



## Relationships between Dewey's Pragmatism and Early Times of Turkish Education System \*

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**ABSTRACT:** Beginning in the late Ottoman period through the first decades of the Republic, Turkey (and Ottoman) experienced a series of significant changes in educational policy and practice aimed at improving the quality of education and underwriting the modernization of Turkish society. One of the most significant outside influences on this process, especially after the inauguration of the Republic of Turkey, was American pragmatism. Pragmatism was introduced into the country and popularized by the visit of the great American pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey—then at the height of his international fame as a proponent of progressive, democratic education—who was asked by Turkish officials to assess the country's educational system and offer his recommendations for its improvement. The result of his three-month visit was an important indicator of influence of pragmatic educational philosophy on the development of Turkish educational system. This historical and philosophical analysis will trace the influence of pragmatism on Turkish education from the “village institutes” of the 1930s and 1940s through its height of influence in the 1950s to its lasting influences on the goals and principles of contemporary Turkish education.

**Keywords:** Ottoman period; Dewey; pragmatism; vocational high school; village institutes

### Introduction

During the last decades of Ottoman rule in Turkey many scholars and politicians looked to western civilization for responses to the decline and eventual fall of their state. Civilian and military bureaucrats in particular traveled to Europe in search of modern training and education. But it was too late for the Ottoman, which collapsed in the aftermath of World War I, leaving western countries free to establish colonies throughout its former territory and even, for a time, to occupy the territory that would become the modern Republic of Turkey. In this context western ideas were seen as both an object for resistance as well as the road to the reconstruction of the Turkish nation. Eventually, however, advocates of westernization managed to liquidate their opponents and introduce radical changes, such as the abolition of the caliphate and introduction of Latin script as a replacement for Arabic script in the writing of the Turkish language. Thus, beginning in the late Ottoman period through the first decades of the Republic, Turkey experienced a series of revolutionary social and political changes, including changes in educational policy and practice aimed at improving the quality of education and underwriting the modernization of Turkish society by politicians and bureaucrats ruling and accepting westernist/modernist ideas.

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As Turkey lived this transformation, pragmatism was coming into its own as a prominent school of philosophical thought, with John Dewey as one of its most famous exponents. Turkish politicians in power desperately needed new ideas to develop the educational system of this new nation; consequently, American pragmatism would become one of the most significant outside influences on this process. Dewey—then at the height of his international fame as a proponent of progressive, democratic education—was asked by Turkish officials to assess the country’s educational system and offer his recommendations for its improvement. The result of his three-month visit was a lasting and pervasive influence of pragmatist educational philosophy on Turkish educational development. In what follows, I propose to trace this influence on Turkish education from the “village institutes” of the 1930s and 1940s through the height of its influence in the 1950s to its lasting influences on the goals and principles of contemporary Turkish education.

### **Dewey’s Ideas on Education and His Effects on Turkish Education in Early Times**

At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey’s ideas were well known in the world through his books and his European colleagues (Curtis & Boulwood, 1966, 467). Yet even after the publication of *Democracy and Education* in 1916 Dewey’s influence on American education remained limited. The establishment of the Progressive Education Association in 1919, however, helped to spread that influence in the U.S. and abroad (Burnett, 1979, 193).

The decade of the American 1920s was called the decade of the Progressive Movement in Education. Yet Dewey’s influence in the promotion of progressive education cannot be confined to the American shores. Indeed, it is during the 1920s that Dewey move from the American education to truly one of international stature. (Ata, 2000, p. 121).

Influential Turkish educators, such as Mustafa Rahmi and Nafi Atuf, were introduced to his ideas during this period through European colleagues.

The educational thoughts of Mustafa Kemal, the first president of the Republic of Turkey, coincided with many of Dewey’s ideas; he was also, in some respects, a pragmatist. He wanted to change the country, and he was looking for good ideas that might help bring that about. In Atatürk’s view schools were means to the democratization and modernization of Turkish society, a view that Dewey’s philosophy gave theoretical and practical significance. Ata (2000), for instance, shows the influence of Dewey’s thought on Turkish educational discourse in the 1920s. Ata writes:

In the journal of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, dated 11 May 1923, Mustafa Rahmi (Balaban) wrote a series of articles on the educational principles of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha. In these articles, Mustafa Rahmi tried to show the philosophical origins of the "Speech" (Nutuk) of Gazi Mustafa Kemal on the aims of education in Turkish Republic, and also the Charter of Education (Maarif Misakı) declared by İsmail Safa (Özler), who was the Minister of Education, in the philosophy of John Dewey. Dewey's books, such as *The Child and the Curriculum* and *School and Society* were translated into Turkish by Mustafa Rahmi (Balaban) and Avni (Başman) before Dewey’s arrival in Turkey. In 1923, İsmail Safa, who was then the

Minister of Education, invited Dewey to visit Turkey. One year later Dewey accepted the invitation of Turkish authorities. (Ata, 2000, p. 122).

In declaring the importance of educating the Turkish people, Atatürk emphasized the training of the people the country needed for various professions through the middle and high schools. He argued that a beneficial education should be practical: knowledge was not ornamental, but rather an instrument for negotiating real life (Binbaşoğlu, 1999, 194). Turkey was newly established at that time and thus needed to educate thousands of students to enable their country's development. Clearly, Atatürk's ideas overlapped many of Dewey's. Atatürk recognized these conditions so, as his ideas clearly overlapped many of Dewey's, Dewey was invited to visit Turkey and help advise in its educational development (Turan, 1997). At the same time, Turkish journals were engaged in extensive examinations of Dewey educational ideas, thus even before his visit Dewey was a major figure in Turkish educational discourse.

Dewey's educational ideas resonated with the circumstances of the new Turkish Republic. For instance, Dewey criticized traditional education. According to him, totalitarian regimes were collapsing and democratic regimes were being established in their place. Such situations brought about radical transformations in social life, and because new situations emerged from them, new social needs appeared. Educational reform was one of them. Dewey wrote:

...with the change from an oligarchical to a democratic society, it is natural that the significance of an education which should have as a result ability to make one's way economically in the world, and to manage economic resources usefully instead of for mere display and luxury, should receive emphasis (Dewey, 1916, p. 76).

Dewey criticized traditional education, arguing that his approach was more useful in the contemporary context of radical social change.

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportune of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world (Dewey, 1998, 5-6).

Traditional education imposed goals on children from the outside, while Dewey demanded that educational goals should emerge from the innate interests of children. Memorization and rote knowledge could not give children the tools to creatively realize their own ends. Instead, they should develop the capability to solve problems that emerge in the pursuit of those ends. This could only happen if experience became the center of education. Dewey wrote:

The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power (Dewey, 1998, p. 65).

In this context, we can say that Dewey advocated freedom more than discipline. However, it should not be understood that this is absolute freedom. To him, impulses and desires are the starting point, and innate instincts and tendencies should be taken the starting point for mental maturation. "Impulses and desires that are not ordered by

intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances,” Dewey wrote (1998, 75-76). Therefore, experience is central to his approach to learning: “To learn from experience is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence” (Dewey, 1916, 87-88). He continues by saying that “experience itself primarily consists of the active relations subsisting between a human being and his natural and social surroundings” (Dewey, 1916, 167). He declared that “an ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance (Dewey, 1916, 90). He defined education as a part of experience, saying that “there is an intimate and necessary connection between the processes of actual experience and education.” (Dewey, 1998, p. 7).

He also gave importance to aims as well as experience. Therefore, he focused on current experience as the only meaningful preparation for a future that was not static but rather marked by progressive change (Dewey, 1916, pp. 51-67). Thus, Dewey’s instrumentalism generally focuses on the beneficial consequences that follow from focusing on the time that could be actually lived. Education should value this, so the individual could progress by focusing on the situation at hand. Dewey conducted his observation of the Turkish education system from the perspective of these ideas. It is not surprising then that they would color his advice to Turkish officials and teachers.

Dewey was invited to Turkey by the Turkish Ministry of Education in order to observe the educational system and share his ideas because Turkey was demanding progress from its educational system. Dewey accepted Turkey’s invitation, organizing a trip from 19 July 1924 until 06 September 1924 which included Istanbul, Ankara and Bursa. Schools were closed, however, owing to summer break. Despite this, he was able to investigate some schools, listen to teacher’s problems, participate in some meetings and give several interviews during his trip. Afterwards, he submitted a memorandum of understanding to the Ministry before his departure, which the Turkish government proposed to include in the national educational budget for 1925. In this report Dewey recommend that translations from foreign literatures should be made and widely disseminated to teachers to expose them to new ideas. Teacher associations should also be established to facilitate their discussion of the readings. He also suggested that school equipment should be exhibited and that books should be delivered to teachers. He urged the Turkish government to send some teachers and students abroad for further training. And he recommended the establishment of many vocational high schools, with special branches devoted to the education of teachers and supervisors. On 8 September 1924 the government published a new circular order on education in which the imprint of Dewey’s recommendations was clearly evident (Ata, 2001, 193-207).

After returning to the United States, Dewey submitted his main report—thirty pages in length—to the Turkish government, which published it in *Maarif Vekaleti Mecmuası* (Dewey, 1 Mart 1925). The report addressed seven key elements of the Turkish educational system: “Program”, “Organization of the Ministry of Education”, “Training and Treatment of Teachers”, “School System”, “Health and Hygiene”,

“School Discipline” and “Miscellaneous” (Dewey, 1960). Unsurprisingly, the report reflects Dewey’s educational ideas. It strongly suggested that students should have an interactive relationship with their villages and their surroundings. High schools should prepare students for occupations. Children should be active and enterprising in their communities. Curricula should be adapted to meet the local conditions and needs of different sections of the country (Kazamias, 1969, p. 141). Dewey’s report was read by teachers and directors of education, and then steps were taken in 1926 by the Ministry and educators to implement his proposals in the elementary school curriculum. Thus Dewey’s ideas had an immediate and direct influence on Turkish education.

One of Ataturk’s basic principles of education was that “education should be practical.” On the one hand, he wanted to eliminate the problem of illiteracy emerging for various reasons; while on the other hand, he wanted to constitute a new society with a different social and economic life (Fidan & Erden, 1997, p. 124). To Ataturk education should impart knowledge that could be applied in a productive life; therefore, many vocational high schools were opened after the foundation of the Republic. Along with this vocational focus, schools were empowered to transform the social and cultural ideas of the Turkish public.

According to Dewey, the world changes constantly. Thus it is impossible to produce solutions to the problems that emerge in this process of change by relying exclusively on received knowledge. Rather, we must respond to this situation with a solution-oriented disposition that constructs new knowledge in response to new challenges (Dewey, 1916, 66, 94). This capability develops as we encounter problems, which should be central to education. Children should not be made the slave of books. These ideas were introduced to Turkey through S. Celal, who wrote and published a report “On the Organization of the Ministry of Education,” in which it is possible to see Dewey’s impact (Binbaşıoğlu, 1999, p. 178). Celal mandated the removal of content—the Great Wall of China, for instance—that was seen as disconnected from the experience of Turkish students. Their subjects and courses of study should be taken from their environment. The schools should be connected to life. The country needed, he argued, real living and working schools that should not educate people who were divorced from real life (Binbasioğlu, 1999, pp. 178-79). While this sort of understanding of education waned between the 1960s and early 2000s, in 2005 the Turkish education system re-introduced project-based training methods (Erdoğan, 2002, p. 51).

In the 1930s Dewey’s ideas were influential in the popularization of the “Project Method” by Ihsan Sungu, who promoted the scientific basis of the method in an article published in 1930 and in a book on general instruction methods published by the Ministry of Education (Sungu, 1930, pp. 185-195). The book and article, which drew extensively on Dewey’s and other philosophers’ work was widely read in teacher training high schools until 1952. These publications were used to support campaigns to support the expansion of literacy rates in Turkey which, though already low, had dropped significantly due to the substitution of the Latin for Arabic script in the

education reforms of the new Republic. “Millet Mektepleri/Public Schools” and “Halk Evleri/People’s Houses” were also established to support the literacy campaigns and to provide on-the job training.

Learning by doing and learning through real experiences play an important role in Dewey’s ideas. Both involve aims, which cannot be separated from real life. (Dewey, 1916, 64-67). The problem of traditional education, however, was that the knowledge transmitted was all-too-often disconnected from the lives of students. According to Dewey,

...the contempt for physical as compared with mathematical and logical science, for the senses and sense observation; the feeling that knowledge is high and worthy in the degree in which it deals with ideal symbols instead of with the concrete; the scorn of particulars except as they are deductively brought under a universal; the disregard for the body; the depreciation of arts and crafts as intellectual instrumentalities, all sought shelter and found sanction under this estimate of the respective values of experience and reason – or, what came to the same thing, of the practical and the intellectual (Dewey, 1916, p. 162).

Dewey mentions that traditional education tended to value and transmits knowledge that was already settled, but the value of this knowledge, he argued, lay in its usefulness for solving present problems or acquiring new knowledge, not in and of itself. People acquire knowledge through their own efforts to solve problems confronted in experience. *Knowledge acquired in this fashion becomes part of the individual learner’s working knowledge rather than a collection of dead facts to be remembered.* Such knowledge enhances the learner’s capabilities to achieve solutions. To Dewey, learning by doing and living forges a connection from the past to the future (Dewey, 1916, 87-88).

Drawing both on his educational philosophy and his assessment of Turkish Schools, Dewey made recommendations for both general schools and agricultural and vocational schools in his report. These schools, he suggested, should be organized so as to become the centers of community life, particularly in the rural districts, which required, of course, the careful adaptation of the schools to local conditions. Based on these recommendations, “Village Institutes” were established in the late 1930s. Although some Turkish educators, such as I. Mahir Efendi, E. Nejat, İ. Baltacıoğlu and F. Kanat, had called for the establishment of these kinds of schools the prior to the inauguration of the Republic, their ideas had not been implemented (Erdoğan, 2013; Oğuzkan, 2013). These schools, once they were established in the late 1930s, tackled problems such as promoting the habit of reading, fostering creative cultural values, cultivating effective self-regulation through extracurricular activities (Binbaşıoğlu, 1999, pp. 107-08). They were clearly designed to actualize Dewey’s idea of combining work and education.

Students and alumni of the schools were not only expected to serve as school teachers, but also leaders of their respective communities and districts at the same. Students actually established their own schools, homes, work places etc., and learned by doing and living together (Güvenç, 1998, p. 56). After the schools were established, numerous books, including books on active learning, were translated into Turkish and

disseminated to the schools. The schools used a problem-focused approach to training, organizing subject matter around the interests that emerged from students' experience and aims. This unification of subject matter by experience connected content to real life problems rather than subdividing it into separate courses by discipline (Dewey, 1916, pp. 130-132). Dewey wrote:

All courses in the old programs were completely independent of each other. They were separately determined. It was not paid attention the connections between them. This connections between courses were given the most important in the new program (Maarif Vekaleti, 1926, pp. 3-4).

Such innovations had already been implemented in the primary school curriculum as early as 1926 when a new course, Life Studies/Hayat Bilgisi, was put into the curriculum of elementary school for first three grades (Kafadar, 1994, p. 178). By 1931 physics, chemistry and biology had been consolidated into a comprehensive science course, while history, geography and citizenship were consolidated under social sciences shortly thereafter. These curricular innovations remained in effect until 1975. Later, in 1992, there was another effort at curricular integration, though this primarily involved consolidation of topics within individual textbooks (Binbaşıoğlu, 1999, pp 37-39, 138).

With the establishment of a new state Turkey needed to establish a new educational system founded upon principles wholly different from those that guided the educational system of the Ottoman. The new nation looked to prominent international educational theorists, Dewey foremost among them, for insight into what those principles should be. In doing so, the Turkish Republic made significant efforts to implement Dewey's recommendations and his educational ideas into the nation's schools. Dewey himself testified to the success of their efforts when he returned to Turkey in 1945. After visiting schools in Ankara he said, "The schools that I dreamed were established in Turkey. They are named 'Village Institutes'. It would be to the point that the whole world should reconstruct their educational system by taking into consideration those Turkish schools that were established by Turkish people." (Cevizci, Dewey md.). Later, in 1949, Turkish educators celebrated Dewey's ninetieth birthday, a further indication of the esteem Dewey enjoyed in Turkey (Yasa, 1949, p. 369). As I have tried to show here, Dewey's pragmatism was a direct influence on the educational reforms enacted in the new Turkish Republic. However, their influence can be traced right into the 1950s. Though the trail of Dewey's influence is less clear in the 1960s—perhaps continuing in the establishment of vocational high schools—it appears to be somewhat resurgent since 2005, when the first three items of the statement of general purposes of Turkish formal and mass education highlighted the need for children to be educated according to their abilities and interests (Türk Milli Eğitiminin Genel Amaçları, items 1, 2, 3 and 4).

### Conclusion

Turkey was a country established a new. Of course, inheriting the old tradition, it was influenced by the cultural legacy of that tradition, but it set out to establish something new. It traded the old perennialist and essentialist assumptions underlying Ottoman education for the new educational philosophies articulated by pragmatists, progressivists, and reconstructionists. It tried to move from a teacher centered to a student centered approach to instruction. Educational technologies were adopted and implemented at a rapid rate. Teachers were given a role in guidance. In all of this pragmatism/progressivism was sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly a significant impact on the evolution of the Turkish educational system.

Turkey wanted to progress its educational system in this perspective like other some developing and developed countries. It was normal that it took certain steps for this issue. One of these steps was to get some advices from foreign scholars and intellectuals by inviting to the country. Dewey was an important pragmatist and respected person in this topic as an educator and philosopher. Thus, Turkish executive staff invited him to observe on educational system and to get his recommendations. As partly indicated above, his reviews were result-centered or pragmatist. Namely, he would recommend the views that would be useful at the end. This was a crucial thing that Turkey was looking for it. After visiting in Turkey, Dewey wrote a report regarding Turkish Educational System to give some recommends. Dewey, as a pragmatist philosopher, recommended profitable and practicable views for the education system. We can state that these reviews reflected Dewey's ideas as a pragmatist philosopher.

All in all, elites following western ideas and styles of life needed new perspectives and implementations for transformation of society. They sent students abroad, and they invited some intellectuals to the country to enhance its politics and philosophy of education as well (Tangulu, Karadeniz, & Ateş, 2014, pp. 1895-1810). Dewey was one of them. Therefore, Dewey's effect on Turkish education system occurred in this way.

## Cumhuriyetin İlk Dönemlerinde Dewey Pragmatizmi ile Türk Eğitim Sistemi İlişkisi\*

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**ÖZ:** Osmanlı'nın son dönemlerinden başlayarak Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarına kadar Türkiye (ve Osmanlı), toplum modernleştirilmesi amacıyla eğitimin niteliğini değiştirerek eğitim politikalarında bir takım değişikliklere gitti. Özellikle Cumhuriyet'in kuruluş yıllarında, bu süreç üzerindeki önemli dış etkilerden birisi, Amerikan Pragmatizmiydi. Pragmatist eğilimlere sahip olan kurucu siyasi kadro ülkeye pragmatizmin en önemli temsilcilerinden olan, ilerlemeci ve demokratik eğitim konusunda uluslararası büyük üne sahip olan J. Dewey'i davet etmişti. Kurucu kadro, ondan ülkenin eğitim sistemini değerlendirmesini ve bu konuda tavsiyeler almayı istemişti. Bunun sonucunda üç aylık bir ziyaret gerçekleştiren Dewey'in değerlendirmeleri ve tavsiyeleri üzerinden eğitim sistemi üzerinden pragmatik bir etkinin oluştuğunu gözlemlemek mümkündür. Onun yaptığı tarihsel ve felsefi tahkikler ile "köy enstitüleri" üzerinden 1930 ve 40'larda Türk eğitim sistemi üzerinde pragmatizmin etkilerinin izlerini taşıdığına göstergesidir. Bu etkinin izleri 1950'lerden günümüz eğitim sisteminin amaç ve ilkeleri üzerinden devam ettiğini belirlemek mümkündür.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Osmanlı; Dewey; meslek liseleri; köy enstitüleri

### Geniş Özet

**Amaç ve Önem:** 19. Yüzyıl boyunca Osmanlı coğrafyası bir dizi çatışmalara sahne olmuştur. Bunun sonucunda çözülme ve yıkılış gelmiştir. Bu süreci durdurmak ve hatta geri çevirmek için eğitimden askeri yeniliklere birçok tedbire başvurulmuş olsa da yaklaşık 600 yıllık Osmanlı Devleti yıkılmış yerine irili-ufaklı birçok yeni devlet kurulmuştu. Bunlardan biri olan Türkiye 20. Yüzyılın başlarında kurulmuştu. Dolayısıyla Türkiye, Osmanlı bakiyesi bir devlet olarak tarih sahnesine çıkmıştı. Anadolu'da yeni bir Cumhuriyet kuran irade ve fâiller, Osmanlı içinde yaşanan fikri ve siyasi tartışmayı bütün canlılığıyla yeni ülkeye taşımışlardı. Ümmetçilik, Milliyetçilik ve Batıcılık olarak üç ana akıma ayrılabilen siyasi kurtuluş reçetelerinden özellikle sonuncusu iktidar olma ve ülkeyi bu yönde dönüştürme imkânını elde etmişti. Böylece, ülkenin yönü batıya ve batıdan gelecek olanaydı. Bu makalenin konusu öncelikle bu meseleye örnek olması bakımından önemlidir. Bununla birlikte kurgulanan proje doğrultusunda, Türkiye'nin başarıya odaklı sonuç almaya dönük hamlelere ihtiyacı vardı. Pragmatik (faydacı) olarak attığı adımların önemli görünür alanlarından biri olan eğitimde, kendisine, amaçları doğrultusunda bakış açıları sunacak dünyaca ünlü isimleri ülkeye davet etmişlerdi. Bunlardan biri dünyaca ünlü, pragmatik (araşsalılık/vesilecilik) felsefenin önemli temsilcilerinden John Dewey'dir. Bu çalışmanın amacı öncelikle Cumhuriyet'in kurucusu olan faillerin nasıl bir zihniyete sahip olduklarını kısaca göstererek aslında zikredilen felsefe ile uyumunu göstermektir. Bu uyumu gösterirken gerek yeni ülkenin kurucu fâillerinin gerekse Dewey'in fikirlerine değinmek önemlidir. Dewey, 1924'ün yazında eğitim üzerinde gözlemlerde

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bulunması ve tavsiyeleri alınması için ülkeye davet edilmişti. Sonuçta bir rapor hazırlamıştı. Daha sonraki Halk Evleri, Köy Enstitüleri gibi bazı uygulamalar göstermektedir ki Türkiye’de hayata müdahale veya katkısı bakımından Dewey’in, dolayısıyla pragmatizmin etkisi görülebilir. Bunun doğrudan bir etkilenme şeklinde olduğu vurgusundan ziyade yeni kurulmuş olan Cumhuriyet’in de ihtiyacı açısından değerlendirmek önemlidir. Makalenin amacı, öncelikle bu etkinin doğrudan (gezi ve rapor ile) ve dolaylı (ihtiyaçlar ve fikirler üzerinden) bir şekilde oluştuğunu somut olgular üzerinden göstererek değerlendirmektir. Bu, esasında Cumhuriyet’in kurucu ve öncü faillerinin pragmatik siyasetlerinin bir parçasını göstermesi bakımından ayrıca önemli bir çalışmadır.

**Yöntem:** Bu çalışmada öncelikle tarihsel bir olgu olarak bir durumun tespiti yapıldığından dolayı tasvir edici bir yöntem kullanılmıştır. Bununla beraber Cumhuriyeti kuran iradenin zihniyet yapısını göstermesi bakımından Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ün fikirlerine yer verilerek esasında ülkeye davet edilen Dewey’in temel bakış açısı ile onunkilerin benzerlikleri gösterilmek istenmiştir. Bu yönüyle de tasvir edicidir. Bunların yanında gerek Cumhuriyet’in ihtiyaçları gerekse Dewey’in tavsiyeleri doğrultusunda oluşmuş olan uygulamaya dönük örneklikler üzerinden bu benzerliğin izi sürülmüştür. Böylece giriş ile tarihsel arka plana kısmen değinilmiş, ardından John Dewey’in fikirleri ile Türk eğitim sistemi arasındaki ilişki veya etkileşimin resmi çekilmeye çalışılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Yukarıdaki amaç doğrultusunda yapılmış bu çalışmada görülüyor ki yeni ve zorluklar ile kurulmuş olan bu devlet ve ülkenin, kurucuların zihniyeti doğrultusunda hızlı, sonuca giden adımlar atması gerekiyordu. Aslında batıya karşı bağımsızlık mücadelesi veren ve yeni bir ülke olarak ortaya çıkan Türkiye’nin yine çareyi batıdan gelen tesirlerde aramasına örneklik oluşturması bakımından önemli olan bu çalışma göstermektedir ki, zaten öteden bu yana tartışılan ve takip edilen fikir ve uygulamalar ile Türkiye, yeni yol haritasını ona göre inşa etmektedir. Büyük fotoğraf veya “bütün” buydu. Dewey’in ziyareti, bulguları ve tavsiyeleri, ülkenin genel gidişatı ve tercihlerindeki bu bütünün bir parçasını oluşturan önemli bir olgudur. Gözlem yapması ve tavsiyede bulunması için davet edilen Dewey’in yaklaşımlarının somut örneklik bağlamında doğrudan değil belki, ancak söz konusu bütün içinde dolaylı tesiri olduğu görülmektedir.

**Tartışma ve Sonuçlar:** Osmanlı sonrası Anadolu’da yeni bir devlet kuran faillerin siyasi adımlarında pragmatizmin ayak izlerini gözlemlemek mümkündür. Ülke kurulduktan sonra atılan adımların her biri temelde daha kuşatıcı bir amacın varlığının göstergesiydi. Bu bakımdan eğitim alanında atılan adımlar da bu temel amacın bir parçasıydı. Dolayısıyla Cumhuriyet’in ilk yıllarında eğitim alanında yapılan birçok yeni uygulama esasında söz konusu temel amacın gerçekleştirilmesi için birer araçtı. Modernleştirerek veya Batılılaştırarak ülkeyi daha mamur hale getirme ve geliştirme olarak ifade

edilebilecek bu temel amacın gerçekleşmesi için eğitim önemli bir manivela olarak görülüyordu. Bu çalışma öncelikle bu çabayı göstermesi bakımından değerlendirilebilir. Bunun yanında, bu çalışmada Cumhuriyetin ilk kurucu kuşağının genel pragmatik tavır ve eylemlerinin örneğini, Atatürk'ün eğitim ile ilgili fikirleri ve 1930-40'lardaki eğitim uygulamaları üzerinden görmek mümkündür. Zikredilen temel amaç doğrultusunda atılan önemli bir adım olarak Dewey'in davet edilmesi ve eğitim ile ilgili fikirleri üzerinden Cumhuriyet'in 1950'lere varan tecrübesine, genel olarak batının özelde ise Dewey'in yani pragmatizmin etkisini yine bu çalışmada görmek mümkündür. Bir pragmatist olan Dewey'e göre, idealistler (rasyonalistler de diyebiliriz) gibi teoriden ziyade uygulamaya odaklanılarak, ortaya çıkan meselelere çare aranmalıdır. Bu bağlamda gözlemine yapmış, ve yine bu doğrultuda tavsiyelerde bulunmuştur. Bunun sonucunda genç ülkenin önünde duran büyük meselelerden biri olan eğitime dair katkısı 1930'lardan itibaren bazı somut adımlar atılmasında dikkate alınmış gibi görünüyor.

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