

The Reflections Of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Concept Of Modern Education On The Revolutions In The Field Of Education

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ABSTRACT

Education was perceived as one of the most important reasons for the decline in the Ottoman Empire, and in this regard, in the XIX. with the end of the century XX. At the beginning of the century, some reforms were tried to be realized. However, with the de facto end of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War and the invasion of Anatolia, it became necessary to continue the educational activities under the conditions of war. With the victory of the War of Independence and the declaration of the republic, which is the existence of the new Turkish state, on October 29, 1923, educational and cultural issues were added to the reform movements that would change the social, political, economic and legal formations of the Turkish nation. Thus, a model has been created that will carry the state above the level of modern civilizations, and especially enable new generations to receive a more national and more secular education. In order for the education model adopted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to be national, contemporary and successful, first of all, unity in education and training must be ensured. In order to ensure this unity, unity and integrity was established in national education by enacting the "Unification of Education Law" on March 3, 1924. Therefore, madrasas and schools were connected to the Ministry of National Education; dervish lodges, tombs and zaviyes were also closed. Thus, the first steps were taken in the social integration and modernization of the nation, which was divided into two as a school-madrasah, and in the conduct of education according to scientific principles. In this study, the importance and requirements of national and contemporary education in the reforms and reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in his own period, together with his ideas on education, are aimed.

Keywords: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Contemporary Education, Reforms, National Struggle, Independence.

Introduction

It is a well-used statement to explain that education is the most effective factor in reaching a certain level of contemporary and developed societies. When we look at the general appearance of countries that have advanced in the modern sense and have reached their people to a sufficient level of happiness, it is striking that these countries have strong educational institutions, teaching staff and scientists that meet the needs both in terms of number and characteristics. These opportunities that the advanced nations of the Western world have can be attributed to the fact that the concept of "raising people" has been fully understood in these states. The rise of societies can be expressed by being happy in a peaceful environment and, apart from this, the state being strong and prestigious, and the education-training issues being solved in a broad sense. When we look at underdeveloped states, it is striking that the majority of the people in these countries do not have a certain level of education and that they still cannot even solve the problems of reading and writing. Therefore, it is seen that the underdevelopment of a society follows a parallel course with the lack of Education (Erendil, 1989, p.523).

A society's ability to develop soundly and have a strong system depends on giving sufficient importance to education and training. Movements characterized by contemporary education and culture expressions are the most important spiritual values of a nation. With the help of contemporary and national education, the young

generation, which is the most needed source of power and strength for the nation, can be raised. Making these young generations conscious and preventing them from being influenced by forces and groups that will intervene from outside can only be possible through good education. This is the sole reason why Mustafa Kemal Atatürk particularly focused on revolutions in the field of culture and gave special importance to education. Mustafa Kemal made the purpose of education more understandable by drawing attention to the fact that the young generation should first know the external elements that will harm their own identity, national traditions and the unity and integrity of the nation and learn how to fight against them. He also evaluated the main purpose of education as the strengthening of the Turkish nation and reaching a level of prosperity and ensuring the happiness of every individual of the people (Ekiz, 2010, p.24).

The republic was declared after the victory of the War of Independence. Thus, Atatürk's reforms were implemented to raise the Turkish people to the level of contemporary civilization, to eliminate the elements that prevented the country from progressing, and to create a contemporary and national system. The fact that the success of the Turkish reforms depended on achievements in education in particular made it necessary to take some decisions to change education and take urgent steps. For this purpose, permanent results were brought to every stage of education and training from primary school to higher education during the time of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The radical results brought increased both the quantity and quality of education and formed the cornerstones of the new Turkey that Atatürk greatly desired (Demirtaş, 2008, p.156).

According to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, education should be contemporary and based on nationality. Mustafa Kemal, who found the education of the previous processes that was not based on nationality to be the sole reason for our calamities, desired the education model of the new Turkish state to be established to be national and contemporary. He explained contemporary education in the July 1921 Education Congress as follows:

“When I talk about a contemporary education program, I mean a culture that is completely far removed from the superstitions of the old era, foreign ideas that are not compatible with our natural qualities, and all influences from the East and the West, and that is in line with our character and history. Because the development of our great nationality can only be achieved with such a culture” (Akyüz, 1987, p.79).

When Mustafa Kemal's ideas on educational purposes are investigated, it is understood that his views deal with the issue of a nation being free or captive. He explains this issue with the following words.:

“The most important and fundamental point is the issue of education. It is education that either enables a nation to live as a free, independent, glorious and high society, or abandons a nation to slavery and misery. There are some things that can be fixed with a law, an order, a whistle. However, there are some things that cannot be fixed even if we struggle shoulder to shoulder as a nation with a law, an order. A man throws away his fez and puts on his hat, but he has the mark of the fez on his forehead. You ban walking around wearing a turban. Nobody walks around wearing a turban. But you cannot eliminate the invisible turbans on some people's heads. Because they are in the mentality. Mentality is the accumulation of thousands of years. You cannot eliminate that accumulation all at once; you only struggle with it. You struggle with it until you establish a new mentality, a new ethic, and in the end you succeed.”

For this reason, according to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, full independence can be achieved by fulfilling the following conditions:

“Full independence is the real spirit of the duty we have undertaken today. We are a nation that wants to live with honor and dignity. All the people of the nation, whether they are knowledgeable or ignorant, have gathered around a single point today and decided to shed their blood until the end, perhaps without fully understanding the difficulties they are in. That point is to ensure and maintain our full independence. When we say full independence, we certainly mean full independence and freedom in all matters, such as politics, finance, economy, law, military and culture. The lack of independence in any of these matters means the nation and country's complete lack of independence in the true sense.” (Duran-Ekici-Barut, 2019, p.1253).

The importance that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk showed for complete independence was revealed in the talks with the French in Ankara after the Sakarya War (Emiroğlu, 2004, p.115). Mustafa Kemal expressed the following for complete independence as a result of the long talks: “Complete independence is the lifeblood of the duty we have undertaken today. This duty has been undertaken towards the whole nation and history. While undertaking this duty, there is no doubt that we thought a lot about how much it could be achieved. However, the final opinion and belief we have reached is that we can be successful in this. We are men who have started this work in this way. We are a nation that wants to live, that wants to live with honor and dignity. Complete independence means, of course, achieving complete independence and freedom in every aspect such as political, financial, economic, judicial, military and cultural. Being deprived of independence in any of these matters means that the nation and the country are deprived of all their true independence.” (Nutuk, 2002, p.422-423).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's View of Education

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk felt that the survival of the state and the order of life of the society depended on national and contemporary education, and therefore he dealt with educational problems since the very first days of the National Struggle. With the removal of enemy soldiers from Anatolia, some groups believed that the old way of life and habits would continue and that their quality of life would increase. However, Mustafa Kemal saw such an idea as problematic. He believed that the society had to maintain the excitement it had gained in the National Struggle and struggle with a lifestyle that had lost its importance. Mustafa Kemal saw the excitement

of such a struggle so strongly that he answered the question, "You have saved the country, what will you do now?" as "My greatest goal is to work as the Minister of Education." Although Mustafa Kemal was not the Minister of Education, he was always closely interested in national education issues. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's contribution to the formation and direction of the basic policy of Turkish national education was achieved both through his speeches at different periods and as a result of his close follow-up of efforts and regulations related to national Education (Doğan, 1981, p.5).

Atatürk thought that education should not be based on elements such as traditions and beliefs that have no logical explanation. According to Atatürk, education should be based only on reason. Things that cannot be explained through reason are obstacles placed in the way of the development of education. By removing the obstacles to education and accepting only reason as a guide, we can become a society that is constantly developing and progressing. Therefore, we should not insist on preserving traditions and beliefs that have no logical evidence. Atatürk expressed the issue with the following words:

"It will be very difficult for nations that insist on preserving certain traditions and beliefs that have no basis in logic to progress; perhaps it will never happen. Nations that cannot go beyond the pit and valley in progress cannot observe life rationally and practically. They are doomed to be under the throne and servitude of nations that regard the philosophy of life as their guardian." (Özel, 2007, p.27-28).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk never considered taking the East and the West as examples in contemporary Turkish education. He reviewed the educational structure of the East and the West; occasionally invited some well-known educators from foreign countries, such as John Dawey, to the country and benefited from their ideas; he also wanted to benefit from their methods. He also never imitated or copied, and always considered copies and transfers from the East and the West as very dangerous.

According to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk;

"Contemporary Turkish education will be national in language, national in method, and national in tools and equipment. Young generations raised with Atatürkist education will be the guarantors of sovereignty. They will be raised as nations that will prioritize the interests of the homeland and the nation above all else."

"Our children and young generations who will grow up, regardless of their educational limits, must first be taught to fight against all groups that act against Turkey's sovereignty, its own identity, and national traditions. According to the international situation in the world, societies consisting of people who do not have the moral values that such a struggle requires have not been granted the right to live and sovereignty."

"Culture is a completely national issue and our programs will be national." But "We will take science and science from wherever they are and instill them in the minds of the nation. There is no registration or condition for science and science. The fact that education is based on contemporary culture does not disrupt the principle of nationality in education." (Senemoğlu, 2001, p.3-4).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk aimed to bring the country to Western standards in terms of education in order to become a part of the civilization of Europe, although in many subjects. Atatürk felt that the primary goal of the people and the country was to achieve new revolutions in terms of education, and he gave special importance to contemporary and national education. Thus, education; "Either makes a nation live as a free, independent, glorious, and sublime social society or leaves a nation in slavery and misery", he explained how important education is for society. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk explained that our main goal is to advance education and training in a contemporary, secular, and democratic area and to raise generations with good character, freedom, creativity, and hard work through good education and training, and he stated this as the main goal to the society and teachers. Thus, he left his mark that creating a new and contemporary nation and rising can be achieved first and foremost through education (Dönmez, 2006, s.93-94).

Atatürk continued to explain the main principles that form the basis of the Turkish education system in his opening speeches at the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in meetings organized regarding education, and in his meetings with teachers and school institutions. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who saw education as the main protector of the republic, one of the most important tools of progress, and the assurance of the new generation, stated the following in the opening meeting of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1922: *"Gentlemen! Our children and youth who will grow up, regardless of the limits of the education they will receive, must first and foremost be taught the necessity of fighting against all elements that are hostile to Turkey's independence, its own identity and its national heritage. According to the international situation, there is no life and independence for individuals who are not equipped with the spiritual elements that such a struggle requires, and for societies composed of individuals of this nature"*.

In another speech of Atatürk, which was national, based on science and technology, and gave importance to schools and the science and technology that schools would possess, he stated that the continuity of the victorious successes of armies would be gained through successes to be achieved in education and that teachers in particular had an important duty and responsibility in this regard. It was revealed that in these thoughts on education, Mustafa Kemal criticized the traditional education method that lacked national character, was far from scientific ideas and was based on memorization, and explained the basic principles of education that he wanted to replace it (Ergin, 2019, p.817).

The nationalization policy based on Turkishness, which came to the fore with the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey in 1923, although it aimed to ensure the integrity of the state, also emerged as a reaction to the discomfort caused by backwardness. In other words, the nationalization policy, on the one hand, provided

for a monolithic nation, while on the other hand, it also concealed Westernization. According to Mustafa Kemal, the leading politician of the Republic, the main reason for the backwardness of the Turkish people was an education system that was not based on nationality. Mustafa Kemal, who determined the value of language, culture and ideal unity in the formation of a nation, explained in a speech in 1924 that after "nationality" was taken as the basis in education, it was an indisputable necessity for its language, system and qualifications to be national as well. Within the framework of these thoughts, the effect of cultural values that would emerge through in-depth research on the Turkish language and Turkish history in awakening "national consciousness" was taken into consideration (Kanbolat, 2017, p.59).

The main points of the educational approach brought by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk are nationalism, scientificness and secularism, ensuring unity in education, educating the people, mixed education and equality of opportunity (Ülkü, 1998, p.280).

The Importance of Revolutions in the Field of Contemporary Education

We learn how Mustafa Kemal Atatürk valued education from his speeches at many indoor and outdoor meetings, his practices on the subject, and research related to the field. After the Great Offensive ended in victory, Atatürk addressed the teachers who came from Istanbul to Bursa to congratulate Mustafa Kemal as follows: "Ladies and Gentlemen! It is obvious that our most important and enlightening duties are education and training. It is absolutely necessary to be successful in education and training. The real salvation of a nation can only be achieved in this way. In order to achieve this victory, we all need to work on a fundamental program as one soul and one idea." With these words, Atatürk explains that real salvation can be achieved by giving importance to education and training. He also explains the importance of the subject with the following words: "It is a fact that a nation that will rapidly reach a high level in education and training will increase all its material and spiritual powers in the struggle for life." Mustafa Kemal was very closely interested in national education issues because he aimed to raise the nation above the level of civilized modernity and he started to work in the early years of the national struggle to create a national education program and continued these efforts along with the war. Atatürk also understood very well that a society that lacked modern and national education could never develop.

Mustafa Kemal emphasized education by saying in his meeting in Bursa, "Our most important and most productive duties are education and training. It is absolutely necessary to achieve success in education and training. The real salvation of a nation can only be achieved this way" and added, "If I were not the President, I would want to be the Minister of National Education" (Kaya-Bahçeci-Kaya, 2016, p.298).

During the time of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the developments in the field of education took place at a level incomparable with the pre-republican period. Many revolutions were carried out in order for education and teaching activities to reach a civilized level. The most important of these revolutions was the Law on the Unification of Education, which would put an end to the disorganization in education. The discussions envisaged since 1923 regarding the unification of education were concluded with Atatürk's statements at the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on March 1, 1924. Thus, three important bills that were discussed and approved by the Republican People's Party group on March 2 were brought to the Turkish Grand National Assembly on March 3 and accepted. The approval of the Law on the Unification of Education followed the second bill proposal, which aimed to abolish the caliphate and the expulsion of the Ottoman dynasty abroad, and the abolition of the Ministry of Sharia and Evkaf. With this accepted law, all educational and training institutions in the country; Neighborhood schools, madrasahs, high schools, sultanis, colleges and minority schools that provided education in foreign languages were connected to the Ministry of National Education. Minister of National Education Vasıf Bey, who was responsible for the implementation of the law, also ensured the closure of the madrasahs after a while, even though they were not included in the law in question. Thus, the unity of education and training was truly established, and the duality in education was eliminated (Demirtaş, 2008, p.161).

During the period from the Tanzimat period to the republic, two different ideas emerged regarding the alphabet. Those who supported the first view stated that the Arabic alphabet was inadequate for the Turkish language and therefore wanted some changes and innovations to be made in the Arabic alphabet. Those who supported this view advocated the reform of the Arabic alphabet. Those who supported the second view stated that the Arabic alphabet was not suitable for the Turkish language structure and therefore, even if some changes were made to the Arabic alphabet, it would not be possible to obtain positive results. According to those who supported this view, the only solution was to completely eliminate the Arabic alphabet and replace it with the Latin alphabet. Mustafa Kemal accepted the second of these ideas and announced that he accepted the second view before the War of Independence ended. On the evening of the end of the Erzurum Congress (August 8, 1919), Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had Mazhar Müfit Kansu write down the reforms he would implement after the end of the War of Independence and the achievement of independence, and stated that the fifth revolution was the adoption of the Latin alphabet (Özel, 2007, p.110).

Atatürk made the second major move in the field of education by introducing the Alphabet Revolution on November 1, 1928. Based on this, the Arabic alphabet was ended and the more civilized Latin alphabet was used instead. During this time, almost 90% of the society was deprived of literacy. A large "General Education" campaign was organized throughout the country and efforts were made to ensure that the people learned to read and write with the Latin alphabet (Erdem, 2011, p.165). Atatürk stated the following at a night meeting in

Sarayburnu Park, Istanbul, on August 9/10, 1928 regarding the Turkish alphabet revolution: "The Turkish letters are the unification of the feelings, desires, excitements, intentions rising from the springs of the heart of the high people who constitute the Turkish social community, at a point, a goal, a purpose." (Atatürk Research Center, 2006 A, p.378). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in the letter he sent to the Prime Ministry on September 21, 1928 regarding the application of the new letters, stated that the public was particularly pleased with the ease of the Latin Alphabet (Atatürk Research Center, 2006 B, p.452). He personally took to the blackboard and taught the people how to read and write. As the "Head Teacher", he opened "National Schools" throughout the country on January 1, 1929, and made it compulsory for the 15-45 age group to receive modern education in these schools. Thus, with the implementation of the Alphabet Revolution, it became quite easy and understandable to express Turkish in writing as the language of education, science, art, culture and speech (Erdem, 2011, p.165). In addition, with the legal acceptance of the Alphabet Revolution, public teaching institutions and courses were opened in many places and new letters were learned with great effort (Uluskan, 2010, s.197).

The phase after Tevhid-i Tedrisat, the acceptance of the Latin alphabet and the National Schools included activities in the field of history and language, which again had national characteristics. Atatürk, who showed a special value to national history activities, put forward the research of Anatolian Turkishness in the light of historical truths with his Turkish History Thesis. Atatürk, who saw history as a connection between the future and the past, published a book called "The Main Lines of Turkish History" in 1930.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk expressed this about history writing as follows: "Writing history is as important as making history. If the writer does not remain loyal to the maker, the unchanging truth will take on a nature that will surprise humanity."

At the "Turkish Hearths Congress" held on April 23, 1930, it was decided to establish a "Turkish History Board" with the aim of scientifically researching Turkish history and civilization, and the first meeting of this board was held on June 4, 1930. This board, which was freed after the closure of the Turkish Hearths, was re-established on April 12, 1931 under the name of "Turkish History Research Society" with the aim of correcting false information on the origin of the Turks and scientifically examining the unrecognized periods of Turkish history. The society, which held its first congress in Ankara on July 2, 1932, was named as the "Turkish Historical Society" in 1935.

There are two periods when Mustafa Kemal focused on language along with history. The first period occurred on July 11, 1932, when the results of the "Turkish History Congress" were discussed. With the decision taken at this congress, it was decided to establish the "Turkish Language Research Society" on July 12, 1932 and to convene a "Language Congress" on September 26, 1932. This first period ended in October 1932, when the results of the congress came into effect. The second period coincides with the last years of 1935, when Mustafa Kemal was interested in the "Sun Language Theory". Thus, important efforts were made to correct Turkish by the state. Another development in education took place in the field of higher education (Ergin, 2019, p.818). Education programs that give importance to the physical development of individuals as well as to intellectual issues ensure that people's national characters reach strong levels. The purpose of the method in education and training is stated as; knowledge will be transformed into a tool to ensure that people achieve success in material matters. In the section explaining the characteristics of education; it is emphasized that the program, which gives importance to the simplification of all kinds of superstitions and foreign thoughts in order to ensure that education is carried out based on knowledge, will be national and patriotic (Albayrak, 2019, p.51). The main solution for Turkey to get rid of all its problems, grow and take its place in the modern world is to modernize education and training by making arrangements and to ensure the renewal of educational institutions and policies. In this respect, special importance has been given to education in government programs (Okur, 2005, p.101).

Conclusion

One of the reasons why the Ottoman Empire could not progress was that it could not keep up with the needs of the period in terms of education. The reforms that have been carried out recently have not provided a solution for this. The inadequate education in schools and the duality between the school and the madrasah have caused negativities in every area of the sector. With the reforms that took place in terms of education since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the dualities in education were first eliminated and all educational institutions were connected to the Ministry of National Education. A modern and secular education system was adopted. On the other hand, great importance was given to schooling from primary school to university and the number of schools was increased. The Latin alphabet, which is used at a contemporary level, was used instead of the Arabic alphabet and at the same time the new Turkish alphabet was adopted.

With the unity achieved in the field of education and training and the laws established by the state taking control of all educational activities, a new contemporary education and training system has been put into operation. The institutions such as primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and higher education that were opened with the implementation of the alphabet reform have proven that Turkey has achieved a superior and civilized education in a short time. The future magnificent victory of the Turkish nation will be realized

with hardworking generations that will be developed in line with Atatürk's educational principles, will spread and strengthen Atatürk's education policy and with wise teachers who will enlighten them.

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