

The Prose Narrator in Turkish Folk Stories and the Formula in the Story

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Abstract Oral repetition is a distinctive feature of orally transmitted literature, prose, and poetry. However, due to the strong influence of the oral formula theory based on examining the epic in verse, a disproportionate emphasis was placed on verse in formula research and prose expression was ignored. This study is an attempt to systematically examine the formula in Turkish prose narrative (story), which is a mixture of prose and poetry. Prose, which is the dominant part of the story, is told by a minstrel, and the poems sung by the same artist accompanied by saz are sprinkled between them. The data used in this article mainly covers the repertoire of a famous storyteller named Müdami (d. 1968). His stories were recorded on several occasions during his thirty-year career. The first collection was made in 1942, when the treasurer was a young soldier and writer Pertev Boratav. Back then, stories were told and written to a group of officers during the show. In 1956, a few stories of Müdami were recorded by İlhan Başgöz in a room where there was no other audience. The last recording was made in 1967, a year before Müdami's death, in his hometown of Poshof. There the same story was recorded in two real cases: one being read to the town's people in a coffeehouse, the other being told to the town's intellectuals at the Teachers' Association the next evening. Various compiling methods and different mediums gave the opportunity to examine the interaction of the formula with the personality of the narrator, the audience and the social environment. I then checked the preliminary findings with collections of stories recorded by other narrators, story booklets published in Turkey since 1930, and other folklore genres. Among these, there are some written sources such as epics, folk tales, shadow plays,

meddah stories, folk poems and early Ottoman history, anecdotes and legends. The study is a compilation study and contains examples of Turkish Minstrel tradition. The stories told by Aşık Müdami were conveyed in both Turkish and English. The formulas Müdami used while telling stories were identified and summarized.

Keywords Storyteller, Tradition, Folklore, Müdami, Oral Literature

1. Introduction

The formula in prose narrative *hikâye* is a unit of verbal repetition which expresses a formula thought in one or more phrases. In this unit, certain words essential to the thought remain relatively constant. It is through this repetition that the formula is identified. The words which remain constant are the basis of the formula, but they are not its only feature. The words are usually utilized in conjunction with other literary elements, such as internal rhymes, alliteration, formal and semantic parallelisms, and various others. None of these components of formal structure, however, is determinative of or indispensable to the pattern of the formula. The formula is a mixture of formal and semantic elements. We find formulae in *hikâye* which are neither textually nor structurally different from ordinary prose sentences. If such a sentence is not repeated in a *hikâye* narration, it is difficult to identify it as a formula. Other *hikâyeler* of the same teller or sometimes the whole *hikâye* tradition should be examined to detect them. In some cases, even that would not suffice, in that the formula

is used out of the *hikâye*, in various written and oral sources. For that reason, many aspects of the culture of a given society must be included in the formula study; the approach must be holistic.

As constant usage of certain words is essential to the formula unit, so is the usage of formula to the *hikâye* narration. No *hikâye* is recorded which does not employ formulae, in varying frequencies. It must be pointed out, however, that not all repeated sentences in narration are formulae. The structure of the language or the similarity of the situation can make a teller repeat such sentences as: “he said there that,” “he kissed his father’s hand,” or “he bade goodbye,” which are ordinary speech patterns. Such expressions may become formulae by acquiring an artistic weight or quality through changes in formal structure and content. The sentence, “he bade goodbye,” becomes a formula when it is expressed in a different manner:

2. Participant Information and Use of Narrative Formulas

No matter what definition is given to the term “tradition” in folklore, be it oral transmission or communal authorship; be it survival for a reasonable time or recognition by the people; formula is traditional in prose narrative. It is orally transmitted, and its original author is hard to trace; it is the common property of storyteller *âşık*s. Formulae have survived quite a long time; some of them have a five-hundred-year history. The teller as well as the audience recognize the formula as soon as it is narrated. The teller relies on a special intonation or a different voice in uttering them. Although the mode of expression may vary from teller to teller, they nonetheless manage to convey to the audience that a specific message, i.e., the formula, is being narrated. *Âşık Müdami* [1] raised his voice and recited the formula at a greater speed than normal, then paused and waited for the audience to receive and absorb the message. The audience, for its part, expressed its reaction, whether positive or negative, more often after a formula than after ordinary narration. Thus, the formula functions as a means of intensified interaction. Such interaction, solicited by the formula, makes it quite necessary to study it during an actual performance, preferably more than once.

Explanation: In the compilation study, for example: F.1: It means Formula 1.

(F.1) “He bade goodbye to all of them, and said, ‘Do not forget me in prayers. Hopefully, if God is willing, I will see you again’.”

“Allahâısmarladık *sizi*/ duadan unutmayın *bizi*/ inşaallah gene görürük *birbirimizi*/ [1].”

The sentence now includes the feelings of hope and despair of a person who is leaving and uses three internal rhymes and a parallelism between the three parts of the Turkish text. Thus, it intensifies the emotional impact in a

traditionally recognized form. This is now an esthetic device and functions as an artistic element in the narration. The formula in a prose narrative, then, can be defined as a *traditional, artistic unit of verbal repetition which expresses a given essential idea (formula-thought) in one or more phrases.*

The frequency of usage of formula in a *hikâye* varies from teller to teller. Generally, only a small part of the narrative is formulaic. *Âşık Latif Yılmaz* of *Oğuzlu*, a man in his fifties in 1944, included 47 formulae in the *hikâye* of *Eşref Bey* (a text of 1664 lines) when he dictated it to me. *Âşık Sabit Müdami* [1] employed 53 such devices in his performance of *Öksüz Vezir*, 48 pages in length. Great tellers who are themselves creative poets not only use more formulae but also change the simple formulae into more complex and colorful patterns. *Âşık Mehmet* of *Sosgert* (37 years of age in 1944) had a great talent for transforming ordinary prose into the rhythmical formula pattern in his narration. Should the *hikâye* tradition survive, some of his creations must become formulae of future narrators.

The selection of and the extent of the usage of the formulae depend not only upon the intention and creativity of the teller, but also upon the nature and response of the audience. I reported that a responsive audience led to an increased frequency of usage of the formula, and that a narrator selected different formulae for different audiences [2]. The contact with the *hikâye* tradition is another variable which influences the frequency. *Âşık Dursun Cevlani*, a storyteller of *Kars*, where the *hikâye* tradition is strong, moved to *Ankara* in 1942, where he had no opportunity to practice his art. According to *İlhan Başgöz* [3], his *hikâye* of *Âşık Garip*, collected before he had moved to the capital city, was very rich in formulae. The same *hikâye* recorded from him in 1956, after he had lost contact with the tradition, had significantly fewer formulae. Dictating a romance to a scribe or narrating it into a microphone also results in fewer formulae than a live performance. The greater majority of *hikâye* chapbooks published in Turkey in the last 50 years lack formulae. A few of them, however, do preserve a single introductory formula derived from urban and written sources.

The formula may consist of a short phrase, such as in “the eyes of poverty be struck blind” (“*Körolsun yoksulluğun gözü*,” or a group of rather long sentences. *Müdami* relates, for example, the whole final section of his stories, two pages long, in formula [1]. There, the marriage ceremony, the food prepared for the guests, the names of the guests, the meeting of the bride and groom, and the consummation of the marriage in the bridal chamber are always formulaic:

(F.2) The order was given to prepare the marriage ceremony, to have the earth opened, the fire placed, the cauldron hung, and the rice cooked. And so, the earth was opened, the fire was placed, the cauldron hung, and the rice cooked. The steam from the cooking rice was a pole reaching the sky. The *köğenbaz*, the *guşbaz*, the *cingöz*,

and the *hokkabaz* each performed his tricks. Of course, you know who the guests invited for the ceremony were. Emin Ağa, Cimin Ağa, the one who wore a gray cloak, the one who carried a thin dagger, the one with the goatee, the one with testicles like a ram's, the one with the hanging stomach, the one with a fat rump, the insatiable one who scrapes the bottom of the cauldron and breaks it, the one who destroys the kitchen looking for food, the dirty one, the blind one, the lame one, the one like me, the one worse than me, the one who can't swallow a *dolma* whole, the one who won't jump over a ditch, Hüseyin the Pepper, Mehmet the *Manti*-eater, the godless one, the one who doesn't get up from where he sits.

And what were the dishes? (The names of Turkish dishes follow.)

The ceremony lasted forty days and forty nights. On a Thursday evening, they were sent to the bridal chamber, where there were red cushions, double pillows and a feather mattress. The mattress was so expensive that even a banker couldn't have guessed its price. It wasn't like our mattresses, where you lie down at night and get up in the morning thinking your back is broken, as though the mattress were filled with stones. The groom came in and performed a *namaz* [Muslim religious ritual] before the night. The bride, escorted by forty handmaidens on her right and forty handmaidens on her left, entered the chamber. "Take her, she is yours," they said, "Take her. We entrust her to you, and both of you to God [1]".

They entered the bridal chamber. He tried to hold the girl and unbutton her belt. With a ruse, she jumped onto the bed. He said, "Is this some new trick you've learned?" The girl said, "It is a game, and you must try very hard to win." And what will happen if I don't?" She answered: "Then you must stay in this room like a stupid sheep." The boy said: "What is it you want us to do?" She answered: "We will fight like two wrestlers, like two rams. If you knock me down, then you can be on top. But if I knock you down, then I will be on top until tomorrow morning." The girl thinks that the boy has no energy left. "Come, let's begin," he said. With both clad only in a single silk shirt, they started wrestling. The girl tried another trick, but he held to her waist so tightly that his grip was like the shoes of Kayseri or the leather of Khorasan. With an embrace so tight and passionate, how could the girl not begin to feel the love between her knees? Her knees collapsed and she fell upon the feather mattress [1].

Her breast is the place where the braids of her hair rest. I got the message. I understood its meaning: Tonight, is Friday night, let us hold each other tightly. My dear listeners, they opened their arms and embraced each other—like what? Like the leather of Ardahan, like the cheese of Çıldır, like the bread of Kars, like the brave young men of Erzurum. That is how they embraced each other [1].

Suddenly a flea fell between them. It cried out: "Please don't hold each other so tightly, I can't breathe!" Who asked you to come between them, flea? [1].

According to İlhan Başgöz [6], theoretically, a narrator may scatter formulae throughout his narrative. However, in reality, the formula-thoughts are attached to certain occasions, and to certain parts of a *hikâye*. The beginning and the end of a *hikâye* are always in formula, as is any portion where prose shifts to poetry. The number of beginning formulae, as far as we have seen in our recordings, is not more than eight. Each teller may select one or several of them to use in his narration. His preference, during the long period of his profession, for particular beginning formulae may be affected by various factors; consequently, he may stop using this or that one and replace it with a different formula. In 1943 Müdâmi employed a short formula in the majority of his *hikâye* [1], in 1956 he shifted to another, and in 1967 he used three beginning formulae in succession. The thoughts expressed in the beginning formulae are the following: a) the narrator relays his respect and a tribute to the master tellers of olden times, b) expresses good wishes, sometimes in the form of a religious prayer, to the audience, c) humbles himself as the simple teller of the master's art, giving all the credit to the tradition, d) emphasizes the good character of storytelling as a pastime which prevents gossip and other unpleasant activities. This is an example:

(F.3) O, my dear listeners, may you be free from all worries, may God not give worry to anyone. If he wills it so, let us live free from worry in this short life. If he isn't willing, what can we do?

I hope you will always carry the sultan's *firman* in your pocket. May our story tonight be told forever. I don't eat plain bread, no matter how long I go hungry. I drink the best Yemen coffee. I smoke the best cigarettes. Of course, I smoke them only if you provide them. However, I don't mind if you don't. I'll just give them up.

This world, they say, consists of 18,000 spheres. My dear listeners, there isn't a single place from East to West without a name. Every city and every place has a name [2].

(Ey yarân-i memduh-ı safa olasız gam hanesinden cüda, Allah hiç kimseye gam vermesin. Kesinde ola fermanımız, neşrolsun destanımız, ne kadar aç kalsak kuru nan yemeniz biz, layib-i güllab, sükker-i helva, kahve-yi Yemen, tiryaki dühan içeriz, bulursak içeriz, bulmazsak vaz geçeriz. On sekiz bin âlem derler bu dünyanın hepisi, magripten maşrike adsız yer olmaz. Her yerin her şahsın bir adı olur [1].)

The ending formulae are more limited in number than the beginning ones, and all clearly state that a) the *hikâye* has come to a close and it is now time to go to bed, b) express good wishes to the audience, sometimes to the nation, c) ask for the forgiveness of the listener for mistakes the teller might have made during the narration. An example follows:

(F.4) They reached their goal. May God, make you reach your own goal. May you always have joy and no worries. May you end up in happiness. What we eat is sugar, what we are clad in is a fur coat, may God give us a happy life. Hıdır is the name of our master, this was the best that we

were able to do.

(Onlar ermiş muradına. Cenâb-ı Mevlâ sizin de muradınızı vere. Olsun deminiz, olmasın gamınız, hayre dönsün cümlelerin serencamınız. Yediğimiz şekerdir, giydiğimiz samur, Allah cümlelerin versin hayırlı ömür. Üstamızın adı Hıdır, elimizden gelen budur [4].)

With the shift from prose to poetry, the narration also shifts from third person to the direct speech of the hero using the first person. In other words, it is the hikâye hero who speaks in poetry, no longer the narrator. The formula used in changing prose to poetry has a single pattern though it can be used as many times as the number of songs, which may vary between eight and fifty in a single *hikâye*. In several variants it explains that, because of the high emotion in the song of the hero, the teller cannot narrate it with his tongue, which might be burnt; that the upcoming song was sung in reality by the hero and the present teller will just repeat it, hoping that the audience will enjoy his performance as much as the original one.

(F.5) He said, "Wait a moment there, if I sing with my tongue, it will be burned, let me sing it on the strings of my *saz*." He placed his *saz* on his chest, now let us see what he said to the beauty who inspired love to his heart, and what she answered? I will sing it for you and hope that my audience will enjoy it. May you always be happy, may you never taste grief in your life [3].

(Eğlen dedi oğlan, eğer dilinen söylesem dilime ateş düşer yanar, tel ile söyleyim. Bastı sazı sinesine, geldi sözün binasına, görelim ne diyecek kalbine aşk ateşi salan güzele. Biz söyleyek aziz cemaatımız dinlesin, mert yakanız namert eline gelmesin, daima devranınız şen olsun.)

3. Formula and Classification of Expressions

Though not as constantly as the above uses, other feelings and behavior may be expressed in formula, and the majority of them are connected to the following categories. No matter in what part of the *hikâye* they appear, their narration may be formulaic. The following formulas and classifications are taken from İlhan Başgöz:

1. *The Hero*

His growth from childhood to youth, the care given him at home, the description of his characteristics, physical or behavioral, his setting off on a journey or preparation for a fight. The description of his fighting and heroism. The power and beauty of his horse. His feelings when he falls in love. His joys and grief.

2. *The Heroine*

The description of her beauty, her good behavior, her abilities as a homemaker, the perfection of her cooking, her dress, and her reading and writing talents.

3. *The Hero and Heroine*

The expression of their longing, meeting, courtship, and

feelings of love. Kissing, embracing, and making love.

4. Description of various rituals and ceremonies which deal with marriage, the wedding feast, union of the couple in the bridal chamber, departure, long journeys, return, meeting with people, and honoring of the guests.

5. Nightfall, daybreak, and the description of scenes from nature.

6. Explanation of the discrepancy between the actual slow course of events in real life in contrast with their accelerated narration in the *hikâye*. The difference between art and reality.

7. *The Teller*

a. Ideas, values, opinions, morals, and criticism of any kind, individual or social, introduced into the *hikâye* as digressions by the teller.

b. Actual requests of the teller during the performance, such as asking for a cup of tea or coffee, expressing a desire to pause for a rest, etc.

The formula-thoughts, classified under these categories, are all associated with the expression of intense human feelings and emotions shared by the members of the community, the teller, and the audience alike. These feelings include:

1. Fear of a desperate situation, be it social or physical.
2. Fear of losing social status and wealth, of living in poverty.
3. Fear of human cruelty or injustice.
4. Sorrow at leaving a friend, family, native land, etc.
5. Joy and pleasure of success, of high achievement.
6. Joy at being free from physical and mental troubles.
7. Joy of love, passion of love, sorrow of unhappy love.
8. Happiness derived from reunion with friends, family, and loved ones, of living among friends.
9. Satisfaction of seeing human relations expressed in proper rituals.
10. Hope for a better future for friends, family, and nation.
11. Trust in God.
12. Expression of good wishes or anger toward individuals or social groups [5].

As a traditional device whose effectiveness in carrying such human emotions has been tested over the years, the formula recreates them during the performance. This is the ultimate goal and function of any literary work and activity. The Turkish tellers who recognize that artistic function calls the formula a decorative device, or *bezek*, and to make a narration formulaic is to embellish it.

This aspect of the formula was observed by George Calhoun, with remarkable accuracy, in a textual analysis of Homeric formula. He writes, "This supposedly colorless tag is associated with emotional reaction or with tense situations and... covers the whole range of human feeling from mild amusement and quiet satisfaction to hot anger or desperate fear.

The formula has a dynamic life, sometimes quite independent of the *hikâye* in which it is employed.

It wanders from teller to teller, from genre to genre, and

in some cases even crosses national boundaries. Two formula which I recorded from contemporary *hikâye* tellers originated in a Turkish epic of the fifteenth century, *The Book of Dede Korkut*. They survived in oral tradition for five hundred years. The first one, which is repeated three times in the book, is:

(F.6) At ayağı küllük ozan dili çevik olur [6].

(The horse's hoof is fast, the bard's tongue is quick.)

The formula explains how the hoof of a horse travels fast and how quickly the tongue of a bard narrates the epic, in contrast with the slow-running events of real life. The modern variants of the formula will be analyzed later.

A modern variant of the second *Dede Korkut* formula was recorded in 1946 from an old *hikâye* teller. The original form of it in the epic is the following:

(F.7) Kül tepecik olmaz, güveği oğul olmaz [6].

(Ashes don't make a hill, the son-in-law doesn't make a real son.)

The variant of it is of an extended form:

(F.8) Kül den tepe, ilden oğul, zibil dağ olmaz [6].

(Ashes don't make a hill, another's son doesn't make your own, garbage doesn't make a mountain.)

That formula is found in a manuscript dated 1466 as a proverb. It is in exactly the same form as the formula in the epic: *Kül tepecik olmaz, güveği oğul olmaz*. The association of formula and proverb poses an interesting problem of origin and transformation. The phrase may have been a proverb originally and introduced to the epic by a bard. If this is the case, we find an example of formula emergence through the transformation of a proverb. The reverse possibility also exists. The phrase may be originally a formula in the prose epic, and be detached from it by continuous repetition, and thus become a proverb. In this case the transformation of a formula into a proverb takes place. It is quite logical that a repeated sentence in a narration may be detached from it, used, and become a proverb. The formula as one of the origins of proverbs deserves an independent study [6].

Another *hikâye* formula recorded in Turkey from various tellers is found in an epic manuscript of the fifteenth century, the book known as the *Dânişmend-Nâme* [7]. The modern version is:

(F.9) Sabah oldu, gün kubbe-i Kaftan baş, gösterdi, âlem münevver oldu, her kuş, dilince mahbûbunu yâd eyledi [6].

(The morning came, the sun appeared from the peak of Kaf Mountain, the world was illuminated, each bird, began to call its love in its own language.)

The same formula in *Dânişmend-Nâme*:

(F.9a) Çünkü sabah oldu. Güneş, Kaf kubbesinde baş gösterdi, âlemi münevver kıldı, kaygılı gönüller açıldı [7].

(Since the morning came, the sun appeared from the peak of Kaf mountain and illuminated the world. The grieved hearts became happy ones.)

The formula in *hikâye*, like other folklore forms, should have an individual creator, an individual author. It is quite impossible to trace this author, however, for the original

author faded away in the tradition during oral transmission. The Turkish *hikâye* tellers nevertheless believe that the formula in *hikâye* is created by an individual and attribute the origins of certain of them to specific tellers. Âşık Gülistan (d. circa 1970) claims that this beginning formula is the work of Âşık Şenlik (d. 1913), who was the author of three *hikâyes* and the master to whom Gülistan served for three years as an apprentice:

(F.10) Eşg-i ihtilât, seyr-i meşgalet, zevkede sohbet, vasf-ı hikâyet, izzet-i iltifat ile hâk-i pâyinize ifade edeyim ki [7].

(For the sake of our gathering, for the sake of our profession, for the nature of our *hikâye*, let us have fun, and let me begin my story with respect to your attendance.)

The fact that the formula was recorded from three different tellers—Gülistan, 1947; Âşık Mirza, 1948; Âşık Müdâmi, 1967—indicates that it must be accepted by the *hikâye* tradition and has a certain distribution. The vocabulary, with the extensive use of Persian and Arabic words, substantiates the opinion of Âşık Gülistan. The formula, in reality, might be the individual creation of Âşık Şenlik, which passed to the oral tradition from one of his *hikâyes*.

The origin of another formula used by Müdâmi is a poem written by Huzuri Baba, a folk poet who lived in the twentieth century and in an area close to Müdâmi's town [1].

Âşık Müdâmi attributes the origin of another formula, a beginning formula he uses very often, to his master Cafer Usta, and says that he learned the formula from him. Cafer Usta was still alive in 1967, and lived in a nearby village when I was doing my fieldwork in Poshof. I visited him and checked the accuracy of this statement. Cafer Usta did in fact know the formula and used it at the beginning of a *hikâye*, of which I recorded part. Müdâmi's claim, however, was not entirely correct. There is no reason not to believe that he learned the formula from his master. But his master's formula was not exactly the same as the one Müdâmi used, and the master couldn't be the author of the formula for the following reason. Cafer Usta's version of the formula was:

(F.11) Gaz gazınan, baz bazınan, alaca tavuk çil horozunan. Âşık Cafer Usta Koroğlu hikâyesine cemaatın müsadisiyle başlasın [1].

(The goose with the gander, the hawk with the falcon, the spotted hen with the speckled rooster, and Âşık Cafer Usta will begin the story of Koroğlu with the permission of his listeners.)

Although Müdâmi does not take credit for the original creation, he extended the formula by adding new parts and ideas. Thus, he produced his own version. It was not a repetition of what he had learned from his master. His version:

(F.11a) Kaz kazınan, baz bazınan, alaca tavuk çil horozunan, delikanlı genç kızınan, kaş, oynatır gözünen, begayet cilve nazınan, Âşık Müdâmi meydana çıkmış

sazınan, sohbet eder elfazından, denleyicilerin müsadesiyle başlıyoruz efendim [1].

(The goose with the gander, the hawk with the falcon, the spotted hen with the speckled rooster, the young boy with the young girl flirting with their eyes, and the Müdami with his *saz* coming forth with a story. With the permission of my listeners, I now begin.)

Our investigation of the origin of the formula reveals that it is derived from a proverb, and was published as such in two sources in the following form:

Gaz gazınan, baz bazınan, kel tavuk kel horozunan [1].

(The goose with the gander, the hawk with the falcon, the bald hen with the bald rooster.)

Even that form seems to be connected with a Persian saying which reads:

Kebiter ba kebiter, baz ba baz [8].

(The pigeon with the pigeon, the hawk with the hawk.)

Such an individual investigation for each formula is quite impossible, and we believe that a formula index, like the motif index of folktales, could thus be prepared for the formulae, as Albert Lord [40] has indicated.

Our limited analysis of the individual origins of formulae makes it clear that the original creation is in fact a recreation and reconstruction of the traditional material of the formula by an individual, a *hikâye* teller. Although the narrator never claims authorship of a formula, he in fact recreates it during the performance. Thus, each formula contains both a traditional part and a part introduced by the narrator. The former is hard to identify, but the latter can be detected if more than one narration of a specific teller is recorded. The following is such an example: Âşık Abbas Dilir ended the *hikâye* of Emrah, with the following formula:

(F.12) Vesselam, hikâyet taman, *var olsun yazan katibin elleri*, var olsun söyleyen üstadın dilleri, var olsun dinleyen ağaların illeri [1].

(This is it, the story is ended, *what a great job the hands of the scribe have done*, and the tongue of the teller has achieved, I wish good to them, and to the tribes of my listeners too.)

The *italic* part is a reference to my recording of the *hikâye* and was created on the spot by the teller. It couldn't be part of the traditional formula since a scribe is not involved in the traditional narration.

The formula is in general of a short form and can be easily memorized, like the proverb and the riddle. Yet it is rarely repeated verbatim. It survives in variants where both the traditional continuity and the change introduced by the individual teller to varying degrees. The fourteen contemporary variants of the *Dede Korkut* [6] formula mentioned above provide a good case to examine the flexibility and fixity of the form. This is the formula in the book:

(F.6a) At ayağı külük (olur) / ozan dili çevik olur [6].

The original form should include *olur*, which is included in all modern variants but is missing in the book. In the complete form it consists of a formal structure of two

parallel units, each containing eight syllables with a caesura after four. The two units are divided by an internal rhyme, olur-4+4r/4+4r (*r* stands for internal rhyme). The content explains, as given above, the quickness of the horse's hoof and the bard's tongue, and their usefulness (the former in helping the individual reach his destination and the latter in helping the narrator tell the story in a short time). Of the modern variants, only one has retained the original form as an independent entity, the others all having been extended by a shorter or longer clause. The one surviving as an independent unit preserves one part of the original formula intact but changes two words in the other:

Âşık (minstrel) dili yeğın olur / at ayağı külük olur [1].

(The minstrel's tongue is quick, the horse's hoof is fast.)

The words *âşık* (2 syllables) and *çevik* (2 syllables) are new; the latter is simply a synonym of *yeğın*, but the former indicates an important cultural change. The epic singer (*ozan*) disappeared from Turkish society after the fifteenth century and was replaced by the romance teller (*âşık*). Within the limit of this social change, however, the formula preserves the formula-thought.

The nature of the change observed in this contemporary variant is followed by the others, although they are all used as part of Some of these forms are as follows:

(F.6b) Âşık dili yeğın olur / at ayağı külünk olur / *tez kavuşturur* [3].

(The âşık's tongue is fast / the horse's hoof is quick / they make one reach his destination quickly.)

(F.6c) Âşık dili yeğın olur / at ayağı külünk olur / *tez varur* / *tez götürür* / *menziline yetirir* [4].

(The âşık's tongue is fast / the horse's hoof is quick / they strike fast, they move fast / they make one reach his destination fast.)

(F.6c) O zaman ayınan yılınan / *şimdi muhtasarı dilinen* / at ayağı külük olur / *ustalar* dili yüğrük olur / *tez vurur* / *tez götürür* [3].

(It took months and years then / the tongue now expresses it quickly / the horse's hoof is fast / the master's tongue is very quick / they strike fast / they move fast.)

The *italic* extensions all have an explanatory function. They make the meaning of the original formula comprehensible. They must be added to the formula when the meaning of the original form becomes unintelligible. In fact, we didn't understand the *Dede Korkut* formula until new variants in extended form were collected.

The most important element of the formula seems to be the thought or idea expressed in the unit. The teller preserves it and makes every effort to have its meaning understood. Words essential to convey the formula-thought remain intact and are repeated in every variant. The teller feels free, however, to change other words which are not essential and to replace them with others which may or may not have the same textural value as the formal structure. Consequently, although there is a tendency toward continuity of the formal structure, it is not necessary for the definition and identification of the formula.

Change is introduced into a formula during the narration, performed before an audience. Consequently, the variant is created by the interaction of two basic components of the performance, that is to say the teller and the audience. The teller, who carries the responsibility of individual creation on his shoulders, always responds to the wishes, demands, and desires of his audience. Thus the individual creation turns into a social creation during the performance. A responsive, interacting audience which pleases the teller causes him to expand the formula, making the narrative more colorful, and increasing the frequency of formula usage. The following changes in formula, reflecting the impact of a different audience, were reported in my previous study. The teller narrated a very short formula to an intellectual audience which was not appreciative of his art when he shifted from prose to poetry in the *hikâye* of *Öksüz Vezir*:

(F.13) Görelim Öksüz Molla ne çağrıyor / annesi Hayrensa Hanım ne cevap veriyor / onların tarafından şair Müdami kulluğunuza arzetsin [1].

(Let us hear what Öksüz Molla said / and how his mother Hayrensa Hanım answered / The poet Müdami in their place will sing it modestly for you.)

The same formula in the same place of the same *hikâye*, performed for the teller's favorite audience, the ordinary people of the town, a day before the other performance, was thus:

(F.13) Öksüz Molla elini kulağına atıp görelim Hayrensa Hanıma ne söylüyor, Hayrensa Hanım ne cevap veriyor, her ikisini Şair Müdami kulluğunuza arzetsin, aziz muhterem cemiyetimiz dinlesin, daima devranımız şad olsun, Allah devletimize, milletimize, yurdumuza, çelik ordumuza zaval vermesin. Hariçten yurdumuza, ordumuza hain bakanların gözlerini kör eylesin. Desin kim desin? Öksüz Molla. Onun ivazından kim desin? Poshoflu Şişman Müdami, mamafi şimdi nâzik Müdami [1].

(Let us see what Hayrensa Hanım [the hero's foster mother] answers him as he holds his hands to his face and sings. Let me, Şair Müdami, sing both of his songs for you, my dear listeners, may you listen and enjoy them. May our entertainment always be happy. May God does not bring an end to our state, our nation, our country, and our invincible army. May he make the eyes of our enemy blind. Who is going to sing now? Öksüz Molla [the hero of the *hikâye*]. Who is going to repeat it for you? The fat Müdami of Poshof. However, you may call him, now Müdami the gentle.)

3.1. Syllable Measures in Stories

The following formal patterns are observed in the Turkish *hikâye* formula:

1. The formula pattern is divided into two parallel units, each part containing seven syllables with a caesura after four; the units are separated by an internal rhyme.

(F.14) Aldı sazı eline / düştü sevdâ yoluna [3].

(4-3r/4-3r)

(He took his *saz* in his hand / and set off upon the road of love.)

The pattern may be extended by the addition of one or more units containing the same syllabic form, but with a different rhyme scheme:

(F.14a) Düştü yolun dengine / Güzellerin cengine / derelerde sel gibi / tepelerde yel gibi / Hamza-i pehlivan gibi [1].

(4-3r1/4-3r1/4-3r2/4-4r2)

(He set off upon the road / struggling after the beauties / like a flood in the valleys / like the wind in the hills/ like Hamza the warrior.)

2. Two units of eight syllables, separated by an internal rhyme, with a caesura after four:

(F.15) Aldı sazı sinesine / geldi sözün binasına [3].

(4-4r/4-4r)

(He placed his *saz* on his chest / and entered the house of poetry.)

The pattern may be extended by the addition of one or more units of the same meter and rhyme:

(F.15a) Aldı sazı, bastı meftun, sinesine / düştü sözün binasına / gör ne dedi sunasına / biz ne diyek siz ne dinleyin [3]. (4-4-4r/4-4r/4-4r/4-5)

(He took his *saz* and placed it on his chest / and began to convey the words / burning with love / let us see what he said to his love / and what we are going to say, what you are going to listen to.)

3. Two or more units of five syllables, connected with an internal rhyme:

(F.16) Âfet-i cihân / rû-yi Bedehşân / hükm-i Süleyman / Züleyhâ-yi şân / Yusuf-i Kenan [3].

(5r/5r/5r/5r/5r)

(The beauty of the world / her face looks like Bedehşân / The wisdom of Solomon / and the glory of Züleyha / and Joseph of Canaan.)

This pattern is especially used for an epithet in the description of a beauty.

4. Four eleven-syllable units with a caesura after six and with a rhyme scheme aaab:

(F.17) Bigâne dolaşır parasız derviş / sen degli âlemde vardır bu teftiş / derler para ile görülür her iş / taht-i rif 'at köşk-ü eyvân paradır [1].

(6-5r/6-5r/6-5r/6-5)

(The dervish without money goes about for nothing, not only you, but many others are in the same situation, they say everything is achieved by money, that high offices and palaces and mansions are all money.)

5. Two or more units of eight syllables with internal rhyme:

(F.18) Dertlere derman mı desem / bir mâh-i taban mı desem/ fagfuri fincan mı desem / beş karış gerdan mı desem?[1].

(8r/8r/8r/8r)

(Should I say she is the cure of all illnesses / should I say she is the full moon / should I say she is a beautiful piece of china / should I say her chest is five spans?)

The classification just represents the basic patterns often

used in the formula but does not include them all. Large numbers of formulae are created by juxtaposing two or more of the patterns given above. The following, for example, combines three patterns into one single formula; each pattern is marked **a**, **b**, or **c**:

(F.19) a. Yola revan oldu, gece ay ile gündüz gün ile; b. yemek yok içmek yok, sabır yok, karar yok; c. derelerden sel gibi, tepelerden yel gibi, Hamza-i pehlivan gibi [3].

(a. 6/5r/5r; b. 3rr/3rr/3rr/3rr; c. 4-3rrr/4-3rrr/4-3rrr)

(a. He set off along the road, by the sun during the day, and by moon at night; b. with no food, no drink, no patience, and no destination; c. like a flood in the valley, like wind on the hills, and like Hamza the warrior.)

Many other formulae cannot be placed into a formal pattern; some may have a single internal rhyme as the only indicator of the rhythmical structure, while others may not contain any textural difference at all to distinguish them from ordinary prose.

The following are two examples of a pattern having only one internal rhyme between two syllabically unequal units:

(F.20) Sevdalı serinden geçti / söyleyen de yazan da birer sigara içti [4].

(8r/14r)

(The lover lost his senses, the teller as well as the scribe smoked a cigarette each.)

(F.21) El elde / etek belde / hanım büyük tandıra bir vırıltı bıraktı [4].

(3r/4r/7/7)

(Wringing her hands anxiously / tucking up her skirts / the woman lit the big oven.)

Formulae resembling ordinary prose:

(F.22) Böyle yiğidi analar bin senede doğurmaz [4].

(Mothers don't give birth to such hero thousand years.)

(F.2) Körolsun yoksulluğun gözü [1].

(May the eyes of poverty be blind.)

The above formal patterns are not different from those employed by other folklore genres in Turkey such as proverbs, riddles, folk poetry, epics, and others. The patterns numbered 1 and 2 represent the same form which is used in the rudimentary verse of the *Dede Korkut* epic. Number 4 is a stanza of a *koşma*, the basic form of minstrel poetry, written by Huzuri Baba and taken from his work. The formula uses the basic forms common to Turkish oral literature.

The usage of certain formulae may be limited to a single narrator and not known in other areas. The following ending formula was recorded only from Mehmet of Sosgert:

(F.23) Ey muhterem ağalar, dağlar dumanı geldi / kaşlar kemanı geldi / söyledik şad oldu güldü / bu nağil burada kaldı [4].

(O distinguished gentlemen, the mist of the mountains has arrived / the most beautiful eyebrow has arrived / we told the story, she became happy and smiled / this story remained here.)

The following was recorded from *âşık*s in Eastern Anatolia, the area where *hikâye* has best survived:

(F.24) Zamane dedigin ay ile yıl ile gider / hikâye dedigin muhtasar dil ile gider [3].

(Time passes by month and year / but short and told by the tongue.)

The boundaries of Turkey do not limit the distribution of the formulae found among the Turkic peoples living in the USSR and Iran. The folk narratives of the Azeris living in Iran and in the Soviet Union, as well as those of the Turkmen and Uzbeks, include formulae similar to those of the Turkish *hikâye*.

A formula may pass the linguistic barrier and be adopted by another group of people. Although the origins of migrating formulae are not easy to trace, and require a different study, their existence in different cultures can be documented. The formulae of the Turkish *âşık*s used in wishing a good day to their audience each time morning comes in the *hikâye* plot were collected from Arab storytellers as well. This is the form used by the Turkish *âşık*s:

Akşam oldu sabah açıldı / hayırlı sabah cümleminizin üzerine açılıns [3].

(Evening fell, morning arose / I wish you all good morning.)

The Arab tellers spell the formula when the long night of narration reaches morning and when the first light of the day is noticed.

Another formula very common in *hikâye* has been collected from various languages, mainly in the ballads and epics of Hungary, the Balkan countries, England, and Spain. This is the Turkish version which is used each time the scene changes:

(F.26) Gel biz haberi verelim öteki yandan [1].

(Let me tell you the story from the other side.)

A cross-cultural study of formulas is an overdue topic.

The usage of formula is not peculiar to the *hikâye* narration. An excellent study of formulas in Turkish folktales has already been published. Formula types 5A, 6A, 6B, 22, 27, 52, 70A, 70B, and 72A of this study are commonly used in folktales and *hikâye*. *The Book of Dede Korkut* [6], the Turkish epic in prose, is more formulaic than the *hikâye* narratives. The *Meddah* stories of urban centers in Turkey include as many formulae as do the *hikâye*, and also use the formula in the same way as they are employed in the *hikâye*. The shadow play *Karagöz* [9], presents the most interesting case in the study of formula in that the puppeteer has to perform the play under a very pressing situation. In the shadow play, a single performer speaks for all the characters in the play, who are presented two or more at the same time on the *Karagöz* screen. He has to produce the dialogue while manipulating two figures involved in the speech. Here the formula has a strong functional task of providing the performer with ready-made material to be repeated while giving him time for quick composition.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, literary works written by individual authors and reaching us in manuscript form also used formulas. The anecdote manuscripts written by

Lamii Çelebi and Gazali of Bursa, the tale book by al-Faraşbad aş-Şidde, the legend manuscripts of Hacı Bektaş Veli and Hacı Sultan, the Muslim epic *Danişmendnâme*, the history of Neşri, the *Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman*, *Şecere-i Terâkime*, the legendary history of the Turkmen written by Ebül Gâzi Bahadır Han [10], and the travel book of Evliya Çelebi [11] all contain formulae, some of which are the same as the hikâye formulae. The following are examples from these sources:

A beginning formula:

(F.27) Râviyân-ı Ahbâr, nâkilân-ı esrâr, râvî şöyle rivâyet, üstad böyle hikâyet eder ki [10].

(The transmitters of the news and stories; the narrator narrates, and the master tells the story in this manner that.)

The same formula in verse:

(F.27a) Râvîler şöyle rivâyet eylemiş / Dinle indi ne demiş ne söylemiş [11].

A description of morning:

(F.9) Çünkü sabah açıldı, güneş Kaf kulesinden baş götürdü, âlemi münevver kıldı. Kaygılı gönüller açıldı [10].

(Since morning came, the sun rose behind Kaf mountain and illuminated the world; the grieved hearts became happy.)

The same formula in verse form:

(F.9a) Doğar perde içinden suph-ı sadık / Yine rahmet kapısın açtı Hâlik

Münevver oldu Âlem yine ol gün / Kenarından göğün çün kim doğar gün [10].

(Morning, our faithful friend, was born out of the darkness. God opened his gate of generosity again. The world was illuminated again when the sun rose from the skirt of the sky.)

An epithet formula:

Sadât-ı kiramdan gözü yaşlı, bağıru taşlı, ciğeri pürhun, aşkı ilâhi ile Mecnun bir merd-i fâzıl [4].

(A man of distinction, who has eyes full of tears, a heart full of grief which comes from divine love, a man of maturity and knowledge.)

Description of a battle:

İki asker birbirine karışıp, kılıçlar berk-i hâtif gibi şahab-ı lâmî olup, süngülerden yel olsa esmezdi, at ayağından sel olsa geçmezdi, ve ok yere gökten dolu gibi yağardı, ve figan u feryâd yerden göğe duhan gibi ağardı. Kılıç kılıca ve sügü sügüye ve çomak çomağa irişip, çaka çak, çata çat, hây u hû-i nefirden dağdaki canavarlar can verip feleklerdeki melekler tesbiblerini feramuş ettiler [1].

(Two armies attacking each other, swords shining like lightning, every place so thick with bayonets that the wind could not pass, even a flood could not penetrate the rows of horses' legs. The arrows falling as if raining from the sky, the screams and wails rising like smoke to the sky, sword against sword, bayonet against bayonet, club against club, they create a noise that the mountain wolf dies and the angels in the sky neglect their prayers.)

A description of travel:

Yeyip içerek, konup göçerek [4].

(Eating and drinking, settling and moving on...)

An ending formula:

Rahmet âlimlere ki ilm ile söylerler, lânet cahillere ki cehl ile hüküm ederler, gelsin rahmet müellife, ve kâtime ve karie ve samie, ve sâhib-i kitâba olsun [1].

(Mercy to the scholars who speak knowledgeably, damned be the ignorant who govern in ignorance. God's mercy upon the author and the scribe, upon the reader and the listener and upon the owner of the book.)

4. Findings of the Research

Based on folklore disciplines, the research deals with the oral formula theory in Müdami's Turkish prose narrative and its reflection on folklore texts by using the formulaic structure of the original oral texts. This study on prose narratives built on verse and prose text shed light on the very old texts of the Turkish folk tradition and evaluated these texts in the ancient language with their formulas and syllable measures. The study will present different perspectives to Turcologists who will work in the field of Turkish folk literature and linguistics. In the research, it has been tried to conclude from which origin Müdami's original prose narrative comes from, in relation to the types of expressions and verse meters in the prose narrative, and the oral formula. The analysis we have done in our research is based on the theory of stylometry and oral formulas, and fixed and repeated words are the basis of the formula, but not the only feature of the formula. The words used by Müdami are often used in conjunction with other literary elements such as inner rhymes, alliteration, formal and semantic parallels, and others. However, none of these components of the formal structure are decisive or indispensable to the pattern of the formula. In our study, we tried to decide where these manuscripts originated by investigating all the implications and conditions of the Turkish oral tradition. The research sheds light on the texts published during the periods when the Turkish folk tradition oral culture tradition was dominant, based on the example of Müdami, and the works published in this period were created with certain formulas. These methodologies used in the studies constitute the basis of the Anatolian minstrel tradition.

5. Discussion and Implications

Does the existence of the formula in these literary works indicate an oral origin? As far as Turkish material is concerned, the origins of formula in a work, prose and verse, and the origin of the work itself should be discussed separately from each other. Written and literary prose and poetry borrow various elements, among them formulae, from oral literature when literary tradition is not yet firmly established or when the culture of the learned is not widely

separated from that of the uneducated masses. Most of the early Ottoman histories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries depict the fighting of the army in the way a bard describes heroic fighting, characterizing heroes in the way of epic characterization, sometimes using similar formulae. They are manuscripts written by individual authors and have nothing which indicates an oral or folkloric origin. So are the other works mentioned above which include formulas. The origins of individual formulae in these sources do, however, require a detailed study for each. We can nevertheless assume, from linguistic evidence—especially their vocabulary, which consists of pure Turkish—that most of the formulae in these early written sources derived from oral narratives. Only a few of them, especially the formula-epithet employed in the characterization of a beauty (F.16) and the beginning formula (F.27), indicate a literary origin due to their extensive usage of Arabic and Persian vocabulary. Some epithet-formulae combine elements of both literary and oral origin. The *italic* part of the following formula is undoubtedly of literary origin, but the remaining part is derived from oral tradition:

Güzel yüzlü, şirin sözlü, şahin bakışlı, keklük sekişli, boylu bosunlu, saçı ibrişin telli, ak tenlü, yemuşak budlu, koç alnu gibi yumru yumru toharlu, yağ içre besili böbrek hanavarlu, *serv-kad lâle-had, püste-leb sîb-gab gab* [3].

(Beautiful, sweet-spoken, with a hawk's gaze and a partridge's gait, tall and slender, with hair like silk, fair-skinned, soft-tripped, with a head like a ram's, ridged and solid, like a kidney nestled in fat, tall like a cypress tree, tulip-checked, rose-lipped, with the chin like an apple.)

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

The formula study of the last quarter century has questioned every aspect of Milman Parry and Albert Lord's oral formula theory, a great breakthrough in the stylistic features of epic narration. The definition of formula, the inclusion of metrics and music in the formula pattern, the oral origin of formulaic poetry, the composition during performance and other conclusions of the theory have been challenged. But the very basis of the theory, the fact that oral literature, verse and prose, is formulaic or relies heavily on the usage of repeated, conventional formula, remains intact.

The formula in verse narrative provides a means, according to the Parry-Lord approach, of telling a story in song and verse under the stress of performance. In prose narrative *hikâye*, this function ceases to operate, the *hikâye* teller is at ease in narrating the story, he doesn't need ready-made devices to compose the narrative, but he still employs the formula as an aesthetic device.

Albert Lord finds it feasible to make a formula index, like the motif index of the folktale. Although it would not be easy to include metrics and music in such an index, our study agrees with Lord's opinion. An index to the formulae

in prose narrative is quite possible and could be very useful in comparative studies. The occasion in the narration (that is, when and where the formula is used), or the personages, objects or ideas to which the formula is attached can be used as the basis of classification for the index.

Although the number of examples is few, F.27, 27a, and F.9 and 9a in our study clearly demonstrate that the formula is transferred from verse to prose and vice-versa, and still survives as a recognizable formal-semantic pattern.

Metrics and music are not the determining components of the formula pattern, but as Gregory Nagy has maintained, the formula generates a meter.

7. Results

An artist type seen in our cultural life since the 16th century is called *Âşık*. *Aşık* is an artist who creates poetry, plays and sings his poetry in the form of a folk song, accompanied by a musical instrument. As we mentioned above, those who fabricate and run the folk tale, that is, classify it, are also the Minstrels. The *Âşık* name given to this artist is taken from Arabic. Not only oral literature, but written literature also uses formulas. *Aşık* type fire is the creation of agricultural culture. The first minstrels appear in the Batini lodges in Anatolia in the 15th century. His transformation into the storyteller Lovers outside the Tekke will be later. The poems created by the Tekke poets in their shops, not the name of *Âşık*, but the names like Kaygusuz Abdal and Abdal Musa show all the characteristics of our *Aşık* literature. And these poets tell their poems with formulas. Formulaicity does not necessarily refer to orality. Both of them, through their historical development, especially when they survived side by side in society as the literature of different social classes, borrow formulae from each other. Written literary tradition, at the time of its emergence (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Turkey), borrowed many formulae from oral literature, due to the lack of previous models. Studies made with these formulas form the basis of the Anatolian minstrel tradition. Because of this, the studies have reached the present day and have been immortal. As a result, the study shed light on the very old texts of the Turkish folk tradition and evaluated these texts in the old language with their formulas and syllable measures. The study will present different perspectives to Turcologists who will work in the field of Turkish folk literature and linguistics.

Notes

The Turkish words refer to folk artists who entertain people in conjunction with the ceremony. A *kuşbaz* performs tricks and entertains with birds, a *hokkabaz* is a juggler, and the *kögenbaz* and *çevgenbaz* are polo-players.

1. These characterizations of people have comical connotations which are found in other prose

narratives in Turkish folklore.

2. The names of the dishes here are not simply enumerated but described in an enigmatic way, thus making it difficult to determine which dish is being described. This results in a comical effect.
3. Kayseri is a central Anatolian city known for its well-made shoes; Horasan is a town of Erzurum.

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