
IMPLEMENTATION OF ALPHABET AND LANGUAGE REVOLUTION AND IT'S POTENTIAL IMPACTS IN HISTORICAL PROCESS

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Introduction

Turks used different alphabets throughout history, they started to use the Arabic alphabet with the adoption of Islam and this alphabet has been used in a very wide geography for a long time. During this period, some important intellectuals in the Turkish world argued that the Arabic alphabet was not in accordance with the Turkish phonetics, and suggested various ideas to change or improve.

Towards the end of growth of the Ottoman Empire, as in many areas of the West, the developments in science-technology and education could not be followed and the education continued in the hands of non-qualified people caused the Ottoman education system to be deprived of the requirements of time. Although some western-style reforms have been attempted in education since the end of the eighteenth century, these initiatives have led to the emergence of a dual educational system and have continued to do so until the state collapses.

After winning the War of Independence and proclamation of the Republic, reforms were initiated in various fields in order to bring the Turkish society to the level of contemporary civilization, to remove the obstacles against the progress of the country and to create a secular and national structure. Innovations in the field of education, one of them, have become inevitable. For this purpose, fundamental changes in all areas of education and training have been made from primary school term to university term in Atatürk period. This revolution movements improved the status of education as both quantity and quality as well as Atatürk wished formed the foundation stone of the new Turkey.

Alphabet Discussions, First Initiatives and Other Developments

The fact that the Arab and Turkish languages were belong to other language groups and that there was no similarity between Turkish and Arabic in terms of their sound structure (colloquialism) and grammar systems could not fit this writing, which was created according to the claim of the Arabic language, according to the structure of the Turkish language.¹ Therefore, problems of ortography and alphabet has occured since the beginning of the westernization reform of the Ottoman Empire's Tanzimat Era.²

¹ Zeynep Korkmaz, *Türk Dilinin Tarihi Akışı İçinde Atatürk ve Dil Devrimi*, DTCF Yay, S. 147, Ankara 1963 p. 36.

² p Korkmaz, *Türk Dilinin Tarihi Akışı...*, p. 36, 37

The Arabic alphabet brought various difficulties with it. Especially using of the letters which unfitted the sound structure of Turkish and Turkish sound harmony and the grammatical structure is getting heavier has caused the literacy rate to remain low in the country.³ Only enlightened people who had education at madraras for many years could read, write and speak because Ottoman is a grandiloquent and difficult language. A large part of the Turkish people living in the rural sides could not read and write their own language, apart from understanding Ottoman.⁴ The establishment of the printing house in the Ottoman Empire in 1727, has been effective in gaining Turkish importance. In the first half of the XVIII. Century, civilian schools were opened to train technical personel for army and the courses are given in Turkish at these schools. During III. Selim and II. Mahmud periods, military schools were included also in Turkish among various European languages.⁵

The first serious debates and attempts to change the Arabic letters began after the year of 1860. Recommendations for the adoption of a new alphabet for the first time, instead of the old letters being replaced completely with the Latin letters was put forward during the years of Second Constitutional Era.⁶

Because the first generation of Turkish intellectuals who grew up in the Tanzimat period gave great importance to the issue of press-publication in order to disseminate their knowledges, and ideas to the public and also the first civil journalism initiatives started in this period. With the emergence of the press-publication life, the problems of literacy, language, education and culture have come to the fore in the country, and thus the most important tool in these issues, the alphabet and the language, have been discussed among the intellectuals.⁷

Alphabet revolution has led too many discussions in due time. One of these arguments is that the revolution is unfounded and that it is the first time in the world that Turkey see it. According to the researchers, the biggest, the longest and most unfavorable and favorable effects of Atatürk's revolutions in the preparatory period, and the most common of the debates was the letter revolution.⁸ Revolutionary cadres and writers for calling this renewal as *Turkish Letters* which taken the Arabic letters instead of the Latin letters, for both a *Nationalism Project and a decision on Western culture*, it was called the *Civilization Project* because it was based on the culture of the European culture and cut the relation with the culture in the past.⁹

³ Elif Asude Tunca, "Türk Harf Devrimi'nin Halka Tanıtımı Çalışmaları", *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, C. II, S. II, Aralık 2006, p. 113

⁴ Neriman Tongul, "Harf İnkılabı", *TİTE Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, S. 33-34, Mayıs-Kasım 2004, p.104.

⁵ Tongul, agm, p. 105

⁶ Mustafa Ergün, "Türk Eğitim Devrimi: Temel İlkeler ve Gelişim Süreci", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Politikaları Sempozyumu Bildirileri Kitabı*, ATAM, Ankara 2010, p. 41.

⁷ Tongul, agm, p. 105. For polarization and conflicts in the media, see, Zeynep Korkmaz, *Türk Dili Üzerine Araştırmalar*, C. I, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu TDK Yay, S. 629, Ankara 1995, p. 750-757.

⁸ Tülin Arseven, "Türk Harf Devriminin Kültürel Temelleri", *Folklor/ Edebiyat*, C. 23, S. 90, 2017/2, p. 169.

⁹ Arseven, agm, p. 169, 170.

The first serious attempt to improve the Arabic alphabet was initiated by Munif Pasha. (Munif Pasha, without a doubt, is one of the key figure in the history of the introduction of improvement of the Arabic alphabet, science and education into the Ottoman Empire. He also was a member of Ottoman Association of Science (also called as Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye)) Munif Pasha, stated that in one of his conference in 1862 in *Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye: That a word cannot be read in a variety of ways, and that some words and special names whose meaning are unknown cannot be read, that the multitude of Arabic-Persian words in our language makes reading-writing completely difficult, that uppercase letters for the private names can not be distinguished from others, Europeans do not have such difficulties in their writings, so that from the age of 6-7, every person can read and write, otherwise we have difficulties of learning the writing it caused intellectual upbringing of the people wasn't possible*¹⁰

14 months after the conference, the Azerbaijani poet Ahunzade Feth Ali presented a draft to the Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye. In this draft; It was stated that the difficulty of the Arabic letters was not a religious necessity for the use of the Arabic letters and a new writing system could be taken, but the society prepared a report and concluded that it was a difficult task to change the types that had been used for centuries.

The Reflection of the Alphabet Revolution to the Newspapers

Encümen-i Daniş, who worked on this issue Namik Kemal and Iranian ambassador Melkum Khan discussed this issue in Hurriyet in 1763-1864. Melkum Khan mentioned that the education in the country is too low, and he stated the inconveniency of the Arabic letters and argued that it should be corrected. Namık Kemal in his reply; he said that the changing in the alphabet would be difficult, many negative effects were caused by lack of knowledge, not from the alphabet, Although the alphabets of nations such as British and American were difficult, they stated that their education was high. He continued however, that he was not opposed to rehabilitation without completely distorting the forms of the letters, but that the state did not want to approach such a thing.¹¹

Those who advocate the transition to the Latin alphabet are mentioned the opinion that the reading and writing complexity is eliminated, the literacy rate is increasing and the orientation towards the west is accelerated at the same time, they believe that printing and communication will also be easier. Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), Falih Rıfkı (Atay), Yunus Nadi (Abalıoğlu), Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt), Ahmet Cevat (Emre), Kılıçzade Hakkı, Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu), Celal Nuri (İleri), Şükrü

¹⁰ Munif Pasha claimed that Arabic alphabet prevented the literacy considerably and caused the ignorance to Sharia and was the person who emphasized. Letter reform was necessary for the education to be developed in Tanzimat Reform era. General Münif defended that was necessary to better because of the difficulties that Arabic alphabet created at a conference that he had in Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmâniyye in 1862. Ercan Uyanık- İrfan Davut Çam, "Arap Elifbası'ndan Latin Alfabetesine Geçiş Sürecinde Garpcı Söylemler", *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XIV/29, Güz 2014, s.190- 192.

¹¹ Emine Kısıklı, "Harf inkılabının Türk ve Dünya Basınındaki Yansımaları", *Erdem*, S. 56, TTK, Ankara 2010, p. 120-123.

(Saraçoğlu) ve Hüseyin Suphi(Tanrıöver) are among those who advocate Latin letters during the Republican period.¹² When the discussions and initiatives between 1862 and 1876 on the improvement of the Arabic alphabet are examined, it is seen that the supporters of the reformers are in the majority, according to the advocates of changing the letters.¹³ Necip Asım, Kazım Karabekir, Mehmet Ali Tevfik, İbrahim Alaaddin (Gövsa), Avram Galanti, Fuad Köprülü, Zeki Velidi (Togan), Ali Seydi, Halid Ziya (Uşaklıgil), Veled Çelebi, Ali Ekrem (Bolayır), Halil Nimetullah (Öztürk) and Ayaz İshakiyer were among those who wanted to continue with Arabic letters.¹⁴ The intellectuals of the Tanzimat period could not do anything more than reduced that issue controversial in manner.¹⁵

Preparations Before the Letter Revolution

Most of the intellectuals understood that the efforts to improve the letters did not result in any results and will not. In case of the view about adoption of Latin alphabet has been embraced more by intellectuals and has been defended for many years in newspapers and magazines.¹⁶ The subject of alphabet, which will be developed during the Republic period, has been prepared to a great extent.

During the period of War of Independence on the nights of 7-8 August 1919 Mustafa Kemal called Mazhar Müfit (Kansu) along with his souvenir book and noted the innovations to be made in the country in the future after the War of Independence was won and he also wrote the note that Latin letters would be accepted. The subject of the alphabet came to the freshen fore in the country after the Azerbaijani Government adopted a Latin origin post on 22 July 1922. The letter of the Government of Azerbaijan's decision on this issue reached Ankara on 31 July 1922. More or less a month before reached this post (June, 1922) Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha mentioned orientation of the West and possibilities of acceptance of Latin letters to Halide Edip. On September 10-12, representatives of

¹² Yasin Elçarpar, "Harf İnkılâbı Hakkında Görüşler Ve Uygulamaya Geçirilmesi", Enderun Dergisi 2/1, 2018, p. 26; Cengiz Dönmez, Tarihi Gerçekleriyle Harf İnkılabı ve Kazanımları, Gazi Kitabevi, Ankara 2013, p. 180, 181.

¹³ In Ottoman Empire, it was put ephasis on the alphabet reform was given up and efforts of changing alphabet started after Tanzimat era. In he following periods there were serious discussions between the ones who were believes and strangers to using Latin alphabet. *Sebilürreşad* is one of the media organs of these discussions. Adoption of Latin alphabet is refused in all of these articles and asked for alphabet reform. Some of those articles were taken from magazines of that era and had a specify place according to the publishing policy of the magazine. Mehmet Soğukömeroğulları, "Harf Üzerine Tartışmaların Sebilürreşad Dergisine Yansımaları", *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 13/3, 2014, p. 645.

¹⁴ Elçarpar, agm, p. 25.

¹⁵ There are two people discussing the letter revolution in the pres: The first of these is Giritli Ahmet Cevat (Emre) and the other one is Professor. Avram Galanti. It is seen that 18 articles written by Ahmet Cevat and that Arabic letter does not conform to the sound structure of Turkish language and Latin letters should be taken. On the other hand, Avram Galanti, opposes the receipt of the Latin alphabet with 9 articles in opposition newspapers and he defends the view that Arabic letters do not interfere with progress.

¹⁶ Up to a specific period, In the Ottoman Empire who using the Arabic letters Focusing on reforming letters after Tanzimat, focusing on reforming letters after Tanzimat, after a while, the efforts to replace the alphabet and change the alphabet begin. In later periods, there are serious controversies among those who have the support of transition to Latin letters. *Sebilürreşad* is one of the publications that these debates are. Acceptance of Latin letters is rejected in all of these articles and the correction of letters is desirable. Some of the manuscripts were taken from the magazines of that period and had a small place according to the publication policy of the magazine. In the early days of its publication, the magazine displayed a positive outlook on nationalism and Turanism, and a marked criticism began in the following years. The letters related to Latin letters belong to the first period of publication of the journal.

Istanbul journalists, including Huseyin Cahit and Yakup Kadri, went to Izmir and met with Ghazi and during the conversation question of Hüseyin Cahit's, *Why don't we accept the Latin alphabet?* Ghazi answered *Time hasn't come yet.*¹⁷ The architect of the Turkish revolution also who knows the results of the reform movements in the Ottoman Empire period, implemented the idea of transition to *the New Turkish Alphabet* based on the Latin alphabet like secret on his mind, has been implemented in a short time firstly actual then legally in accordance with the strategy of revolution.¹⁸

During War of Independence, with the extraordinary conditions brought by the First World War, and also as in the case of the country was totally struggle with Independence War, other issues outside of battle remained in the background.¹⁹

Ataturk harped on about the emergence of changes about modernization, in other words, getting new cultural key elements and for adopted them by community most part of issue that unsufficient, cultural elements timeously. From early history of the Republic, One of the reasons why Ataturk and his colleagues worked most intensively on the subject was the desire for rapid development. An easy and simple alphabet was needed for the rapid spread of literacy. Facilitating and disseminating reading-writing and performing modern education and training could only be achieved by reform of the letters.²⁰ According to Ataturk, letter revolution was a major step of the initiative aimed at nationalizing and developing the Turkish culture. In period of Republican, modernization and reaching the ideal of Western civilizaion necessitated the issue of letters.²¹

Atatürk's Views on the Letter Revolution

The goals that Atatürk wanted to achieve with the language revolution are related to his views about perspective of language. This view can be gathered in a number of main points as the importance of language in the cultural life and national cultural policy, its importance in the value and dissemination of a nation's existence:²²

1. *Ataturk a man of a national leader andan intellectual, has attatched great importance primarily, in terms of the place and meaning of language within a nation. There is no way to distinguish between language and nation.*

17 Ülkütaşır, *age*, p. 73; Kısıklı, *agm*, p. 124-126; Dönmez, *age*, p. 169; Ayşegül Şentürk, "Harf İnkılabının Yapılışı ve Uygulanışında Basının Rolü", *SDÜ FEF Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, S. 26, Ağustos 2012, p. 30.

18 Mehmet Kayıran- Mustafa Yahya Metintaş, "Latin Kökenli Yeni Türk alfabesine Geçiş Süreci ve Millet Mektepleri" *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, S. 24, Ağustos 2009, p. 193.

19 Tongul, *agm*, p.110.

20 Yasemin Doğaner, " Elifba'dan Alfabe: Yeni Türk Harfleri ", *Modern Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, C.II, S. IV, Aralık 2005, p. 33- 36.

21 Tongul, *agm*, p. 111.

22 Korkmaz, *Türk dili Üzerine...* , p. 844-851

2. *In order to achieve the goal of raising all words and concepts to the level of vibrant and rich cultural language, the Turkish language required a national development path in accordance with its structure and operation characteristics.*
3. *In the directives to direct the Turkish language, the link between language and the nation and nation and language has been kept in the forefront in terms of providing national unity and integrity.*
4. *In parallel with eliminating the dichotomy in education and which achieved with law of Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat), nationalization of education and providing educational unity as a clear, comprehensible, satisfactory and sufficient national education language required by national education.*²³

Recognizing that the Turkish nation and the Turkish language are manifested in the depths of the history and that they are aware of their greatness, M. Kemal Atatürk took the first step towards gaining the Turkish language's deserved position, and have been registered the the inscription of *Turkish is the official language of the state.* to our first constitution.²⁴ Ataturk always thought that Turkish should be free of Arabic and Persian rules and words and become self-conscious.²⁵ The views on the topic of Turkish language, which continues since the opening of the TGNA; The recommendations, attitudes and behaviors of the Turkish Law Proposal issued by Tunali Hilmi Bey in 1923 and as a Turkish article, Turkish letters and the literacy problem of the society were discussed obviously in the parliament in 1924 for the first time.²⁶

On February 25, 1925, Şükrü (Saraçoğlu) Bey, who was the Minister of National Education in the Parliament gave the following answer to those who asked his opinion on the problem of letters: *"Gentlemen, I'm yours educational agent truly and because of it's deputy, according to me, giving a speech about trouble of letters -which has lots of trouble topics about it- will be not benefit. It could be harmful, because it could build a fire on just ones..."*²⁷

Kemal Ataturk, who initiated the renewal of Turkish society with a series of courageous reforms, gave special importance to writing and language reform. He created the necessary organs to accomplish this matter as reform for bringing into this issue into state work, and he has also provided the state with a wide range of support.²⁸

²³ Korkmaz, *Türk Dili Üzerine...*, p. 847, 848; Dözmez, *age*, p. 256-267

²⁴ 1921 Anayasasında bu konuda bir düzenleme yapılmamıştır; ancak 29 Ekim 1923 tarihinde 364 sayılı ve "Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu'nun Bazı Mevaddının Tavzihan Tâdiline Dair Kanun" başlıklı yasa ile anayasanın 2. Maddesi "Türkiye Devleti'nin dini İslam; resmi lisânı Türkçedir" şeklinde yenilenmiştir. Yusuf Can Tıraş- Halil İbrahim Ertürk, "Türk Dili Devrimiyle Birlikte Türkçenin Kazanımları", *Journal of Turkish Language and Literature*, Volume:1, Issue: 2, Autumn 2015, p. 211.

²⁵ For the thought structure of Atatürk on this subject, see: Şerafettin Turan, *Atatürk'ün Düşünce Yapısını Etkileyen Olaylar, Düşünürler ve Kitaplar*, TTK, Ankara 2018, p. 60-63.

²⁶ Tongul, *agm*, p. 113

²⁷ Tongul, *agm*, p. 114

²⁸ György Hazai, *Türkiye Türkçesinin Dünü ve Bugünü- Türk Dili Araştırmalarına Kısa Bir Bakış*, Çev. Tefik Turan, TDK, Ankara 2012, p. 95.

Realization of the Letter Revolution and Implementation Throughout the Country

The issue of letter trouble in Turkey, has gained currency after Baku conference and has aroused wide repercussions in the country with *Latin letters should accept or not?* titled survey which dated 28 March 1926. The famous writers and scientists of the period such as Halit Ziya, Necip Asım, Veled Çelebi, Ali Canip, İbrahim Alaaddin, Prof. Zeki Velidi Togan, Avni Başman, Yusuf Semih, Ali Şeydi, Prof. Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat defended the Arabic letters, intellectuals like Refet Avni, Abdullah Cevdet, Mustafa Hamit defended the Latin alphabet. The reasons for the defenders are:

1. *To accept a writing system that will teach the public to read and write more easily*
2. *To improve the richness and vitality of Turkish and to develop it*
3. *To communicate with civilized nations*²⁹

The end of 1927 and the first half of 1928 has been a very dynamic period for the implementation of Latin letters to Turkish. Falih Rifki in the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, Yunus Nadi in the *Cumhuriyet*, Celal Nuri in *İkdam*, Hüseyin Cahit in *Tanin*; they tried to spread this idea by defending their Latin letters. Ahmet Cevat's writings in the journal of *Vakit* from the end of 1927 and up to beginning of 1928, and İbrahim Necmi (Dilmen)'s *Turkish Alphabet with Latin Letters* titled writings in the journal of *Milliyet* between May-August 1928 were the last attempts before the letter revolution.³⁰

It is no coincidence that the acceptance of the new Turkish letters took place in 1928. There are important reasons for this. The change of writing types is, above all, one of the innovations required by the newly established Turkish state. Because the Republic is a radical order and changing of political structure. Also it is destruction of the outdated institutions of the Ottoman Empire, attempts to change their cultural values in line with nationalization and modernization. However, it was not easy to raise awareness on the way, the alphabet had to pass through the stages of the problems step by step. Letter revolution has been compulsory in order to leave old values and get new ones.³¹

In fact, the majority of the innovations designed to be carried out in the country have been completed by adhering to the principle of *secularism* in the period from the time of the letter revolution. These breakthroughs have created opportunities to facilitate the transition to the Alphabet Revolution.³² The period of *Takrir-i Sükûn* (also referred as maintenance of order), which lasted from 1925 to 1929, was an important factor in the preparation of a suitable environment for the realization of the other reforms and the

29 Turan, Şerafettin- Özel, Sevgi, *Türkçenin Dil Devriminin Öyküsü*, Dil Derneği, Ankara 2016, p. 60-76.

30 Tongul, agm, p. 115,116

31 Tongul, agm, p. 116

32 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi-I 1924-1930, Devrimler ve Tepkileri*, Türkiye İş Bankası Yay, İstanbul 2009, p. 274-284.

Alphabet Revolution.³³

Bill of Latin Numerals which prepared by CHP secretary general Saffet (Arikan) Bey and his colleagues was established by the parliament on the day of 20 May 1928. At the same day, The Council of Ministers decided to establish a commission called the *Language Council* to examine the issue of the alphabet, to determine various opinions on this issue and to express opinions.³⁴ The commission consisted of 9 members; including 3 deputies (Faliş Rıfki, Ruşen Eşref, Yakup Kadri), three education magisteries (Mehmet Emin Erişingil, İhsan Sangu, Avni Başman) and three linguist (Ragıp Hulisi Özden, İbrahim Grandi, Ahmet Cevat Emre).³⁵ Then, with the participation of Fazıl Ahmet, İbrahim Necmi, Ahmet Rasim, Celal Sahir and İsmail Hikmet, the number of members of the commission has increased to 14. This commission examined the alphabets of many nations such as French, English, German and Hungarian, and held its first meeting under the leadership of Atatürk on 26 June.³⁶

The Commission has prepared two reports: One is *the Report on Grammar*, the *The Elifba Report* was presented to President Mustafa Kemal Pasha in August 1928 and was the first official and scientific report on the new Turkish alphabet. The *Elifba Report* was presented to President Mustafa Kemal Pasha in August 1928 and was the first official and scientific report on the new Turkish alphabet.³⁷ Language Council in the course of this work, had established the *Latin Alphabet Commission*, consisting of three persons. This commission, on the one hand, will help the work of the Language Council, on the other hand Latin script, especially will research and review on the subject of French alphabet and Turkish writing reforms and determine the opinions. The report prepared by the Commission was given to the Presidency on 12 August 1928.³⁸ Prime Minister İsmet Pasha also entered the Alphabet Commission, and in the meetings held on 17 and 19 July, the new alphabet was named the *Turkish Alphabet by him*.³⁹ By the way, the *Milliyet* newspaper started the new alphabet campaign and used the alphabet prepared by the members of the Language Council as of 26 June.

On the evening of August 9, 1928, Mustafa Kemal gave the first gospel of the Great Revolution to the people and started the Revolution with the following words:

“Dear Brothers and Sisters, I can’t explain how happy I am in your presence. I will

³³ Tongul, agm, p. 117

³⁴ Turan- Özel, age, p. 68

³⁵ Zeynep Korkmaz, “Atatürk ve Yazı İnkılabı Üzerine”, *Erdem*, C.11, S. 31, TTK, Ankara, Mayıs 1999, p. 171-178.

³⁶ Şentürk, agm, p. 33- 35

³⁷ Kayıran- Metintaş, agm, s. 195; M. Şakir Ülkütaşır, *Atatürk ve Harf Devrimi*, TDK, Ankara 2000, p. 60-63.

³⁸ Alphabet Commission or Language Committee, has accelerated its activities with the encouragement of Atatürk. The Commission did not accept the 24-letter Latin alphabet as it is. The alphabet commission, which does not conform to the characteristics of Turkish and which is not appropriate to take the letters W Q, X and W al in the Latin alphabet, considered to add vowels like I, Ö, Ü with silent characters such as Ç, Ğ, J and S necessary, which are not in the Latin alphabet. Thus, the new Turkish alphabet is composed of 29 letters, 8 of them are vowel and 21 of them are sibilancy. Kayıran- Metintaş, agm, p. 196, 197.

³⁹ Tongul, agm, p. 120.

express my feelings with single words. I'm glad, I'm happy, I'm very pleased. I have identified the feeling that this situation inspired me in small notes. I'm gonna have read these people read to you." Pasha, after a small notes in his hand, given to a young man, then continued his words:

" Citizens, these notes are original, genuine Turkish words, written in Turkish letters. Your brother tried to read it immediately; but he could not read. After a little work, he can undoubtedly read. I would like to learn it all of you within five to ten days..."

After the 9th of August 1928, the intellectuals and the public all over the country to belearned and to learn the new letters, started the race to teach, printed the alphabets, and the newspapers published lectures, Starting from 8-10 lines, writing long letters, with using all the new Turkish letters and changing the headlines was a fun job for newspapers. Lessons about new Turkish letters was started to given in Dolmabahce Palace on the date of 11 August 1928. Presidential entitlement officers, deputies and some parliament members joined the first class on the date. On the 25th of August, the second course was attended by deputies and they did reading exercises. On the 29th of August, the third lesson was attended by poets and writers.⁴⁰

On the one hand, the table of the new letters were giving to the public. In a meeting held on 16 August at the CHP, it was decided to take the necessary measures for the dissemination of new letters and to open a classroom in each district. In the same year, for these classes, *Turkish Alphabet For Public Schools* was printed. Meanwhile, the Istanbul Municipality ordered the telephone book to be published in new letters for next year. After the 15th of August in the Chamber of Commerce signatures began to be signed with new letters. Also These letters would be used in correspondence. New courses were opened in some government offices in Istanbul and Ankara. The Minister of Justice had ordered that the law diplomas to be given in November be written in new letters. In the meantime, training courses was opened for education inspectors and after learning new letters, they were held responsible for teaching.⁴¹ In August, Darülfünun (Ottoman University) began to organize conferences on new letters. State Printing House in Istanbul, has been prepared to publish books with the necessary letters in addition the first petition with new letters was given to Ministry of Education in 21 August.⁴² Governors in provinces, the head of the board, was teaching officers. Among the courses opened in government offices, there was the course of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The General Directorate of Telegram identified the nickname of the new letters. Mustafa Kemal Pasha organized trips to various cities between 23 August and 20 September, as the head teacher, he gave public lecturing lectures in these provinces. During these trips, he removed the signs which he deemed unnecessary in the new alphabet and reported them to the Prime

⁴⁰ Esin Tüylü Turan, "Mustafa Kemal Paşa ve Harf İnkılabı", *Vakanüvis- Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Yıl. 3, Prof. Dr. Azmi Özcan Öğrencileri Özel Sayısı, p. 392, 393.

⁴¹ *Türkiye Tarihi, Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980*, C.IV, Cem Yay, İstanbul 2005, p. 435- 440.

⁴² Turan, agm, p. 392; Tongul, agm, p. 122, 123.

Ministry with a dissertation. During these trips, he removed the marks which he deemed unnecessary in the new alphabet and reported them to the Prime Ministry with a official letter.

On November 1, 1928, the posts and petitions will be accepted by this date. Newspapers, magazines, boards, advertisements, would be published in new letters starting from December 1, 1928. After January 1929, all the books were to be printed in new letters. In records (proceedings), old letters could be used as steno until June 1929, items like books, regulations, notebooks, and rulers which utilized in government offices could remain until June 1930. Money, stamps, bonds would be valid until changed. Lessons in schools were to be given with those new letters. But initially these activities were not organized, they were in an undisciplined state. Mustafa Kemal Pasha wanted this to be taken into an organization and to be more disciplined. Thus, this issue has been entered into the government program and the decision to establish the Public Schools has been taken at the end of these ideas and efforts.⁴³ Immediately after the letter revolution, an effort to organize the Public Education Institutions was made under the name of Public Schools. The enactment about Public Schools which prepared by Republic of Turkey published in the official newspaper and was implemented in November 1928. According to this regulations; The National Schools were established to help the whole nation to read and write the new Turkish letters easily and to quickly turn the masses of people into literacy. Atatürk has guided the people in teaching the new Turkish letters.⁴⁴

National Educational Minister Mustafa Necati Bey posted a circular letter to governorates on 2 December 1928 which includes that; from January 1, 1929 lectures begin start in Public Schools, for this reason, until then National School classrooms will be established for each teacher, those who are not successful in a course period will attend the other courses, in villages with a single teacher both classrooms A and B will open, and other information once he gave, the numerical information about these things and challenges will notify to the ministry; in 10 January 1929 wanted by him.⁴⁵

Public School Regulation's –which enacted on November 24, 1928, 15 thousand copies were printed and sent to all over the country and this article was read and started to apply immediately by governors, district governors and education managers.⁴⁶ In the first head of regulation article *making public of Turkey be able to read and write, gaining to main knowledge* expression, has been identified as the purpose of Public Schools.⁴⁷ Reading and writing with new letters has taught to approximately 2.5 million people in

⁴³ Tongul, agm, p. 124,125.

⁴⁴ Ülkütaşır, age, p. 90.

⁴⁵ Bahattin Demirtaş, “Atatürk Döneminde Eğitim Alanında Yaşanan Gelişmeler”, *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, C. I, S. II, Yaz 2008, p. 160-166.

⁴⁶ Demirtaş, agm, p. 162.

⁴⁷ According to the Regulation; organization of Public Schools consists of A and B classes and public reading rooms and village boarding courses. President of the National Schools was President Mustafa Kemal Pasha. All citizens between the ages of 16-45 are obliged to attend these schools or to take exams. In the villages where there is no teacher or non-school, commuter delegation committees are set up to teach them new writing. Tongul, agm, p. 127.

the country at in those institutions until 1936 and citizens between the ages of 16-45 attended them between the years of 1928 -1935. In fact, this number is approximately 3.5 million because of those who had previously read and write with the Alphabet Revolution have become enabled. In other words, a quarter of the population is literate. Considering the difficulty in the conditions of that period, this is an important progress.⁴⁸

On November 30, 1928, newspapers were finally published in old letters. In addition, the “Newspaper Premiums Law” was accepted and the newspapers were granted a premium in order to make the new letters easy and quick to learn. Thus, in a shorter time, newspapers were able to print in new letters. This premium was given to help newspapers renew their machinery and other printing equipment in a short time.⁴⁹ This law entered into force in 3 November 1928 through publishing in the official newspaper.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The first attempt was started by Munif Pasha at the beginning of the 1960’s and the suggestions, discussions and endeavors about this topic has been continued until 1928. However, no conclusions were reached during this time. These proposals and discussions gained more importance in the first year of Republic period, also has continued to be relevant in the press and Grand National Assembly of Turkey. At the end, Atatürk began to work systematically by taking the alphabet problem and its reforms. Language Alphabet and Alphabet Commission was established by him examining the various alphabets, it was decided to bring the letters of Latin letters in accordance with the Turkish language structure.

Atatürk considered the acceptance of the new Turkish alphabet in order to facilitate and enable the Turkish nation to become a part of civilized nations. In addition the aim of to open the way to contemporary civilization to the Turkish nation and to ensure that it rises above its level of contemporary civilization, another major aim of the alphabet reform is to nationalize our national culture. Together with the Language Revolution, it is one of the important achievements to go to the source of Turkish and to get new words from this source. Letter Revolution is not only a reform, it is part of a radical cultural exchange, especially with breakthroughs in language and history. The writing and alphabet discussions which were carried out since the Tanzimat period, were completed in a short time under favour of Mustafa Kemal’s determination and new Turkish alphabet was approved in parliament according to the structure of Turkish language.

Within the supports of the press, serious efforts have been made in the country in order to adopt, learn and disseminate the new alphabet from August 9, 1928. Within the support of the state and the press nationwide, literacy was popularized and public education was

48 *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, C.II, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yay, Ankara 2008, p. 114- 120.

49 Tongul, agm, p. 126.

50 Doğaner, agm, p. 37.

carried out because the new Turkish letters greatly simplify reading and writing. Within the Public Schools, the public learned the new typefaces, 54.050 classrooms were opened between 1928 and 1933, 2.305,924 students were enrolled in the courses and 1.124,916 people have graduated successfully.

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