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Language Policy and Official Ideology in Early Republican Turkey

YILMAZ ÇOLAK

The issue of language in Republican Turkey has evolved around the two basic principles of Turkey's official ideology, Kemalism: secularism and nationalism. It is linked to secularism because from the beginning language policy has included attempts to purify Turkish by purging it of Arabic and Persian words which are regarded comprising religious meaning and understanding. Although the importance of this movement has diminished during the past 20 years, the Turkish Language Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu* – TLS), founded in 1932 as an official body, still determines the state's language policy and continues its work of seeking appropriate terminology. With regard to the latter aim, the official language policy intends to create a unified national language to help form a homogenous national community. In recent decades, a policy that denies the existence of various ethnic and local languages in Turkey began to be questioned especially by Kurdish ethno-nationalists voicing the demand to use Kurdish for public matters. These two trends illustrate the importance of language as a political and cultural dilemma in Turkish politics and society, and the extent to which language has become politicized. In this way it seems obvious that language has come to the fore as one of the ingredients in describing the boundaries of Turkey's public sphere.

The seeds of the Turkish state's language policy can be found in the early Republican period (the 1920s and the 1930s) when a process of language revolution was initiated, especially through the works and activities of the TLS, in parallel with the formation of official ideology. This quest was based on a purifying approach to eliminate all foreign grammatical rules and words from the Turkish language. In fact, together with the script change in 1928, the foundation of the TLS was one of the critical turning points of the language revolution. It signified the goal to create pure Turkish (*öz Türkçe*) by ending the dominance of foreign lexical elements, mostly Arabic and Persian, in the Turkish language. And, in their place, the TLS strove to institute *öz Türkçe* words that were generally taken from dialects within and

outside Turkey and old literary texts, and invented some in accord with existing Turkish roots.

This article highlights the political use of language in understanding the struggles and debates about the nature of culture formation during the formative decades of the Kemalist regime. It will be shown that the politicization of language is one of the significant end products of language policy of early Republican Turkey, and also the new Turkish language came to symbolize a conversion from imperial–religious to national–secular culture. In order to trace the process of the creation of *öz Türkçe*, the discussions on the script revolution and the works and activities of the TLS will be documented here by focusing on legislation including constitutional provisions, laws, decrees, regulations and guidelines regarding language use, and debates in ruling and intellectual circles.

Together with history, language was seen as an indispensable component of the Kemalist modernist project for culture and society, seeing that each had to be made a new entity. It was based on the belief that, like all aspects of culture, language could be reformed in accordance with a politically designed plan and thus used as an effective tool to rename and reshape the social and political order.¹ It reflects a revolution in language with stress on its political role in the formation of a new culture from above. Here language appears as another ‘man-made’ object.² It helped the Kemalist revolutionaries to *rename* the world according to their own aesthetic preferences. The state elite, politicians and non-professionals rather than linguists initiated this revolution through processes of linguistic engineering. The revolution in language was promoted by language policy that is defined as state intervention in language through a set of legislations and actions, and even public and official attitudes to language.³ Here the goal was to create *öz Türkçe*. As a new language it would be a device ‘to spread culture among the people. It should be a language through which the flow of thought and idea from *above* is possible in order to publicize and inculcate culture.’⁴ It was so called ‘scientification of language’⁵ entirely inspired by Kemalist ‘positivism’. This was part of the cultural tendency of the new regime, as Heyd aptly states, to engender a ‘complete break with the Islamic past and the adoption of the secular values of modern civilization. The new outlook led, *inter alia*, to the introduction of Roman script and an urgent demand for the creation of a language capable of fully expressing the thoughts and feelings common to Occidental culture.’⁶ This policy gradually took shape in two main stages: the first, the adoption of the Latin script; the second, the creation of *öz Türkçe* by eliminating all foreign elements.

The discussions on script revolution and purification attempts did not suddenly spring up with the establishment of the Republic, but dated back to the Tanzimat reform movement in the nineteenth century. Ottoman

modernization led to the emergence of a new idea of the people needing to be composed of individuals who were educated and enlightened. This worldview led to programmes to educate the people that, toward the mid-nineteenth century, gave rise to the belief that there needed to be a common language that ordinary people could easily understand. The new trend became very visible in the attempts of the Tanzimat elite to simplify the legal, administrative and educational language. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the rise of a new modern intellectual group and the effect of more newspapers supported and accelerated the tendency of purification and simplification. For modern-educated intellectuals, along with modern standards, Ottoman Turkish had to be corrected by putting a strong emphasis on everyday language and by coining new terms of Arabic and Persian origin to express western terms.⁷ Parallel to that, the rapid spread of newspapers, using standard language, played a leading role in the process of forming a common language through simplification. This is an example of what Benedict Anderson refers to as 'print capitalism'. It in fact facilitated the formation of a common language that is necessary for the nationalism to survive and the possibility of an imagined national community.⁸ In the Ottoman Empire, as occurred in Europe, language gradually began to emerge as the main way to express a new national affiliation and so serve as a binding force for the people of the same community.

The search for a standard, common language was the main concern of nationalist writings of the last three decades of the Empire (1890–1910). Seeing language as one of the essential elements of a nation, the Turkish nationalists elevated the Turkish part of the Ottoman language and saw the vernacular of the people as a reservoir to make the Turkish language dominant. This view began to gain support from various sections of the intellectuals and rulers who wished to create a new linguistic unity especially during the Second Mesrutiyet (1908–18) in which the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) played a leading role. Newspaper and literary languages began to be simplified, especially stimulated by the activities of this Turkist movement. Prominent Turkists such as Ömer Seyfeddin and Ziya Gökalp led the most important element of this 'new language movement'.⁹ Its basic aim was to create a *Yeni Lisan* (New Language) by standardizing the vernacular of the people, especially that of İstanbul. The 'new language', during the CUP governments, received political support and gradually became the legal and administrative language as much as one for newspapers and literary works.¹⁰

In all discussions on language reform from the beginning of Ottoman modernization, the script, particularly the characters, had become the hottest issue. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, language simplification attempts came with some effort to modify the script.¹¹

In the CUP period, the need for reforming the script to express Turkish phonemes and syllables in a proper way was widely recognized. However, the main discussion on the issue of script took place between the westernizer strand and the moderate group including the Turkists and Islamists. Westernizers, believing in revolution, proposed to form a new script based on the Latin instead of Arabic which was not so well suited for writing Turkish.¹² The Turkists and Islamists opposed any serious changes in the Arabic script, while accepting some new arrangements to make the script easy to read and write. During the rule of the CUP, the moderates' views became the official line.¹³ The CUP's efforts seemed to be part of the quest to form a common vernacular, necessary for drawing the boundaries of a newly defined collectivity. In the 1920s, after the proclamation of the Republic (1923), the script was the most problematic side of language reform. It kept appearing on the agenda as a contested issue.

With the first attempts to build the institutions of a nation state during the early years of the Republic of Turkey, a common national language was seen to be essential to the development of a mass consciousness of being a part of a cultural whole. The rulers of the new regime regarded language essential for the development of the new political and cultural identity, for each to see themselves as a member of a unique nation. Thus, in the 1924 Constitution, Turkish was made the official language of the State (Part One, Article 3). The Second Meşrutiyet reformers and intellectuals sought only to simplify language; they did not directly intervene in state structure. In contrast, the new republican rulers aimed at creating pure Turkish with a revolutionary zeal that included changing state institutions.

The change of script in 1928 was the first phase in the state's language revolution. In the period between 1923 and 1928, although there was wide consensus on the necessity of simplifying language, the main focus of discussion was on the characters and orthography. In this way the script had become the subject of heated debate from the early days of the Republic. In the debate, two leading groups came to the fore: in the first were supporters for change composed of those who were mostly followers of the 1910 westernizer strand, and the second, opponents who had been moderates in the same period. The debate began with a motion by İzmirli Nazmi with his two friends at the İzmir Economic Conference in February–March 1923, which was not taken into consideration by the chairman Kazım Karabekir because of 'Latin characters being harmful for the unity of Islam'.¹⁴ Immediately after Kazım Karabekir's views against the Latin characters were published in the newspapers, a fervent discussion began to dominate public debate. Hussein Cahit (Yalçın) and Kılıçzade Hakkı (Kılıçoğlu) published articles refuting Kazım Karabekir's views on the script and mentioned the necessity of a script reform to be freed from the burdens of 'ignorance and illiteracy'.¹⁵ One part

of this debate even occurred in the parliament in 1924: Şükrü Saracoğlu, during the session on the budget of the Ministry of National Education, voiced a similar point to those affected by Hüseyin Cahit and Kılıçzade Hakkı.¹⁶ In 1926, once again the issue of Latin characters became a widely and hotly discussed topic in intellectual and political circles.

In order to understand the 1928 revolution and the later purifying attempts of the early 1930s, it seems necessary to summarize the views of both proponents and opponents of the proposed idea.¹⁷ The supporters, who were among the leading figures of the westernizers of the Second Meşrutiyet, argued first that in contrast to Latin, the Arabic alphabet failed to express Turkish adequately, and secondly, that justification for the Latin characters was more compatible with the general westernizing and civilizing ideology of the new regime. The first argument was mainly about the nature of the Arabic alphabet that did not suit Turkish sounds and so caused serious difficulties with Turkish orthography and spelling. Thus, this alphabet had been responsible for widespread illiteracy and ignorance. Due to the fact that Latin characters were easy compared with Arabic script, the new script would be easy for everybody to read and write; secondly, if western civilization was wholly accepted, then it was necessary to imitate its writing and reading style and so adapt its Latin characters to the Turkish language. Otherwise, the Turkish revolution would be incomplete. In this respect, the adoption of the Latin script would contribute to the redemption of the Turkish nation that was currently 'chained in darkness' with the Arabic script.

On the other hand, opponents who were mostly the Turkists and Islamists of the Second Meşrutiyet developed a moderate attitude to the issue of language. Most of the prominent linguists, historians and writers of the time were against the proposed change of script.¹⁸ For them any change in the characters would damage continuity in the intellectual and daily life of the nation. But it seemed crucial to make some changes to the script and add some new characters. Contrary to the views of the proponents, they argued that ignorance and illiteracy stemmed from economic backwardness and lack of a true national education. The focal point of their argument was that the adoption of the Latin alphabet would bring about a loss of the ties with their vast religious and cultural literary tradition. In this respect, one might stress that the above debate turned around the question of how to modernize. After 1926, in accordance with the rulers' 'civilizing' ambitions the trend increasingly favoured those who supported the change of script.

Therefore, towards the end of 1926, the constant debate on the script came to an end at the same time as the settlement of the RPP's authoritarian rule by silencing all opposition. After that time, there did not emerge any view, such as that of the opponents, that was in sharp conflict with the standards determined by the state. The move toward new characters became the official

line. However, in 1927 and 1928, the first preparations to realize the revolution in the script were made in a hidden way. Still, some writers of the official line such as Falih Rıfkı (Atay), Yunus Nadi (Abaloğlu), Mithat Sadullah (Sander), Celal Nuri (İleri) and Ahmed Cevad (Emre), continued to write in favour of the Latin script in newspapers. It seemed that to carry out the revolution in the script was secretly decided in 1927 as state policy, and from the beginning of 1928 the decision was put into effect.

The government's first step to change the characters was to set up, in May of 1928, the Language Committee engaged on the task of 'Latinizing' the writing system and preparing a new grammar.¹⁹ As the first preparatory phase, in May 1928 western numerals were instituted in place of Arabic ones, with a law that made them compulsory for all official bureaux as from 1 June 1929, and for private businesses from June 1931. In the next two months, the committee prepared a report, *Elifba Raporu* (Report on Alphabet), and presented it to Mustafa Kemal on 1 August 1928. Immediately, on the basis of this report, in İstanbul, on 9 August 1928 Mustafa Kemal introduced the 'new Turkish letters'.²⁰ In the following days, classes for higher officials and other staff, deputies, university professors, intellectuals, were held to teach them the new characters. In order to present the new characters to the masses, Mustafa Kemal went to some provinces where he gave public lectures on them. After presentation of the Latin script, the parliament passed a law on the script change on 1 November 1928. Passing to the new script would have to be realized, at most, in one year.²¹ The rulers, at once, set to spread a nation-wide education campaign by establishing education in the new alphabet for school children in the following semester and setting up *Millet Mektepleri* (Nation Schools) as a system of compulsory adult education.²²

The basic theme in the discussions during the adoption of the Latin script was about the Arabic characters' destructive influences on Turkish culture from the time that it had been adopted. This accorded with the Kemalist understanding of cultural conversion based on the civilization/archaism dichotomy. The Arabic characters, together with the sultanate, caliphate, sharia courts, medresses, tekkes, clothes, *serpuş* (traditional male headgear), were seen as belonging to the East/Ottoman past, which had imprisoned the Turks to live in a backward Eastern position. This imagination saw the removal of the Arabic characters as part of the general trend to correct the 'faults' of the past for the sake of progress on the path to civilization,

The Arabic script was seen as incapable of expressing Turkish in general and modern scientific and technical terms in particular. At the same time, the new Latin script was perfectly adequate for writing Turkish. This mission was regarded as urgent, and so some objections which focused on the discontinuity in history were rejected. As Mustafa Şekip (one of the reformists) stated, 'We have no time to listen to such objections which

insistently point out to us the risk which our culture and traditions may run. The foremost thing in our minds is the present and the future. Let those who are *fond of the past*, remain in the past' (my emphasis).²³ Thus, to establish a new future and create new generations, it was at first necessary to free young people from the destructive influences of all books and writings filled with 'superstitious and scholastic' knowledge. 'These books belonging to the pre-modern, archaic ages were', writes Celal Nuri (one of the pro-reformists), 'inadequate to meet today's cultural needs, and these outmoded volumes even got us into a dilemma we face today'.²⁴ Consequently, in the discourse of the rulers the Arabic letters with their form and writing style and with their Arabic-Islamic and Ottoman associations were seen as incompatible with modern ways. It is obvious from the following words of Mustafa Kemal:

So long as Turkish was written from right to left, it could never properly express the ideals of European civilization. The picturesque involutions and intricacies of Arabic script afforded a psychological background to the Oriental mentality which stood as the real enemy of the Republic.²⁵

Here the emancipatory aspects of the Latin characters were presented as a panacea for correcting the shortcomings and deficiencies of the *Oriental mentality*. What was needed was a revolution in language; the change in script was its first step. The solution was a new creation, the Latin characters that could lead the way to the conversion from traditional to 'civilized' life. It would end the backward position of the Turks in life and science. It would eliminate the domination by Arabic and Persian rules and lexicons and make it easier for the Turkish nation to possess the universalized standards of western civilization.

Script revolution became both a critical symbol and an engine to establish a 'language without history'. It was an act of 'forgetting'. It resulted from a political will to cut new generations off from the influences of the Ottoman-Islamic cultural heritage, from the 'shame' of the past. The aim was to create a 'state of literacy', to enable Turks to enjoy modern civilization by means of a newly manufactured culture.²⁶ This change also gave the state a chance to control the whole process of publishing all new writings as well as transcriptions of existing ones. This was very clear in the position of some newspapers that opposed the changes. After the revolution, facing the loss of their readers, newspapers and other periodicals took financial support from the government. Some newspapers, which criticized the change and other reforms, were deprived of the critical subsidy.²⁷ The last opposition groups were thus eliminated and what was contemplated was a new literature that

included no views contrary to the official line. Printing became a key for the ruling elite to create a new national community.²⁸

Therefore, the 1928 revolution was regarded as an essential part of the formation of national culture, the first step in the nationalization of universalized values of civilization. The basic theme was that, with the help of the new script, a new culture would be created as a requirement of the modern age. Abolishing the old script meant being freed from the 'old culture' and also the emergence of the 'new'.²⁹ Here culture, beside its nationalized form, was often used to refer to all aspects of life developed in the west. After 1930, it is evident that this attitude began to take place in official texts and discourse.³⁰ For example, in *Tariff IV* prepared in 1931 to be taught in high schools, the change was portrayed as a turning point in the struggle for the 'cultural independence of Turkishness'.³¹ Indeed, after the adoption, the main efforts of the state agencies, especially the TLS, were directed to making a 'new' language for a 'new' culture, which was purified from all 'archaic' and 'eastern' elements.

As mentioned above, the first step in revolutionizing the language was to change the script and the second was to purify Turkish. Thus, in connection with the revolutionary cultural programme of the Republic, both the alphabet change and the purifying attempts had to be made in familiar terms. This view was held by the pro-reformist elite and was deliberately and roundly expressed in the newspapers of the period. In an editorial comment in *Milliyet* (1 March 1929), it was said that the old writings of Arabic and Persian origin were 'most fitting to Arabic characters, and also, of course, Arabic and Persian ways of thought and feeling were in fashion in the Ottoman era'. This was the movement that aimed at 'fully freeing Turkish from the chaos of the old values' which Arabic and Persian phrases fostered.³² It was in this sense that the ruling elite tried to purify the language of 'foreign' words, of mostly Arabic and Persian derivation, through the works of the TLS³³ which was one of the basic cultural institutions. It was founded in 1932, with the task of forming and selectively reproducing Turkey's national culture. Its establishment and radical purification attempts aiming at creating *öz Türkçe* in the early 1930s took shape in the political context of the consolidation of a monopoly system based on single state ideology. During that time all autonomous social and political associations and organizations beside State-Party control were banned, in order to provide total social and cultural control. In their place, some new centralized institutions such as the TLS, the Turkish History Society and the People's Houses were established. These were charged to spread the principles of Kemalism being formulated as the state's ideology.

Although the search for a 'scientific' and 'civilized' language³⁴ went back to the mid-1920s, it gained momentum with the script change in 1928. It was a widespread purification movement with fervent official support. The

movement finds its true expression in Mustafa Kemal's words, in his Introduction to Sadri Maksudi's *Türk Dili İçin* (For the Turkish Language).³⁵ After mentioning the strong link between national sentiment and language, he continued:

A rich national language has great influence on the development of national feeling. The Turkish tongue is one of the richest of all; it only needs to be intelligently cultivated. The Turkish nation, which knows how to establish its government and its sublime independence, must also free its language from the yoke of foreign words.³⁶

To this end, after the script revolution, a commission called *Dil Encümeni* (The Language Commission) was set up in Ankara, assigned to produce the 'new Turkish Standard Dictionary'. The dictionary's aim was to put *öz Türkçe* words in place of those of Arabic and Persian origin. In 1931 the activity of the committee was ended. Immediately after the first Turkish History Congress, on 12 July 1932, the TLS was officially founded, initiated and encouraged by Mustafa Kemal.³⁷ He himself designed the two main branches for its work: the first, philology and linguistics, and the second, the Turkish language (studying and determining Turkish language from the point of dictionary–technical terms, grammar-syntax, etymology). Mustafa Kemal appointed Samih Rıfat as the first president of the TLS, and Ruşen Eşref (Ünaydın) as its first general secretary. Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu) and Celal Sahir became its first members. These four founding members, charged with this ideological programme of forming the new Turkish, were politicians rather than linguists or social scientists.³⁸ Setting the agenda for all discussions and policies about language until the end of the Single Party Period (1945), this bureaucratic mission had a central role in inventing new *öz Türkçe* free from all 'destructive' and 'unenlightened' influences of the 'old' language. It would be the new Turkish language conceived as more beneficial to the new Turkish society.

Coupled with a desire to build a high culture, the Society's founding principle implied that it must deliberately cultivate the language, e.g. to *rename* and to *redefine* what was incorrect in the past. Thus, its most important aim was again to purify the Turkish language, to elevate it to the level of civilization and science, and to close the gap between the written and common language. It had to seek a vocabulary based on the Turkish of the people – whose language was thought to be less distorted. It should draw on the dialects and old texts of other Turkic languages. All this was clear in Article 3 and Article 4 of the TLS's statutes. In Article 4 the procedure to realize its aims was given as follows: a) to organize scientific meetings, b) to determine and codify the Turkish language in accordance with its roots,

evolution and needs, c) to obtain all materials useful to study the Turkish language and to collect new words from old books and dialects of people from various places of the country, d) publish the products of the TLS' activities.³⁹

In order to further and discuss ideas on the Turkish language and to determine an elementary programme, the TLS immediately convened the first Turkish Language Congress (*Birinci Türk Dil Kurultayı*) in İstanbul on 26 September 1932.⁴⁰ The Congress aimed to solve the question of language by its future directives:

The Society will determine a set of rules and principles, and will regain these rules and principles to be followed. The journalists and intellectuals who up to now have defended an evolutionary approach to language and have so far not made any progress in the affairs of language, will obey this order. . . The last task of the Congress is to set language control over publications and the world of the press.⁴¹

Mustafa Kemal and his co-workers expected that in the Congress their programme would be wholeheartedly welcomed. But there was a heated debate on whether the reform would be conducted in an evolutionary or revolutionary way. Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), the former editor of *Tanin* and one of the pro-reformists on the issue of the script in the 1920s, severely criticized the official purist tendency to throw away some commonly used words of foreign origin.⁴² For him, in the previous 15 years, the language had already been simplified to a sufficient level. So it was an exaggeration to stress the current hegemony of foreign words in the Turkish language. While believing in the necessity of some regulations, he argued that language was not something that could be deconstructed and reproduced by 'a deliberate action'. It was just a natural organism taking its shape in an evolutionary way. Against the general official line, he proclaimed, 'the written language has never in any place been identical with the spoken language, and it cannot be identical'.⁴³

Almost all speakers, representatives of the state's official line, fervently condemned his views. They claimed that language could and should be consciously cultivated and reproduced, which was necessary as in other reformist acts, for they were 'revolutionists, not evolutionists'. Hasan Ali, Ali Canip, Fazıl Ahmet, Dr Mustafa Şükrü, Sadri Ethem and Namdar Rahmi denounced his claims, arguing for the will to create *a new moral base* with revolutionary zeal.⁴⁴ Sadri Ethem criticized Hüseyin Cahit's wish for continuation with the past: 'The past having its own economic, legal and artistic entity is not compatible with today's understanding. This difference can only be overcome by revolution, not evolution. Today we have a *new*

*society with new tastes and morality.*⁴⁵ (my emphasis) Their stand, signifying a radical purist stream, in turn continued to be the official line, supported by Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁶ They emphasized the significance of the total elimination of all words of foreign origin, to create a culture unrestrained by the nostalgic preferences of the older generation.

The Congress also emphasized the official history thesis that saw Central Asia (the Turks' motherland) as the cradle of all civilizations. It did this by comparing the 'ancient Turkish languages' (including Hittite and Sumerian) on the one hand with the Indo-European and Semitic languages on the other. This *ahistorical* tone of voice was at the heart of most of the presentations in the Congress. They usually claimed that Turkish was the mother of all tongues in the world.⁴⁷ Ruşen Eşref:

In the programme of the Congress it was proved that the Turkish language had spread from Central Asia to the shores of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans and the Finnish gulf. . . It is very likely that it was the language of the Sumerians and Hittites. . . Turkish was the language of the *first* and *oldest* culture. It was at the roots of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, which make up the basis of modern linguistics. Turkish was, therefore, the language of those who have founded big cities and states and of those who have cultivated land and enlightened human kind (my emphasis)⁴⁸

Nevertheless, this thesis came to be seen as conflicting with the hegemony of the radical purists in the mainstream official line. So it was no longer stressed. In 1935 a new, more moderate route was decided in language reform.⁴⁹ In 1935 Mustafa Kemal became convinced that it was not necessary to change every word of foreign origin. Thus, the radical purist line stopped and was replaced by a more moderate one that found its evident expression in the Sun Language Theory, which will be elaborated below. What was solidified in the First Congress, for later in the Second Congress, was the view that *Osmanlıca* (Ottoman Turkish) is a significant 'Other' for *öz Türkçe* and for the hegemony of radical purism.

As already mentioned, the official language reform movement was primarily based on the aim to save the younger generation from the old values embedded in the old language. Here the old was *Osmanlıca*. In the discourse of most writings and speeches on the language revolution after 1928, the passing from *Osmanlıca* to *öz Türkçe* was emphasized. Especially in the period between 1928 and 1936, the state officials and intellectuals regarded *Osmanlıca* as the significant 'Other' of the newly constructed *öz Türkçe*. The First Turkish Language Congress officially aimed to replace the 'old' language, that is, *Osmanlıca*.⁵⁰ In the established plan of the language

engineers, all efforts were made to downgrade the status both of *Osmanlıca* and the Ottoman Empire through stressing its non-Turkish character. Their main assumption was that their aim of transforming Turkey's culture could not be realized on the basis of *Osmanlıca*, which was the 'language of the Sultanate and religion', a language made up of two foreign languages (Arabic and Persian).⁵¹

This view of *Osmanlıca* can be summarized as follows. Before coming under the influence of Islam, Turkish, though it borrowed some words from various languages, had preserved its true essence. When the Turks met Islam, Arabic and Persian began to have a strong influence over Turkish; the former was in administrative and legal areas, and the latter, in literature. This trend reached its peak in the Ottoman time when the sense of national belonging and consciousness did not prevail. At that time, Turkishness was submerged under a constructed Ottoman identity and was mentioned mostly in pejorative terms.⁵² So Turkish became distorted, losing its functional power and its vocabulary and grammatical structure. The result was a language that was a mix of three languages – Arabic, Persian and Turkish – known as *Osmanlıca*. This language in time also became dominant as a spoken language among the circles of the upper stratum as well as a written one. Under the burdensome effect of Arabic especially, it took the shape of a language full of foreign affectations and values that were unsuitable to the Turkish state of mind. Unnatural and obscurantist in comparison with modern values, it developed naturally out of Ottoman culture that was equally 'hybrid' and 'entirely aristocratic'.⁵³ As a language of administration and high culture developed at the centre, it completely alienated itself from the people's language. In the end, there emerged two different languages: the written (and spoken) language of the cosmopolitan ruling class called *Osmanlıca* and the Turkish of ordinary people called *öz Türkçe*.⁵⁴ It was seen as a significant sign of duality between the rulers and ruled, or a sign of social status between the two groups.⁵⁵ Thus, alongside *Osmanlıca*, Turkish with its purity and cleanliness had lived among the people without any of the corruption that was evident in the language of the Ottoman ruling stratum. On the other hand, *Osmanlıca* was full of Arabic and Persian terms as 'foreign and frozen cliché'. These should be removed because they only have 'scholastic meanings'.⁵⁶ In other words, these had to be cut out because of the 'fact' that '*Osmanlıca* came to be regarded as expressing a state of mind or point of view belonging to the *old realm*. On the other hand, today we have *our own realm* and thus we dislike old phrases signifying foreign values'⁵⁷ (my emphasis). In nationalizing language, in the first place, one had to take into consideration scientific developments and progressive civilization, which would bring about a close link between the national language and the people's language.

This view brings us to the official understanding that *Osmanlıca* with its artificiality and foreign meanings and feeling could not provide a model for a more civilized domain of the Turkish nation. It was for this reason that on behalf of the civilizing rulers, *Osmanlıca*, the language of ‘high culture’, was unbecoming to the new regime’s ideology, Kemalism. Populism, one of the six principles of Kemalism, aimed at abolishing class differences and privileges. There needed to be a new Turkish to end the cultural gap between the Turkish of popular language and that of the upper classes. A purified and simple Turkish that could be easily understood by everyone, a language that could be shared by all strata in the society, regardless of class, religious or ethnic differences.⁵⁸ They saw *öz Türkçe* as providing a common language for the community of ‘civilized’ equals.

To recapitulate, on the creation of *öz Türkçe* there appeared two main groups representing two main views on the language issue: first, the ‘radical purists’ who argued for the total elimination of all foreign words and words of foreign origin and their replacement by *öz Türkçe* words and terms in the written and spoken Turkish language; second, the ‘moderate purists’ who did not believe in the need for a revolutionary break in linguistic affairs, while promoting the purification and simplification of the written language as far as possible.⁵⁹ Ahmet Cevat (Emre) firstly elaborated moderate purism in his book in 1931.⁶⁰ The book emphasized in the first instance the impossibility of revolution in language, for it was a living thing in the mind first based on ‘understanding’. And so it firmly excluded newly created words that did not have any connotation in the people’s language.

Radical purism as a revolutionary project first appeared in Sadri Maksudi (Arsal)’s book entitled *Türk Dili İçin*, published in 1930. With a highly secularized nationalist passion, he emphasized that the Turkish race all over the world was losing national character due mainly to the gradual weakening of its language. For the survival of the Turkish race, in his view, the first and most important task was to create a written and spoken language that would be *öz Türkçe*, a language of (universal, western) civilization.⁶¹ The main idea of the book is that, like the modern nations developing their language through a ‘deliberate renewal’, Turkish had a strong need to be recorded by a ‘language revolution’. This required a ‘collection of words actually used by the people, giving them and sing them in scientific and literary works, by substituting words of foreign origin coining new words in accordance with the language’s grammatical and syntactic rules.’⁶² Thus, in order to achieve this revolution, he argued that all words of foreign origin including Arabic, Persian and Latin terms should be eliminated and a new terminology should be recreated from Turkish origins.

The struggle between the radicals and the moderates shaped all discussions of language reform until the end of the Atatürk era. During the early years of

1930s, radical purism became the dominant line especially when Mustafa Kemal sided with it. And the policy of the First Turkish Language Congress (5 October 1932) was to make it the official language.

After the Congress, a comprehensive language plan was sought. It was the starting point of the radical purist period 1932–35. The Congress elected a Central Committee to direct the works and activities of the Society, and enacted a programme to speed language reform.⁶³ According to the programme, the Committee initiated two main projects. The first was the collection of words from the vocabulary of ordinary people, old texts of ancient Turkish vocabularies and other Turkic languages. The second was the search for Turkish equivalents of foreign origin words.

To accomplish this task the government supported the TLS with its full authority. In this national mobilization and language planning, several institutions and individuals worked together to create *öz Türkçe*: government agencies, schools, universities and newspapers. A decree issued in November 1932 called upon all the country's administrative organs to cooperate in the collection of Turkish words that existed in everyday speech, but were not currently used in the written language.⁶⁴ In every province and every district a language committee was established, comprising top local officials and regional RPP's leaders. Mostly teachers and other educated people worked on the collection. They filled in a separate form for each word, registering its meaning, synonym and antonyms, and stating how and where it was used. The TLS aimed to process completely every single form. Within eight months, the Society collected 129,792 forms.⁶⁵ At the same time, together with the vocabulary of the living dialects, more than 159 old literary texts and dictionaries, mostly of Turkish dialects, were systematically investigated to discover Turkish words. Parallel to the project of collecting words from the spoken language, was the other project, a language survey among the literate to find *öz Türkçe* equivalents in place of 1400 words of Arabic and Persian origin.⁶⁶ Although the survey aroused lively public interest by the active participation of the newspapers, the radio, the RPP and the People's Houses (established in 1931 as adult education centres, scattered throughout the country as cultural branches of the ruling RPP), this did not provide relevant equivalents. Therefore, the language engineers turned to some 130,000 words collected from ordinary and past usage.

These words as well as other terms collected from the old texts and dictionaries were examined. Then the popular, ancient and Turkic material in the summer of 1934 was put into a dictionary form entitled *Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Söz Karşılıkları Tarama Dergisi* (a Collection of Turkish Equivalents for *Osmanlıca* Words). It suggested about 30,000 *öz Türkçe* words as possible substitutes for over 7,000 Arabic and Persian loanwords.⁶⁷ Meanwhile the grammatical elements, suffixes in particular, were gathered,

analysed and classified, and all scientific terms, in French, English or German, were collected and distributed to specialists for them to suggest equivalents in Turkish.⁶⁸

This attitude of replacing all words of Arabic and Persian origin reached its peak between 1933 and 1935. In those years, various measures, such as massive publicity, encouragement, reshaping of habits in the use of language and coercive legislation, were actively employed to achieve broad acceptance or compliance with the new policy. For example, after February 1933, the newspapers had to use the new substitutes. The last item in the programme approved by the first Congress, required newspapers to use some space to make contributions to the language revolution. Thus, at least two articles appeared, translated into new Turkish with a glossary explaining the new words published at the end.⁶⁹ By a decree issued in November 1934, *Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü* (General Directorate of the Press) ordered the press to publish a full text of its editorial in *öz Türkçe* on the front pages.⁷⁰ In addition to the above legislative actions on the press, some measures were taken to force the people to change their speech habits. This can be illustrated by a decision of the İzmir municipality approved in March 1933. Accordingly, the use of words and forms other than Turkish were prohibited in public. It particularly restricted street vendors who usually used the words of the ‘old’ and other languages in their profession.⁷¹ Indeed, this act had been voiced throughout the Atatürk era by the campaign of *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!* (Citizen! Speak Turkish!). What was required was that the ‘true’ Turkish citizens had to, as Ahmet Emin Yalman put it, speak Turkish: ‘Let those who did not want to be Turkish citizens by means of their languages and deeds, those who did not want to adopt the *umumi hayat* (the public life) of the country, be visible and exclude themselves from the whole like an *ecnebi* (foreign) element.’⁷² Citizens had to be free from the ‘cosmopolitan, mosaic’ structure. Here it is clear that those who did not speak Turkish would be excluded.

At this juncture, the role of the People’s Houses was emphasized in educating and spreading *öz Türkçe* in their locality. It was in this regard that two main tasks were attributed to the Houses: the first was to ‘transform the Turkish of the native speakers into the dialect of the centre’; the second, perhaps more important, was to ‘be engaged continuously and more closely in order to educate or convert those whose mother tongue is not Turkish or who speak another language at home even if they also speak Turkish’.⁷³ The campaign targeted mainly the non-Muslims and non-Turkish Muslims to make them speak the new Turkish. It was obvious that the aim was to form a homogenous national community with a common language. Moreover, the usage of the new Turkish was to be advanced through state officials over the country all using the new language. Mustafa Kemal set

himself the task of always making his speeches and writing letters in the new language.

The process of the constant, radical modification on the Turkish vocabulary also gave way to changes in many names and titles. The act of *renaming* appeared first in the names of some cities, places and geographical names, containing some reference to the *ancien régime* and particular ethnic and traditional structures. Also, this trend paved the way for a fashion of changing names from Arabic to Turkish. For instance, Hüseyin Kazım, one of the radical purists, argued for the necessity of calling children by such names as Alp and Bozkurt in preference to Arabic and Persian names like Ali and Mehmet.⁷⁴ This alteration of Islamic names was later turned into the Law of Surnames (*Soy Adı Kanunu*) issued in June 1934, which required that everyone had to take a surname within two years.⁷⁵ Article 3 of the Law prohibited taking as surnames names denoting rank and one's official position, or referring to *aşiret* (tribal structure in the east and southeastern Turkey) and other nations, and uncivilized manners. All new surnames had to be *öz Türkçe*.⁷⁶ A law issued on 26 November 1934, prohibited the use of titles (expressing official and social positions in the Ottoman Empire) such as *paşa*, *gazi*, *efendi* and *bey*, as well as names indicating noble lineage. Following the western style, it required that first names should be followed only by *Bay* ('Mr') or as *Bayan* ('Ms').⁷⁷ In conjunction with this decree, Mustafa Kemal dropped the title Gazi, of Arabic origin. On 24 November 1934, parliament bestowed on him the surname, Atatürk ('Father Turk') and another law issued on 7 December 1934 prohibited the use of Atatürk, or any modification of it by anyone else. Then he considered substituting Kemal with an old Turkish word that has a very similar sound to the name Kemal. It was 'Kamal', meaning the 'strong', the 'armed'. He was now called Kamal and his political system, *Kamalism*.⁷⁸ Similar acts of renaming were evident in post-revolutionary France. The Jacobins renamed themselves and urged others to name children in accordance with the new system, as well as changing the names of places and streets that would remind people of the past.⁷⁹ The Kemalist efforts to abolish all titles belonging to the 'old' names seem to have been motivated by the desire to equalize and civilize everyone. This was at the heart of the state ideology, Kemalism.

Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Söz Karşılıkları Tarama Dergisi, providing a large alternative of possible substitutes, created great chaos in using new words in place of those that were dropped. By the loss of words accumulated throughout centuries, which formed the crucial component of the vocabulary of spoken Turkish, most people faced severe difficulty in finding new equivalent words to express themselves.⁸⁰ This situation was 'linguistic anarchy'. Mustafa Kemal described it as follows: 'We have brought the language to deadlock. . .we will also save it from this deadlock'.⁸¹ In the end,

the realization of this brought about change to a more moderate position. In mid-1935, the voice of the moderates began to find echo in the official line. The criticism by moderate purists may be illustrated by the views of Yaşar Nabi. He saw the efforts of the radical purists as making ‘Turkish far too barren and insufficient by eliminating all words of foreign origin. . . many of them taking root in the people’s tongue. The few *öz Türkçe* words that replaced foreign words made it impossible to make any progress in science and technology or even to create the most primitive literature.’⁸²

By the autumn of 1935, the TLS dropped its policy of extreme purism. With Atatürk’s encouragement, a new dictionary was commissioned with the task of making a comparative study of words in the *Tarama Dergisi* and to discover the best Turkish equivalents that would be published in a new dictionary.⁸³ In September 1935, its product was both the *Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Cep Klavuzu* (An Ottoman–Turkish Pocket Dictionary) and the *Türkçeden Osmanlıcaya Cep Klavuzu* (A Turkish–Ottoman Pocket Dictionary). The main stress was no longer on finding Turkish equivalents for all words of foreign origin. So it included many assimilated Arabic–Persian words previously put into the list of condemned words. Although the *Klavuz* made it unnecessary to eliminate all words of foreign origin used in Turkish to some extent, Atatürk did not think that these new dictionaries went far enough to eliminate the chaos. He was now convinced that words of foreign origin were badly needed in both the written and spoken languages. These words would not be contrary to the language reform.

During late 1935 and early 1936, the Society’s moderate attitude became the new official line. The new policy was justified with a new theory called Sun Language Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*). After almost ten months of work, the Theory became crystallized and publicized in the Third Turkish Language Congress. It convened on August 1936, as İ. Necmi Dilmen clarified, ‘to introduce the Turkish Language Thesis to the whole world’ by showing that Turkish was the ‘basic source of all cultural languages including the Ural–Altai, the Indo-European and the Semitic ones’.⁸⁴ The Theory claimed that Turkish was the mother of all languages. It was in the first instance arranged in accordance with the Turkish History Thesis that claimed that the Turks in history had been culture creators, and their homelands (Central Asia and Anatolia) were the cradle of human civilization (or ‘high culture’).⁸⁵ This theory was developed by the ‘TLS in serious philosophical, scientific and linguistic work for ten months’. These were supported by several publications including articles, booklets and books. Coupled with the desire to present this ‘scientific’ discovery to the whole world of science, a number of European scientists were invited. Their presence was clearly to support the linguistic engineers’ theory.

The Sun Language Theory had a far-reaching effect. If all existing languages were of Turkish origin, it was no longer necessary to eliminate words previously thought to be of foreign origin.⁸⁶ The Theory opened a new epoch since everybody could 'write and speak as you did without any hesitation because all are in Turkish'.⁸⁷ At the same time, Atatürk himself set the tone by re-establishing some words of Arabic origin such as *millet* 'nation' in his speeches from late 1935 onwards in place of the purist replacement *ulus*. In a similar fashion, in the following years, several words of Arabic and Persian origin were welcomed back as well as some of European origin. The latter had become more important in recent times.

It seems obvious that the reason for the Sun Language Theory was to end the great chaos caused by the radical purists. Finding substitutes was no longer emphasized in official discourse.⁸⁸ However, this did not mean abandoning all reform. The goal remained the same: to some degree Turkish should be purified and simplified and free from any foreign yoke. Now the TLS primarily concentrated on technical and scientific terminology. In general, in determining the terms, it was settled that some foreign roots were tolerated when a proper Turkish equivalent could not be found. If it was necessary, new terms should be re-invented from Turkish roots by means of Turkish word formation. Increasingly Arabic terms were being replaced by European ones, especially French, and being directly applied when a Turkish equivalent did not exist.⁸⁹

With the death of Atatürk (November 1938), there was a period when language reform was restored for a short time. A number of old names that had been replaced by Turkicized ones were reinstated. Nevertheless, the TLS maintained its moderate position regarding purism. This restorative attitude may be understood when one takes into account the vulnerable political context resulting from the change in the ruling cadre of the party. After the new cadre consolidated its power, a new tide of purism was put forward by the successor of Mustafa Kemal, İsmet İnönü by 1940.

To conclude, there were two principal steps in the language revolution during the formative decades of the Republic. The first was the formation of new Turkish, called *öz Türkçe*, to provide a break with the past. The second was the standardization and generalization of that language to assimilate local dialects and local/ethnic languages. In other words, the script revolution, and later the attempts to purify and standardize were based on the multiple political aim of breaking with the past, interpreting the present, and reshaping the future by renaming or redefining.

In fact, this process was similar to the development of other 'national' languages elsewhere. Thus the newly formulated Turkish language should be taken as a 'cultural artifact' of the Kemalist-nation building project rather than simply an independent basis of 'national consciousness'. The goal of the

project was to ‘liberate’ Turkish from ‘ten thousand years of subordination’ and to restore it to its ‘rightful place’ among the civilized and cultured nations. This was to be realized through elevating the status and advancing the use of *öz Türkçe*. In the period between 1928 and 1936, the rulers and intellectuals had regarded *Osmanlica* as a significant ‘Other’ of *öz Türkçe* by seeing it not as the national language but the ‘language of the Sultanate and religion’. This notion brings us to the official understanding that *Osmanlica* with its ‘artificiality’ and ‘sense of foreign feelings’ could not set a model for civilized Turks. In this respect *öz Türkçe* had to assume its proper role of projecting a truer Turkish personality. Seen as the sole valid language, it acquired a superior status, such that even speakers of other languages and dialects among the Kemalist elite group developed negative attitudes towards their own language and dialects.

The official language policies began to spawn a state and intellectual elite who continued to benefit from its monopoly of the mastery of the official language. Thus, the use of language attained the highest importance. It was a symbol of a high, cultured and civilized life. Its use gave the right to take part in that life. It came to be a language that was, in the words of Eugene Weber, ‘about status and access and success and, sometimes, revenge’.⁹⁰ As part of the nation-building process, it was also a tool for forming and strengthening a collective sentiment of belonging within the borders of the homeland. It disregarded all particularities that were seen as dangerous for the healthy formation of a new Turkish nation. In short, *öz Türkçe* with its new characters and words became one of the constituent parts of the planned secular conversion from imperial religious to national secular culture.

It is in this sense that Kemalism’s concept of language as a ‘man-made’ object conflicted with Herder’s Romantic view, which saw language as the sole constitutive aspect of culture, a tool for expressing all belonging to living traditions and manners. Herder saw language as a basic aspect of culture, as the product and expression of the collective experience of the group having its own unique way; so it could not be invented in anyway by a group of individuals through coining new words.⁹¹ However, the Kemalist conception of language was based on a progressive and futurist idea stimulated by Jacobin utopianism.

The Kemalist quest for building up a new future needed to create *öz Türkçe*. The expectation was that it would express the new meanings in the secularized moral discourse of Kemalism, the official ideology of the Turkish state. It would help to reshape the people’s view of themselves. Language was to be used as a tool of conversion. The acts of ‘renaming’ were intended to produce a world of new meanings that would enable the Kemalists to interpret and re-construct the interests and ethos of future generations. This act came with ‘scienticization’ (i.e. pseudo scientific studies) of language that

was motivated by a political ideology. In other words, the script revolution and later purifications and standardizations followed a political impetus that aimed to break with the past and to re-interpret the present and the future.

The official act of re-naming as part of the project of revolutionizing the language was inherent to the power relations of the time that included tensions and struggles as well as some harmony. Thus, this revolutionizing of a language often displayed uneven and, sometimes, contradictory features. This historically contingent process made language one of the most contested issues during the early Republican era. Every step in the language revolution became the subject of the hottest debate both among politicians and among intellectuals. The principal contenders were different parts of the Kemalist elite. In 1935 they adopted the more moderate, in place of the radical, tendency in the purification of Turkish from Arabic–Persian origins. The change was one of the signs that a more moderate interpretation of Kemalism was being adopted.

NOTES

1. This use of language was very common in the France of the Jacobins after the Revolution. See Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourtte* (New York: Norton, 1990), pp.67. It was also evident in the American Revolution. See Cynthia S. Jordan, *Second Stories: The Politics of Language, Form, and Gender in Early American Fiction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp.7 and 10–11. This stemmed from the belief in the human power to reform and reconstruct reality.
2. It was a matter of the link between language and power. For the relation between language and power or authority and the usage of language as a device for ‘the act of renaming’ see Jordan, *Second Stories*, pp.10–11.
3. For the definition of language policy see Harold F. Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996).
4. Quoted from ‘Gazi Türkçesi’ (*Gazi Turkish*), in Zeynep Korkmaz (ed.), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (Atatürk and Turkish Language 2) (Ankara: TDK, 1997) (original publication 1932), p.114.
5. The expression is from F. Rıfki Atay. See Falih Rıfki Atay, ‘Dil Kurultayı’ (Language Congress), in *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1936), p.518.
6. Uriel Heyd, *Language Reform in Modern Turkey* (Jerusalem: The Israel Oriental Society, 1954), p.20.
7. See Agah Sırrı Levend, *Türk Dilinde Gelişme ve Sadeleşme Evreleri* (Phases of Development and Purification in Turkish Language), 3rd edn (Ankara: TDK, 1972), pp.113–48 for further details on the developments of the period.
8. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd rev. edn (New York: Verso, 1991), pp.37–82.
9. They tried to eliminate Arabic and Persian grammatical rules and some words for which there existed Turkish synonyms in the spoken language, and where unavoidable technical terms from Arabic roots. In this sense, Ziya Gökalp’s language reform programme was the main product of the movement. For his programme, see Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, translated by Robert Devereux (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), pp.93–94.
10. Heyd, *Language*, p.18.
11. For some proposals on modifications in the script see M. Şakir Ülkütaşır, *Atatürk ve Harf Devrimi* (Atatürk and Language Revolution) (Ankara: TDK, 1973), pp.17–20.

12. See Bilal Şimşir, *Türk Yazı Devrimi* (Turkish Script Revolution) (Ankara: TDK, 1992), pp.47–52. As in most reforms of the Republic, the westernizer' call for change in the script might be seen as a forerunner of the 1928 script revolution.
13. As an official body, in 1914, *Islahat-i İlmiye Encümeni* (The Committee for Scientific Terms), working on correcting and regulating the rules of letters and writing, was founded. Later Enver Paşa in 1917 attempted to put in use in some official affairs a new script. G.L. Lewis, 'Atatürk's Language Reform as an Aspect of Modernization in the Republic of Turkey', in Jacob M. Landau (ed.), *Atatürk and Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), p.196.
14. Kazım Karabekir, 'Latin Harflerini Kabul Edemeyiz' (We Can't Accept Latin Letters), in H. Yorulmaz (ed.), *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet Alfabe Tartışmaları* (Discussions on the Alphabet from the Tanzimat to the Republic) (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1995), pp.90–3.
15. Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), 'Latin Hurufu ile Türkçe Yazı Yazmak Mümkün müdür?' (Is It Possible to Write in Turkish with Latin Letters?), in *ibid.*, pp.94–7.
16. Sami N. Özerdim, *Yazı Devrimin Öyküsü* (The Story of Script Revolution) (Ankara: TDK, 1978), p.20.
17. For both groups' views see Hüseyin Yorulmaz, 'İslah-ı Huruf'tan Tebdil-i Hurufa' (From Reforming the Script to Script Change), *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete*, pp.8–10.
18. See 'Latin Harflerini Kabul Etmeli mi, Etmemeli mi?' (Should Latin Letters Be Accepted or Not?), *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete*, pp.194–32.
19. Ülkütaşır, *Atatürk*, pp.60–61.
20. On the question, the words of Mustafa Kemal, uttered on the night of introducing the new script on 9 August in 1928, are illuminating: 'Fellow countrymen! In order to express our beautiful language we are adopting *new Turkish letters*. . . We have to emancipate ourselves from the incomprehensible signs that had placed our minds in an *iron* frame for centuries. We want to understand our language by all means. We shall understand it surely with these new letters in the near future. . . Today, one of our tasks is to learn quickly the new Turkish letters and teach them to the whole nation. . . If at least 80% of our nation is still illiterate, the fault is not ours. The fault lies with those who, not understanding the Turkish character, have *chained our heads with iron bands*.' (my emphasis) 'Mustafa Kemal Pasha' Address on Launching the New Characters', in Lutfy Levonian (trans. and ed.), *The Turkish Press 1925–1932* (Athens: School of Religion, 1932), pp.90–1.
21. The law brought obligations for everybody to begin to use the new script immediately, while government departments, periodicals and advertisements had to adapt to the new letters on 1 December 1928.
22. See 'Millet Mektepleri Talimatnamesi' (Nation Schools Statute), in Zeynep Korkmaz (ed.), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili: Belgeler* (Ankara: TDK, 1992), pp.84–102. *Millet Mektepleri* as a wide system of adult education came to be the first well organized adult education centres of the Republic. Every adult between the ages of 16 and 40 had to attend classes regularly held in primary schools. It was obligatory for them. The impressions of one foreign contemporary observer about the application of new law in Samsun might be illustrative: 'My friends told me with considerable glee of enforcement measures taken by police who visited cafés and backgammon dens, removing to school any culprits who could not produce certificates of their reading and writing ability. . .The penalties were prescribed both for those who neglect to attend the schools and for those who attend but are lazy.' Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish Transformation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968) (original publication 1935), p.125.
23. See 'Some Extracts from the Address of Mustafa Şekip Bey, Professor of Psychology in the University of Constantinople', in *The Turkish Press 1925–1932* (original publication 1928), p.87.
24. Celal Nuri, 'A New Phase of the Turkish Revolution', in *The Turkish Press 1925–1932*, p.298.
25. Quoted in H.E. Wortham, *Mustafa Kemal of Turkey* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1930), pp.188–9.
26. It led to the emergence of the 'new mode of literacy' to which, according to their position at the moment of change, some have advantage in access. See Victoria Rowe Holbrook, *The*

- Unreadable Shores of Love: Turkish Modernity and Mystic Romance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), pp.2, 20.
27. See Allen, *The Turkish*, p.126.
 28. See Anderson, *Imagined*, pp.44–5.
 29. This was the very tone of the claims of Yunus Nadi as he stated all that was done after the adoption of new script in one year as an essence of creating new national culture. See Yunus Nadi, 'Yazı İnkılabı' (Script Revolution), in Zeynep Korkmaz (ed.), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2: Atatürk Devri Yazarlarının Türk Dili Hakkındaki Görüşleri* (Atatürk and Turkish Language 2: The Atatürk Period's Writers' Views on Turkish Language) (Ankara: TDK, 1997) (original publication 1929), pp.11–13.
 30. For the Republican formulation of culture see Yılmaz Çolak, 'Nationalism and State in Turkey: Drawing the Boundaries of 'Turkish Culture' in the 1930s', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol.3, No.2 (2003).
 31. *Tarih IV* (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti Yay., 1931), p.252.
 32. M. Nermi, 'Nermi Bey Diyor ki: "Öz ve Ulu Yol Tutulmuştur!"
 33. Its first name was the *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* (the Turkish Language Research . Society). In 1936 it purified its own title as the *Türk Dil Kurumu*.(The Turkish Language Society).
 34. The expression belongs to Balhasanoğlu Necip Asım (Yazıksız). See Balhasanoğlu Necip Asım, 'Dil Heyeti' (The Language Committee), in Mehmet Kaplan et al. (eds.), *Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı II* (Ideational Life of Atatürk Period) (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay., 1992) (original publication 1926), p.32.
 35. *Türk Dili İçin* was one of the studies worth mentioning directing the purification movement in the first half of 1930. Sadri Maksudi (Arsal), *Türk Dili İçin* (Ankara: Türk Ocakları İlim ve Sanat Heyeti Yay., 1930).
 36. Ibid.
 37. See Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın, *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti'nin Kuruluşundan ilk Kurultaya Kadar Hatıralar* (Memoirs from the Foundation of the Turkish Language Research Society to the first Congress), 2nd edn. (original publication in 1933) (Ankara: TDK, 1943), p.10.
 38. All were members of the parliament and the RPP. Ünaydın, *Hatıralar*, p.13.
 39. For the statue of the Society see *Birinci Türk Dil Kurultayı: Tezler Müzakere Zabıtları* (The First Turkish Language Congress: Theses, Discussion Minutes) (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), pp.420–55.
 40. Three language congresses were convened up to the end of the Atatürk era (1938): 1932, 1934, and 1936. There did not exist any thematic difference in 1932 and 1934 congresses, and so in this study the main stress was placed on the first one.
 41. Burhan Asaf (Belge), 'Kurultay' (Congress), *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, September 26, 1932, p.2.
 42. See *Birinci*, p.274.
 43. Ibid., p.276; Frank Tachau, 'Language and Politics: Turkish Language Reform', *Review of Politics*, Vol.26, No.2 (1964), p.196.
 44. See *ibid.*, pp.280–310.
 45. Ibid., p.300.
 46. In the Congress and later, any view against the official line was condemned as reactionary, urged by the enemies of the Republic. See Jacob M. Landau, 'The First Turkish Language Congress', in Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *The Earliest Stage of Language Planning: The 'First Congress' Phenomenon* (Berlin: Mouton: De Gruyter, 1993).
 47. In his presentation entitled 'Türk Filolojisi-Türk Dili Bir Hint-Avrupa Dilidir' [Turkish Philology-Turkish Language is an Indo-European Language], Saim Ali tried to show that the Turkish language was of the family of the Indo-European languages. Ibid., p.75. Ahmet Cevat (Emre) compared the Sumerian language with the Turkish one and found many similarities. Ibid., pp.81–94. Similarly, Agop Martayan strove to attract attention on commonalities between Turkish on the one hand and Sumerian, Indo-European and Armenian languages on the other. Ibid., pp.94–104. Artin Cebeli went one step further and claimed that "the Turkish language was of a similar family with the 'Turco-European languages' and the languages of all white races. . . Also the mother of all languages, as it is thought, is not Sanskrit, but Turkish'. Ibid., p.129. What was common in their argument was that Turkish was the oldest of living languages all over the world.

48. See *Birinci*, p.470; Ünaydın, *Hatıralar*, pp.76–7.
49. Although in the daily press of 1932 on the relations of the Turkish language with others there were many commentaries and articles emphasizing the age of the Turkish language and the source of all world languages, in the period between 1932 and 1935 there were very few such articles. In 1935, in harmony with the new official line, a number of writings began to appear in the newspapers. See *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2*, pp.623–80. A similar shift may be observed to some extent in comparing the First and Third Congresses with the lectures delivered at the Second Turkish Language Congress in 1934. See ‘İkinci Türk Dil Kurultayı’ (The Second Turkish Language Congress), *Türk Dili*, No.8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.
50. One of the Kemalist purists, Ahmet Şükrü, with a nationalist and mystified tone, described the Congress as a main step in the ‘revolution of passing from *Osmanlıca* to Turkish’. See Ahmet Şükrü, ‘Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Geçiş İnkılabı’ (The Revolution of Passing from *Osmanlıca* to Turkish), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1932), pp.97–8.
51. İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu), ‘Dil’ (Language), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1933), p.149.
52. See Samih Rifat’s opening speech, *Birinci*, pp.4–5.
53. The phrase belongs to Yunus Nadi. See Yunus Nadi, ‘Dil İnkılabına Dair Bir İki Deyiş’ (One or Two Words on Language Revolution), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1933), p.135.
54. Seeing *Osmanlıca* as a foreign language for the Turks might expose its best signs in the words of Mustafa Kemal: ‘When you translate something from *Osmanlıca* or another language, first look at the meaning and try to express it in Turkish’. Quoted in Ahmet Cevat (Emre), ‘Dilimizi Öz Benliğine Kavuşturmaya Başlarken’ (Beginning to Discover the True essence of Our Language), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1932), p.122.
55. In the writings on this duality, two hugely separated life-styles and world views were usually stressed. In the First Congress, Hasan Ali (Yücel) deemed *Osmanlıca* responsible for the deep chasm between the intellectuals and the rest of the people. The language revolution was aimed at abolishing this chasm and ‘making a civilized language by understanding the people’s language and making it academic’ See *Birinci*, p.284. In the Ottoman era the ‘duality between “*Lisani Osmani*” (Ottoman Language) and folk Turkish was not a mere linguistic one, but a sharp difference among “understandings” or “state of mind”. Ottoman understanding created by *Osmanlıca* was in its true terms a mind of Middle Age... By the language revolution we do not only pass from one language to another, but also pass from one understanding – that of Middle Ages – to a ‘Turkish understanding’ – that of the civilized world’. Halil Nimetullah, ‘Osmanlıca Anlayıştan Türkçe Anlayışa’ (From the Ottoman Understanding to the Turkish One), *Cumhuriyet*, 27 March 1933, p.3.
56. See Samih Rifat’s speech, *Birinci*, pp.481–82.
57. M. Nermi, ‘Nermi Bey Diyor’, p.3.
58. This can be clearly observed in the Statute of the TLS according to which every Turkish citizen regardless of gender, ethnic, racial and religious difference was accepted as its member. For an evaluation see Yunus Nadi, ‘Türk Dili İçin İlk Kurultay’ (The First Congress for Turkish Language), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1932), p.467.
59. For a detailed account of discussion on the two trends in the early 1930s see Ali Ekrem Bey, ‘Turkish Language Changing Rapidly’, *The Turkish Press, 1926–1932* (original publication 1931), 150. Sadri Maksudi (Arsal), İ. Necmi (Dilmen), Celal Sahir and Ruşen Eşref (Ünaydın) were the leading radicals. On the other hand, among the famous moderates were Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), Ahmet Cevat (Emre), Falih Rifkî (Atay) and Yunus Nadi (Abalıoğlu).
60. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), *Yeni Bir Gramer Metodu Hakkında Layiha* (Text on A New Grammar Method) (İstanbul, 1931).
61. For further details see Sadri Maksudi, *Türk Dili*, pp.12–20.
62. *Ibid.*, 18.
63. See *Birinci*, p.456.
64. See Heyd, *Language*, p.26.

65. 'İkinci Türk Dil Kurultayı', *Türk Dili*, No.8 (Sep. 1934), p.24. By Sep. 1933, or in nine months, this was over 130,000. See Ahmet Şükrü, 'Dil Bayramı' (Language Festive), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1933), 162.
66. See Ahmet Şükrü, 'Tarama Derneği', *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1934), p.500 for further details; 'İkinci', pp.24-8.
67. See 'İkinci', p.28. In this thick book of 1300 pages, *Osmanlıca* words were put in an alphabetic order and on the opposite side their *öz Türkçe* equivalents were placed.
68. Ibid.
69. For one of the first examples, see Yunus Nadi, 'Niçin Dilimizi Düzeltmeye Çalışıyoruz?' (Why Do We Try to Correct Our Language?), *Cumhuriyet*, 3 March 1933, p.1.
70. Ahmet Şükrü, 'Dil Değişiminde Milliyet' (*Milliyet* in Language Change), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1934), p.50.
71. See 'Güzel Bir Emir' (A Good Order), *Cumhuriyet*, 7 March 1933, p.3.
72. Ahmet Emin Yalman, 'Umumi Yerlerde Türkçe' (Turkish in Public Places), in Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları* ('Capital Tax' and 'Turkification' Policies) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), pp.122-4.
73. Yaşar Nabi, 'Halkevleri'nin Dil, Tarih, Edebiyat Yolundaki Çalışmaları' (Language, History, Literature Works of the People's Houses), *Ülkü* (March 1939), pp.45-6.
74. Following Mustafa Kemal's endeavour to Turkicize many people's names, he listed new names in his article. He even declared that he unofficially has dropped his name, Hüseyin Kazım, and wanted from his friends to call him Yılmaz. See Hüseyin Kazım (Duru), 'Her Türk'ün Adı Türkçe Olmalıdır!' (Name of Every Turk Has to Be Turkish!), *Öz Dilimize Doğru*, No.17 (12 March 1934), p.11.
75. *Resmî Gazete* (Official Gazette), 'Soyadı Kanunu' (Law of Surname), No. 2741, (Ankara: Prime Ministry, July 2, 1934), p.506.
76. During the sessions on the Law, Şükrü Kaya, Minister of Interior Affairs, emphasized that establishing Turkish surnames instead of those reflecting any traditional, ethnic, religious attachments would be necessary for national unity. For him, words such Çerkes, Laz, Kızılbaş, Haydaranlı [an *aşiret* name], and so on, belonged to the Middle Ages, and encouraged division among the people. Thus words preferred as surnames had to be free from all particularisms and also they had to be *öz Türkçe*. See *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, D. IV, C. 23, 21-6-1934, pp.246-49.
77. See Ahmet Cevat Emre, *Atatürk'ün İnkılap Hedefi ve Tarih Tezi* (Atatürk's Goal of Revolution and History Thesis) (İstanbul: Ekin Basımevi, 1956), pp.46-47.
78. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım* (My Life and My Memoires), Vol.IV (İstanbul: Altındağ Yay., 1968), pp.1785-6. In Ottoman and Modern Turkish Kemal refers to perfection. Kamal is from old (Central Asian) Turkish texts. Finally he decided on Kemal, but usually signed his name as K. Atatürk.
79. See Darnton, *The Kiss*, pp.6-7. This was, as Hunt calls it, 'revolutionary language' which '... was itself transformed into an instrument of political and social change. . . The language itself helped shape the perception of interests and hence the development of ideologies'. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1984), p.24.
80. One contemporary observer reported that '[D]uring 1935 the metropolitan press passed through a period of trying to use nothing but the pure Turkish words. Even the best educated men and women could not learn the daily news without looking up several words per paragraph in their pocket glossaries.' The result was for the newspapers to suffer a 'tremendous drop in circulation'. See Donald Everett Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation* (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political And Social Science, 1939), p.244.
81. Falih Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş, 1969), p.477.
82. Yaşar Nabi, 'Dil Devriminde Ülkü Söz Kıtlığı Değildir' (The Ideal in the Language Revolution Is Not The Scarcity of Words), *Atatürk ve Türk Dili 2* (original publication 1935), p.261.
83. As Falih Rıfki Atay recounts, at the beginning the committee consisted of only the moderates. Then, upon the demand of Atatürk, some purists entered into the committee. He

- tells us, 'We [the moderates] preferred for a lot of words to remain in the language, although others [the radical purists] wanted to create a pure language having no relevancy in the world. In Turkish we leave as many words through proving that they are Turkish'. Atay, *Çankaya*, pp.475–9.
84. *Üçüncü*, p.4. It is obvious that by cultural language he meant a language with highly developed, artistic, scientific capability (like the Western languages, specifically French, German and English). In this Congress, and then on, it was used interchangeably with the phrase 'culture language' which seemed adopted as equivalent to that of 'civilized language' put to use in previous official discourse of language.
 85. That is why, in this regard, 'the language works had to examine closely the presence of a primitive Turkish culture language which had taken root everywhere through Turkish migrations. . . The New Turkish Language Thesis anticipates that at the foundation of all languages, there has been the language of our ancestors who carried culture to the four corners of the world'. *Üçüncü*, 9–11. With the Theory, the sun took its distinguished place among the symbols of the Kemalist regime: 'Our ancestors who founded the first culture in Anatolia used the sun as a symbol. . . The sun takes its place in history as a symbol of Turkish thought and art'. As Afet İnan recorded, this expression was made by Mustafa Kemal himself. See *Üçüncü*, 7.
 86. *Ibid.*, pp.13–14.
 87. Atay, 'Dil Kurultayı', pp.517–18.
 88. After Atatürk's death, it was completely dropped out of the official discourse. Even then İ. Necmi Dilmen cancelled his lectures on the Theory, which were made obligatory in 1936 at the Faculty of Language, History, and Geography of the Ankara University. See Lewis, 'Atatürk's', p.208.
 89. Some of them were *benzin*, *makina* (machine), *fizik* (physics), *psikoloji* (psychology), *kimya* (chemistry), *telefon* (telephone), *elektrik* (electricity), *radyo* (radio), *gazete* (gazette, newspaper), *kongre* (congress), *parti* (party), *demokrasi* (democracy), and so on. See Webster, *The Turkey*, p.242. Coupled with this trend, in 1936, the Republican People's Party changed its name from *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* to *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*. Here chose the French *parti* to the Arabic *fırka*, while the other two words in the title were of Arabic origin.
 90. Eugene Weber, 'What Rough Beast?', *Critical Review*, 10/2 (1996), p.296.
 91. See Robert Reinhold Ergang., *Herder and The Foundations of German Nationalism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), p.87.