từ "**mấy**" xuất hiện trong các câu phân vấn, dùng để nhấn mạnh số lượng ít.

- (3) **Mấy** ai có thể làm được như bà? (báo DT)
- (4) Đất này nào biết **mấy** ai kẻ tri âm? (DMPLK)

In addition, "a few" is also a demonstrative pronoun, indicating a certain amount that is not clearly stated. This quantity is usually not much.

- (5) Nghĩa là chỉ có ba bốn hôm nữa chứ **mấy** mà cứ ròi cả lên. (vietlex)
- (6) Chả **mấy** mà hết ba năm. (vietlex)

However, this problem will be very different if it is a phrase "how much" and the phrase is after the predicate. Because then, it means a lot, even extremely a lot.

- (7) Ngay cả cái tuổi bốn mươi ngày nào xa lạ và khó tin **biết mấy** cũng chỉ còn lại nốt mùa đông này. (NBCT)
- (8) Vả lại, có những cách âu yếm bình dân hơn, chúng cầu véo hoặc phát nhau... thiết thực **biết mấy**...(CP)

There are many cases where the pronoun "a few" is combined into phrases showing a small and short amount (event, time, etc.), but this phrase in negative or affirmative form has the same meaning. For example, few – none/not many; few people – none/not many people; rarely – rarely/not often; much – not much/not much; soon – not/soon, some time (sometimes) – not/soon...

- (9) Người chê Xuân vô học, người lại quả quyết rằng về học thức của Xuân thì **mấy ai** đã bằng! (SD)

- (10) Theo thói quen ở bãi, và lại, đường sá đi lại diều vợi, mọi nhà trong cù lao **không mấy ai** ra ngoài, không ai nghe biết tin tức mọi nơi. (DMPLK)
- (11) Cần thận được như anh đã có **mấy người!** (vietlex)
- (12) Thời gian gần đây, trên một số tuyến đường ở Đà Nẵng xuất hiện nhiều chiếc xe con, xe khách cũ được xếp hàng rao bán trên vỉa hè, dưới lòng đường nhưng **chẳng mấy người** mua. (báo DT)
- (13) Kè chạy trốn có **mấy khi** la làng. (vietlex)
- (14) **Chả mấy khi** chúng đứng giữa đường nghênh ngang! (SD)
- (15) Không ốm không đau, làm giàu **mấy chốc**. (Tục ngữ)
- (16) Cứ với đà này, **chẳng mấy chốc** mà Slim sẽ qua mặt cả Chủ tịch tập đoàn phần mềm Microsoft. (báo DT)
- (17) Buôn bán mà chênh mảng thế thì **mấy lúc** mà vỡ cửa hiệu? (báo DT)
- (18) Mai một **mấy con** vịt quý này sẽ khoái chị, **mấy hồi**... (CĐBT)
- (19) Dễ tôi cũng phải tập thể thao mới được, không có **chả mấy lúc** mà già. (SD)
- (20) Tiêu như phá **mấy nổi** mà hết nhãn của cái. (báo DT)
- (21) Đừng có mang thân ra quần quật **chả mấy nổi** mà hoa tàn nhụy héo. (báo DT)

In Vietnamese, a negative sentence without using a negative word is called a reject negative sentence, in case a negative word is used, it is called a descriptive negative sentence. Here, although the cases with and without the negative words still have the same meaning, the negative - refutation sentence has a nuance (modal meaning) that emphasizes more than the descriptive negative sentence.

3.1.2. "A few" as a quantifier - numeral

"A few" is classified in the category of quantifiers - an approximate numeral with grammatical characteristics: that must be accompanied by unit nouns or some special block nouns by many authors such as Cao Xuan Hao, Nguyen Van Pho, etc., In cases where "a few" is used as a quantifier - the numeral representing the quantity below, the explanation is not too difficult, because "a few" has a neutral nuance. That means the developer language/writer does not use implying more or less quantity, large or small size, sooner or later time...

- (22) Buổi sáng tôi đang đứng ngoài cửa gặm **mấy** nhánh cỏ non ăn điem tâm. (DMPLK)
- (23) **Mấy** lần bị mang đánh nhau, tôi chỉ đứng yên. (DMPLK)

Ngoài ra, số từ "**mấy**" còn biểu thị con số dưới mười; ngữ đoạn **mấy chục, mấy mươi** thì biểu thị con số tròn chục và dưới một trăm.

- (24) Chỗ này chắc chỉ **mấy** cân thôi. (báo DT)
- (25) Cả đàn **mấy chục** các loại Cá đuối theo, chen nhau đánh sóng và quẫy đuôi ngoáp miệng bắn nước lên đầy mặt tôi, ướt cánh và ướt cả bụng tôi. (DMPLK)
- (26) **Mấy mươi** năm rồi, tôi chưa có dịp ăn Tết tại Việt Nam. (báo DT)

Numeral "a few" in the correlation with one, expressing "a lot"; is often found in literature, folk songs, and proverbs.

- (27) Sự đời nghĩ cũng nực cười
Một con cá lội, **mấy** người buông câu. (Ca dao)
- (28) Nổi mình thêm tức nổi nhà
Thêm hoa **một** bước, lệ hoa **mấy** hàng. (TK)

In case the quantifier - numeral "a few" is used to express the subjective idea of the speaker/writer is more or less, other words must be added. Particles marked with "a few" have little meaning, including (only) have, just, only,...

Particles marked with "a few" have many meanings including several, these, already, all, even, too,...

- (29) Dân cư *chỉ có* vài nhà Cóc, **mấy** anh em Ễnh Ưong, Châu Chàng, Nhái Bén, một Ếch Côm và một chú Rắn Mòng. (DMPLK)
- (30) Nói *có* **mấy** câu thì đầu đuôi câu nào cũng "ngày trước ta..." và "biết rồi, biết rồi...". (DMPLK)
- (31) Lắm khi em cũng nghĩ nổi nhà cửa như thế này là nguy hiểm, nhưng em nghèo sức quá, em đã lo ròng rã **hàng mấy** tháng cũng không biết làm thế nào. (DMPLK)
- (32) Ấy anh chàng theo đuổi tôi **đã** **mấy** tháng nay rồi đấy. (SD)
- (33) Còn đương phân vân, biết có nên sang ra mắt bác Xiển Tóc hay là lui đi, thì bỗng **cả** **mấy** ả Bướm đều im bật tiếng. (DMPLK)

When expressing the degree, the amount of difference in structure compared with the verbs/prepositions more, less, equal, close, too, above, below, double ... then "a few" denotes a lot.

- (34) Bởi tôi lực lưỡng to **gấp** **mấy** anh. (DMPLK)
- (35) Họ rải vôi trên những hồ chôn lớn **bằng** **mấy** khẩu địa cộng lại. (CĐBT)

In cases there are no accompanying modal particles/participles, it is necessary to consider the context, that is, to consider the semantics of other accompanying words. For example:

- Dặm là quãng đường xa (so với khả năng đi của loài vật).

(36) Trời đông rét run cánh run râu thể mà cả làng Châu Châu nhảy ra ngoài khe lá, lũ lượt đội gió tiền tôi **mấy** dặm đường mới chịu trở lại. (DMPLK)

- Dòng rã: liên tục trong suốt một thời gian bị coi là quá dài (*Từ điển tiếng Việt* - HP).

(37) **Ròng rã** **mấy** mùa rồi, không nhớ mà cũng không nghe được một tin tức gì về Trũi. (DMPLK)

Therefore, in the examples above, "a few" denotes a lot.

3.1.3. "A few" means "with"

(38) Em hút **mấy**, anh...! (NBCT)

(39) Hà, đội anh **mấy**! (vietlex)

(40) **Mấy** lại rằm tháng tám là giỗ đầu cậu mày, mợ mày về dù sao cũng đỡ tủi cho cậu mày, và mày cũng phải có họ, có hàng, người ta hỏi đến chứ? (NNTA)

"A few" here is used as a conjunction or colloquial word, meaning to express the speaker's casual or intimate emotional nuances.

3.1.4. Other cases

"A few" combined with the negative words (no, not, yet): means negative but not absolute negation. Between the negative and "how many" there may or may not be other words. This is considered an understatement, a common avoidance in Vietnamese conversational speech.

(41) Bầm, trông bà chỉ có vẻ lương thiện, đứng đắn thôi chứ **không** tân thời **mấy** ạ. (SD)

(42) Nhưng chuyện ra đi của má tôi **không** **mấy** ly kỳ... (CĐBT)

(43) Kiên ăn uống có vẻ như nhỏ nhẹ so với Phương, và thực ra là anh **chẳng** ăn gì **mấy**, chỉ nhìn Phương, bàng hoàng. (NBCT)

(44) Hủ lậu! **Chưa** tiến hoá **mấy**! (SD)

Các trường hợp từ cổ, ít gặp trong giao tiếp hiện đại: **mấy** nả (chẳng được bao lâu, bao nhiêu), **mấy** tí (ít).

(45) Vải ấy thì được **mấy** nả thì rách. (vietlex)

(46) Mới quần thảo vải hiệp, tôi đã rõ sức anh dế lều láo kia, chơi với tôi, không được **mấy** nả sức. (DMPLK)

(47) Bầm quan chả **mấy** tí, quan cho mấy xu cũng được. (vietlex)

(48) Quần với áo mà đến thế thì chả còn... che đậy gì được **mấy** tí. (SD)

3.2. The translation of "how many" into English

4.2. The translation of "a few" into English

There are many different types of translation, such as Jakobson, Firth, and Catford, who are researchers who view translation as a linguistic activity; Larson, Crystal, and Newmark consider translation not only from a linguistic perspective but also from a cultural and social perspective. In 1988, Newmark introduced a translation model consisting of 8 basic translation methods, including word-for-word, literal, faithful, and faithful. Semantic translation, adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation. In "Diary of A Cricket", translator Dang The Binh chose the method of free translation as the primary method in the translation process.

We have collected 79 sentences with the word "a few" appearing in the book "Diary of a Cricket" and compared them with the English version. The data processing results show that, in 9 out of 79 sentences, "a few" is translated into "(a) few" (accounting for 11.4%); there are 8 out of 79 sentences, "a few" is combined with accompanying nouns and converted into a noun with the corresponding plural grammatical form in English (accounting for 10.1%); There are 9 out of 79 sentences, "a few" are translated into determiners indicating a small or large number (accounting for 11.4%) and in 53 out of 79 sentences, the author chooses to translate out of ideas (accounting for 1.4%). 67.1 %. Here are the four main methods translators used to translate "a few" into English in "Diary of a Cricket".

(49) Bỗng thấy chị Cốc từ mặt nước bay lên, đến đậu gần hang tôi, cách có **mấy** bước.

Translation: I suddenly noticed a cormorant who had just alighted **a few** steps from my place.

(50) **Mấy** hôm sau, về tới quê nhà.

Translation: **A few** days later, I arrived at my native place.

Second, the quantitative meaning of "a few" is combined with the noun and converted into a noun expressing the plural form in English.

For the cases where "a few" appears in the original sentence with the meaning of only an unknown quantity and is considered to be relatively many, the translator chose the method of combining the quantitative meaning of "a few" into it together with the following noun and translate it into a noun of the same meaning in the plural form as:

(51) Còn việc lụt lội và việc của người ta, không nên tưởng chúng tôi xui **mấy cô bé** học trò làm ra mưa gió.

Translation: Ants living there had not been washed away in the flood made by **the little girls**.

(52) Còn đương phân vân, biết có nên sang ra mắt bác Xiển Tóc hay là lui đi, thì bỗng cả **mấy ả Bướm** đều im bật tiếng.

Translation: I was still hesitating whether I should present myself before Mr. Longhorn when all of a sudden **the butterflies** stopped their dancing and singing and took refuge in the neighbouring bushes.

Third, "a few" is translated into determiners of a small or large number depending on the context.

The main translation method used by translators in "Diary of a Cricket" is the free translation method. Therefore, in some translated sentences, the author chooses to translate "a few" into determiners of a general quantity, which may be less or maybe more depending on the context in English such as some, many, several, every... For example, "a few" in (53) indicates a small number, the translator has chosen the equivalent word "a few" which means "a few"; in (54), the translator did not choose to translate the word "entirely", but the way of translating "a few" into "many" partly showed the meaning of a long time in the original sentence; or in (55), "a few" does not emphasize quantity, so the author chooses a general translation "a few" which means "several"; while in (56), the translator chooses to translate "a few" into "every" to emphasize the meaning "every time".

(53) Buổi sáng tôi đang đứng ngoài cửa gặm **mấy** nhánh cỏ non ăn điềm tâm.

Translation: One morning, as I was nibbling at **some** young blades of grass...

(54) Ròng rã **mấy** mùa rồi, không nhớ mà cũng không nghe được một tin tức gì về Trũi.

Translation: **Many** months passed. I was till without news of Mole-cricket.

(55) Lập tức, **mấy** cái bóng lôm ngôm vào hang hì hục đào, bới, cạy, khoét moi đất ra.

Translation: Through the small aperture, I saw **several** shadows crawl into the cave and start tearing at the brick wall.

(56) **Mấy** lần bị mang đánh nhau, tôi chỉ đứng yên.

Translation: I became so sick that **every** time I was put in a fight, I just stood still.

Fourth, the "a few" in the source sentence is not translated into the receptor sentence.

"A few" is not translated into English when it means an interrogative pronoun as in (57), (58), and (59). Instead, when "a few" appeared in the source sentence as an interrogative pronoun asking about time, the translator translated it into a time question word such as "when" in (57) or by combined tenses (present perfect) in questions as in (58). Besides, the source can also be omitted completely as in (59).

(57) Đi xa thế độ **mấy hôm** thì về được?

Translation: When could I be sure of returning home?

(58) **Mấy năm nay** chú đi đâu?

Translation: So where have you been lately?

(59) Đất này nào biết **mấy** ai kê tri âm?

Translation: A true friend is difficult to find...

The rest, "a few" is completely omitted according to the free translation method chosen by the translator.

3.3. The translation of "a few" into modern Chinese

The translation of "a few" into modern Chinese was done by translator Li Ying (李莹) and was first published in China in January 2018. Up to now, it has had 2 more reprints. The original work has 79 sentences containing the word "a few" (of which 1 sentence contains 2 words). In 80 cases appearing, there are 25 cases in which the translator did not translate these words into Chinese, the other cases are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of how to translate the word "a few" into modern Chinese

Expression in Modern Chinese	几	些	们	群	多	好
Times	40	4	3	1	6	1

Thus, "a few" means quantity expressed by many words of different classes in modern Chinese: word count, word visualization, quantifier, adverb, and macro word. The most translation method is still through the number of words "几", imagine the word "多" is used to translate when "a few" denotes a large quantity, a long time; the amount of the word "些" is used 4 times, used to represent a small amount, a short time; the pronoun "们" comes after the plural pronoun. The amount of the word "群" is used to translate when referring to the fact that there are many similar individuals and the same species; The adverb "好" is used with the image of the word "远" to indicate a long period.

Regarding the semantic translation of the word “a few” in this work into modern Chinese by translator Li Ying (李莹), we have the following general assessments:

First, the word “a few” appears in the work in the narrative sentences, the vast majority of which mean quantitative facts. Therefore, if this word is not translated, many situations will lose their verbatim meaning such as (60), (61), (62). If it appears in a negative sentence (describe or refute), then “some” can be translated or translated according to the meaning (63), (64).

(60) Tôi dọn giọng, vỗ đôi cánh nhỏ mới ngắn đến nách, rồi cao hứng gáy lên **mấy** tiếng rõ to.

Translation: 我清了清嗓子，拍打着新长出来的翅膀，用我那清澈的引吭高歌起来。

Here, “a few” is a neutral quantity, without the nuance of more or less. However, in the sense that Vietnamese people often understand (analyzed above), the number of words “a few” denotes will usually be less than ten. The translator translated it to “begin to nape” (高歌起来), which means to extend continuously.

(61) Ai cũng kêu là ghét hai thằng láo lếu, giá thấy mặt bây giờ thì phải đánh cho chúng **mấy** đánh.

Translation: 他们扬言要把我们的脖子拗断，打个死去活来才罢休。

In that case, the translator has switched from “beating a few hits” to “beating bones to shreds / dying and coming back to life” (死去活来).

(62) Dẫu sao, trong **mấy** ngày qua, tôi cũng nảy ra một ý nghĩ rất đẹp là đã được thấy mặt đất này bao la, không phải chỉ có cái bờ ruộng, cái đầm nước của quê mình.

Translation: 虽然被孩子抓住的这一段经历不美好，但是使我明白了一些道理，这世界上不仅只有家乡的湖泊和田埂，还有那广阔无垠的大地。

Here, author To Hoài just wanted to mention the days when De Men spent a lot of time thinking about himself, about everything that was happening around him, not the whole time from the time he was arrested until that time (这一段经历不美好). As for the two sentences below (e.g. 63, 64), “a few” appears in the negative sentence, so it can be translated without losing the meaning that the author wanted to express.

(63) Mới quần thảo vài hiệp tôi đã rõ anh để lếu láo kia, chọi với tôi, không được **mấy** nả sức.

Translation: 只过了几招我就摸透了他的底细，跟他打不用花多少力气。

(64) Theo thói quen ở bãi, vả lại, đường sá đi lại diệu vợ, mọi nhà trong cù lao không **mấy** ai ra ngoài, không nghe biết tin tức mọi nơi.

Translation: 按照当地居民的情况，来回的交通非常遥远，所以，住在小岛上的居民与世隔绝，他们不知道外面的世界是什么样子的。

Second, recognizing the standard modal meaning of the word “a few” is a relatively complicated matter; In addition to the cases where particles show more and less clearly, it is necessary to rely on sentiment to judge. According to the translation, some sentences translated by the translator are not satisfactory with the modal meaning, such as:

(65) **Mấy** bận Nhện đã đánh em. (**Mấy** ở đây mang sắc thái trung tính, chỉ lượng nhỏ, tầm dăm ba lần)

Translation: 因为此事，他打了我很多次。(很多次 là rất nhiều lần)

(66) Không biết **mấy** hôm mới tỉnh. (**Mấy** ở đây mang sắc thái trung tính, chỉ lượng thời gian ngắn, tầm vài ngày)

Translation: 昏迷了很多天，二哥才醒过来。(很多天 là rất nhiều ngày)

Third, some of the focal points (themes) associated with “a few” have been changed compared to the original text. This is very important to avoid in translation work.

(67) Đi xa thế độ **mấy** hôm thì về được?

Translation: 去那么遥远的地方，什么时候确定能回来呢?

The focus of the question is asking about the period (a few days - a very short period), but the translated sentence has the focus of asking about the time (什么时候确定能回来 when can you return).

(68) Cảm động quá, đi **mấy** ngày, lại đi **mấy** ngày, rồi đi nhiều ngày nữa cũng thấy đầu đầu đều bàn tán công việc các loài bây giờ đã thành anh em.

Translation: 真是非常感动，时间一天天过去，已经隔了很长时间，仍能够看见各地都在讨论我们实现理想的事情。

Here, although the author used the period - going for a few days, the main point is to emphasize the place - going for a few days to a new place. The translator translated to the meaning of time, so the previous and the following translations become disconnected because the former is about time and the second is about location.

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the translation methods selected by translator Dang The Binh in “Diary of a Cricket”, we believe that translating "a few" into "a few" is the most appropriate and satisfactory option, in order to ensure transmission, download the complete message in the source language. In the Chinese translation, translator Ly Doanh has chosen many ways to translate the word "a few" to suit the Chinese language and socio-cultural factors. However, this is a work that favors a detailed description of the natural world of animals, so regardless of the language it is translated into, not translating those descriptions verbatim will reduce the price value of the original.

The translation of Vietnamese into English - a language of different types and the translation of Vietnamese into Chinese - a language of the same type has different difficulties and advantages. However, with the same type of language, translators are more convenient in preserving the original meaning, less need to use escape translation. In the cases where "a few" appear in negative or interrogative sentences to indicate a small, insignificant number, whether translated into English or modern Chinese, 100% must use free translation.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, "a few" in Vietnamese can hold different roles such as interrogative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, quantifiers - word numbers, and conjunctions. There are some special phrases such as: knowing how much indicates “a lot” ; someone/mot many people, sometimes/rarely... emphasizing little; few, a few are from ancient times, rarely seen in modern communication.

The article examines how to translate "a few" into modern English and Chinese through the work of De Men adventure diary. The results show that there are many options for translating "a few" into these languages. However, the current translation still exists in some cases where the translation of the word "a few" is not semantically satisfactory; and in case "a few" appears in negative or interrogative sentences, it is imperative to use the escape translation method.

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