



Rethinking *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic Traditions) as ‘Natural’ Narrative: In the Framework of Fludernik’s ‘Natural’ Narratology*

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Abstract

By the concept of ‘natural’ narrative, Monika Fludernik brought a new perspective for narratology in the late ’90s. In her narrative theory, narrativity starts with the human experience rather than the plot. Fludernik’s approach may provide an insight into understanding *ḥadīth*. Each *ḥadīth* account is a report of a saying, an event, or an experience about the Prophet Muhammad from the perspective of companion narrators. *Ḥadīth* also asserts the Prophet’s life experience by telling how he acted in his life and reacted to people’s attitudes. *Ḥadīth* transmission is also an experience referring to narration of prophetic knowledge from one generation to the next. In this article, I try to discuss to what extent *ḥadīth* can be considered ‘natural’ narrative in the framework of Fludernik’s theory.

Keywords: *Ḥadīth* Narrative, Natural Narrative, Structure of *Ḥadīth*, Context of *Ḥadīth*.

Hadis Rivayetlerini Fludernik’in ‘Doğal’ Anlatı Teorisi Bağlamında Ele Almak Öz

Monika Fludernik, ‘doğal’ anlatı kavramı ile 90’lı yılların sonunda anlatıbilime yeni bir perspektif getirmiştir. Bu teoriye göre anlatıyı oluşturan esas unsur olayların belirli bir mantıkla art arda sıralanması değil, onun bir tecrübenin ifadesi olmasıdır. Fludernik’in yaklaşımı, hadisi anlamak noktasında ışık tutabilir. Zira hadisler, Hz. Muhammed’e ait ya da onunla ilgili bir söz, olay ya da yaşanmış bir tecrübenin sahabi ravi perspektifinden naklidir. Hadisler aynı zamanda Hz. Peygamber’in hayatı boyunca nasıl davrandığını ve insanların tutum ve davranışlarına nasıl tepki verdiğini bize anlatarak onun hayat tecrübesini ortaya koyar. Öte yandan hadis rivayeti, Hz. Peygamber’den edinilen bilginin bir nesilden diğerine anlatımını konu edinen bir tecrübedir. Bu makalede, Fludernik’in teorisi çerçevesinde hadisin ne ölçüde ‘doğal’ anlatı olarak ele alınabileceği tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis Anlatısı, ‘Doğal’ Anlatı, Hadisin Yapısı, Hadisin Bağlamı.

Introduction

In recent decades, many *ḥadīth* studies in Turkey have focused on a holistic comprehension of *ḥadīth* instead of *isnād* and *matn* problems of single narrations.¹ In spite of the methodical differences among them, the four sample studies on this issue, Özařar's *textual reconstruction*,² Kuzudiřli's *structural analysis of ḥadīth narrations*,³ Cořkun's *holistic view*,⁴ and Apaydın's *integrative approach*,⁵ have a similar point of departure: As every single *ḥadīth* narration has its own style to tell a prophetic saying or an event in the Prophet's lifetime, seeing the whole picture requires to consider all variants of a *ḥadīth* account together.⁶ In many cases, it is required to deal with the various *ḥadīth* accounts for a thorough understanding of a certain *ḥadīth* issue, as well as with many extra-textual factors. Although comparison of various accounts is well-known in classical *ḥadīth* methodology by the concepts of *'ard*, *mu'arađa*, and *muqābala*, these abovementioned studies differ from classical methodology by aiming at structural⁷ or contextual⁸ analysis of *ḥadīth* accounts or constructing a separate, integrative entity departing from various accounts.⁹

Any attempt at holistic comprehension of *ḥadīth* is directly related to its narrativity. Because such a study requires to analyze the aim, the structure, and the context of a given *ḥadīth*. As it is known, the Prophet Muhammad did not utter his words as 'juridical text' independent of its time and space; on

* This article is the expanded version of the paper titled "Rethinking *Ḥadīth* as Natural Narrative" and presented at "The Society for the Study of Narrative Annual Conference" held in Pamplona (Spain) on May 31, 2019. With special thanks to Professor Stephen Pattison, who introduced me to narrative and narratology.

¹ Studies depending on formal, stylistic and thematic analysis of *ḥadīth* can be considered as pioneers of undermentioned studies in Turkey. In particular, Marston Speight's article "The Will of Sa'd b. a. Waqqāş: The Growth of a Tradition," *Der Islam* 50 (1973), pp.249-267 and Iftikhar Zaman's PhD dissertation "The Evolution of a Hadith: Transmission, Growth and the Science of *Rijal* in a Hadith of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas" (The University of Chicago, Chicago, 1991) should be mentioned in this context. Both authors did not declare their main concern as 'holistic comprehension of *ḥadīth*', on the one hand, and the undermentioned studies in Turkey have no or little reference to them, on the other. However, the methodical similarities between the two groups of studies should be highlighted.

² Mehmet Emin Özařar, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek: Fikhi Hadisler Bağlamında Bir İnceleme* (Ankara: OTTO, 2015), pp.224-268.

³ Ali Kuzudiřli, *Rivayetlerde Sarmal Özellik* (İzmir: Tibyan Yayıncılık, 2012).

⁴ Selçuk Cořkun, *Hadise Bütüncül Bakıř: Tesbit-Anlama-Anlatma Bağlamında Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2014).

⁵ Mehmet Apaydın, *Hadislerin Tespitinde Bütünsel Yaklaşım* (İstanbul: KURAMER Yayınları, 2018).

⁶ Henceforth, "*ḥadīth* narration" refers to a single account of *ḥadīth* (pl. *aḥādīth*), whereas "*ḥadīth* narrative" refers to the whole literature and a certain type of religious narrative.

⁷ Kuzudiřli, *Rivayetlerde Sarmal Özellik*, p.19.

⁸ Cořkun, *Hadise Bütüncül Bakıř*, pp.282-340.

⁹ Özařar, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek*, pp.227-230; Apaydın, *Bütünsel Yaklaşım*, p.177. Apaydın suggests dealing with empirical data alongside *ḥadīth*, *sıra*, and other narrational resources.

the contrary, they emerged from life experience and in a socio-cultural context. Besides, whatever he said and whatever he did or approved were narrated from the first Muslim generation's (*ṣaḥāba*, the companions) perspective. At this point, the experiential character of *ḥadīth* is to be taken into account from two aspects: First, *ḥadīth* emerged from the experience between the Prophet and his companions. Second, the transmission of *ḥadīth* from the first generation to the second (*tābi'ūn*, the followers) is another specific experience influencing both the narrator's and the narratee's mind, as well as body of the narration, the *ḥadīth* text. All of these issues refer to narrative and narratology in a way.

Up to the present, the narrativity of *ḥadīth* has been undertaken only in a considerably small number of studies. In some orientalist studies, *ḥadīth* narrative is handled in comparison to literary narrative genres. For instance, Sebastian Günther's main issue is 'fictionality' of *ḥadīth* narrative. With his words, he "looks at Ḥadīth from the viewpoint of modern theory of literature" and examines his sample *ḥadīth accounts* by the same method applied to other literary genres.¹⁰ Stefan Leder decides historicity of a *khbar* (pl. *akhbār*), the basic form of classical Arab narrative, by its comparison to other modern fictional genres. Structural or stylistic similarities between *khbar* and literary narrative are to be considered as signposts of fictionality.¹¹ By the same token, Daniel Beaumont examined issues related to *khbar* narrative comparing to hard-boiled novels.¹² However, this approach centered around the fictionality is inadequate by leaving aside the two facts: Firstly, *ḥadīth* has emerged from a real experience. Secondly, the narrative is a basic function of human cognition before a literary technique.

At this point, there is a need for an integrative approach considering *ḥadīth* narrative from every angle. Monika Fludernik's 'natural' narratology provides a holistic theory approaching narrative as a cognitive instrument. Focusing on conversational storytelling, she attempts to assert how human beings spontaneously tell their daily experiences. In this sense, she makes a

¹⁰ Sebastian Günther, "Fictional Narration and Imagination within an Authoritative Framework: Towards a New Understanding of *Ḥadīth*," in *Storytelling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), pp.434-439.

¹¹ Stefan Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khbar*: A Basic Form of Historical Writing," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1992), pp.306-308.

¹² Daniel Beaumont, "Hard-Boiled: Narrative Discourse in Early Muslim Traditions," *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996), pp.16-19.

difference between literary and non-literary narrative genres, besides between institutional oral forms and daily storytelling.

In this article, I examine the relationships between *ḥadīth* and natural narrative. After a brief information about narrative and narratology, I try to set forth how *ḥadīth* emerged as narrative. By discussing the development and content of the 'natural' narrative concept, I analyze to what extent *ḥadīth* narrations have similar features with natural narrative. In this context, *isnād* and *matn* problems of *ḥadīth* narrations or criticisms on natural narrative are taken out of the framework. Sample *ḥadīth* narrations are mostly taken from main *ḥadīth* collections, as well as reference sources are chosen from classical *ḥadīth* books and basic sources of narratology.

1. What is Narrative, What is Narratology?

Narration is one of the most basic human actions as human beings always tell each other stories of what happened. Therefore, the narrative is a phenomenon as old as the language ability of humanity. However, the transformation of narrative into the subject of an independent discipline is a considerably modern issue. As it is still a discussed concept, there are various definitions of and approaches to narrative. A widely-accepted definition of narrative belongs to Gerald Prince: "The representation (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) narrators to one, two, or several (more or less overt) narratees."¹³ Here, three main features of narrative are prominent. First of all, narrative is a *representation* of an event or a series of events. Therefore, every narrative is a commentary of certain events from a certain point of view, not the events themselves. Secondly, the term narrative contains both the *product* and the *process*. In the context of the narrative, not only a story of *what happened* but also questions of *how it happened* (plotline) and *how it is told* (discourse) are examined. Thirdly, there are three basic elements of narrative: event(s), narrator(s), narratee(s). It means, there must be an event (or events) that a narrator (or narrators) feel(s) meaningful enough to tell to a certain audience(s) or a reader(s).

At first glance, these issues may seem related to the technical aspect of literary theories. However, narrative is also a cognitive instrument and a par-

¹³ Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p.58.

ticular mode of thinking pertinent to comprehend the outer world, take lessons from what is experienced, find a way for planning the future and go beyond the factual world to the possible ones. In this sense, narrative is a trans-cultural and interdisciplinary issue. As Marie-Laure Ryan describes:

Narrative is an instrument of self-creation; narrative is a repository of practical knowledge, especially in oral cultures; ... narrative is a mold in which we shape and preserve memories; narrative, in its fictional form, widens our mental universe beyond the actual and the familiar and provides a playfield for thought experiments; ... narrative creates and transmits cultural traditions, and builds the values and beliefs that define cultural identities; narrative is a vehicle of dominant ideologies and an instrument of power.¹⁴

Only after interdisciplinary perspectives became predominated in narratology, narrative studies were expanded into such a broad spectrum. Narratology is a fairly new discipline as the term of narratology was coined by the late '60s. However, the determination of narrative as a mode of speech goes back to Plato. In *The Republic*, he classifies modes of speech into categories: While *mimesis* means an artistic representation by direct wording of the character, *diegesis* refers to a speech reported by another person. Therefore, the teller/author in *diegesis* is on the position of narrator.¹⁵ Literary studies related to narrative goes back to the 19th century, after the emergence of the novel as a genre of fictional prose. In these studies, literary genres were classified according to the characters' complexity and functionality, on one hand, and varieties of plot design, on the other. Additionally, new issues were emerged in the literary theory such as the author-narrator relation and the differences between first-person and third-person narrations. It was Vladimir Propp's model that presented the elementary components of narrative and the way they are combined. Propp's model also paves the way for structuralist studies focusing on the main problematics of narrative such as perspective, logic, and rhetoric. French Structuralism (1966-1980) concentrated on the structural analyses of different genres. In these studies, a holistic ap-

¹⁴ Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narrative," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman *et al.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p.471 (quoted from Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction?* [Paris: Seuil, 1999]; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley [New York: Random House, 1978]).

¹⁵ Jan Christoph Meister, "Narratology," in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn *et al.* (Hamburg: Hamburg University), § 17, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/narratology> (accessed Feb. 12, 2019).

proach to narrative was adopted by attempting to explain the semiotic infrastructure of all signifying systems and focusing on disclosing the universal deep structure of narrative by analysing the surface structure of a given narrative.¹⁶

In the '80s, two major trends were dominant in narratology: narratology's scope widened beyond literary narrative, on the one hand, concepts and theories were imported from other disciplines, on the other.¹⁷ *Narrative turn in the humanities* (a methodological shift from structuralism to post-structuralism) has an effect on this process.¹⁸ The structuralists' main interest, systematicity, replaced by the cultural and philosophical issues of history and ideology. As a result, critically oriented narratological models and theories led to the emergence of heterogeneous methodologies and the plural concept of "narratologies." In this framework, Monika Fludernik highlighted the cognitive functions of oral and non-literary narrative instead of the text itself. Therefore, she opened a new chapter in the narratological project.¹⁹ In *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, Fludernik claims that narrativity starts with the human experience rather than the plot and this model is in contradistinction to plot-based classical narratology.

2. *Ḥadīth* as Narrative

As narrative is a cognitive instrument and a universal mode of speech, *ḥadīth* can be revised by its narrativity. The word '*ḥadīth*' has many literal senses, but prominently means 'new' and is used as an antonym of *qadīm*, 'old'. From this derived the use of the word '*ḥadīth*' for an item of news, a tale, a story, or a report, relating to the present or the past. As a term, *ḥadīth* means words, acts, approvals, or attributes attached to the Prophet Muhammad.²⁰ Although the term was developed at least in three generations, it is reportedly known that the Prophet himself and his companions used this word referring to his sayings.²¹

¹⁶ Meister, "Narratology," §§ 20, 23, 24, 36, 37.

¹⁷ Marie-Laure Ryan and Ernst van Alphen, "Narratology," in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp.110-116.

¹⁸ Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (London & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), p.1.

¹⁹ Meister, "Narratology," §§ 40, 43.

²⁰ Muḥammad al-'Uthaymīn, *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maktabat al-'Ilm, 1994), p.5.

²¹ Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddiqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, Special Features and Criticism* (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1961), p.1.

In this framework, I would like to focus on how *ḥadīth* emerged. For passing his message, Prophet Muhammad neither made a list of rules nor contended with giving sermons. As it will be explained below, he was in dialogue with people whether in daily life (at home, at the mosque, at the marketplace, or on a journey) or in state of exception (i.e., at wartime or famine). Throughout 23 years of his prophecy, he acted with his believers and reacted to their attitudes. He was carefully listened and observed by his companions because they believed in him as the true guide for this world and hereafter. Whatever he said, acted, confirmed, or rejected was carefully followed. According to a narration reported by al-Bukhārī, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (a companion of the Prophet and the second caliph after him) who resided about four kilometres away from Medina made an agreement with one of his neighbours. They used to listen to the Prophet by taking turns. Whoever of them went to the Prophet, used to transmit what he had learned that day to the other at night.²² This is only an example of companions' concern about prophetic sayings.

Prophetic knowledge was emerged from the interaction between Prophet Muhammad and his companions, and then transmitted from one generation to the other. Prophetic sayings were important for the companions because all actions of the Prophet served them as an ideal, all of his words was law to them and his moral choices establish a set of personal and social values, which they attempted to follow as much as possible.²³ The companions and the followers were fully aware of the historic significance of their age and uniqueness of their Prophet. As an eyewitness or a participant-witness to the events in Prophet's lifetime, the companions transmitted not only plain words of the Prophet, but also their anecdotes concerning the Prophet. These proto-*ḥadīth* accounts were narrated informally and non-systematically in the form of little stories. Thus, conversations between the Prophet and his companions evolved into narratives whose focal concern is the prophetic sayings and their contexts.²⁴

The process of *ḥadīth* narration has created not only a product, the text of *ḥadīth* in the framework of time, space, person(s), plot, etc. but also other elements of narrative: narrators, narratees, their perspectives, and backgrounds. Two structural components of a *ḥadīth* account, the *matn* 'body of

²² Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *al-'ilm*, 27 B. *al-tanāwub fī al-'ilm*, vol.1, p.29 (no.89).

²³ Şiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, p.3.

²⁴ Jamal J. Elias, "The *Ḥadīth* Traditions of 'Ā'isha as Prototypes of Self-Narrative," *Edebiyât* 7 (1997), pp.215-217.

information' and the *isnād* 'chain of transmitters', refers to these two layers. Although the main body of an account is the *matn*, *isnād* has many functions for developing story and discourse of the *ḥadīth*. First of all, *isnād* links the final transmitter –in most cases compiler of a *ḥadīth* collection– with the first one, i.e., the eyewitness to the events. Thus, *isnād* determines authenticity of a *ḥadīth* and preserve the *matn* from alteration or falsification.²⁵ Secondly, *isnād* represents the authoritative aspect of the *ḥadīth* as it implies that this is a true account of a prophetic knowledge transmitted by reliable narrators. The other function of *isnād* is giving information about how narrators affect the discourse of *ḥadīth* as each *ḥadīth* account reflects its narrator's style and concern, as it will be analyzed below.

3. What is 'Natural' Narrative?

Thus far, we have seen that the term of *ḥadīth* refers to both a specific kind of narrative and a narration process. Before asking to what extent this narration process can be considered natural, I would like to discuss what natural narrative means.

Discussions on the term of natural narrative go back to studies on personal experience narratives. As William Labov asserts in his studies, independent of their socio-cultural background, human beings use certain linguistic patterns in their oral narrative of personal experience. Be it short or tall, detailed or brief, personal experience narratives have a common cognitive teleology, but other elements, such as similes, metaphors, slangs, etc. can be changed according to narrator's aim and other external factors.²⁶ In Labov's model, the oral narrative of personal experience generally develops within a similar structural schema. This schema may be changed due to the narrator's aim or the listener's position. Some elements may not be found in a personal experience narrative if the narrator wants to skip some points or (s)he does not want to tell the whole story.²⁷ As Mary Louise Pratt points out, although the narrator does not intentionally plan this structural schema, it resembles the plotline in the literary narrative. For her, its reason is rooted in the speech situation. In other words, narrators select their material, events

²⁵ R. Marston Speight, "Ḥadīth," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, <http://www.oxford-islamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0286> (accessed July 17, 2019).

²⁶ William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), p.xiv; William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience," *Journal of Narrative and Life Experience* 7:1-4 (1997), p.16.

²⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p.71.

in the past, due to their present aim. Any experience is felt to be 'tellable' due to its present context or the listener's position or the narrator's aim.²⁸

In that vein, Fludernik elaborates Labov & Waletzky and Pratt's approach and establishes an independent 'natural' narrative model. She considers *spontaneous conversational storytelling* as the prototypical shape of natural narrative. This definition includes only a part of the wider area of oral narrative, therefore, oral poetry and folktale traditions of oral storytelling remain out of the scope. However, the term natural narrative covers various forms: "the spontaneous narration of personal experiences, ... the telling of jokes and anecdotes, the retelling of other people's experience, ... bare reports and summaries of events [, or] the 'telling' of imaginary scenarios." All these forms have a common characteristic: being free from institutional settings.²⁹ On the other hand, Fludernik highlights that every genre of narrative, whether it is natural or not, is determined by cultural, societal and ideological circumstances. That is why she rejects a mythic 'naturalness' of any narrative and uses the term 'natural' in the quotation. In her words "natural narrative is conceived as 'natural' exclusively in terms of its quality of spontaneous (re)production, and on the basis of its universality, its transcultural existence and significance."³⁰ In this sense, natural narrative is a universal phenomenon. But Fludernik points out to its cultural aspects: "[B]oth oral and written forms of discourse are coequal, structurally determined symbolic media which operate within specific generic, cultural and contextual frames."³¹

Every form of natural narrative has its own structural or stylistic characteristics, however, there are also some distinctive features separating natural narrative from that of other oral forms. In any case, the common point of all natural narrative genres is 'narrating an experience'. As Fludernik emphasizes, the core element of narrative is human experience, not plot. By its very nature, narrative must contain a human experiencer in a way, at a level. Depending on studies on oral narrative, she asserts that it is the emotional concern with the experience and its evaluation that establishes cognitive elements of narrativity.³² In this sense, she defines the core of natural narrative by the term 'experientiality', which she coined:

²⁸ Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory*, pp.73-74.

²⁹ Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.10.

³⁰ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.11.

³¹ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.11.

³² Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.9. Fludernik's definition of narrative starting narrativity with human experience is considered groundbreaking. See Jan Alber, "Natural Narratology," in *Routledge*

Experientiality in narratives of personal experience consists in the dynamic interrelation between the *description of personal experience* on the one hand ... and the *evaluative and rememorative transformation of this experience* in the storytelling process: tellability and point of the story dialectically constitute each other. The narrative is a narrative, not because it tells a story, but because the story that it tells is reportable and has been *reinterpreted by the narrating I*, the personal storyteller. ... Stories of personal experience epitomize typically human experience by representing it in the shape of an objective correlative that is organic in form and function.³³

In Fludernik's model, 'natural' narrative genres are classified by the degrees of spontaneity. Initially, the spontaneous and the non-spontaneous genres are distinguished from each other. Particularly, spontaneous conversational storytelling has significant differences from those organized or semi-organized ones such as narration in interviews or storytelling sessions. However, there are some transitions between these two genres as Fludernik highlights that life stories may occur in both spontaneous and non-spontaneous conversations.³⁴ Although interviews conducted in an oral-history framework are considered non-spontaneous, they may share some common features with those of spontaneous for being non-institutionalized and not depending on a 'plotline' in the sense that it used in literary narrative.

In spontaneous storytelling, there are some structural features, which enable the narrator to establish a narrative discourse without getting out of the plotline.³⁵ As the oral language is formed as a sequence of idea units, one can produce only one major idea at a time,³⁶ and many idea units are not complete sentences. It was the different usages of language that converts these units into narrative episodes through the conversation process and combines them within the plotline. For instance, pitch levels, pauses, intonation structures, and volume levels are frequently observed in everyday conversations and used for various functions, whether emphatic or emotional. Moreover, they provide flexibility for the plotline and interact to mark off more extensive semantic or thematic blocks of discourse, as well. On the

Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, ed. David Herman et al. (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), pp.528-530.

³³ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.52 (emphases mine).

³⁴ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, pp.43-45.

³⁵ Here, Fludernik uses the term 'plotline' in the sense of Labov's unintentional cognitive structure, not as in its literary meaning. See Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.48.

³⁶ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, pp.43-45.

other hand, conjunctions such as *so, well, now* and the like play a significant role in the lines of discourse markers. They also fulfil important roles as signals of structural points in narrative, by marking the story's return to the plotline, signalling the result section of the narrative, or serving to flag new episode beginnings. Temporal specifiers such as *one day, that afternoon, a specific date* are frequently placed at the beginning of the stories and they serve to introduce the story proper as well as its first episode.³⁷

In natural storytelling, the speaker must attempt to get to the point as fast as possible and evaluate the significance of the experience recounted. Besides, listeners participate in the storytelling by interrupting the story with questions, expressing their emotional reactions,³⁸ or signalling their continuing interest in the story by nodding or gestures.³⁹ These stylistic features reflect the interaction between the narrator and the narratee.

In this experience-based model, there are various modes of storytelling through which story meaning is created. The major determiner of a mode can be the narrator's position (first person or third person), the audience's position (an interactive listener or an interviewer) or point of view (objectivity or subjectivity).

Report is used for providing information about facts or events. Its aim is presenting the point of the story in brief. Therefore, reports neither tell the full story nor put forth subjective judgements or a certain perspective.

Narratives of personal experience are first-person narratives, in which the narrator and the protagonist is the same person. As the narrator is also the experiencer, (s)he is in the unique position to present his/her case depending on his/her memory. In this mode of storytelling, experientiality emerges from an interaction between the *description of personal experience* and the *evaluative and rememorative transformation of this experience* in the storytelling process.

Observational narrative is the story of passive experiencer. In this kind of narrative, the narrator is on the position of an observer of the events, which are not directly related to him/her. The *perception* and the *feelings* of the narrator constitute the tellability of the story.

³⁷ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, pp.45-46, 48.

³⁸ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, pp.46-47.

³⁹ Charles Goodwin, *Conversational Organisation: Interaction between Speakers and Hearers* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), p.103.

Vicarious narrative is also a third-person narrative. The speaker has received the information by hearsay rather than direct observation. Its tellability depends on the narrator's *insight* into the protagonists' experience.

In third-person narratives, a personalized narrator does not have access to other people's minds. However, the narrator makes the story more easily accessible by *rendering protagonists' typical and appropriate reactions, thoughts, and motives*.

Solicited and lengthy narratives are stories told upon the demand of others such as storytelling performed in interviews. In Fludernik's model, solicited narratives are considered semi-spontaneous. Patterns of spontaneous storytelling are distorted in solicited narrative because there is not an interactive listener, therefore not a turn-taking routine.⁴⁰

Institutionalized narrative (e.g., oral poetry or oral storytelling) may adopt and elaborate all of these above-mentioned structural and stylistic features. However, there are some conditions of institutionalization that distinguish natural narrative from that of the institutionalized. First of all, the bard, professional storyteller, has a hierarchical position in the storytelling process, therefore, (s)he can dominate, even manipulate the narration. Subject of the tale is the second substantial characteristic of institutionalized narrative. In contrast to real-world reports of battles etc., institutionalized narrative repeats mythic, ritual, religious, or national key events. The story is about the heroic and mythic past and not about the bard's own experience. Another sign of institutionalization is related to the narrator. The absence of 'narrating-I' correlates with the lack of interest in 'the individual'. In pre-modern Western oral or written literature, personal self is not seen except in relation to God. A nonconformist individual rejecting established rules is emerged after significant social changes preparing modernity. The length of narrative is another feature. Epic narrative contains larger number of episodes instead of some five or six and its main issue is how to organise such series.⁴¹

As a result, natural narrative is a spontaneous experience of telling of human experience. In this intertwined process, the act of telling is not planned. However, some measures are distinguishing natural narrative from other institutional genres, as it is mentioned above.

⁴⁰ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, pp.52-56.

⁴¹ Fludernik, *'Natural' Narratology*, p.57.

4. *Ḥadīth* as Experience: Clues of Naturality in *Ḥadīth* Narrative

Briefly, narrative can be defined as rendering an experience *tellable* in accordance with narrating time's concern, based on the universal narrative structures but shaped in forms of a certain culture. In this framework, I would like to discuss how *ḥadīth* has features of the natural narrative. As experience is the core element of natural narrative, I will focus on degrees of experientiality in *ḥadīth* narration.

4.1. Experience of the Prophet Muhammad with Allah

As the Messenger of God, the Prophet Muhammad had a specific experience with Allah. In Islamic theology, there are two types of communication between a prophet and God. The first one is *wahy*, or the revelation. In Islamic faith, the Qur'an is word by word revealed from Allah to the heart of the Prophet Muhammad. Here, the Prophet is the only transmitter of the *wahy* and he has no self-decision in this process. The second type of communication is metaphysical visions or inspirations of the Prophet. In *ḥadīth* literature, we may find many descriptions about paradise, hellfire or other metaphysical beings, which are not mentioned in the Qur'an. These are mainly based on visions of the Prophet. For instance, after he led the ritual prayer following a solar eclipse, clearly states his vision by these words:

Just now at this place, I have seen what I have never seen before, including Paradise and Hell. No doubt it has been inspired to me that you will be put to trials in your graves.⁴²

This vision is a kind of metaphysical experience of the Prophet. Metaphorically, it may be associated with the explanation of an image reflected in the mirror. As it is impenetrable for others, the Messenger of God is on the position of the omniscient narrator and explains what come into his view by the words of the culture in which he lived. Here, we find a description of the seventh heaven, full of idiomatic expressions, similes, and metaphors:

I was shown Sidrat al-Muntahā (i.e., a tree in the seventh heaven) and I saw its nabk fruits which resembled the clay jugs of Hajar (i.e., a town in Arabia), and its leaves were like the ears of elephants, and four rivers originated at its root, two of them were apparent and two were hidden. I asked Gabriel about those rivers

⁴² Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *al-'ilm*, 24 B. *man ajāba al-futyā*, vol.1, p.28 (no.86). English translations of this and most of the following *ḥadīths* are taken from <https://sunnah.com> (accessed July 20, 2019) with small changes.

and he said, "The two hidden rivers are in Paradise, and the apparent ones are the Nile and the Euphrates."⁴³

Like the majority of the *ḥadīth* literature, narrations about the metaphysical world generally comprehended and memorized by meaning, not word by word. Thus, one may find different variants of a *ḥadīth* related to heavens, hellfire, and other metaphysical beings.

4.2. Experience of the Companions with the Prophet

Although there are many *ḥadīth* narrations composed of only a short prophetic utterance,⁴⁴ the majority of the *ḥadīth* literature consists of the companions' reports about the Prophet or their anecdotes related to him. In this kind of narrations, one may see how the companions' life transformed under the Prophetic influence.

In *ḥadīth* narrative, there is a strong interrelationship between its purpose and structure. With small numbers of exception, *ḥadīth* narrations are not full stories. Instead, each *ḥadīth* narration is an episode from an event or a situation. For many individual accounts, readers may not understand what it means, if they have no extra-textual knowledge. This is partly because of the background not mentioned in the text but shared between the narrator, the companions, and the narratee, the followers. Although this fragmentary structure is related to the general features of classical Arab narrative,⁴⁵ the main reason is implicit in the aim of *ḥadīth*: Bringing the Prophet and his wisdom forward.

In many narrations, we find neither full story nor other narrative details related to time, space, or person(s). Instead, the words of the Prophet are presented without information or after a brief description of a situation:

⁴³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *bad' al-khalq*, 6 B. *dhikr al-malā'ika*, vol.4, p.109 (no.3207).

⁴⁴ This kind of *ḥadīths* generally contains aphorisms or recommendations of the Prophet such as "Fasting is a shield" (Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, K. *al-fitan*, 12 B. *kaff al-lisān*, vol.2, p.1314 [no.3973]) or "Increase in remembrance of the severer of pleasures" (al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, K. *al-zuhd*, 4 B. *dhikr al-mawt*, vol.4, p.553 [no.2307]; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, K. *al-khawf min Allāh* 11, vol.2, p.246 [no.802]). These short *ḥadīths* generally emerged as a part of a conversation or a situation and later on are dissected (*taqṭīr*) by *ḥadīth* scholars. That is why I did not consider this type of *ḥadīths* as an independent group within the context of experientiality.

⁴⁵ In classical Arab narrative, the basic form is *khabar*, which is plotted around a simple event and its persons, time, space, etc. Other forms such as *ḥikāya*, *qiṣṣa*, and *sīra* consist of accumulation of *akḥbār* in the framework of a certain plotline. One-piece, long narrative genres such as epic did not exist in classical Arab literature. See Sa'īd Yaqṭīn, *al-Kalām wa-al-Khabar: Muqaddima lil-Sard al-'Arabī* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1997), pp.196-198; Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*," pp.279-280.

Surāqa said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah about a lost camel that comes to my cisterns that I have prepared for my own camels: 'will I be rewarded if I give it some water to drink?' He said: 'Yes, in every living being there is reward.'"⁴⁶

Stefan Sperl analyzes these kinds of samples in the framework of Genette's story and discourse dichotomy.⁴⁷ In his point of view, the prophetic utterance, which determines the discourse, is the core element of a *ḥadīth* narration whereas the story composes its shell.⁴⁸ Accordingly, a *ḥadīth* narration can provide more or fewer details in keeping with the aim of emphasizing the prophetic message.

The prophetic utterance also reflects the authoritative aspect of *ḥadīth*. As the Prophet was not a lawmaker enacting on abstract and hypothetical situations, his regulations emerged from daily life and later became a source for legal rules:

I asked the Messenger of Allah and said: "A man came to me asking to buy something that I did not have. Can I buy it from the market for him and then give it to him?" He said: "Do not sell what is not with you."⁴⁹

In this example, the Prophet made a regulation on a commercial transaction in response to the question of a tradesman. Later on, the prophetic utterance is formulated as "Transacting of a non-existent thing is invalid" and became a general rule in Islamic Law. Muslim jurists debated the legitimacy of commercial transactions in their time measuring by such formulations largely derived from the *ḥadīth*. In other words, rules implicit in the Prophet's experience with his companions were narrated, therefore, *ḥadīth* narrative embraced the law.

4.3. Experience of Narrating *Ḥadīth*

Experientiality in *ḥadīth* narrative is not limited by being emerged from a certain experience. Transmission of *ḥadīth* is also a kind of experience influencing the consciousness of both the narrator and the narratee, corre-

⁴⁶ Ibn Māja, *Sunan, K. al-adab*, 8 B. *faḍl ṣadaqat al-mā'*, vol.2, p.1215 (no.3686).

⁴⁷ In Genette's approach, while story refers to narrative content [*what is told*], discourse refers to the way of narrating the content [*how is told*]. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp.27-29.

⁴⁸ Stefan Sperl, "Man's 'Hollow Core': Ethics and Aesthetics in *Ḥadīth* Literature and Classical Arabic Adab," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 70:3 (2007), p.477.

⁴⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, K. al-buyū'*, 19 B. *karāhiyat bay' mā laysa 'indak*, vol.3, p.526 (no.1232).

spondingly shaping the text of *ḥadīth*. It may be seen how the narrator's perception, observation, remembrance, or evaluation, and the narratee's expectations affect the structure and the style of a *ḥadīth* narration.

‘Ā’isha said: “The Ethiopians were playing with their small spears, Allah’s Messenger screened me behind him and I watched (that display) and kept on watching till I left my own. So you may estimate of what age a little girl may listen to amusement.”⁵⁰

In the abovementioned *ḥadīth*, ‘Ā’isha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, narrates a personal memory with her husband in experiential mode and then evaluates this experience due to the narrating time’s perception. In this self-portrait, the narrator reveals her past self as a young lady in a social environment, with her desires.

However, in some *ḥadīth* narrations, the narrator is only an observant eye for the event:

Anas said: “While I was walking with the Prophet who was wearing a Najrānī outer garment with a thick hem, a Bedouin came upon the Prophet and pulled his garment so violently that I could recognize the impress of the hem of the garment on his shoulder, caused by the violence of his pull. Then the Bedouin said, ‘Order for me something from Allah’s Fortune which you have.’ The Prophet turned to him and smiled, and ordered that a gift be given to him.”⁵¹

In this observational narrative, the companion-narrator, Anas, only depicts what has happened and do not make any comment. However, a careful look can easily catch his point of view as well as the extra-textual implications. Descriptions about physical appearance and reactions of the Prophet provide information about his ethical attitude. Besides, the Prophet’s calm response to the Bedouin’s rudeness draws a strong contrast. Therefore, Prophetic wisdom comes to light through the narrator’s paradigmatic point of view.

In contrast to folktale storytellers, *ḥadīth* narrators tell stories about their own or other’s real experience. Stories of *ḥadīth* narrations are not

⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *al-nikāḥ*, 115 B. *nazar al-mar’a*, vol.7, p.38 (no.5236).

⁵¹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *farḍ al-khums*, 19 B. *mā kāna al-nabī yu’ṭī*, vol.4, p.94 (no.3149).

about mythic events or heroes;⁵² on the contrary, companion-narrators report what they have experienced, participated in, witnessed, or heard at first hand:⁵³

Abū Mūsā said, "We went out in the company of the Prophet for a *ghazwa* (military expedition) and we were six persons having one camel which we rode in rotation. So, (due to excessive walking) our feet became thin and my feet became thin and my nail dropped, and we used to wrap our feet with the pieces of cloth, and for this reason, the *ghazwa* was named Dhāt al-Riqā' as we wrapped our feet with rags." When Abū Mūsā narrated this (*ḥadīth*), he felt regretful to do so and said, as if he disliked to have disclosed a good deed of his.⁵⁴

In this short narrative, Abū Mūsā, a companion, told a memory of a military expedition in which he participated. What makes this memory is tellable is the difficulties they have encountered. As the name of the military expedition is given due to these difficulties, probably Abū Mūsā felt that telling of this experience may let next generations take a lesson on how the Prophet Muhammad and his companions achieved their duty. On the other hand, the second transmitter's (Abū Burda) explanations disclosed how Abū Mūsā was reluctant to tell this story. On the position of the vicarious narrator, Abū Burda makes the *ḥadīth* narration more comprehensible by describing feelings and ethical attitude of Abū Mūsā. This sample also demonstrates that military expedition reports (*maghāzī*) in *ḥadīth* literature are different from epic narrative by its short form and realistic content. Contrary to the heroic and mythic concept of the epic, the companion-narrator tells his real experience and reveals himself as *narrating-I*.

Whether in the form of personal narrative or that of observational, a non-conformist individual with his/her thoughts, feelings and socio-cultural background may be seen in *ḥadīth* narrations. It is a well-known example that one of the female Muslims of Medina, Umm 'Umāra, questioned why

⁵² As mentioned above, narratives related to the metaphysical world is out of this context. On the other hand, some *ḥadīth* accounts about historical events contain supernatural elements such as participation of angels in the Battle of *Badr* (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *K. al-maghāzī*, 11 *B. shuhūd al-malā'ika*, vol.5, p.80 [no.3992, 93, 94]). Such miracle accounts do not render *maghāzī* narrations epic as they do not abolish physical and social causality in the sequence of events. For further discussions on *ḥadīth* narrative and epic, see Sperl, "Man's 'Hollow Core'," pp.478-484.

⁵³ Senturk highlights that companion-narrators used object language and eyewitness narrative because usually they had participated in the events they were reporting. See Recep Senturk, *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Ḥadīth Transmission Network, 610-1505* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p.154.

⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *K. al-maghāzī*, 31 *B. ghazwat dhāt al-riqā'*, vol.5, p.113 (no.4128).

women did not specifically mentioned in the revelation of God⁵⁵ and upon this questioning, the following verse was revealed: “Indeed the Muslim men and the Muslim women, and the believing men and the believing women”⁵⁶ Many *ḥadīth* narrations render some companions as nonconformist individuals in the hope of attaining a better place in society. One of them, Asmā’ bt. ‘Umays, emigrated from Mecca to Ethiopia first and after spending there some difficult years she emigrated again, this time to Medina, together with a group of Muslims. When she met with ‘Umar, he said: “We have migrated before you (people of the boat), so we have got more right than you over Allah’s Messenger.” Upon these words, Asmā’ expressed her anger:

“No, by Allah, while you were with Allah’s Messenger who was feeding the hungry ones amongst you, and advised the ignorant ones amongst you, we were in the far-off hated land of Ethiopia, and all that was for the sake of Allah’s Messenger. By Allah, I will neither eat any food nor drink anything till I inform Allah’s Messenger of all that you have said.” ... When Allah’s Messenger heard this, he said to her: “His right is not more than yours, for him and his companions there is one migration, but for you, i.e., for the people of the boat, there are two migrations.”⁵⁷

At the end of this relatively long *ḥadīth* (400 words in Arabic), the first narrator, Asmā’, explains that the people of the boat were coming to her in groups and asking about this *ḥadīth*. It is understood that this *ḥadīth* is a solicited narrative and it has hardly shows the features of spontaneous storytelling such as narrator’s intonations, or listener’s interruptions. However, one may see in this narration how this experience was transformed through the narrator’s memory, besides, how her feelings and thoughts were. On the other hand, some stylistic features of spontaneous storytelling such as conjunctions (e.g., *fa-*, *hattā*) or temporal specifiers (e.g., *balaghanā makhraj Rasūl Allāh, ḥīna iftataḥa al-Khaybar*) is also found in this narration and function as discourse markers.

The narratee’s concern also one of the determiners of the experience of narrating *ḥadīth*. As *ḥadīth* narrations are not typescript recordings, listeners’ gestures or spontaneous reactions are hardly mentioned. However, narratees’ presence is always felt in *ḥadīth* whether by their questions or situations in which they have described. However, they are prominent only to the

⁵⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, K. al-tafsīr*, 33 B. *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*, vol.5, p.354 (no.3211).

⁵⁶ 33/al-Aḥzāb:35.

⁵⁷ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, K. faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba*, 41 B. *faḍā’il Ja’far*, vol.4, p.1946 (no.169 [2502]).

extent that they serve to convey the prophetic message. On many *ḥadīth* narrations, the companions frequently appears as careful listeners trying to comprehend the Prophetic words by their questions:

The Messenger of Allah stood up and said: "O people, Allah, Most High, has decreed pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) for you." Al-Aqra' b. Ḥābis al-Tamīmī said: "Every year, o Messenger of Allah?" But he remained silent, then he said: "If I said yes, it would become obligatory, then you would not hear and obey. Rather it is just one pilgrimage."⁵⁸

The follower-narrators are less prominent in *ḥadīth* narrative, in comparison to the companion-narrators. Generally, they are on the position of 'learners' asking about the Prophet, and companion-narrators give information in response to their questions. Their reactions, thoughts, and feelings are mentioned on limited occasions.

When Ḥafṣa (Prophet Muhammad's wife) was asked, "How was the bed of God's Messenger in your house?" she replied, "It was a canvas folded into two, which was spread for God's Messenger to sleep on. On one night, ... I folded it and spread it that way." In the morning, Messenger of God asked: "What did you spread for me last night?" I replied: "It was the same bed, I only folded it into four so that it may become softer." Messenger of God said: "Leave it in its original form. Its softness deprived me of my prayers at night."⁵⁹

Although Ḥafṣa makes an explanation in response to a question, the quantity of the information depends on the narrator's intention, not that of the narratee's. Ḥafṣa prefers to shift the focus of the narrative into the Prophet's night prayer habits, and the exact answer of the question, the features of his bed, remains in the background. The asking person's reactions are not mentioned, as well as there is no information about him/her.

In the first two generations, it was the task of "transmitting the prophetic knowledge" that distinguishes the act of narrating *ḥadīth* from institutional storytelling. Storyteller's artistic creativity is appreciated neither for the companions nor for the next narrators. Because the Prophet Muhammad, his

⁵⁸ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. *al-ḥajj*, 73 B. *farḍ al-ḥajj marratan fī al-'umr*, vol.2, p.975 (no.412 [1337]); al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, K. *al-ḥajj*, 1 B. *wujūb al-ḥajj*, vol.5, p.111 (no.2620).

⁵⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, 45 B. *fī firāsh Rasūl Allāh*, p.188 (no.312).

family, and companions were real persons, as well as authenticity and accuracy of a *ḥadīth* account have always been the main problematic.⁶⁰ Prophet's authority limited the narrator's free imagination, so that, in many occasions, the companions cross-checked each other's narrations with regard to sticking to the truth.

In *ḥadīth* literature, many narrations describe the companions' and the followers' serious attitudes towards the act of narrating *ḥadīth*. A narrative about 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, a companion, reflects how the mission of transmitting the Prophetic utterance builds awareness in the mind of the narrator:

Once, in the evening, as soon as he said "Messenger of God said," his eyes filled with tears, his veins swelled up and then he unbuttoned [his garment. After he narrated the Prophetic utterance] he said: "or like this, or similar to this, or akin to this."⁶¹

Sticking to the literal words in narrating *ḥadīth* is a reflection of this awareness among narrators. Some companions (e.g., 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Zayd b. al-Arḡam, Abū Hurayra, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr) were meticulous in literary wording and they strongly advised others to do so.⁶² However, the act of narrating *ḥadīth* is surrounded by human limitations, by its very nature. Dependence on the exact wording was almost impossible and the majority of the companions were aware of this. A narration about 'Ā'isha describes the situation:

After the decease of the Prophet, 'Urwa, 'Ā'isha's nephew, used to write *ḥadīth* narrations from her. Once, he asked her: "I listen to [a *ḥadīth*] in a way, and then listen to it again, [you tell it] in another way." 'Ā'isha asked: "Do you hear any contradiction in the meaning?" He replied: "No." She said: "It does not matter."⁶³

Narration by meaning was more common among narrators and in some cases, this fact joined together with the narrator's misremembrance or misconception. Hence, a prophetic utterance could be misremembered or quoted out of context. A companion, 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn declares how time distance may have a negative effect on a *ḥadīth* account:

⁶⁰ Sahair El Calamawy, "Narrative Elements in the *Ḥadīth* Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. F. L. Beeston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.309.

⁶¹ Al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, K. *al-muqaddima*, 28 B. *man ḥāba al-fuyā*, vol.1, p.324 (no.276).

⁶² Abū Muḥammad al-Rāmhurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāsil bayn al-Rāwī wa al-Wā'ī*, ed. Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1404), pp.538-539.

⁶³ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī 'Ilm al-Riwāya*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ḥamdī al-Madanī (Medina: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), p.205.

If I wished, I would narrate *ḥadīth* throughout two consecutive days but some people among the companions slowed me down. I witnessed what they witnessed and I heard what they heard. They narrate some *ḥadīth* but the fact is not as they said. I have exactly known that they are on the right way (i.e., do not intentionally distort the facts) but I fear to confuse just as they did.⁶⁴

Criticisms of the companions for each other's *ḥadīth* narrations asserts how such misconceptions were double-checked. 'Ā'isha was one of those companions who paid attention to correct those mistakes. For example, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, a companion, when the time of his death came, called for new clothes and put on them. He then said: I heard the Messenger of Allah said: "A deceased will be raised in the clothes in which he died."⁶⁵ 'Ā'isha heard this and rejected: "May Allah have mercy on Abū Sa'īd! What the Prophet meant by these words was that a person will be raised from the grave upon the acts and deeds that (s)he has done in this life."⁶⁶

Conclusion

In this paper, I have restricted the issue of naturality in *ḥadīth* narration to its emergence and first transmission. Later periods of *ḥadīth* narration, i.e., the compilation and the classification, may be discussed in the framework of a well-structured and planned (in Fludernik's term, institutionalized) narration process. Although *ḥadīth* compilations in its latest form contain edited forms of the narrations, spontaneous conversations of the first two generations and other experimental forms of 'natural' narrative are still prominent in *ḥadīth* literature. In this sense, I have tried to explain above how different genres and modes of 'natural' narrative are observed in *ḥadīth* narrative.

For being a religious narrative, *ḥadīth* is not free from the socio-cultural, paradigmatic, or individual background. However, it mainly emerged spontaneously and was narrated as an experiment of a unique experience between the Prophet and his companions. These narrations were distinguished from ordinary daily conversations in some ways. Firstly, the companions narrated *ḥadīth* with the sense of fulfilling a duty, therefore, their minds were semi-organized. On the other hand, many *ḥadīth* narrations were initially told by the follower's demand so they do not show the stylistic features of

⁶⁴ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol.4, p.433 (no.19906).

⁶⁵ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, K. *al-janā'iz*, 18 B. *taḥīr thiyāb al-mayyit*, vol.5, p.32 (no.3114).

⁶⁶ Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *Hiz. Aişe'nin Sahabeye Yöneltilmiş Eleştiriler*, trans. into Turkish by Bünyamin Erul (Ankara: Kitâbiyât, 2007), pp.159-160.

spontaneous conversation in every case. These facts point out that 'spontaneity' is not a decisive factor for naturalness of *ḥadīth* narrative.

As it was demonstrated above, *ḥadīth* narrative is distinguished from institutionalized storytelling in many ways. On the contrary, both *ḥadīth* narrative and 'natural' narrative have several characteristics in common, especially in terms of experientiality. It may be easily seen how the companions tell real-life experiences which they got, participated in, witnessed, or heard. It is this multi-layered experientiality that renders *ḥadīth* narrative 'natural':

1) The first degree of experientiality in *ḥadīth* literature is seen on *ḥadīth* accounts explaining metaphysical experiences of the Prophet. These accounts are not to be discussed in the context of natural narrative as they reflect unnatural experiences impenetrable to others.

2) The core element of *ḥadīth* narrative is prophetic utterances and they have arisen from the experience between Prophet Muhammad and his companions. By its emergence, *ḥadīth* consists of the prophetic words through spontaneous conversations or situations. Here, the prophetic utterance functions as the discourse marker and other narrative elements can take place in a *ḥadīth* account as long as they serve the purpose of bringing the Prophet forward. In this level, *ḥadīth* is a natural and spontaneous narrative.

3) Narrating the Prophet or narrating about the Prophet was a spontaneous but a paradigmatic task for the first generation. After the decease of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions transmitted not only plain prophetic utterances but also conversations and situations embracing those words. Although this transmission was a non-planned process, they were fully aware of how their experience with the Prophet was unique and important. Through the companions' rememorative and evaluative storytelling, this experience evolved into a specific kind of narrative. The second generation, the followers, were also aware of this and they tried to expand their knowledge by asking the companions about the Prophet. In this level, *ḥadīth* is a natural, spontaneous, and paradigmatic narrative.

4) The tension between the awareness of narrating the Prophet, on the one hand, and the human limitations, on the other, demarcates the borders of naturalness in *ḥadīth* narration. One may find footnotes of this tension through the narrations on how *ḥadīth* accounts have been comprehended, memorized, transmitted, and cross-checked. These narrations reveal us

three things: Firstly, the task of narrating the Prophet limits the free imagination of the narrator. Secondly, failures related to human cognition such as misremembrance or misconception had occurred in *ḥadīth* narration, like in other types of narrative. Thirdly, due to the narration process in a free, open-to-all atmosphere, these kinds of mistakes were cross-checked as much as possible.

As a result, *ḥadīth* narrative can be considered 'natural' by its emergence and first transmission. Although in later periods, *ḥadīth* transformed into a specific discipline and this fact rendered the final form of *ḥadīth* accounts semi-structured, naturality of *ḥadīth* narration did not change. Because it depended on a unique and spontaneous experience of the companions with their beloved Prophet.

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