

An Overview of Turkish Teaching in the Context of Language Policies*

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Abstract. Language policy is the set of rules created to affect the language of a society, and the function, structure or acquisition of linguistic diversity. It determines the place of language in the social structure. It focuses on language-related problems, explores language positions and shows how these positions are used. It is associated with language regulation. It determines the use of languages and formally resorts to legislation to determine them. Although language policy spreads as a field of sociolinguistics, it is one of the research topics of applied linguistics. Therefore, this study is carried out to obtain data on the teaching of Turkish language in terms of language policies. A new perspective is sought in this area.

Keywords: Language policies, linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, teaching Turkish, Turkish language

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication, which depends on the use of this tool. A social context is necessary for communication to occur. Without this context, communication cannot be established, because communication is a way of conveying our thoughts and feelings to other individuals.

Language is an inseparable whole with human thoughts and identity. The use of language is necessary for conveying the culture, beliefs and practices of the society which people belong to. Each community has its own language and communication system. So a group of people who use any language is called a language community.

The role of language in society is that it is a communication system. No language-free communities were found. Even animals have a language they speak. Language has both abstract and concrete aspect because language is a living and productive entity reflect the culture to which they belong. Therefore, there is an interaction between language and culture.

Languages are not described as richer, poorer, or more beautiful than another. Languages derive or borrow the words they need. Words that refer to concepts or objects that are no longer needed also fall out of use. This does not cause the language to deteriorate. It is not correct to characterize a language as richer or poorer than others because every language is sufficient to the extent that it meets the needs of the society to which it belongs. (Bayraktar, 2018)

Linguists have put forward various views on the definition of language. Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered the founder of linguistics, defined it as "a system consisting of separate signs that correspond to separate concepts". Zeynep Korkmaz saw language as "a notification tool".

According to Doğan Aksan, "Language is a versatile and highly developed system that enables the transfer of thoughts, feelings and wishes to others by making use of the elements and rules that are common in terms of sound and meaning in a society." (Aksan, 2003)

Applied linguistics also shows its influence in many different fields, since language is present almost everywhere in social life. One of these areas is language policy.

Language Policy as a Field of Applied Linguistics and the Emergence of Language Policy

Language policy is one of the fastest growing sub-disciplines of applied linguistics. Applied linguistics consider the political dimension in the use of language. Language policy refers to the conscious choices made by certain authorities regarding the relationship between language and society. But there are also many unplanned, unconscious language policies. The distinctive feature of language policies is that they are carried out consciously. (Açık, 2014) Language policy aims to learn about the use of linguistic communication and how this use shapes language.

Language teaching and learning, which has an important place in applied linguistics, is political in that it includes languages belonging to different cultures. This field was

created by linguists of the 1960s who were interested in solving the language problems of nations.

Types of Language Policies

Monolingualism: The ability of people to speak only one language. It is the inability to speak several languages.

Bilingualism: Bilingualism is the ability to communicate in more than one language. There are 23 types of bilingualism, which are: acquired, additive, balanced, ascending, innate, perceptual, compound, successive, sequential, implicit, diagonal, dominant, ineffective, functional, horizontal, new, major, minor, natural, generative, vertical, elliptical, regressive bilingual.

Multilingualism: Multilingualism is the existence of several languages in a society. Society is multilingual regardless of whether people use these languages or not. It shows the diversity of languages that exist.

Although the terms bilingualism and multilingualism are commonly used to refer to individuals who have acquired the ability to use more than one language, bilingualism and multilingualism are very complex social, psychological and linguistic phenomena (Bölükbaş Kaya, Hançer & Golynskaia, 2019).

2. METHOD

This study was carried out using the qualitative research method based on the interpretative approach. In this study, descriptive approach was used by using historical process analysis. The most comprehensive study in this field in Turkey is Fatma Açıık's "Teaching Turkish in the Context of Language Policies" and Hüseyin Yaşar's doctoral dissertation titled "Language Movements in Turkey in the Context of Language Policies (1980-2015)". Salim Orhan's published master's thesis titled "Language Policies, Language Rights and Practices in Turkey" is also a source for this field. Based on these data, a comment was made as a result of the observation. In the light of this information given, the study is unique in that it covers and systematically describes everything related to this field.

3. FINDINGS

Language Policies in Turkey

Pre-Republican Period

Tanzimat Period

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire developed and reached the highest level in political, social, economic, cultural and many other areas. However, some political reasons and some developments in the West caused it to stay in the background and enter a stagnation period.

With the treaties of Karlowitz in 1699 and then Passarowitz in 1718, the Ottoman Empire began to lose territory and regress. The Ottoman Empire, which did not communicate with the West except for war and trade issues, decided to turn its direction to the West after this pause period. Who ascended the throne at that time Twenty-Eight Mehmed Çelebi is sent to France to celebrate Louis XV. Thus, it begins to be aware of the situation of the West.

The West started to get more and more developed with the Renaissance and reform movements that emerged in the 17th century at that time. In the 18th century, this progress gained momentum with the Age of Enlightenment. Concepts such as "nationalism, freedom" that emerged with the French Revolution also influenced the whole world. Ottoman intellectuals and ambassadors, who were in such an environment, were of course under the influence of all these, and when they returned to their countries, they started to do some work with this influence.

On December 16, 1727, Twenty-Eight Mehmed Çelebi and İbrahim Müteferrika established the first Turkish printing house. The first Turkish book published here is "Vankulu Lügati". Thus, the Ottoman Empire started the Westernization process by turning to the West. New currents of thought and concepts came from the West, and Turkish equivalents were tried to be found for these concepts.

With the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict on November 3, 1839, the Ottoman Empire documented its steps towards "Westernization". The articles of this edict with new regulations are as follows:

1. Every citizen, Muslim or not, is equal before the law.
2. The safety of life, property and honor of all citizens will be ensured.
3. Taxes will be levied fairly.
4. No one shall be deemed guilty and punished without being tried in court.
5. The period of military service will be equal for all.
6. Taking and giving bribes in public affairs would be strictly prohibited. (Çetin, Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı, 2017)

Although there is no article in the Tanzimat Edict about making an innovation in the field of education, innovations were also made in the field of education. The establishment of the academic institution called "Encümen-i Daniş" on July 18, 1851 is one of these innovations. Its aim is to prepare books for universities and to provide translated works into Turkish. This institution was replaced by the association named "Cemiyet-i İlmiyye-i Osmaniye" on May 24, 1861.

The establishment of the institutions called "Cemiyet-i Kitabet" founded in 1862, "Cemiyet-i Tedrisiyye-i Osmaniyye" established in 1865, "Cemiyet-i Edebiyye" and "Cemiyet-i Tıbbiyye-i Osmaniye" established in 1866 are examples of innovations in the field of education. The first attempt to establish a terminology was made by "Cemiyet-i

Tıbbiyye-i Osmaniyye”, which was established in 1866 for the purpose of teaching medicine in Turkish.

Due to the Ottoman intellectuals' dislike for the rule of Abdulaziz, the Ottoman intellectuals established a secret society called the New Ottomans in 1865. The purpose of this association was to make a constitution, to establish a constitutional administration, to open a national assembly.¹

In 1876, Abdülaziz was deposed, and Kanun-i Esasi, the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire, was prepared, which enabled the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha were also present in the preparation phase of this constitution. The New Ottomans started with the Reform Edict and II. It ended with Abdulhamid's coming to power.

The Reform Edict is a further stage of the Tanzimat Edict, in which the Western imposition is more evident and clear. Minorities were given the opportunity to study in their own language, to be civil servants, to be represented in provincial assemblies. The main purpose of the West, which imposes these rights, is to bring the minorities to a level that will ensure their independence by becoming conscious and stronger. (Çetin, Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı, 2017)

The situation in Turkish has led to various discussions in this period. For this reason, important steps were tried to be taken in the Tanzimat period in terms of simplification of Turkish. In order for Turkish to enter a new era, intellectuals tried to give direction to Turkish by putting forward remarkable ideas. The foundations of language policy were laid in this period.

The language issue, which was not considered as a state policy until the Tanzimat, became a policy that was given importance together with the Tanzimat. The reason behind this is that the idea of Ottomanism, which started to take shape and could be considered as a kind of nationalism, began to spread in the Ottoman society. A state dignitary who tried to keep the state alive by spreading this idea to the whole Ottoman society, also made an effort to keep a state that was on the verge of disintegration. (Yaşar, 2016)

Ottoman Intellectuals and Language

Şinasi wanted to turn to the public as the main source in language and literature. Durub-ı Emsâl-i Osmaniye is a good example of this. While working on Turkish literature, Şinasi also focused on the Turkish language, while creating a new human being, he also created a new language for him. Although his studies on language have not reached the present day in its full sense, the influences he made with his works are obvious. Even though the language did not reach its present form with it, it became a matter of generations after it. Şinasi is an important Ottoman intellectual who enlightened both our literature and our language and helped its development.

In the 411 numbered issue of *Tasvir-i Efkar* newspaper published by Şinasi, Namık Kemal dealt with the issue of lexicon together with other issues of our literature in an article he wrote. Namık Kemal is one of the most prominent names on the language. Namık Kemal, knowing the importance of language for the life of the nation, wants it to be processed, developed, used properly, and written well in terms of both writing and syntax. (Tarakçı, 1989)

Namık Kemal argues that letters should be reformed. He objects to the Arabic and Persian phrases in our language and says that they should be removed. According to him, a rhetoric book should be written in order to understand and learn Turkish. He argues that Turkish should ensure the development of the state and the nation, and in order to achieve this, it should reach a certain level of development. He wants the language of education to be Turkish and therefore a language that facilitates education should be created. Turkish pronunciation should be caught and disseminated. Turkish should express positive sciences as well as emotions and thoughts and should be an intermediary language for the spread of science and technique.

Ahmet Vefik Pasha became one of the names who made dictionary studies in this period. The dictionary named *Polish-i Osmani*, which deals with the history of the Turkish language, is one of the important dictionary studies.

Ali Suavi, one of the most important representatives of the Turkish Movement, "Everything that needs to be explained should be published daily, in a language that everyone can understand." he said. The first objection to the use of Arabic and Persian grammar in Turkish comes from Ali Suavi. While he welcomes the development of Turkish, like every other language, by making use of foreign sources, it is natural that our Turkish has a beautiful harmony, and if it is written in short sentences using a simple and understandable language, a good result will be obtained. (Tanpınar, 2012)

Ziya Pasha, like his contemporaries, opposed and criticized a heavy, ornate, artificial language under the influence of old literature in his article titled *Poetry and Construction*. He advocated a plain, natural and sincere language that the public could understand. However, in the preface of the *Harabat Anthology*, he defends the opposite of this view.

Şemsettin Sami thought about language and Turkish and made some attempts to develop himself. He wrote his suggestions in his articles in the face of the results he obtained by discussing the historical process of Turkish, its origin, the situation against foreign languages, how it should be improved. *Kamûs-ı Türkî*, written by Şemsettin Sami, is the most important work in this field. This dictionary, first published by *İkdam* newspaper in 1901, is the first dictionary in which the word Turkish is mentioned.

Period of Abdulhamid II

After Sultan Abdülaziz was dethroned on May 30, 1876, Murat V was brought in. Murat V remains on the throne for two months and is replaced by Abdulhamid II, who has to accept the Kanun-ı Esasi, which remains in force until the end. (Çetin, 2017)

In this period, there is an artistic language dominance. Ahmet Mithat Efendi comes to the fore with his criticism of the Deans. The “Turkish Language Movement” begins in the İkdam Newspaper. Language discussions take a different dimension in this period.

II. It should be noted that the first act of the Abdülhamit period on language was the inclusion of Turkish as the official language of the state in the Constitution in Kanun-ı Esasi. (Yaşar, 2016)

The following articles are included in the Kanun-ı Esasi regarding language:

Article 18: In order to be employed in the state, which is the hidemate of the Ottoman Empire, it is imperative that they know Turkish, which is the official language of the state.

Article 68.: The following are not permissible for the Delegate of the Delegation: First of all, a person who is not a member of the vassal state and has the privilege of temporarily serving foreigners due to the order of the second, who does not speak Turkish directly, does not speak Turkish, and who is not aged thirty years old, but who has been convicted of his personal service. Those who do not respect sabian sui circumstances are those who claim their nationality as foreigners, whose tasian law has been deprived of civilisation, although the saminen's freedom is condemned. These cannot be deputies. It will be necessary to read Turkish and write as much as possible in order to become a deputy in the commissions to be executed after four years. (Anayasa Mahkemesi, 2022)

The fact that Turkish is the official language was objected by foreigners, but these objections were rejected by representatives of Turkish origin.

The Period of Union and Progress

The Union and Progress period was a period in which fractures were experienced in every sense. The Committee of Union and Progress developed a policy against the policies of tyranny and passed into the state administration. There has been a significant increase in the number of newspapers and magazines after the Committee of Union and Progress took over the state administration.

On July 23, 1908, with the proclamation of the Second, the simplification studies in the language gained a completely different dimension. The intelligentsia of this period brought nationalism to the fore.

The Turkish association was established on 25 December 1908. The purpose of the association was explained in the Turkish Language Journal published in 1909. The aim is to “learn and teach the past, state and works of all tribes called Turks”. The association,

whose members understood the relationship between language and culture, worked for the movement of simplification in language. (Wikipedia, 2021)

The New Language article, written by Ömer Seyfettin on April 8, 1911, shaped the language discussions and became an important step in the language. They defended the view that "a national literature can be created with a national language." The principles underlying this article are:

1. Not using Arabic and Persian grammatical rules, removing the compounds made with these rules,
2. Writing Arabic and Persian words as they are pronounced in Turkish,
3. Not taking words from other Turkish dialects,
4. Creating a new written language based on Istanbul speech,
5. Liberation of language and literature from east-west imitation.

The most distinctive feature of the New Language movement, led by Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin, Ali Canip, Kazım Nami etc. that it has prepared an environment conducive to the developments in the Republic period by purifying our language from the excesses of conflicts of thought such as "corruptionism" and "liquidationism" that have been going on since the Tanzimat. (Korkmaz, 2005)

The Committee of Union and Progress, which was founded on May 21, 1889, was established as a secret organization aiming to warn people against the government in order to save the homeland from foreign invasion. The Committee of Union and Progress, which adopted Turkism as its principle, tried to make Turkish accepted as the official language in this period.

Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti is one of the organizations that took the idea of Turkish nationalism to a higher level and pioneered the simplification of the Turkish language. These organizations have an important place in the development of national language consciousness.

İsmail Gaspıralı, who needed a Turkish publication where he could present his ideas, started to work on language in this period. As a matter of fact, his newspaper named Tercüman became popular and became widespread. Gaspıralı introduced an innovative educational reform in this newspaper.

The phrase "Unity in language, thought, and work", which has been used under the title of Tercüman since 1911, has become the most common slogan of the Turkish world and has still preserved its currency and validity even after nearly a century. (Akar, 2014)

Republican Period

The Turkish Grand National Assembly decided to renew the election on April 1, 1923. Until the Second Assembly convened, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk demanded that a new constitution be drafted. On 11 August 1923, the second assembly convened. The

proclamation of the Republic is carried out by this assembly. Decisions such as ratifying the Lausanne Peace Treaty and making Ankara the center of the state are also taken in this assembly. In the constitution prepared in line with Atatürk's thought, it was decided that the form of government of Turkey would be a republic. On 29 October 1923, the Republic was officially proclaimed. (Eroğlu, 2003)

For the first time, the hand of the state reached out to the language during the Republican period; In this period, a planned and programmed language policy was followed. This policy is based on a realistic understanding of language that is compatible with the basic principle of the Republic. On the basis of such an understanding of language, there is an in-depth scientific view that prioritizes the structure and functioning of language, the connection between language and society, language and culture. (Korkmaz, 2005)

The alphabet discussions, which continued after the proclamation of the Republic, necessitated the adoption of Latin numbers on May 24, 1924, and the adoption of Latin letters on November 1, 1928. In this period, language studies gained a different dimension. The Spelling Dictionary was published by the Language Committee on 12 December 1928. On April 19, 1931, the Turkish History Tetkik Society was established, and on July 12, 1932, the Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti was established. Then, the First Turkish Language Congress was held at Dolmabahçe Palace on September 26-October 4, 1932.

The following principles were adopted at the convention:

1. Turkish should be compared (compared) with the oldest Turkic languages such as Sumerian and Eti, as well as the Indo-European languages called Semitic.
2. The historical developments of Turkish should be sought and its comparative grammar should be written.
3. The words in the Turkish dialects should be compiled and the dialects dictionary, then the main Turkish dictionary, Turkish suffix nahvi (grammar, syntax) should be written thesis. While making consumables, syntax, lexicon, and using the term, attention should be paid to researching all the suffixes (affixes) of Turkish, and to processing these suffixes and prepositions in a way that will meet all the needs of our language.
4. The historical grammar of Turkish should be written.
5. Works on the Turkish language published in the eastern and western countries should be collected, and the necessary ones should be translated into our language.
6. It should publish the researches of the society itself and those who deal with Turkish language affairs abroad, in a journal.
7. Language issues should be given special place in the national newspapers. (Yaşar, 2016)

As a matter of fact, compilations from the public mouth were also made in this period. II. The Turkish Language Congress convened on August 18, 1934, and in this congress, decisions were taken to produce words from Turkish roots. Convened on 24-31 August 1936, the III. The Turkish Language Congress focused on the "Sun Language Theory". (Akar, 2014) This theory argues that Turkish is the oldest language in the world, and other languages are derived from Turkish.

Simplification studies continued unabated during the İsmet İnönü period, and the simplification of Turkish continued to be implemented as a policy. During the Adnan Menderes period, rules were set against using the words suggested by the Turkish Language Institution and the budget given to the Turkish Language Institution was cut. There has been a sharp return to the old language. In this period, the Turkish Language Institution considered the problem of spelling as a subject on its own. In this period, as in other periods, some intellectuals opposed the simplification of the language. Adnan Menderes period came to an end with the coming to power of military administration on 27 May 1960. Between 11 and 15 July 1960, the Ninth Turkish Language Congress was held again at Ankara University, Faculty of Language, History and Geography, and the names of those who opposed the simplification of the language were deleted. In the period of Süleyman Demirel, criticisms about the Turkish Language Institution came to the fore again.

The Turkish Language Institution was attached to the prime minister with the law numbered 2876, which was accepted on August 11, 1983 and published in the Official Gazette on August 17, 1983.

Towards the end of the 1980s, Turkish teaching centers were established with the leadership of universities. Boğaziçi University and Ankara University have been the pioneers of these studies. With TÖMER, which was established within Ankara University in 1984, teaching Turkish to foreigners gained an institutional identity.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was established in 1992. TIKA's work on teaching Turkish is also an example of language policies.

Established on May 5, 2007 under the Yunus Emre Foundation, Yunus Emre Institute has been instrumental in the spread of Turkish by aiming to teach Turkish to foreigners and introduce Turkish culture.

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of the study, it has been determined that there are strategy deficiencies in language policy. For this reason, it has been tried to give the most appropriate answer to the question of whether there is a lack of language policy in our country. Are minority languages seen as a threat, whether measures are taken for minority languages, should the use of minority languages be restricted, whether linguistic diversity should be seen as a problem, such questions are the main starting point for the solution. Solution

suggestions were made to all these questions in a way that would preserve the Turkish language. Solutions and suggestions for the study are as follows:

Projects related to teaching Turkish to foreigners should be supported, and language experts should be encouraged to work in this field. A curriculum valid in all language centers should be established and quality course materials prepared in accordance with the "European Language Portfolio" should be produced. Language rights of Turkish learners should be protected, and language diversity should not be seen as a problem. Financial support should be provided to people working on language. Graduates of "Turkish Language and Literature, Turkish Language and Literature Teaching, Turkish Teaching and Linguistics" departments should be employed and qualified studies should be produced. International activities should increase and teaching environments should be uniform.

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