

Evaluation of John Dewey in Terms of Articles Reflected in Periodicals in Turkey

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Abstract. The aim of this research is to make a general evaluation of the articles about John Dewey published in the period of Cumhuriyet Age in Turkey. For this aim, on internet and libraries some key word search was done in these titles ‘John Dewey, Dewey and J. Dewey’. The articles that were suitable were analysed with content analysis technique. After this practice, the articles were collected under some categories and evaluated. At the end of the research in the articles about John Dewey and published in the Cumhuriyet age, it has been found there are many reports on Dewey’s life, his views on education and philosophy and evaluations over his Works that has been translated to Turkish, his reports on Turkish Education System, the reflections of his Works to today’s education, his views on democratic education and his contributions to Turkish and world education systems.

Key words: journals, John Dewey, education philosophy, Cumhuriyet Age, Turkey

I. Introduction

There is a close relation between education and development. In other words, one of the most significant tools in the development level of countries is education. This is why, societies that have the goal to be successful in different fields have to solve the problems in educational field. In order to solve problems in the above mentioned field, countries benefit from many instruments, one of which is the thoughts of scientists who had great contributions to education. In this respect, scientists, philosophers and pedagogues who served in educational field and prepared important works can be helpful in solving today’s education problems. One of these scientists is American philosopher and pedagogue John Dewey.

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Dewey was born in 1859, in Vermont, Burlington, America. He had education in various public schools and then went to the University of Vermont in 1875 and took philosophy and sociology classes. After graduation from the university in 1879, he taught in different high schools between 1879 and 1881, and while teaching in these schools, he completed his master's degree and entered doctorate program in John Hopkins University. He took logic classes from Charles Sanders Peirce, psychology classes from G. S. Hall. In 1884, he was assigned to the University of Michigan as an instructor; he gave philosophy classes for ten years and became the head of the department. Dewey met with James H. Tufts, George H. Mead and A. W. Moore in the University of Michigan and made many researches on pragmatism with them (Karadeniz, 2012).

Dewey was invited to the professorship chair of the department of philosophy and psychology by the rectorship of the University of Chicago in 1894. He taught philosophy, psychology and pedagogy classes and during his teaching career and focused on social problems and published his works under the title of *Studies in Logical Theory*. In 1938, he became the lifetime honorary president of "American Philosophy Society"; after retirement, he wrote articles in periodicals such as *Republic and Nation*. He affected American education and social philosophy and became a significant person who affected the society with his articles over 100 and various books (Karadeniz, 2012).

Dewey visited many countries for his researches, and was invited to Turkey by Atatürk in 1924 and prepared a report about Turkish education system. After his researches about Turkish education system, the report he presented to Turkish Ministry of National Education influenced Turkey for many years and was discussed by Turkish science society. Dewey died in 1952 at the age of 93 as a result of a disease.

The aim of this research is to evaluate the researches about John Dewey in Turkey. For this reason, articles about the topic "John Dewey" in periodicals during Republic period are analyzed with content analysis method. As a result of this analysis, articles that are similar in terms of content are discussed under common titles. In this frame, it is seen that articles about John Dewey are about his effects on Turkish education system and education and philosophy. This is

why, articles about John Dewey during Republic period are evaluated in terms of his thoughts about education and philosophy and his effects on Turkish education system.

II. Articles about John Dewey's Effects on Turkish Education System

When the articles about Dewey's effects on Turkish education system are analyzed, it is seen that they are mostly about his visit to Turkey in 1924, the report he prepared, the process of preparation and his place and significance in Turkish thought life.

In periodicals, besides analyzing the change in American education system with Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, it was attempted to emphasize the deficiencies in traditional education system, and its insufficiencies in discovering children's interest and abilities. It is mentioned that he visited many countries in this process, made conferences and gave advices. One of the countries he visited was Turkey. He came to Turkey upon the invitation of Education Counselor, İsmail Safa and he prepared a report, including two sections, in three months (Ata, 2000; Ayas, 1949; Bal, 1989; Binbaşoğlu, 1954; Güçlüol, 1996; Güteryüz, 1984; Maral, 1970; Tuğaç, 1954; Vazife, 1956). In these periodical, it is stated that he made some solution suggestions to the problems in education system. One of these solution suggestions was about teacher training. It is seen that in many education reforms prepared by the Education Counselor, Mustafa Necati between 1925 and 1929, he was affected by Dewey's ideas. Mustafa Necati analyzed Dewey's suggestions about teacher training and actualized most of them. These suggestions are; teacher's training schools should be sufficient enough to set an example in terms of practical and theoretical education, teachers in these schools should be chosen amongst the most talented ones and they should make professional analyses abroad once in every five or six years, besides a practice school, there should be "Experience School", reading associations, discussion and meeting groups should be established among teachers and teachers should be able to take classes through communication. Mustafa Necati shares the ideas of Dewey in terms of raising qualified teachers, having sufficient equipments in schools, administrating these schools by local

administrations, giving hands-on and life-oriented classes (Bal, 1989; Güleriyüz, 1984).

Ata (2001) wrote an article on the preparation period of Dewey's report about Turkish education system and analyzed Dewey's program in Turkey through newspapers of the period. Ata stated that there was confusion in Turkish press about Dewey's aim in Turkey. İstanbul press firstly had written that Dewey came to Turkey as Education Counselor, but after a short time, it was understood that it was false information. Besides that, Ata stated that Dewey's suggestion of increasing teacher salaries was not a random suggestion; it was a suggestion after making interviews with teachers and listening their demands carefully. The newspapers of that period were the witnesses of these interviews. On the other hand, as it was break time for schools in Turkey, he couldn't see the practices, but attempted to reach some results on the basis of the situations of school buildings. According to Ata, while reading Dewey's report, this fact should be taken into consideration.

Turan (2009) who gave information about John Dewey's analyses in İstanbul and Ankara, narrated the speech of Dewey in Turkish Association. Dewey mentioned in this speech that the most significant need of Turkish education is vocational training. According to him, firstly, a salary that will enable teachers carry out their duties should be given. Dewey, who stated that the most significant tools that will develop a country are schools, mentioned that when teacher training is not good, then schools will not be beneficial as expected. He emphasized that if skillful, capable teachers can't be raised, then establishing teacher training schools is unnecessary. Turan, also gave some information about Dewey's working paper about Turkish education system. But in an article of professor Wexliard, Dewey's impressions about China and Turkey are explained and it is stated that Dewey's suggestions didn't have a real effect on organizing education. According to Wexliard, only some parts of primary education can be excluded from this criticism (Hızır, 1964). In periodicals, it was shown that the most significant reason why Dewey's thoughts couldn't be put into practice was that his suggestions didn't comply with the situation of the country (Hızır, 1964; Tuğaç, 1954).

In his article, Güçlüol (1996) discussed Dewey's effects on Turkish education system and stated that from the establishment of Republic, until today, our national education has achieved some great successes and the report of Dewey about Turkey was transgressed. According to him, effects of Dewey's thoughts and suggestions can be seen in; admission and execution of the law no 789, making education planned, establishing education administrations, improving professional and technical education institutions, diversifying teacher training and education schools, planning and organizing activities of education administrators.

One other thought of Dewey mentioned in the periodicals is his thoughts about schools. According to an article about this issue, Dewey sees school as a small model of society. Activities and basic institutions in society also exist in schools. So, the young who are raised in schools, which are a sample of society with different social institutions and relations, gain the first experience and intellect which are necessary for carrying out duties and responsibilities. According to this article, Dewey, brought school and society very close. (Tuğaç, 1954). But it is mentioned in periodicals that according to Dewey, practices in schools of that period couldn't prepare students to democracy citizenship. Dewey thought that school discipline and education methods are formal and formalistic. But schools of countries that are governed with Republic should be different in terms of discipline practices. An arbitrary administration which gives order and dictates is not proper for raising students to democracy citizenship (Güleryüz, 1984; Tuğaç, 1954). In an article about the death of Dewey, it is mentioned and criticized that although he was a significant philosopher and educationist raised in America, there was no words in Turkish press (Kaçar, 1952; Ufuklar, 1952). But Dewey is very important abroad. It can be understood from the articles that he is seen as a significant person not only after his death, but also before. In an article, it is mentioned that in his 90th birthday, President Truman sent a greeting letter to Dewey and 1500 people all around the world attended this birthday (Batu, 1950; Gündüzalp, 1949; Yasa, 1949). According to a program prepared by a committee in Ankara, a greeting telegraph was sent to the important pedagogue a meeting was held in conference Hall of Atatürk High

School and speeches about Dewey were made. One of these speeches belongs to Fuat Gündüzalp (1949). Gündüzalp mentioned in his speech that, although Dewey had written his most valuable book before the establishment of Republic in Turkey (1923), his recognition and translation of his works in Turkey occurred after the establishment of the Republic. Gündüzalp also had some criticisms about the issue; he stated that the first pedagogy history book in Turkey was written by Nafi Atıf Kansu in 1916, and although he mentioned Montessori in his book, Dewey wasn't mentioned. He added that he could find only one text about Dewey before Republic, which was a long article translated by İhsan Sungu.

Özsoy (2009) made a criticism similar to Gündüzalp and stated that Dewey's intellectual effect continuously spread both in interdisciplinary way and in a wide geography from west to east. He also said that Dewey was discovered very late in Turkey, by a very limited intellectual environment, he was misunderstood and misrepresented as none of his works which are directly about education –except “Freedom and Culture (1962)”, and there are very few secondary sources about the issue. Some of Dewey's works, directly about education, such as *The School and Society*, were translated into Turkish after 25 years. Turkey was only seen as a pedagogue or education philosopher, his other works in other fields weren't analyzed sufficiently, almost completely disregarded.

In his article upon the death of Dewey, Gündüzalp (1952) gives information about Dewey's life, contributions to Turkish education and works that are translated into Turkish. According to him, the basic reason why Dewey is a well-known pedagogue in Turkey is that he had come to Turkey in 1924 upon the invitation of the Ministry of Education and prepared a report about the education system in Turkey. Gündüzalp states that he is the father of 20th century education because of many reasons such as he takes the needs of children into consideration, the information in schools are applicable in real life.

Among articles about Dewey, there are some researches that analyze today's education problems comparatively through his views and suggestions. Bülbül (2009) compared today's education problems with the suggestions of Dewey in his report about Turkish education system in 1924. According to Bülbül, when findings and recommendations in the report, they don't exist, but they are

represented in a way that they include possible problems in future. He concluded that when today's education problems are taken into consideration in this perspective, it can be seen that the reasons of most of these problems are resulted from the fact that suggestions of significant professionals such as Dewey aren't taken into consideration and there are significant negligence both today and in the past.

III. Articles about John Dewey's Thoughts about Education and Philosophy

When the articles which are published in Turkey about Dewey's thoughts on education system, it can be seen that they are about; implementation of pragmatism on education, philosophical and psychological bases and features of the understanding of education and making children the center of education, Dewey's thoughts about school, features of the school he established and his thoughts about learning and teaching.

In periodicals, it is mentioned that Dewey is affected from pragmatic philosophy in terms of the understanding of education (Doğan and Öztürklü, 2010; Kaçar, 1957; Maral, 1970; Tuncor, 1976; Yasa, 1954). In other words, he measures and evaluates all of the events and thoughts on the basis of their effects in life. He sees pedagogy as the science of "establishing character", objects to education of child from the outside and states that instead of this, child should be active in learning process. Children who study in this way are beneficial for society. Sole information, submitting education system can not be accepted (Kaçar, 1957).

Dewey, known as one of the most important representative of pragmatism is almost the only person who developed this philosophy by applying its principles into education. The basic principal of pragmatism he represents is; attempting to reach realities through experiencing. In other words, pragmatism means valuing experience above everything. When this principal is applied in education, it creates learning through experience, being educated through work (Bender, 2005; Er, 1950; Üstündağ, 1950; Yasa, 1954). But there are also some people who state that Dewey is not in fact a pragmatist. In his article, Hilmi A.

Malik (1929) claims that Dewey is not a pragmatist, he is an instrumentalist, because if he was a pragmatist, he would write sentences in order to affect priests. In a study which includes the translation of Werrer Correl's article, philosophic and psychological bases of Dewey's thoughts on education are explained. It is mentioned in this study that philosophic bases of Dewey's school is similar to Dilthey and Nietzsche and instead of presenting a new thinking system, Dewey is interested in removing conflicting situations in life. Removing contradictory concepts is the basis of Dewey's philosophy. According to Correl, by contradictory concept, Dewey means the defects between humans and outer world. These defects occur when behaviors that results positively are repeated in other conditions and when they bang to the obstacles created by the world and can not reach the goal. This is why, new and unattempted behavior patterns should be continuously formed. The changing processes of behavior patterns are identical with the learning process. As human beings are in the center of behavioral change, the life characterizes this process (Kaya, 1992).

In the periodicals, it is stated that Dewey's school is one of the most significant tools of socialization (Çakır, 2006; Kaçar, 1952; Özgür, 1953 and 1968). According to Dewey, school is a small model of society, child is prepared for social life through school and it enables him/her express himself. Besides that, according to Dewey, education has both conservative and constructive features. Education is conservative as it enables transferring cultural heritage from adults to children. But Dewey states that despite this conservative feature of education, it has a more dynamic and general feature than the function of protecting status quo. According to him, through cultural instruments such as language and technology, an individual should have the chance to change the culture he inherited. Although Dewey's thoughts include socialization of child through school, he places "individual" in the center of everything and prefers an introspective method in which individual directs and disciplines himself. Schools should teach students thinking rather than what to think. But he thinks that instead of letting a child develop on his own, schools will be more beneficial in this process (Çakır, 2006; Kaya, 1992; Ufuklar, 1952).

According to Dewey 's understanding of education, child should grow up on his own, not by directly conveying information; he/she should create and learn on his own. But because of these thoughts, it shouldn't be thought that he is against school and teacher. Dewey is against schools and teachers who accumulate information on children, make them yield and passive. The school he advices is a small society that is active in reflecting the life of big community, living under the effect of art, history and science. Child is an organ of this society (Bender, 2005). Thoughts of Dewey on learning and teaching are some of the issues mentioned in periodicals (Maral, 1970; Shook, 2002). In his article Maral (1970), mentions three teaching principles of Dewey as directness, practical thinking and open mindedness. Maral explains that directness means no foreign interest between child and the topic to be learned, completely focusing on the topic, and he adds that this is very important in learning. According to the practical thinking, which is the second principle, teaching a topic just for teaching a class should be avoided. Teacher should be able to go off the subject, encourage observation, and evoke the feeling of success in students. Open mindedness principle means not being conservative and it is based on freedom. Completely depending on the goals of a class, forcing students think in some boundaries, not being able to create alternative solutions to problems, forcing students move on the same road and preventing freedom. According to Shook (2002), Dewey thinks that learning is a process that continues for a life time. This learning doesn't comply with traditions; learning is not a sole acquisition of facts that are added to the total of the beliefs of an individual, because although facts and abilities are a part of learning, it is not the "only" acquisition of abilities. According to Dewey, problem solving ability is the most important part of learning; problem solving is quite different from remembering facts and imitating. Problem solving means creating beliefs and abilities. Moreover, it means solving one's problems on his own, because according to Dewey, this can improve his problem solving abilities.

Binbaşıoğlu (1954) analyzes Dewey's pedagogy in three dimensions. These are; formation, functional and social education. Formation is shaped as an opposition to educating a child from outside. According to this, education enables child improve on his own. Educating child in the best way can not be done by only

giving information; good education means helping students draw conclusions and helping them experience. This is why, environment is very important. The second part of Dewey's pedagogy is visual education. According to functional education, instead of making students do useless things involuntarily, they should be supported for developing their instinct, transform information into a tool that eases life. The third part, social education is based on enabling individuals become useful to society. This is possible by placing child in a proper environment. This is why, according to Dewey, schools shouldn't be places that are away from social life, only dealing with classes.

Er (1950) gives information about the school Dewey established for the new views and practices about education. Er states that Dewey's principle in education is learning through practice. He also states that education should start with creative activities rather that arouse interest in children such as reading-writing. This is why, Dewey criticized traditional school as it gives little time for children to study, and children don't have the chance to get the necessary equipment for having an active role in teaching process. According to him, schools have the duty to enable child become a member of a small society, manage on his own. In his school that he established for reaching these aims, he placed handiworks in the center of all of the educational activities. In this way, child, who is put aside in traditional education, is in the center of all of the activities. According to Er, all these show that Dewey made a huge revolution in education. When the character of this revolution is analyzed, 4 main principles are seen. These are; teachers take the interest and needs of children into consideration, education is based on learning through experience, topics are transformed into necessities before teaching and schools are social institutions.

In the periodicals there was translation of an article by Max Eastman, who was an assistant of John Dewey. In these articles, it is emphasized that Dewey ended the idea that schools are places that prepare individuals to life, he is not only a successful pedagogue, but also a successful person in the field of philosophy in America. According to this article, the achievements of Dewey in education and philosophy are significant and In order to understand him

thoroughly, one should obtain information about his personality and nature (Özgür, 1953; 1968).

Besides Dewey's thoughts about education, his views in the field of philosophy are included in these periodicals. When the articles about his philosophic views are analyzed, it can be seen that they are about; features of Dewey's ideas on philosophy, comparison of Dewey, representative of pragmatic philosophy in America and Erişirgil, representative of the same philosophy in Turkey, Dewey's thoughts on democracy, religion and liberalism, Turkish modernization and Dewey's thoughts.

In a research about the approach to pragmatist philosophy in Turkey, the effect of cultural difference between two countries on pragmatist thinking is analyzed. This is why, Dewey and Erişirgil's similar and different thoughts on issues such as epistemology, axiology, ontology, teaching methods etc. are analyzed comparatively (Anar, 1988).

Dewey's thoughts on democracy are another issue included in the periodicals. It is mentioned that, Dewey accepts democracy, although he knows the defects of the system. According to him, the aim of political regulation is to help raise every individual on his own and this is possible by participation of each individual according to his/her abilities in determining the future of the policy of the society and future of the country he/she lives in. Dewey, who doesn't trust in state, believes that social works should be mostly carried out by voluntary organizations. He saw that there is individuality and social activity in the diversity of institutions, parties, organizations, workmen's clubs etc. State ensures coordination between them, limits their scopes and solves problems. Voluntary organizations can not be threatened with political boundaries. Dewey says that chemists, astronomers, companies, workmen organizations and societies established by churches exceed national boundaries, because the benefits they represent are global. This is why, according to Dewey, internationalism is not a goal, it is reality, it is not a sensual ideal, it is a power. According to him, human beings are independent but they have responsibilities in democracy. Human beings don't content with doing what is told, he/she wants

to be satisfied. He is not a slave; he is the part of an independent society (Aydoğdu, 2010; Güçlüol, 1996; Kaya, 1992; Türer, 2002; Vazife, 1957).

Shook (2002) states that, education is essential for democracy as it represents the progressive view of democratic problem solving. According to him, education should be supported by all of the social groups as it is crucial for democracy, and democracy should be the sole power in society. Shook mentions that Dewey suggests democracy in order to evaluate and increase school's efficiency and control and handle school systems. Dewey aims at directing children collective activities that require reflective thinking in order to enable them learn problem solving through cooperation. According to Shook, Dewey's social philosophy is democracy philosophy and this is they, there should be an education philosophy.

Another issue included in the periodicals about Dewey is his thoughts about liberalism. According to Yılmaz (2009), Dewey bears the changing social structure in mind and attempts to reconstruct liberalism with an understanding of constant change. According to him, the attempt to reconstruct liberalism also means the attempt to ground democracy. As can be understood, the thought of democracy represents his entire philosophy. In this respect, Dewey's approach is a liberal democratic theory. So, Dewey's thoughts are important as they support the views that there is a strong relation between liberalism and democracy and liberalism can produce a democracy.

When Dewey's religion philosophy is analyzed, effects of pragmatic philosophy can be seen. In his article about Dewey's religion philosophy, Türer (2009) writes that Dewey doesn't only deal with solving problems of modern culture between science and religion, he also attempts to overcome the discriminations between sacred and secular and religious life and daily life. In order to reach this goal, Dewey attempted to discover deep moral and religious meanings that shape American culture creatively. According to Türer, Dewey wrote a comprehensive work about religion and religious experience. *A Common Faith* (1934) is the most famous piece of art about religion that addresses the deepest and most meaningful parts of our existence, and states that religion is a

field of opportunities. Besides that, according to Türer, Dewey reflected his thoughts about religious issues for 60 years in his books and articles.

Özsoy (2009), who thinks that Dewey is an important representative of libertarian education tradition; he discussed the relation between Turkish modernization and education in terms of Dewey. According to him, Turkish modernization has the feature of being an education project. He researched the level of libertarian and democratic values in Turkish modernization through Dewey's perspective. In his research, Özsoy determined that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between libertarian and democratic values that Dewey defends.

4. CONCLUSION

Thoughts analyzed by Dewey are accepted not only in America, but also in many countries around the world. This is why, it can be said that, his thoughts can not be reduced to local features, they concern many countries. The point that makes Dewey important in Turkey is not "only" his thoughts. The reason why he is accepted to be a significant figure in Turkey and his thoughts have been discussed for many years in Turkey is that he visited our country and prepared a report afterwards. Based on the fact that there were a total of 39 articles about John Dewey in the periodicals during Turkey's Republic Period (1923-2013), it can be said that he was seen as a significant figure in Turkey.

When the articles about Dewey in periodicals are analyzed in terms of content, it can be seen that his effects on Turkish education system, his thoughts on education and philosophy are discussed. There are many articles in these periodicals about Dewey's report on Turkish education system. In these articles, although it is emphasized that Dewey's thoughts have significant effects on Turkish education system, they can not be completely practiced because of the conditions of the country.

Besides articles about Dewey's effects on Turkish education system, there are articles about his thoughts on education and philosophy. In these thoughts, effects of his commitment to pragmatic philosophy are clearly seen. In the

articles about Dewey's educational side, his thoughts on school, child, active learning, and bases of the thoughts about education, democracy education, learning and teaching were discussed. Articles about philosophical side of Dewey are fewer than the articles about his Turkish education system and educational side. The articles about his philosophical thoughts include pragmatic side, democracy, liberalism and religion. In the articles, it is especially emphasized that Dewey is under the effect of pragmatic philosophy both in terms of education and philosophy.

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