

Loss and Gain in the Translation of Beatrix Potter's The Tale of Peter Rabbit from English into Indonesian

Kehilangan dan Penambahan dalam Terjemahan *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* karya Beatrix Potter dari Bahasa Inggris ke Bahasa Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

*Trying to translate children's story is not easy. Thus, to make children understand the translated text, the translator should really find the understandable word for children in the target language. Not only that, the translator also should be able to fix and match the culture of the target language as well as linguistics and extra-linguistics of the target language. Regarding that, this study intends to know the level of loss and gain in translation of the children's story book entitled *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* written by Beatrix Potter who was known as English Writer for children's books featuring animals. Thus, the story of Indonesian version which has translated by Yulie Dhaniaty was also presented. Dealing with this study, in this case, there are three levels of loss and gain in translation: the level of word, phrase, and clause. Hence, those three levels are analyzed in both English and Indonesian versions. To do this study, the qualitative method is used. There are some steps of analyzing data, firstly, the text of the story in both English and Indonesian versions is read by the researcher. Then, the level of loss and gain in translation of the story is analyzed. Hence, the results show that the gain process is the dominant one. Thus, the loss in translation is also shown in some events of the story. From those results, it is summed that the loss and gain occurred because the translator wants to make the story more natural, alive and meaningful.*

Keywords: Loss and Gain, Translation, Children's Literature, The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Beatrix Potter

ABSTRAK

Menerjemahkan cerita anak bukanlah hal yang mudah. Oleh karena itu, agar anak-anak dapat memahami teks terjemahan, penerjemah harus benar-benar menemukan diksi yang dapat dipahami anak-anak dalam bahasa sasaran. Tidak hanya itu, penerjemah juga harus mampu menyesuaikan budaya bahasa sasaran serta aspek linguistik dan ekstra-linguistiknya. Sehubungan dengan hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat kehilangan (*loss*) dan penambahan (*gain*) dalam penerjemahan buku cerita anak berjudul *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* karya Beatrix Potter, yang dikenal sebagai penulis Inggris untuk buku anak dengan tokoh hewan. Versi bahasa Indonesia yang diterjemahkan oleh Yulie Dhaniaty juga dianalisis. Dalam penelitian ini terdapat tiga tingkat *loss* dan *gain* dalam penerjemahan, yaitu pada tataran kata, frasa, dan klausa. Ketiga tataran tersebut dianalisis dalam versi bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan beberapa tahapan analisis data. Pertama, peneliti membaca teks cerita baik versi bahasa Inggris maupun versi bahasa Indonesia. Selanjutnya, dilakukan analisis dan klasifikasi *loss* dan *gain* dalam penerjemahan dengan fokus pada ketiga tataran tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses *gain* lebih dominan. Namun demikian, *loss* dalam penerjemahan juga muncul dalam beberapa bagian cerita. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa *loss* dan *gain* terjadi karena penerjemah berupaya membuat cerita menjadi lebih alami, hidup, dan bermakna.

Kata kunci: Kehilangan dan Penambahan, Penerjemahan, Sastra Anak, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Beatrix Potter

1. Introduction

This study aims to investigate loss and gain in translation of children's story book entitled *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. In this case, the story of Indonesian version is analyzed to know the level of loss and gain in the story. According to Tosun & Filipović (2022), Oudad & Azmi (2023), and Elkins (2024), the term of Loss in translation refers to the disappearance of certain features in the target language text which are presented in the source language text. Hence, in the other words, translation loss refers to the incomplete replication of the source text into the target text which means that the translator might not be translated a word, phrase even clause (Araghi & Palangkaraya, 2024; Hongisto & Taivalkoski-Shilov, 2023; Saed et al., 2024).

Therefore, in many cases, when the translators translate the text, there is a problem, such as finding the equivalence word in the target text so that unconsciously the translator will do the loss in translation. In this case, it also can relate to the failure of the translator to convey an element of meaning such as expressiveness (Bassnett, 2013). Hence, if the translator does not have enough knowledge of the target language, some words and phrases might be deleted so that the loss in translation might be occurred.

Furthermore, when translating the source text into the target text, the translator might add some additional information to make meaning or message more alive. Thus, the translators, in this case, need creative skills to develop their relative expressional abilities to translate a text. In the other words, it can be called by gain in translation. According to Bassnett (2013) and Wang et al. (2025), gain is a concept that focuses on the enrichment or clarification of the source language text in translation process. It can occur when the translator wants to make a message in source text clearer and meaningful text.

The same concept is also proposed by Van Coillie & McMartin (2020), Saeed (2024) and Siino et al. (2024). They argue that gain in translation refers to the enrichment or clarification of the source text, which enables the target text to remain flexible and socially adaptable across different contexts. This suggests that gain in translation serves an important function, as it helps the language adjust more effectively to the communicative and cultural needs of the target audience.

Regarding with loss and gain in translation, those always occur when the translators try to translate the text. There will be chances for them to adapt when two different languages interact (Gilyazetdinov, 2025; Klotz et al., 2023). Moreover, According to Bassnett (2013), losing or gaining meaning in the target language results from language differences. It is occurred because language differences usually result in untranslatability. Thus, the untranslatable text can automatically bring the translator to the loss and gain process in translating a text. Hence, they will complete each other whether omit or add information of the source text to make the translation in the target text more meaningful and alive.

Furthermore, translating a text means understanding another language. In this case, the translator automatically should really understand the target language as well as linguistic and extra-linguistics of the target language. It will be useful for the translator to make the process of translating a text easily. It is because when the translators do not know about those two elements, they will surely face the condition that forces them to do loss in translation. As Bassnett (2013) pointed out that a level of loss and gain usually occurred in three different kinds; level of word, level of phrase, and level of clause.

Hence, in this study, the researcher will focus on analyzing three different levels of loss and gain in translation. In this case, children's story book is chosen because most of children's story is adapted from English. Thereby, it is not easy to translate the story for children. The translator should have a creative skill to find understandable words for children so that the lexical choices are really influence the readable translation especially for children.

The collections of Beatrix Peter's stories are chosen to be analyzed as well as the Indonesian version which is translated by Yulie Dhaniaty. Beatrix is one of the famous writer in British English. She is an expertise of writing children's stories. Many translators from different countries translated her works. Then, some of her stories also make many film directors interested in making a movie based on Beatrix's stories. One of favorite stories is *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. It is the first story made by Beatrix, and now many different language versions have been translated from that story. Therefore, the story of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* also has now been launched in the movie version.

2. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. It is because this study describes the findings of loss and gain in translation of children's story book. The data of this study are taken from the collection of children's story book written by Beatrix Potter. She is one of famous writer in British English, especially in writing many kinds of children's story book. She has more than 20 collections of children's stories which are famous in every country.

The story of *The Tale of Rabbit Peter* is chosen as the data to be analyzed. It is the first story published in British and until now it has been translated into many languages including in Indonesia. Therefore, a movie version also has launched in TV channel program, especially program for children. Furthermore, the researcher also takes the Indonesian version of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* as the data to be analyzed. In this case, the Indonesian version was translated by Yulie Dhanianty; one of Indonesian writer who has created and translated many stories.

Furthermore, in technique of analyzing data, the researcher was analyzed the story step by step. Firstly, she reads and compares both two stories (English and Indonesian version). Then, she begins to analyze and classify loss and gain in the story by focusing on the level of loss and gain proposed by Basnett (2013). Therefore, the interpretations related to the findings as well as giving the assumption to loss and gain in translation process are presented.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on analyzing loss and gain in translation of children's story book entitled *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the Indonesian translator dealt with loss and gain in translating the story. In this case, the researcher found 29 loss and gain in the story which occurs in different level of loss and gain. The brief explanation of findings in the level of loss and gain will be explained below.

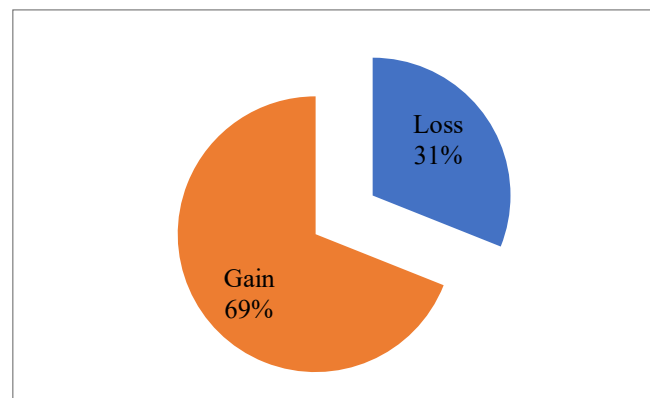


Figure 1. The Result of Loss and Gain in the Story of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

In the figure 1 above, it is clearly shown that gain in translation is the dominant one. Almost a nearly third of utterance in the story belongs to gain process. In this case, the researcher found that there were 20 gains in the story which were clustered into three levels of loss and gain in translation; level of word, phrase and clause. Therefore, loss in the story also was represented. The researcher found 9 losses in the story. It meant that there was only a small fraction of loss done by the translator.

3.1. Loss in Translation Found in the Story of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Furthermore, regarding with analyzing loss and gain in translation of the story, the researcher follows the theory of loss and gain proposed by Basnet (1980) who stated that loss and gain can occur in different level; level of word, level of phrase, and level of clause. The following figure above will clearly show the findings of analyzing loss and gain in different level.

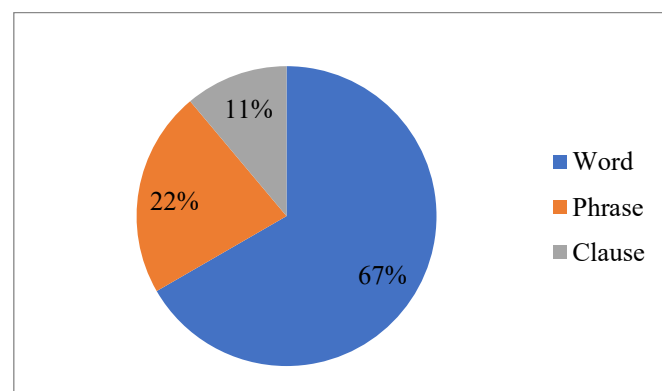


Figure 2. Level of Loss Found in the Story of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Based on the findings above, the word level of loss in translation takes the highest one. It is clear that 67 % or 6 words loss done by Indonesian translator. Therefore, the second position belongs to the phrase loss. In this case, the translator is not often deleting or omitting a group of phrase in the story. Based on the results of analyzing the story, the translator

only omitted two phrases in the story. Thus, the smallest level of loss that is done by the translator is in clause level. There is only one clause omitted by the translator. Thus, to know more detail about the results, the following representative findings will be explained in detail below.

3.2. Loss in Word Level

In this case, the researcher found many losses in word level. There were six findings found in the story. The following representative findings in Table 1 below will explain how the translator lost the word in the story.

Table 1. Word Loss in the Translation

Source Text	Target Text
They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree.	<i>Mereka tinggal dengan ibu kelinci dilubang dibawah pohon besar.</i>

The context of the story above told about rabbits' family who lived in underneath the root of a big tree. It can be seen on the findings above, in that case, the translator did not translate the word fir in the TT which means pohon cemara in Bahasa Indonesia. In that context, the translator did not translate and mention the word "*pohon cemara*" because in the target language, it has already clear that a fir is usually big. Hence, the translator thought that it was enough to say "*pohon besar*". Then the reader in the target language will automatically understand even know that a very big tree is definitely a fir.

Therefore, another finding of loss in word level also is represented. It occurred in the situation when Peter tried to lurk himself from Mr. McGregor but then he was detected by Mr. McGregor because he was sneezed at that time. The following representative story, as summarized in Table 2, will be explained in detail below.

Table 2. Word Loss in the Translation

Source Text	Target Text
Presently Peter sneezed— " <i>Kertyschoo!</i> " Mr. McGregor was after him in no time, and tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants.	<i>Peter bersin lalu Pak. McGregor melihatnya dan mengejar Peter. dan berusaha menginjak Peter, yang melompat keluar jendela, melewati tiga tanaman.</i>

In this case, the word "*Kertyschoo!*" is not translated into target text by the translator. It is because that word is only the word which illustrates the sound when people sneezed. Hence, in that context, it does not matter if the translator does not translate it into the target language. It does not change the meaning conveyed by the writer of the story in the source text.

3.3. Loss in Phrase Level

This part represents loss in translation in phrase level which is found by the researcher in the story. In this case, the researcher only found two phrases which were not translated by the translator. It occurred in the story when the old Mrs. Rabbit went out to buy bread for supper. The representative findings presented in Table 3 are explained in detail below.

Table 3. Loss in Phrase Level

Source Text	Target Text	Loss in Phrase Level
Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.	<i>Kemudian ibu kelinci mengambil keranjang dan payungnya menuju toko roti. Dia membeli lima buah roti kismis.</i>	Phrase: a loaf of brown bread

Based on the finding above, it showed that the translator did not describe how bread looked like. The translator directly translated five currant buns without translating a loaf of brown bread which means *sepotong roti coklat* in Indonesian. In this case, the translator did not change a meaning, but unfortunately, the translator deleted one message of that part of the story.

Furthermore, the second finding of loss in phrase level found in the section when Peter was rushed by Mr. McGregor because he stole some foods in Mr. McGregor's shed. Then he ran until he fell down and his shoes lost in around garden.

Table 4. Loss in Phrase Level

Source Text	Target Text	Loss in phrase level
After losing them, he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away altogether if he had not unfortunately run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.	<i>Peter berlari dengan sangat cepat. Dan Huuutzzzz ia terjatuh. ia terjerat jaring frambus, dan kancing dibajunya tersangkut. Padahal jaket biru dengan kancing brass yang dipakainya dengan itu baru ia beli dengan ibunya.</i>	Phrase: After losing them

It can be seen in the Table 4 of representative findings above, the translator deleted adverbial phrase in the beginning of sentence. It seemed like the translator did not want to biting around the bush because in the previous sentence, the writer of the story had explained about losing Peter's shoes. Thus, it can be concluded that the translator did not need any adverbial phrases to signify the existence of previous events. Then, fortunately, it does not change the message or meaning written by the writer in the ST.

Furthermore, in the finding above, the researcher does not only find the loss in phrase level, but then, she also finds the gains in clause level. It can be seen in the table above that the translator adds additional clause *Dan Huuutzzzz ia terjatuh!* In this case, the translator seemed to add a clause in order to make a story more meaningful and emotional. Based on the context of situation above, the translator wanted to build the character of Peter when he fell down because Mr. McGregor rushed him. Hence, it can be concluded that the additional clause which is added by the translator in the TT does not change even broke the meaning; instead she makes the section of the story more emotional. She rises up the situation more alive so that the reader in the target text will easily imagine the situation in the story.

3.4. Loss in Clause Level

Based on analyzing loss in the story, the researcher only found one loss in clause level. It occurred when Peter met a white cat when he tried to find a gate to go out from garden. Then he met a white cat.

Table 5. Loss in Clause Level

Source Text	Target Text	Loss in Clause Level
Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.	<i>Peter mengurungkan niat untuk berbicara pada kucing tersebut.</i>	Clause: he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.

Based on the context of situation above, Table 5 shows that the translation in the target text is simpler than the source text. It can be seen on the table that the translator, at that time, deleted one clause. She did not translate it, whereas, it seemed like additional information about the white cat who sat without any movement which is told by Benjamin Bunny. Hence, it can be assumed that the translator did not want to tell the story of Benjamin Bunny as new character who at that time suddenly appeared in the story. Thus, the translator worried if the reader confused even curious with Benjamin Bunny who did not tell before. Then, in this case, the translator also does not have right to add the story about Benjamin Bunny, because it will be out of the content written by the writer.

3.5. Gain in Translation Found it the Story of The Tale of Peter Rabbit

After describing and explaining the findings of loss in translation, now, the findings of gain also are presented. In this case, gain in translation takes the dominant one in the story of target text version. There are 20 gains of additional information which are realized on the level of word, phrase and clause. It indicates that the translator wants to make the equivalence meaning of situation between the source and target text.

The figure 3 shows that gain in the level of word and clause has the same portion. Each of them has 40 % or there are eight findings of each level of gain. Therefore, the level of phrase gain is only 20% which means only four findings involving in the target text.

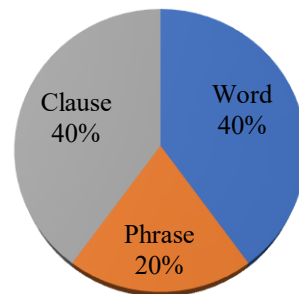


Figure 3. Level of Gain Found in the Story

3.6. Gain in the Word Level

In the story of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the researcher found that there were many additional words added by the translator. There are eight findings of gain in the word level. For the further explanation, the researcher will represent some representative findings in Table 6 to be explained in detail.

Table 6. Gain in the Word Level

Source Text	Target Text	Gain in the Word level
"Now run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out."	" <i>pergilah dan jangan nakal, nak¹, ibu akan keluar mencari makanan².</i> "	¹ Word: <i>nak</i> ² Phrase: <i>mencari makanan</i> ²

In this case, the translator did a gain process in the section when the old Mrs. Rabbit asked her children to go out to pick a berry in the garden. In this context, it can be seen in the representative finding above, the translator did a gain process by adding the word *nak* in the target text. Thus, the word *nak* referred to Mrs. Rabbit's children. Hence, it can be concluded that the translator, in this case, seems want to emphasizing Mrs. Rabbit's utterance when she asks her children to go out.

Another finding of gain in word level also is explained. This case, as shown in Table 7, occurred when Peter met Mr. McGregor in the garden when Peter wanted to steal some foods in the shed..

Table 7. Gain in the Word Level

Source Text	Target Text	Gain in word level
But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor! He was on his hands and knees planting out young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, "Stop thief!"	<i>Taukah? Akan tetapi diujung kebun timun, peter terkejut melihat pak McGregor yang sedang menanam kol melihat peter. Lalu ia melompat dan mengejar peter, mengayunkan cangkul dan berteriak "hey! berhenti, pencuri!"</i>	Word: <i>Taukah?</i>

In this case, the translator adds the word "*Taukah?*" in the beginning of the sentence. It indicates that the translator wants to make the story more natural. It also implies that she wants to make the reader curious about the event that will be involved.

3.7. Gain in Phrase Level

In this section, gain in phrase level occurs four times in the story. At that time, it occurred when Peter lost his shoes. The following representative findings will explain clearly, as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Gain in Phrase Level

Source Text	Target Text	Gain in Phrase Level
He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes.	<i>Lalu, pada saat itu, Peter kehilangan salah satu sepatunya diantara tanaman kol dan kebun kentang.</i>	Phrase: <i>Lalu pada saat itu,</i>

Based on the representative finding above, the translator adds the adverbial phrase in the beginning sentence. It indicates that she wants to give a signal to the reader about different events that will be told after. In the other word, the additional phrase level was used to emphasize the event that was happening at that time.

3.8. Gain in Clause Level

Based on the findings, the translator mostly does a gain in clause level. It was proven that there are eight findings representing gain in clause level. It occurred in the event when Peter gave up until he cried because he could not find the gate to go away from Mr. McGregor. Then his sobs were heard by sparrows then he forced to go out from hideout.

Table 9. Gain in Clause Level

Source Text	Target Text	Analysis
PETER gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement, and implored him to exert himself.	<i>PETER menyerah dan menangis. namun isaknya terhenti karena ada sekumpulan burung gereja yang terbang rendah yang bisa menggagalkan usaha peter untuk sembunyi. Wuuuuuuuuu dan ternyata benar. Tangis peter terdengar oleh seekor burung gereja. Burung itu langsung saja menghampirinya dengan semangat, lalu mengajaknya bermain dan keluar dari persembunyiannya.</i>	Clause: yang bisa menggagalkan usaha peter untuk sembunyi. Clause: Wuuuuuuuuu dan ternyata benar. Clause: lalu mengajaknya bermain

It can be seen on the Table 9 above, the translation of the target text is more complex than the source text. In that context, there are three kinds of gain in clause level. The clause in the red color shows that the gain in the story. Firstly, the translator adds a clause “yang bisa menggagalkan usaha peter untuk sembunyi” which implies that the translator wants to emphasize to the reader that the sparrow failed the effort of Peter to hideout. Therefore, for the second and third clause, the translator adds “Wuuuuuuuuu dan ternyata benar. lalu mengajaknya bermain ” It is assumed that the translator wants to make the text in the target language more natural by giving additional clause, but it is not out of the plot of the story.

3.9. Discussion

The findings of this study, which show 20 cases of gain compared to 9 cases of loss, highlight that the Indonesian translation of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* predominantly exhibits enrichment rather than reduction. This result is in line with recent developments in translation studies that emphasize the creative and adaptive role of translators in reshaping texts for new audiences. Guo (2021), through the framework of eco-translatology, explains that translators of children’s literature work within a “translational eco-environment” where they must adjust language and expression to the cultural and cognitive needs of young readers. The predominance of gain in this study reflects such adaptive orientation, as the translator actively enriched the narrative to enhance clarity, emotional engagement, and cultural resonance for Indonesian children.

The tendency toward gain, particularly at the word and clause levels, also reflects a shift from focusing solely on equivalence toward adopting functional and dynamic strategies. Current studies show that effective translation is not only about transferring meaning but also about adapting underlying cultural schemas and communicative purposes. Kianbakht (2020), for instance, proposes the Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence, which highlights the importance of aligning cultural concepts and metaphors between source and target texts. In this study, additions such as the word *nak* or the clause *Wuuuuuuuuu dan ternyata benar* can be interpreted as strategies to build intimacy and dramatization, which make the story more vivid and emotionally relatable for Indonesian readers.

At the same time, the identified cases of loss, such as the omission of the lexical item *fir* or the clause about Benjamin Bunny, illustrate the inevitable trade-offs in translation. These omissions, although fewer in number, serve functional purposes such as simplifying expressions, reducing redundancy, and preventing distraction for readers. Syafa’ati & Pujianti (2017), in their study of game localization, similarly found that translators often omit certain elements to maintain readability and engagement, particularly when the audience is younger or less familiar with cultural references. In this research, loss appears to fulfill the same function by making the story flow more smoothly in the Indonesian context without significantly altering the main narrative.

Viewed more broadly, the coexistence of loss and gain in this study confirms the dual role of translators in children’s literature: to adapt linguistically and to mediate culturally. Hamza & Nicolas (2025), Saeed (2024), Abdullah (2023), and Hintz & Tribunella, (2019), emphasizes that children’s literature carries not only entertainment value but also

pedagogical and moral dimensions, which require translators to balance fidelity to the source text with accessibility for young readers. In line with this perspective, the findings suggest that gain enriches narrative engagement while loss helps preserve clarity and avoid cognitive overload. Both strategies ultimately contribute to producing a translation that is natural, meaningful, and able to foster imagination and understanding among its intended audience.

4. Conclusion

This study has presented the result of analyzing loss and gain in the children's story. After analyzing and interpreting the findings of loss and gain in translation of children's book story, it can be concluded that the translator often added additional information which is defined as gain in translation. The gain uses to give more meaningful and natural text of the story but then it does not change the message or meaning conveyed by the writer. In this case, the translator has successfully realized the gain through the creativity of herself, because she has been able to make the story more alive and meaningful by enriching some additional word, phrase and clause. Furthermore, loss in translation also is found in the story. It can be assumed that the translator deleted a word, phrase or clause because she wants to find the appropriate equivalence word for children so that children will easily understand the story.

Furthermore, by conducting this study, hopefully, it will be useful for the other researchers. Then, the researcher also hopes that this study will be more developed by analyzing the translation technique used by the translator. It is because this study only focuses on loss and gain in translation without giving attention to the translator's technique.

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