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## **From Biblical Texts to Balinese Paintings: A Systemic Functional Approach to the Intersemiotic Translation of the *Parable of the Ten Virgins***

**Ni Made Diana Erfiani**

Universitas Dhyana Pura, Denpasar, Indonesia

**Ni Nyoman Tri Sukarsih**

Universitas Dhyana Pura, Denpasar, Indonesia

**Cakra Sagiarta Lee**

Universitas Dhyana Pura, Denpasar, Indonesia

**Abstract**--The intersemiotic translation is defined as the interpretation of linguistics signs by means of non-verbal resources. This study aims to investigate the intersemiotic translation of linguistic texts” The Parable of the Ten Virgins” into an image system of Balinese Paintings made by Christian artist Nyoman Darsane. The approach applied in this study is derived from multimodal social semiotic theory in accordance to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Theory (SFT). The source of data is biblical texts which were taken from the New International Version of the Parable of the Ten Virgins of Matthew 25 verse 1 until 13 and its intersemiotic translation in the form Balinese painting. The result of analysis has demonstrated that the metafunctions principle of the different semiotic systems which in this case is texts and painting have complementary and compounding meaning to each other in all levels of meaning including experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Even though there are some untranslated keys of information in those levels of meaning as there are omission strategy implemented from source text to the target image for various reasons such as presenting only essential information.

**Keywords**--Balinese painting, biblical text, intersemiotic translation, systemic functional theory.

## Introduction

Formal definitions of translation are largely focus only on the linguistic aspect of the translation process. One of them is the definition of (Osman, 2017), who states that Translation involves the transfer of the meaning present in a given linguistic discourse from one language to another. . Similar concept is also proposed by (Catford, 1965), as he asserts that translation theory is concerned with a correspondence between languages. Numerous theories share similarities with the ones mentioned earlier, but the challenge with such definitions and arguments lies in the fact that translation is fundamentally a language-dependent activity, or at the very least, an activity in which language takes on a central role.

(Els, 2021), states that in the translation process, the meaning-making which is transpired does not have to be centered solely around linguistic elements. This is emphasizing (Petrilli, 2003), that translation involves the act of interpretation and therefore translation theory ought to be integrated into the framework of sign theory. Regarding this he states: “*sign activity or semiosis is a translative process*”. Through this concept he proposes that translation process is a semiotic component because it is more than just a language activity. In other words, it can be understood that translation encompasses more than just linguistic aspects; it is also a semiotic undertaking.

Referring to the above understanding about translation, intersemiotic translation involves the translation between distinct codes. (Aktulum, 2017), states that one of the codes pertains to language, classified as linguistic, while the other code involves non-linguistic elements, specifically described as non-verbal semiotic resources like images. (Els, 2021), argues that intersemiotic translation is a growing field as there is a mind shift on the understanding of translation. Roman Jakobson stands out as a leading authority on intersemiotic translation. He defines it as the interpretation of verbal signs through the utilization of signs from nonverbal sign systems (Jakobson, 1959). He delineates three modes of interpreting verbal signs: intralingual translation, which involves translating signs into other signs within the same language; interlingual translation or translation proper, which entails translating into a different language; and intersemiotic translation, which encompasses translating from one language into another nonverbal system of symbols (Jakobson, 1959).

The multimodal approach proves highly appropriate for application in intersemiotic translation. Within the intersemiotic framework, the texts under consideration are those that incorporate language along with other semiotic resources, such as still and moving images. Fundamentally, multimodality constitutes an interdisciplinary method that directs attention to the diverse modes employed in communication, expression, and representation. It underscores the idea that communication is not solely reliant on language but is also rooted in the semiotic connection between language and signs (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). (Mujiyanto, 2019), conducts a study on the English Indonesian Intersemiotic Translation by using multimodal approach. Through this study he explores how the multimodal approach elucidates the translation from English to Indonesian across verbal, audio-lingual, audio-visual, and gesture-verbal texts. This exploration aims to contribute to the advancement of multimodality in

intersemiotic translation, focusing on English-language text and its translation into Indonesian. The research demonstrates that audio-lingual translation employs multimodal strategies in conferences, audio-visual translation predominantly occurs in the translation of films and dubbed or semi-dubbed informational content, verbo-visual translation integrates verbal and visual elements, commonly observed in the translation of illustrated and caricature stories, and gesture-verbal translation encompasses various categories of gestural text translated into verbal language (Paltridge, 1993; McTaggart, 1980; Smelcer et al., 1980; House, 2006).

A more in-depth study was carried out by (O'Halloran et al., 2016), who combined a multimodality approach with the application of systemic functional theory (SFT) which was coined by Halliday in analyzing texts that involve several linguistic and non-linguistic codes. The examined data comprises a news report that incorporates linguistic text, photographs, an infographic, a video, and a mathematical graph. (Halliday & Hasan, 1989), suggesting that language is just one among various semiotic resources (such as sounds, gestures, images, and dress) that collectively shape culture, the SFT approach proves adept at navigating the intricate, multi-dimensional complexity inherent in intersemiotic translation.

This research aims to analyze the translation process between different codes, namely from religious texts which are transformed into paintings with Balinese patterns using a multimodality approach through the application of SFT theory. This intersemiotic translation activity was carried out by a Balinese Christian painter named Nyoman Darsane. In the bibliographic book about Nyoman Darsane written by Tjokropramono & Ferninaindis (2022), there are 89 paintings with Balinese styles which are divided into two periods, namely 1970-1999 and 2000-2021 (Tjokropramono & Ferninaindis, 2022). This study is an initial study that will only discuss one painting, namely the painting of the parable of the ten virgins, which is a rendering process of the Biblical text, namely from the Gospel of Matthew.

## **Concept and Theoretical Framework**

### **Concept**

There are three concepts described in this study, namely the concept of biblical texts, Balinese paintings, and the parable of the ten virgins. Scriptural texts or it is known also as biblical text according to Collins English Dictionary is the text which is used to describe things that are written in or based on the Christian Bible. Biblical text also refers to the collection of sacred writings or scriptures that are considered authoritative and foundational to the religious beliefs of Judaism and Christianity. The term primarily encompasses the Old Testament for Judaism and both the Old and New Testaments for Christianity. The Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Bible, contains religious texts that are sacred to both Jews and Christians. It includes historical narratives, laws, poetry, and prophecy. The New Testament contains writings that are specific to Christianity, focusing on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the early Christian community. Biblical texts are highly revered and are considered divinely inspired by believers. The interpretation and understanding of these texts can

vary among different religious traditions, denominations, and scholars. Scholars often engage in biblical studies, employing various methodologies such as historical-critical analysis, literary analysis, and theological interpretation to understand the meaning and context of these ancient texts.

Balinese painting is considered as the more prominent type of Balinese arts which consists of two types of artworks namely painting and wood carving (Anggakara, 2020). Originally, painting took place on walls of temples for religious and ceremonial purposes. These paintings are deeply intertwined with the cultural, religious, and historical aspects of Balinese life. Key characteristics include in terms of themes and subject it depicts scenes from Hindu epics such as the Ramayana dan Mahabharata, mythological stories, religious rituals, and daily life in Bali. In terms of style and technique the paintings are renowned for their vibrant colors, intricate details, and a highly decorative style. From religious significance many Balinese paintings have strong ties to Hindu-Balinese spirituality. Temples, deities, and religious ceremonies are often depicted, reflecting the island's predominant Hindu culture. In terms of cultural traditions, Balinese paintings are part of a broader artistic tradition that includes dance, sculpture, and other forms of visual and performing art.

(Ermac, 2019), writes an exegesis paper on the parable of the ten virgins. Regarding this he describes that the Parable of the Ten Virgins, as recounted by Jesus, serves as a lesson to his disciples, urging them to remain vigilant for his imminent return. Drawing parallels to the virgins who brought lamps to greet the bridegroom for the wedding feast, Jesus illustrates that his followers can either emulate the five wise virgins who anticipated the delay of the coming and secured ample oil or resemble the five foolish ones who, unprepared for the delay, depleted their oil supply. The readiness of the wise virgins granted them access to the wedding feast, while the foolish ones, forced to acquire more oil, were ultimately excluded. The poignant image of the unprepared virgins outside the wedding feast conveys a sobering reality, emphasizing the crucial teaching for all disciples of Jesus to remain consistently prepared for his imminent arrival. The parable concludes with a resolute emphasis on its primary message, serving as a poignant reminder for all who encounter or contemplate its teachings “*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour* (Matt. 25:13 ESV).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Through his concept that distinguishes three ways of interpreting verbal signs i.e intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translations, (Jakobson, 1959), has broadened the definition of translations across non-linguistic semiotic resources. (Iedema, 2003), conceptualize intersemiotic translation through the principle of resemiotisation. It focuses on the dynamic changes in meaning as it traverses different contexts, practices, or stages within a given practice. This complexity in translation goes beyond a mere examination of language, as texts comprise numerous facets. Translation involves a synthesis of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements, and it is within this amalgamation that meaning is constructed (Dicerto, 2017). Jakobson's introduction of the concept of intersemiotic translation allowed the field of translation to move beyond a narrow focus on language. This innovation provided translation scholars and

practitioners with the opportunity to explore additional resources and dimensions in the translation process. (Kourdis & Yoka, 2012), proposes a departure from a language-centric approach in the theoretical framework of intersemiotic translation facilitates a more creative avenue for translation. The accompanying illustration contrasts the expansive potential for generating meaning in intersemiotic translation with the comparatively limited possibilities in translations solely rooted in language, whether intra- or interlingual:

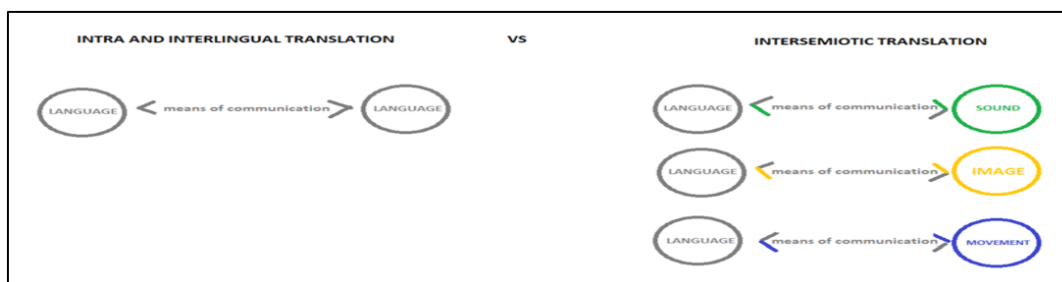


Figure 1. Meaning-making possibilities through intersemiotic translation vs intra- and interlingual translation Source: (Els, 2021)

As previously explained, multimodality adopts an interdisciplinary stance, emphasizing the diverse modes employed in communication, expression, and representation. It underscores the notion that communication transcends the confines of language alone, extending into the semiotic bond between language and signs (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). This approach is based on Halliday's (1978), social semiotics in which language and other semiotic resources are seen as resources for making meaning. In his exploration of language, Halliday consistently acknowledged that language constituted just one among numerous semiotic resources, including images, gestures, attire, sounds, and more. (Taylor, 2003), argues that perspectives on language as a social semiotic are paving the way for an increasing fascination with the collaborative dynamics of different modes in the creation of meaningful texts. In line with this, (Borodo, 2015), argues that within a broader semiotic framework, language represents just one component alongside images, gestures, posture, gaze, and color, each possessing distinct yet significant potential for meaning-making.

Based on the above understanding on the concept of multimodality and Halliday's social semiotic, a systemic functional approach to multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA) has emerged as a method to comprehend the functions of diverse semiotic resources and the meanings that emerge when various semiotic choices intersect in multimodal phenomena across spatial and temporal dimensions (O'Halloran & Fei, 2014). As it is derived from Halliday's concept, the systems in question are arranged according to the functions, termed "metafunctions," that these resources fulfill in society. These metafunctions are ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Ideational meaning comprises experiential meaning, which structures the experience of the world, and logical meaning, which establishes logical connections in the world. Interpersonal meaning serves to enact social relations and create a stance toward the world. Finally, textual meaning organizes experiential, logical, and interpersonal

meanings into coherent messages (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014); (Martin & Rose, 2003).

The SF-MDA approach has been implemented by (O'Halloran et al., 2016), by developing a framework of metafunctionally organised systems of meaning, register, and genre. The systems are organised according to different ranks of constituency for each resource. In terms of text and image systems the framework is organized according to discourse semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology/graphology for language; and work, episode and figure for image. This is in accordance to Halliday's and Martin's systems for language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) (Martin & Rose, 2003) and (O'Toole, 2011), framework for images. The following (figure 2) is the developed framework of text and image systems which are used to analyse the intersemiotic translation of meaning between text and photograph:

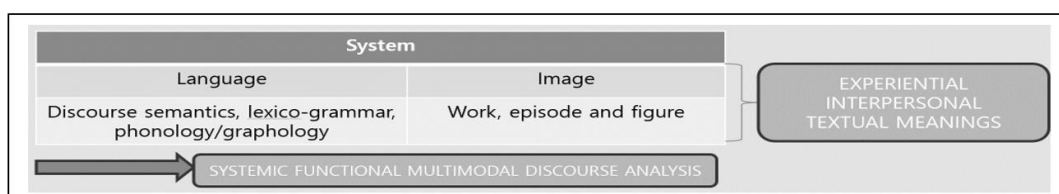


Figure 2. Text and Image Systems  
Adopted from (O'Halloran et al., 2016)

The same framework is going to apply to analyze the process of rendering between language and static image in this case painting.

## Methodology

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a case study on the intersemiotic translation of the parable of the ten virgins. The approach used is a multimodal approach with the use of two semiotic modes or resources which is in the form of language and static image i.e Balinese painting. The source of data for language is biblical texts of the parable of the ten virgins from Matthew 25:1-13 which were taken from two Bible versions namely New International Version and King James Version. The source of data for image is the Balinese painting of the parable of the ten virgins by Nyoman Darsane. It was painted in 1998 of batik material with title *10 Anak Dara Dengan Pengantin Lelaki*. It was one among 7 other paintings of the same theme. The data was analyzed by utilizing the text and image framework which is developed by O'Halloran et al. (2016), using Halliday's (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and Martin's (Martin & Rose, 2003), systems for language and (O'Toole, 2011), framework for images.

## Result and Discussion

### The Semiotic Bond of Language and Sign in *the Parable of the Ten Virgins*

As proposed by (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), communication takes place not primarily through language only but also through the semiotic bond of language and sign. This reveals in the intersemiotic translation which is one of the three types of translation proposed by (Jakobson, 1959), as translation between different codes. One of the codes is linguistics, which is language and the other code is a non-linguistic which is described as non-verbal semiotic resources such as static or moving images.

The following data is the presentation of a semiotic bond between language (linguistic text) and sign in this case static image in the form of painting even though they are not displayed in one text.

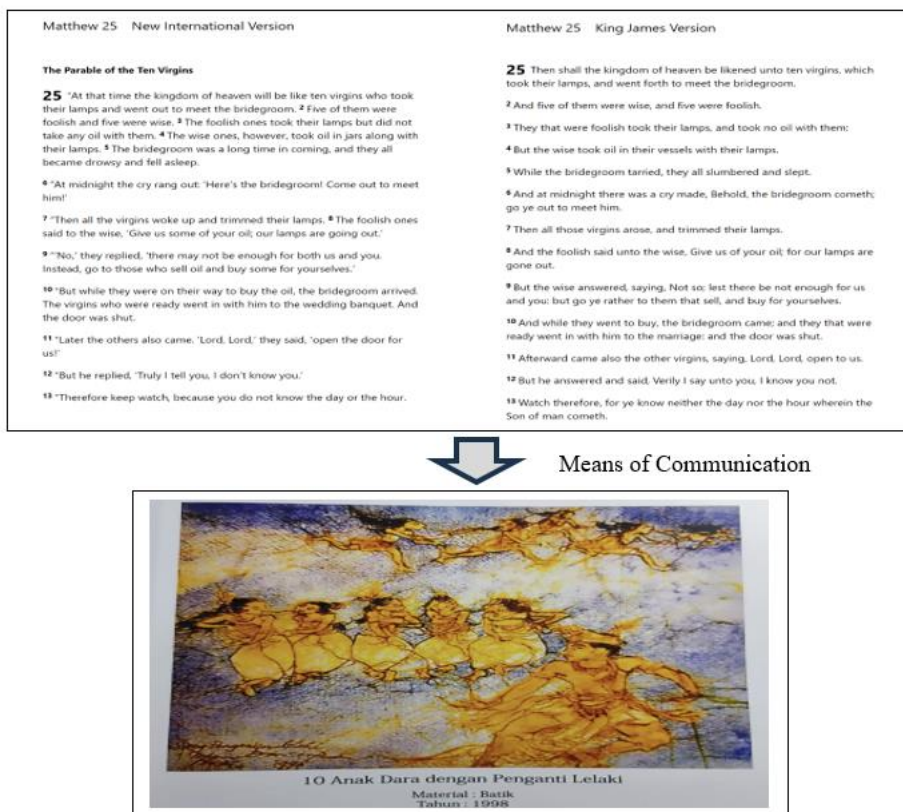


Figure 3. Semiotic Bond of Language and Sign in Intersemiotic Translation of *the Parable of the Ten Virgins*

The narrative of the Parable of the Ten Virgins has been chosen to illustrate the principles of intersemiosis between the linguistic text and the painting. This segment includes biblical linguistic texts from Matthew 25, verses 1-13, sourced from two of the most prevalent English translations of the Bible: The New International Version (NIV) and the King James Version (KJV). The NIV,

established in 1978 by the former International Bible Society, is widely acknowledged as the most popular and extensively read modern English translation, valued for its accuracy and readability in conveying the Word of God in contemporary English. On the other hand, the KJV is esteemed as the most precise translation of the Bible, renowned for its literal word-to-word rendering. KJV was published in 1611 (Khillar, 2022). The painting, on the other hand is one of the 8 paintings of the same theme by Nyoman Darsane which is taken from his bibliography published in 2022 entitled 10 Anak Dara dan Pengantin Lelaki or in English 10 Virgins and the Bridegroom.

As displayed by (Els, 2021), and also displayed in figure 3 above, there is a means of communication between the source text and the target image that generate meaning. Even, according to (Kourdis & Yoka, 2012), the translation of different modes enables translation to become more creative. This organization is due to the distinct ranks of constituency assigned to each resource within the systems. As illustrated in Figure 2, text and image systems are structured based on discourse semantics, lexico-grammar, and phonology/graphology for language; and work, episode, and figure for the image. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) (O'Toole, 2011).

### **Intersemiotic Translation Between Linguistic Text and Painting in the Parable of the Ten Virgins**

As mentioned by (Martin & Rose, 2003), in linguistic texts, information unfolds sequentially from the outset to the conclusion, creating waves of varying scales and conveying nuances through its positioning. This structure informs the reader about the prominence of specific information, distinguishing between thematic or new elements. In contrast, images present all information simultaneously, employing diverse resources such as foregrounding, parallelism, and the relative position and proportion within the entire composition to designate points of emphasis (O'Toole, 2011). This fact can be clearly seen by comparing the linguistic texts and the painting as presented in figure 3. The following are some key information that are presented in the linguistic texts of both translation versions which show the flows of information of the story from the beginning to the end:

- Ten virgins (five were foolish and five were wise)
- The foolish ones took lamps without oil, the wise ones took lamps with oil in jars
- The ten virgins became drowsy and fell asleep
- The foolish virgins asked for oil to the wise virgins
- The foolish ones were on their way to buy the oil
- The bridegroom arrived
- The wise virgins went with the bridegroom to the wedding banquet
- The foolish virgins came and begged the bridegroom to open the door but the it was closed

But this is not the case with the information on the painting. In the painting all the information is presented simultaneously to identify points of prominence. For example, the painting displays all participants which in this case are the wise and

foolish virgins and also the bridegroom simultaneously with their respective roles and circumstances.

In the level of experiential meaning by (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), and (O'Toole, 2011), both language and image can be analyzed in terms of participants role to show the logical connections. Referring to some of the key information above regarding the story and also if it is associated with the following table on the two versions of the texts that have been analyzed in accordance to discourse perspective, there are three groups of prominent figure or participants in the texts namely: 1. The foolish virgins who took their lamps but did not take any oil with them (identified by reference 'five', 'foolish ones' and co reference 'them', 'us', 'our', 'you', 'yourself', and 'others'); 2. The wise virgins who took oil in jars along with their lamps (identified by reference 'five', 'wise ones', and co reference 'their', 'your', 'they', 'us'); 3. The bridegroom (identified with reference 'bridegroom', 'Lord', and co reference 'him'. Through this it is clearly seen that the information flows in waves of different scales to identify points of prominence of the characters.

Table 1  
Discourse Analysis on the Two Versions of Linguistic Text of *the Parable of the Ten Virgins*

Reference	Co-reference	Conjunction	Determiner	Repetition	Demonstrative	Substitution	Comparative	Adverb	Dummy	Preposition
<b>Matthew 25 New International Version</b>										
The Parable of the Ten Virgins										
<p>25 <b>At that time the kingdom of heaven</b> will be like <b>ten virgins who</b> took their lamps and went <b>but</b> to meet <b>the bridegroom</b>.</p> <p>2 <b>Five of them</b> were foolish and <b>five</b> were wise.</p> <p>3 <b>The foolish ones</b> took their lamps <b>but</b> did not take <b>any oil with</b> them.</p> <p>4 <b>The wise ones, however,</b> took oil in jars along with their lamps.</p> <p>5 <b>The bridegroom was a long time in coming,</b> and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.</p> <p>6 <b>At midnight the cry rang out: Here's the bridegroom!</b> Come out to meet him!</p> <p>7 <b>Then all the virgins</b> woke up and trimmed their lamps.</p> <p>8 <b>The foolish ones</b> said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'</p> <p>9 'No,' they replied, <b>there</b> may not be enough for both us and you. <b>Instead,</b> go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'</p> <p>10 <b>But while they were on their way to buy the oil,</b> the bridegroom arrived. <b>The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet.</b> And the door was shut.</p> <p>11 <b>Later the others also</b> came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'</p> <p>12 <b>But he</b> replied, <b>Truly I tell you,</b> I don't know you.'</p> <p>13 <b>Therefore</b> keep watch, <b>because you</b> do not know the day or the hour.</p>										
<b>Matthew 25 King James Version</b>										
The Parable of the Ten Virgins										
<p>25 <b>Then</b> shall the kingdom of heaven be likened <b>unto ten virgins,</b> which took their lamps, and went <b>forth</b> to meet <b>the bridegroom</b>.</p> <p>2 <b>And five of them</b> were wise, and <b>five</b> were foolish.</p> <p>3 <b>They that were foolish</b> took their lamps, and took no oil with them:</p> <p>4 <b>But the wise</b> took oil in their vessels with their lamps.</p> <p>5 <b>While the bridegroom</b> tarried, they all slumbered and slept.</p> <p>6 <b>And at midnight there was a cry</b> made, Behold, <b>the bridegroom</b> cometh; go ye out to meet him.</p> <p>7 <b>Then all those virgins</b> arose, and trimmed their lamps.</p> <p>8 <b>And the foolish</b> said <b>unto the wise,</b> Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone <b>but</b>.</p> <p>9 <b>But the wise</b> answered, saying, Not so; <b>lest there</b> be not enough for us and you: <b>but go ye</b> rather <b>to them that</b> sell, and buy for yourselves.</p> <p>10 <b>And while they went to buy,</b> the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went <b>in with him to the marriage:</b> and the door was shut.</p> <p>11 <b>Afterward</b> came <b>also the other virgins,</b> saying, <b>Lord, Lord,</b> open <b>to us</b>.</p> <p>12 <b>But he</b> answered and said, <b>Verily I say unto you,</b> I know you not.</p> <p>13 <b>Watch therefore,</b> for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.</p>										

As it is transformed into image there are also three groups of prominent figure or participants in the painting namely: 1. A man with Balinese costume who is in the foregrounding and dancing position; 2. A group of five women with Balinese costume who are in the middle group position. They are painted empty hands and they are also in dancing position; 3. A group of five women with Balinese costume who are in back ground position. They are also painted empty hands but in running position. Even though the painting displays all participants simultaneously, the position of each group of figures could identify their points of prominence (Alfeld & de Viguierie, 2017; Ma et al., 2022; Carcagni et al., 2007; Suwija, 2016).

The only man painted in the foreground position wearing Balinese clothing like a king can be identified as the bridegroom. This is also in accordance with one of the references used in the text as pronoun 'Lord'. The group of women who are in the middle group position can be identified as the five wise virgins that can be tracked through references wise ones and some other co-references such as their, your, they, us. Although they are not painted with lamps and oil, from their position close to the bridegroom figure it can be concluded that they occupy the position of a group of wise virgins. The group of women who are in a background position and far from the groom's position can be identified as the foolish virgins. They are also painted empty handed without lamps. At his level of experiential meaning, it can be concluded that the participants' role in the linguistic texts tends to parallel and reinforce the role of participants in the painting and vice versa (Hassanabadi & Heidari, 2014; Lehtinen, 2009; Nascimento et al., 2017; Widana, 2017). Although there is an omission at the level of circumstances where the ten virgins, both wise and foolish, are depicted in the image system as empty handed, that is, not carrying lamps or oil as stated in the language system.

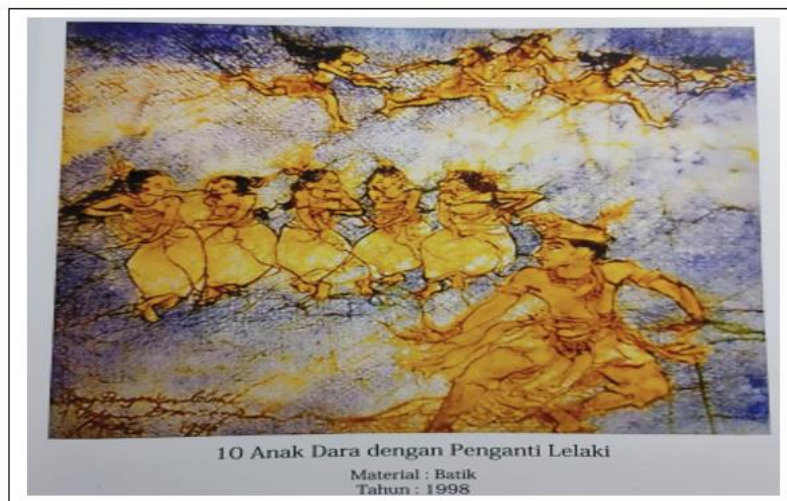


Figure 4. Image in the Form of Balinese Painting *the Parable of the Ten Virgins* by Nyoman Darsane, 1998

At the level of interpersonal meaning both codes (linguistic text and image) can be analyzed in terms of speech function for linguistic text and in terms of participant's gaze for the image. In this case the declarative sentence in verse 10 of the text which says: *The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet* (NIV); *they that were ready went in with him to the marriage* (KJV) is translated into the gaze (visual address) of the man with Balinese costume who is in the foreground position look at the five women who are in the middle ground position. The dance movement with lower hands position can be interpreted as asking someone to talk or to do something. Another point of interest to be discussed is the imperative sentences which are used to issue command such as written in verse nine of the text which says: *go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves* (NIV) and *go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves* (KJV) are translated into specific gaze of running by the group of foolish virgins in the background position. This command was conveyed by the

wise virgins to the foolish virgins who begged for oil from them because their lamps were about to go out.

At the level of interpersonal meaning there is also key information that is not translated from linguistic text into images. The imperative sentence uttered by the foolish virgins who begged the groom to open the door as written in verse eleven, '*open the door for us!*' (NIV) which ends with an exclamation mark to show that the request is particularly urgent is apparently not translated into the image. Omission is a method in translation that is often used for various reasons. As mentioned by (O'Toole, 2011) in image system, the information has to be simultaneously presented to identify points of prominence. In this version of the painting, especially on the theme of the parable of the ten virgins, the painter probably chose to emphasize the role of the wise virgins who he placed in a middle ground position who seemed to have communicated through the gaze to accept the invitation from the groom to be together enter the wedding banquet. As (Dimitriu, 2004), mentions some purposes of using omission strategy in translation which one among them is to presenting only essential information.

## Conclusions

Intersemiotic translation as the translation between different codes which is linguistic and non-linguistic codes can be represented in the translation of the biblical texts the parable of the ten virgins with its translation image in the form of Balinese painting. This can be explored through the lens of multimodality, wherein language and various semiotic resources are regarded as tools for meaning-making. Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) offers essential theoretical frameworks for modeling semiotic resources, enabling the analysis of meaning derived from semiotic choices within multimodal texts—such as linguistic text and painting. In SFT, semiotic resources are conceived as interrelated systems that collectively form and express culture, allowing for their formulation in both language and static images, including paintings.

The result of analysis has demonstrated that the metafunctions principle of the different semiotic systems which in this case is texts and painting have complementary and compounding meaning to each other both all levels of meaning including experiential, interpersonal, and textual meaning. Even though there are some untranslated keys of information in those levels of meaning as there are omission strategy implemented from source text to the target image for various reasons such as presenting only essential information.

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