

LANGUAGE POLICIES AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE PERIOD OF SULTAN ABDÜLHAMID II: EXAMPLES FROM THE YILDIZ PALACE LIBRARY COLLECTION

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Abstract. One of the issues at the heart of the Ottoman Empire throughout history was education, bearing in mind that education is the guarantee of a nation's progress. The biggest breakthrough in the field of education in the Ottoman Empire took place during and after the reign of Abdulhamid II. In this period, the language of education and instruction was an important issue in the studies conducted for the dissemination of educational institutions throughout the country. In addition to Arabic Language, the necessity of learning western languages emerged from the times when the Ottoman Empire's relations with the western states had begun to gain traction owing to political developments. In modern schools, some western languages were introduced, especially the French language.

Within the scope of this study where the era of Abdulhamid II is prioritized to understand the place of foreign language education within the education system, the general characteristics of the education system of the period are given in brief. Language policies and foreign language education of the period are examined. In addition, some examples from the Collection of Yıldız Palace Library, which has a very important place in the education system of Abdülhamid II period, are introduced and discussed.

Keywords: Language education; language policies; Abdülhamid II period; Yıldız Palace Library Collection; Istanbul University Rare Books Library

Language Policies in the Period of Sultan Abdülhamid II

The Ottoman administration had a liberal, Ottomanism ethnic policy, through equality and citizenship for all its subjects which is not based on any ethnic background. Although the centralized and modernized state had a language policy that emphasized Turkish to carry out its business, it continued to use community languages in communicating with other communities (Özyurt, 2004: 158). The people who lived as Ottoman subjects used the Turkish language in their relations with the state in daily lives.

During the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire, the increase of foreign relations created a need for young people to be conversant with foreign languages (Özyurt, 2004: 163). Due to the introduction of French public bureaucracy and the use of the French language by foreign statesmen, the external correspondence of the foreigners, especially with French embassies and consulates, required the use of French (Günalan & Çiçek, 2017: 125). When it was found out that young people were unable to meet their needs, the Translation Department was established in 1832 (Özyurt, 2004: 163). The Babıâli Translation Department consisted of two sub-departments, one of which was the Chamber of Translators where one of the officers was supposed to study the language and one of whom was to be engaged in translation works (Balci, 2008: 84).

After Abdülhamid II's ascent to the throne, he adopted and declared a Constitution (Kanun-i Esasi), which brought the Constitutional Monarchy as a form of administration with the Parliament. Thus, the 1st Constitutional Monarchy period began. These political developments, as a natural consequence of the Tanzimat, were the movement of the state to become European (Akyüz, 2001: 204). Upon the start of these studies, the language problem once again came to the forefront in official circles (Karal, 1985: 317). Thus, Abdulhamid II's approach stating that "language is the main element of social cohesion, rather than representing ethnicity, it should be seen as an upper identity tool to keep the Ottoman society together and this should naturally be represented with the Turkish Language (Özcan, 2017: 216; Bezirci, 2018: 510) resulting in the acceptance of Kanun-i Esasi (The Ottoman Basic Law/Constitution) (1876) with which the Turkish Language became the official language (Açık, 2013). This indirectly meant that Turkish would also be used during the realization of public services while foreign companies and affiliated bodies, doing business in cooperation with different institutions of the Ottoman Empire, were still preparing contracts in French and English. It was seen that government officials, as well as some non-governmental organizations, trying to intervene in the writing of the administrative procedures and official correspondence in the state institutions were required to use Turkish (Günalan & Çiçek, 2017: 128). Despite the measures taken and the intense efforts to spread the Turkish Language among non-Muslims, it was impossible to talk about the same level of success all over the Ottoman geography. As one moved away from the center, the success could change even within the countryside itself (Özcan, 2017: 229). However, the desire of the Ottoman Empire to disseminate the Turkish Language and making it the official language made it possible to unite the Turkish dialects around a common written language (Özyurt, 2004: 164; Özcan, 2017: 230).

Language Education in the Period of Sultan Abdulhamid II

The period of Abdülhamid II was a period during which changes made since 1839 were gathered at a focal point and Western ideas began to be understood

(Mardin, 1985: 347; Türköne & Önder, 2011: 15). When evaluating the education and training in this period, factors such as characteristics of the period, external events, state financial status, political ideas and movements, knowledge and experience of educators should be taken into consideration.

In the period of where Sultan Abdülhamid II remained in power for thirty-three years, measures were taken to ensure the dissemination of education alongside public works, and in the field of education and training, a policy based on balance between centralist and educational institutions was followed. The foundations of modern education were laid in this period; the provision of financial assistance to the new schools and the transition to Darülfünun's functioning as a university and education's direction especially to Anatolia - the most remote corners of the state where the majority of Turks resided - taking the extensions of the central authority to these frontiers were amongst a few of the attempts made about education (Baytal 2000:28). The period of Abdulhamid II included an increasing institutional modernization process in education. Textbooks used as basic modern tools and detailed regulations regulating the in-school behaviors of teachers were also prepared (Karataşer, 2017: 428).

The Tanzimat Period decisions regarding the activities on education were mostly made during the reign of Abdülhamid II. With the constitution of 1876, the need for a regulation on education had been on the agenda. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, the organization took its final form by organizing the central organization. Thus, under the Ministry of Education, general directorates and inspectorates were formed for each teaching degree and primary and secondary schools and teacher training schools were taken to the provinces in this period. The basis of the education center, set up according to the teaching steps, was determined in 1879 (Baytal, 2000: 28-31; Özcan, 2017: 217). During the reign of Abdülhamid II, the number of primary schools was reduced by increasing the number of secondary schools and the number of schools at primary school level, which performed their activity using new methods, increased. The number of schools opened in this period exceeded 15.000. At the same time, Abdülhamid II gave great importance to protecting the unity within the country and the business of raising public servants. He pushed the madrasahs out of the system together with the new institutions in many fields. In the period of Abdülhamid II, vocational schools were opened in many fields. In this way, the educational institutions such as the Faculty of Civil Engineering, the School of Law, the School of Commerce, the School of Agriculture, the School of Mourning and Education, the Industry School of Education, the School of Girls, Darülfünun, Dârülmua'llimîn and Dârülmua'llimât were established. In Istanbul, there were 28 private Turkish schools where the number of students reached 4500, but in 1873, the first private school called Darüşşafaka was opened for Muslims (Tekin & Göksal, 2017: 325-326; Baytal, 2000: 28-31). Especially at that time, he gained fame with mathematics, science courses and French graduates who were stronger than other

Idadi and Sultanians. After the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908), foreign Language teaching came to the forefront, French was compulsory, English and German were studied during elective language lessons (Soner, 2007: 399). Over time, these private schools increased. In the early 1880s, a number of vocational schools were opened such as the Vocational School of Fine Arts and the Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi. In 1901, it was reopened with the name Darülfünun-i Şahane which had been previously closed. In this period, only Galatasaray Sultanisi (High School) was established (Tekin & Göksal, 2017: 325 – 326; Baytal, 2000: 28 – 31).

The foreign schools opened by the USA, France, England, Italy, Austria, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria and Iran laid the foundations for opening schools in the Western sense within the Ottoman state. These schools activities led to many positive effects such as increasing the number of foreign language learners in the society and contributing to the education of girls. Over time, the Turks also increased their interest in foreign schools and started sending their children to these schools. Since these schools were founded and managed by missionaries, they exerted cultural influences of various aspects on Muslim students because they were taught the language and religion of the state they belonged to. Particularly, during the Tanzimat period, some of the students were raised as western fans. The first statutory audit for foreign schools in the Ottoman state was introduced in 1869 under the 18 Maarif-i Umumiye Ottoman. While the regulation mainly seeks solutions to the educational problems of the Ottoman state, it defines the necessity of seeking to obtain a license and was not able to carry on with the activities of the schools unlicensed (Tekin & Göksal, 2017: 329 – 333; Özcan, 2017: 217). The first private foreign school opened by foreigners in the Tanzimat period was Robert College which started functioning in 1863. This was followed by Üsküdar American High School for Girls in 1871, followed by French, German and Italian schools (Soner, 2007: 399).

The Ottoman Empire, as an expression of respect for Islam, showed an extreme interest in Arabic. It can be said that the majority of the graduates of the madrasahs for the Classical Ottoman period could speak a second and third language such as Arabic and Persian as well as their mother tongue. The basic formation of all educated Ottoman administrators and intellectuals were Arabic and Persian. Although it was necessary to speak a foreign language for a cultured Ottoman master, the significant languages were Arabic and Persian (Özkan, 2010: 1785, 1791).

The state opened up to the West in the Tulip Era, which began immediately after the peace in Karlofça. One of the changes experienced in this period was the subject of foreign language learning. Until this period, the state needed the personnel speaking foreign languages to execute foreign policy through the people who had had close relations with the west. The Ottomans were still receiving help from the interpreters of the Divan-ı Hümayun to become aware of the events and relations in Europe. The Babiâli Translation Department was established after this

rebellion which can be described as the institution that teaches foreign languages systematically for the first time in the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to the opening of the Translation Department in the schools opened in the 18th and 19th centuries, in addition to Arabic and Persian, one Western Language was introduced into the Ottoman system of education. For example, in 1793 in the Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun school, French, in addition to Arabic, was taught. Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye was opened in 1839 and in addition to other courses, French grammar lessons were also included (Özkan, 2010: 1788). French was the international language of diplomacy and had a considerable influence on the spheres of literature and thought. In particular, the French methods and institutions were taken as an example in the establishment and development of the Western education system, which gained serious momentum together with the Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire (Gençoğlu, 2014: 37).

The second stage of the secondary level education of higher education institution of the Ottoman Empire began to spread between 1882 to 1892. It was in the Abdülhamid II period that French was included in the required courses in the schools. The Sultanis (High Schools) were the institutions providing education in French and Turkish. After these studies, a school named Enderun Mektebi (A school for special students) which educated the high-quality statesmen required by the Ottoman Empire from the period of Sultan Mehmed the Conquerer, started a school in 1868 with the name of Galatasaray High School providing modern education. This school, which also had French instructors, quickly established itself in Europe with the quality of its foreign language education. Graduates of this school were fluent in French. In the following years, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Latin, Greek, Bulgarian, English, Italian and German classes were opened. Galatasaray High School, which opened on September 1, 1868 was a turning point in terms of foreign language teaching in Turkey. Another feature of this high school was that it was the first public school to teach foreign language at secondary level. Muslim and non-Muslim students were educated together in this school (Özkan, 2010: 1788 – 1789; Özkan, 2017: 56).

In civil schools, in 1840, one Western Language was included in the curriculum. However, in 1855, a school was opened in Paris under the name of Mekteb-i Osmanî and attempts were made to send the students from medicine and military schools to the French military schools to develop their foreign Language having completed their secondary education on the grounds that military schools fail to teach the French language. However, when the desired success could not be obtained from this school, military High Schools were opened in 1875 (Özkan, 2010: 1790; Özkan, 2017: 56).

French language courses taught in schools starting from the middle of the 18th century and the foreign language education given in the Babiâli Translation Department in 1821 failed and the need for foreign language-speaking staff started to increase. The idea of opening Mektebi Sultani appeared. With the beginning of

the Westernization movements, Arabic and Western languages, especially French, began to be taught in the Ottoman schools, but the desired success could not be achieved. Thus, on March 26, 1866, a language school began its education life in French with 20 students. Although the Language School was opened only for teaching French, new lessons such as Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian were added to the school curriculum for the practical needs of the Ottoman bureaucracy. In 1869, the number of students in the school reached to 662. However, the Language school was closed soon. It was opened for the second time in 1879 on the condition that it taught French as well as Arabic. In addition to Arabic and French, Greek, Slavic languages, Armenian, English, German and Russian were included in the curriculum. In addition to Arabic and French, each student was obliged to learn Greek and Armenian, and it was decided that the learning of other languages would be dependent on the students' wishes. After the second opening of the language school it was closed for an unknown reason. The language school, opened and closed twice before, was opened for the third time in 1883 (Özkan, 2010: 1794 – 1795; Balcı, 2008: 85; Özkan, 2017: 58). The Language School, opened and closed several times, was completely closed on 18 August 1892. After the school was closed, it was decided to open another school with the name of Mekteb-i Ali-i Diplomasi. However, although the opening of Mekteb-i Ali-i Diplomasi in Besiktas was prepared, and it was planned to be opened instead of the Language School, this attempt too was later abandoned (Özkan, 2010: 1797; Balcı, 2008: 93).

Sultan Abdülhamid II resumed his "Education Abroad" approach, which had been abolished by Sultan Abdülaziz, in 1880 giving great importance to education abroad like his predecessors. In the period of Abdülhamit II, it was determined that a total of 423 people benefited from state scholarship in various fields such as internship, specialization and university education. During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II Germany became the most preferred country abroad following France. The political and military rapprochement with Germany had a great influence on this increase in popularity. However, effective anti-regime campaigns of the Young Turks in Europe since the 1890s, adversely affected the education policy of Abdülhamit II. As a result, except from military field and a few non-military fields, education abroad was terminated (Gençoglu, 2014: 33 – 38).

Some Examples of works Related to Education from Yıldız Palace Library Collection

In this part, some of the works in the library of Yıldız Palace, still in the Library of Rare Books of Istanbul University, have been examined on the subject of language education during the reign of Abdülhamid II through which examples of the educational practices pertaining to the period are presented.

It is observed that there are 5 pieces of calligraphic works on foreign language education in the form of 81 literary works in English, French, German, named

“Other Languages”, when examined from the viewpoint of foreign language education, except for the ones in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Persian, 4 are written in Russian and one in Greek.

The book No. Rus.2, written in Russian, translated by Mehmed Sadık, is a book that teaches the Russian language. It is called Russian Elif-ba (alphabet). The font type is ordinary font. Its dimensions are 240x180, consisting of 23 lines and 45 sheets.

The one named Rus.3 written by a Russian author named “Mir’atı Ef’ali Rusi” is about the beautiful Russian writing techniques and examples of these. The font is in the form of decorative writing, measuring 245x170, consisting of 25 lines and 172 pages, with 4 rulers.

Rus. 4, a book titled “School Companion” translated by Mehmed Sadık, is a reading book consisting of stories aimed at for beginners in Russian in simple language. The font is in the form of decorative writing, measuring 245x180, consisting of 25 lines and 248 pages.

Russian 5, a book titled “Miftah”, written by Daniel Saib, is a methodological one, teaching Russian-language. The font is in the form of big letters, measuring 215x135, consisting of 20 lines and 116 sheets.

Rum.2 is a book named beautiful calligraphy published in a Greek magazine of beautiful calligraphy techniques with examples from Greek language in various forms of writing, measuring 210x300 having 14 pages.

Among the books on education in the Ottoman Turkish works in İstanbul University Rare Books Library Yıldız Palace collection, the book numbered 79543 and entitled “Acceptance of Mekâtib-i İdadiye-i Şahane Şakird” dated 1901 belongs to the aforementioned period and contains the rules on acceptance for students.

A book numbered 81559 published in Mekteb-i Fünun-u Harbiye-i Şahane printing House on the curriculum to be followed in Mekteb-i Harbiye-i Şahane, where French lessons from the 1st grade to the last gradewere taught every day, is deemed important in science and other courses such as mathematics, science, chemistry at certain times of the day, which is noteworthy.

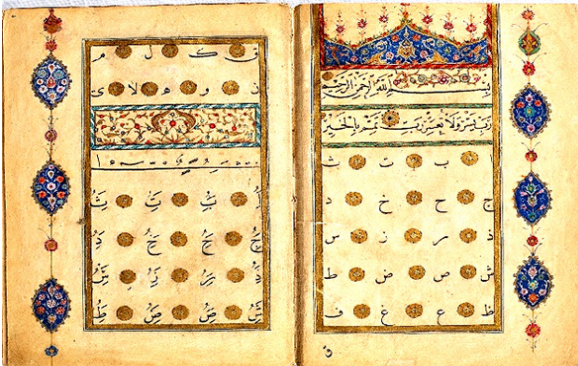
In addition, there are three alphabet books called “Elif-ba”, valuable manuscripts, supposed to be used during the language training of the princes existing in the Rare Books Library’s Yıldız Palace collection. *Elif ba* (the first two of the Arabic letters are *elif* and *bā*), a series of letters representing the sounds of the Arabic language and the writing system (the Encyclopedia of Islam), which is the name given to the alphabet used by the Turks and adopted from the Arabs and used for 9 – 10 centuries until the acceptance of Latin letters in 1928 (Kubbealtı Lügatı). The information and images of *Elif-ba* mentioned in 3 manuscripts are given below;

Pic.1 Alphabet Number A 6378



Alphabet Number A 6378; 1263/1846-47, signed by Mustafa Vasif (d.1853), Istanbul, Ottoman period. 18 folios, naskh in 7 lines in blue and red ink, 1 double folio illuminated alphabet page, illuminated margins, gold decorated green leather binding with a flap. 21.5x16x0.6 cm. (Uluç, 2015: 69).

Pic.2 Alphabet Number A 6475



Alphabet Number A 6475; Late seventeenth century, signed by Hafız Osman (d.1698), probably Istanbul, Ottoman period. 17 folios in naskh, 1 illuminated heading, illuminated rosettes and marginal medallions, brown leather binding and flap gold block pressed with a medallion. 24x17x0.6 cm. (Uluç, 2015:70).

Pic.3 Alphabet Number A 6519



Alphabet Number A 6519; Nineteenth century, Istanbul, Ottoman period. 34 folios in naskh, 1 double folio illuminated alphabet page, illuminated margins, gold decorated purple binding with a flap. 12.2x16x0.4 cm. (Uluç, 2015:71).

In the Rare Books Library, in the collection of Yıldız Palace, another example of important and original works reflecting the language education practices during the reign of Abdulhamid II is the reports called “Şehzade Karneleri” belonging to the princes - numbered T8994 (Pic. 4). These reports include end-of-year evaluations of the courses taken by Burhaneddin Efendi, İbrahim Tevfik Efendi, Ahmet Efendi, Emine Nemika Sultan, Mehmed Selim Efendi and Abdulkadir Efendi. When the lessons and evaluations are examined; in addition to courses such as mathematics, geography and history, it is seen that Arabic, Ottoman, Persian and French language lessons were taught with emphasis and memorization, grammar-translation methods were applied within the scope of the courses.

Pic.4 T8994



The Yıldız Photography Collection, which can be defined as the world's largest visual archive of the 19th century, consisting of photographs taken during the reign of Abdülhamid II, is preserved in İstanbul University's Rare Books Library most assiduously and has been put into service for researchers. This valuable collection includes 911 photo albums and 36,585 photographs. The photographs in the albums collectively present the latest of the political regimes, systems or social and political structures in various countries of the world. In our albums containing a wide range of topics in political, historical, geographical and architectural spheres, school photos reflecting glimpses of education life of the period are also noteworthy from the point of view of our subject matter. Below are examples of these photographs.

Pic.5 Faculty of Agriculture, Thessaloniki Hamidiye, 90494---0004



Pic.6 Prussian School for Girls in Jerusalem, 90504---00



Pic.7 Mekteb-i Sultani (Galatasaray High School) teachers and students, 90834---0017



Pic.8 Humus (Syrian) Greek School teachers and students, 91289---0004



Conclusion

Abdulhamid II thought that the world's leading states had become great powers through education. Therefore, by carrying out educational reforms in his own time, he undertook urgent and serial measures and carried out education oriented initiatives in all parts of the empire. In the field of education and training, a policy based on equilibrium between centralist and educational institutions was followed. In general, the education perspective of the period outweighs the reformist / modernist aspect. In this period, schools were established in almost all fields of education from

primary to university which form the foundations of today's educational institutions. The Tanzimat decisions regarding the activities of education taken mostly in the Abdulhamid II period had the opportunity to be implemented in the period of the 1876 constitution when the need for regulation on education came to the agenda and the central organization of the Institution of Education took its final form.

In addition to the form and quality of education, the language of education remains an important issue. In the Ottoman madrasas, it was understood that besides the teaching of the Turkish language, education was given in the Arabic language and it continued until the end of the Ottoman Empire. However, due to the increase in the relations with the Western states and political developments, the need for personnel who speak Western languages increased day by day. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire began to give more importance to foreign language education, and new educational institutions opened in the 18th and 19th centuries, and, in addition to Arabic and Persian, some Western Languages, including French, were introduced. In particular, the language school opened in 1866 was an important step in this regard.

Also in this period, in the western sense, the opening of schools laid the foundations of the systematic foreign language teaching institutions for the first time, such as the opening of the Babiâli Translation Department. Although the level of their success is not clear, the number of schools where French was the compulsory and German and English were the optional language courses along with foreign language teaching schools increased over time, which was noteworthy. It is seen that the works in the collection of the Yıldız Palace Library, the document of the works of the period of Abdülhamid II, reflect the educational activities of the period.

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