

“Self-Learning French Coursebooks” as Part of French Education in Post Tanzimat Era of the Ottoman Empire

Levent Ali Canakli¹ & Sercan Alabay²

¹ Faculty of Education, Bursa Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey

² School of Foreign Languages, Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Turkey

Correspondence: Sercan Alabay, School of Foreign Languages, Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Turkey.

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Abstract

French teaching in Ottoman Turkey found its actual speed with the Tanzimat period (the political reforms made in the ottoman state in 1839). Until the proclamation of the Republic, and even until the 1950s, French was considered the leading carrier of Western culture and civilization in Turkey, and teaching French was deemed necessary. However, it cannot be said that this was a very successful and sufficient period for French and foreign language teaching in general. Failure to fulfill the primary conditions of language teaching, such as teacher, material, and method, has been the main problem of foreign language teaching. When the lack of schooling is added, “self-learning French” books have emerged as an opportunity for teaching French, although they are not many. The five books discussed in the article, written in Turkish using the Arabic alphabet between 1867 and 1928, mostly describe the basic pronunciation rules, word types, sentence features, and grammatical information of French, starting with the alphabet, in a plain language and style. Although there was a good variety of French-Turkish dictionaries at that time, since economic conditions did not allow everyone to acquire a glossary, and even if there was an opportunity, which dictionary to choose is a different problem, as a standard feature in all of them, the vocabulary parts of the books were kept very wide. Books; It has been seen that both of them are successful when the measures such as showing the pronunciation of French words, grammatical knowledge that is not suffocating, broad vocabulary, the relevance of French and Turkish translation texts, page structure, language, and simplicity of expression are taken into account.

Keywords: French teaching, self-learning, Ottoman period textbooks, Tanzimat

1. Introduction

Due to the Ottoman Empire and France relations, the French language’s emergence in Turkey dates to the 17th century. However, the beginning of foreign language teaching in Turkish schools, which emerged as an inevitable need for learning Western science and technique, was realized through military schools established in 1773 (Demircan, 1988, p. 66). Therefore, it can be said that teaching French in Turkey has a history of approximately 250 years in parallel with Ottoman modernization.

With the schools opening after the Tanzimat, the widespread use of French teaching naturally created some needs, the foremost of which is the need for teachers to conduct French lessons. This need was initially met by Muslims who speak French, and primarily by minorities and foreigners, but “the need to train foreign language teachers specifically” was not felt in this period (Demircan, 1988, pp. 66–68); Until the language branch of Darülmualimin (faculty of education) was opened in 1910 (Pehlivan, 2019, p. 102), there was no institution that trained French teachers in the Ottoman Empire. In such a case, the ways to find a French teacher were as follows: “Those who received a French teacher or teacher’s license due to the competition exams opened by the Ministry of Education or the exam held before the commission were employed in schools. French lessons were given by permanent, mobile, or honorary teachers, military graduates from the Military Academy, and graduates of Darülfünun, Mülkiye, and Galatasaray High Schools. Apart from this, the personnel working as civil servants were given a double duty upon their request” (Güçtekin, 2017, p. 46). However, after opening the short-lived Language branch, the teacher issue was evaluated as insufficient in terms of both number and quality (Demiryürek, 2013, pp. 135–138).

Teaching methods are another issue in foreign language teaching, which means teaching French to a large extent

in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, the preferred method until the end of the 19th century was the traditional grammar-translation method (Demircan, 1988, p. 68). However, although there are bright examples such as Galatasaray Sultanisi, the failure in language teaching, in general, has brought about the search for new methods and discussions about it. The natural, direct, and selective (eclectic) methods were brought to the agenda in these discussions and became suggested and partially applied (Demircan, 1988, pp. 68–69; Pehlivan, 2019, pp. 18–22).

On the other hand, dictionaries and textbooks are among the basic needs as indispensable language teaching materials. When Turkish libraries are scanned, the efforts of Ottoman linguists and educators on this point are immediately noticeable. Especially in terms of the diversity of dictionaries, there is a remarkable richness compared to its time: Ottoman-French and French-Ottoman general dictionaries, pocket dictionaries, encyclopedic dictionaries, special field dictionaries related to scientific fields such as medicine and law, fishing dictionary, proverbs dictionary, etc.

There has not been comprehensive research on the French textbooks taught in the Ottoman period yet. However, based on the textbooks available, the content required for language teaching such as grammar, speaking, writing, handwriting in Latin letters, translation, and methods for students are not neglected; that many textbooks are translated from French; We are aware of the methods of the well-known linguists of the 19th century such as Ollendorff and Berlitz and that these methods are applied; It is possible to say that those who wrote books in the early days were generally from non-Muslim minorities. The oldest French textbook we can see is dated 1845.

The works listed below are the books approved/published by the Ministry of Education to be read as French textbooks in Ottoman schools. In addition, a large number of French grammar books and dictionaries that do not have this “approval” statement or are not clearly written as textbooks are not included in this list:

Yorgaki Brazi, Gramer Fransez Yani Sarf-ı Fransevi, İstanbul, 1845.

Thomas Xavier Bianchi, Fransızca ve Türkçe Yeni Tekellüm Risalesi, Paris, 1852.

Kirkor Margosyan, Sarf ve Nahv-i Fransevi, İstanbul, 1859.

Mekâtib-i Askeriye Şakirdanına Mahsus Fransızca Yazı Meşki, İstanbul, 1865.

M. Noel-M. Chapsal, Yeni Sarf-ı Fransevi, çev. Seraphin Lazian, Matbaa-i Aramyan, İstanbul, 1881.

Hüseyin Hasip, Nev Usul Sarf-ı Fransevi, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1882.

M. P. Poitevin, Nazari ve Amelî Nev Usul Nahv-i Fransevi, çev. Mekteb-i İdadi Fransızca Muallimi Refik, İstanbul, 1883.

Sarafim, Türkçe ve Fransızca Yeni Usul-i Mükâleme, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1883.

Emile Otto, Bedreka-i Lisan-ı Fransevi-Birinci Kısım: Kavaid-i Sarfiye, çev. Beşir Fuat, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1884.

Emile Otto, Bedreka-i Lisan-ı Fransevi-İkinci Kısım: Kavaid-i Nahviye, çev. Beşir Fuat, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1884.

Ömer Subhi, Kavaid-i Lisan-ı Fransevi, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1885.

M. K., Anasır-ı Sarf-ı Fransevi, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1886.

Jan Dimitriyadis, Durûb-ı Emsal-i Osmaniye ve Franseviye, Matbaa-i Ebuzziya, İstanbul, 1888.

Yusuf Muzaffer, Medar-ı Nutuk: Fransızca ve Türkçe Mecmua-i Mükâleme, Matbaa-i Ebuzziya, İstanbul, 1888.

Yusuf Ziya, Fransızca Numune-i İnşa, Mahmut Bey Matbaası, İstanbul, 1888.

Mehmet Halit, Fransızca Usul-i Tahrir ve Kitabet, İstanbul, 1889.

Resulzade Hüseyin Hüsni, Mükâleme Sene 2: Türkçe ve Fransızca, Matbaa-i Safa ve Enver, İstanbul, 1895.

Mehmet Rüştü, Ef'al-i Gayr-i Kıyasiye-i Franseviye, Mahmut Bey Matbaası, İstanbul, 1897.

Moiz Daimediko, Muallim-i Tercüme-i Mükâleme ve Kitabet-i Franseviye, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1897.

Y. Fehmi, Mükemmel ve Mufassal Rehber-i Mükâtebe-i Türkiye ve Franseviye, Ahter Matbaası, İstanbul, 1900.

Serab Abouhani, Bedreka-i Kıraat Yahut Tatbikatlı Fransızca Elifba, Saryan ve Şeriki Matbaası, İstanbul, 1902.

Hüsn-i Hat Fransevi Meşki, Mekteb-i Fünun-ı Harbiye Matbaası, 1902.

Maarif Nezaret-i Celilesi, Numune-i Elifba-yı Fransevi, Kasbar Matbaası, İstanbul, 1903.

- Ali Nazima, Zübde-i Usul-i Franseviye, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1908.
- Biti Ben Rubi, Mükemmel Rehber-i Ef'al-i Fransevi, Der Nersisyan Matbaası, 1910.
- Hüseyin Fehmi, Türkçe-Fransızca Tercüme Örnekleri, Tefeyyüz Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1911.
- Ali Atâ, Fransızca'yı Nasıl Öğrenmeli, Beynelmillel Ticaret Matbaası, Manastır, 1912.
- Laryo ve Flori, Sual ve Cevap Tarihiyle Kavaid-i Lisan-ı Fransevi-İbtidai Senesi, çev. Ali Nazima, Tefeyyüz Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1914.
- M. Berlitz, Metod Berliç'ten Tedris-i Lisan-ı Fransevi, çev. Orhan Selahattin, Gayret Kütüphanesi, İstanbul, 1924.

It can be said that these books, which are mainly prepared for formal education, meet the need in schools to a great extent. However, teaching French in the Ottoman Empire was necessary because the young citizens who went to school and society wanted to develop Western science, technique, and culture. However, the spread of French teaching was an issue directly proportional to schooling. The total number of public schools within the borders of the Ottoman Empire in the 1907–1908 academic year was 13,212, and the number of students studying in these schools was 639,836. Non-Muslim and foreign schools are not included in this (Güçtekin, 2017, pp. 45–46). Considering that the Ottoman population in 1914 was at most 19.5 million, it is immediately apparent that the schooling rate was not high. In addition, even if there was a school, due to the conditions of the Ottoman period from the 19th century until the establishment of the Republic, every child/young person in education age couldn't have the opportunity and opportunity to go to school. One of the solutions to this situation was “learning French by oneself”; Besides the books mentioned above, books suitable for the “self-learning” method have been written for those who do not have the opportunity to learn French at school. This study will examine five of the “French without a teacher” books published between 1867 and 1928.

2. Literature Review

L'Eclaircissement de la langue français, by John Palsgrave, is generally accepted the first French teaching book published in England in 1530 (Lambley, 1920). Extermann (Extermann, 2017) also claims the importance of multilingualism in modern shaped Europe in his overview of the teaching of modern languages in France and francophone Switzerland (1740–1940).

No comprehensive study has been found about the literature's French textbooks taught in Ottoman schools. The “French without a teacher” books, the subject of this study, have not been the subject of any research until today. Bozkurt and Karadağ (2013), in their study titled “A Comparative Study on French-Ottoman Turkish Proverbs Books,” examined three collections of Turkish and French proverbs prepared as an auxiliary source for students. In the study, three books that we can consider as additional resources for the course were introduced and compared regarding the number and content of proverbs. Eraslan (2020) dealt with the same subject in his study titled “Turkish Proverbs in Comparative Turkish and French Durûb-ı Emsâl” but listed the work's sayings differently from the previous one.

In his master's thesis titled “Teaching French in Secondary Education Institutions in Turkey: Historical Development, Models, Practices,” Tekin (2008) examined French textbooks. Still, these are textbooks in Latin letters after the Republic, not the Ottoman period. Yet another master's thesis “II. Foreign Language Education in Ottoman Higher Education in the Second Constitutional Period and Pehlivan (2019) conducted a quality archival study in the Darülfünun Elsin Branch. Demircan's (1988) comprehensive study on foreign language teaching in Turkey does not say anything about textbooks.

Demiryürek's (2014) study titled “Historical Development of Foreign Language Teaching Methods in Turkey (1891–1928)” includes the language teaching methods used in Turkey in the historical period and discussions about them. Although textbooks are not emphasized in the article, the journals that include activities related to French teaching (competition, translation, concise words, words with pronunciation mistakes, etc.) to serve those who are trying to learn French, and the method discussions in these journals about teaching French are emphasized. One of them is learning by reading “learning languages without a teacher,” which is the subject of this article. This article is essential as it shows that this issue was emphasized in the Ottoman period.

It may be considered that the only critical study on French textbooks of the Tanzimat period is Ayhan's (2018) research titled “Pre-Republic Materials in The Manuscript Library of Bursa Relating French Teaching.” In this study of the books on French education in Bursa Manuscripts Library, the author introduced some dictionaries, textbooks, and grammar books. At the same time, some of them gave only the imprint and evaluated the contents of the books. Include in the Method section information that provides definitions of all primary and secondary

outcome measures and covariates, including measures collected but not included in this report. Describe the methods used to collect data (e.g., written questionnaires, interviews, observations) as well as methods used to enhance the quality of the measurements (e.g., the training and reliability of assessors or the use of multiple observations). Provide information on instruments used, including their psychometric and biometric properties and evidence of cultural validity.

Autodidacticism and Self-Learning French Books

In today's economic, demographic and technological conditions of the world, it is seen that the self-learning method has become more and more critical. Studies in this area reveal that it is both easier and necessary for people to educate themselves (autodidacticism) in every imaginable field. Of course, not only today but also in every period of history, all kinds of impossibilities or conditions have led people to self-educate. This form of education, expressed with closely meaningful concepts such as autodidacticism, self-teaching, and self-study, can be encountered in almost every society. However, this area lacks academic recognition (Sørensen, 2011, p. 30). In this sense, especially after the Tanzimat, many "autodidact" names can be counted among the Turkish intelligentsia and statesmen. Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, Ahmet Vefik Pasha, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, and Peyami Safa are truly great autodidacts of Turkish history. They learned French, not at schools, but rather in an autonomous way. It should also be considered that the self-taught French books that will be examined here can be connected to this "tradition" with one side.

2.1 *Mükâleme-i Sıbyan*

It is a two-volume work, translated from Olendorf in *Lisan-ı Fransevi*, by Chief of Staff and military school lecturer İsmail Hakkı. At the beginning of the work, printed and handwritten examples of the French alphabet, letters doubles, French syllables, signs, vowels, and consonants are shown. The first volume is divided into 86 lessons in the form of conversation. Each class includes a subject from French grammar and examples of words, phrases, and sentences related to this subject. At the end of the lesson, there are 3 or 4 translation exercises. These exercises are in the form of conversation. After the student has translated them, they can check whether the translation is correct in the Key volume, prepared as the book's second volume.

One of the critical shortcomings of this two-volume work, consisting of 400+172 pages, is that the pronunciation of French words is not given. However, a book claiming to "teach oneself French" should not have had this defect. A second issue concerns the language used by the author in the translation. Although the book says "self-learning," those who will study the book must be at a certain level of education to understand the language used in work. At least it is necessary to know the grammatical terms of Ottoman Turkish at that time. Therefore, the work does not appeal to "everyone," but to students attending the school (İsmail Hakkı, *Mükâleme-i Sıbyan-Kendi Kendisine Fransız Lisanını Öğrenmek İçin Türkçeye Tercüme Olunan Ollendorff Usulünün Anahtarı I-II*, yayın yeri yok, İstanbul, 1867, 400+172 s).

2.2 *Hocasız Fransızca Öğrenmek Usulü*

It was written by Mustafa Fazıl, the language teacher of Şemsulmaarif School. In the preface, the author states that he started to write this book because there is not yet a perfect book containing all the rules of French in Turkish, and adds that this book is intended for people who want to learn French without consulting a teacher due to their busyness.

The French spelling and pronunciation rules required to read the phrases are given first in work. In these rules given in 30 titles, no mistakes were found by the author, and it was seen that a sufficient level of writing knowledge was given considering the audience that the book addressed. In addition, some rules that need to be explained when appropriate are included in the footnotes. After these rules, pronunciation exercises with sentences are given. In the examples here, the original French spelling, Turkish pronunciation, and Turkish meaning are given together, which constitutes one of the successful and superior aspects of the work. At the end of the chapter, translations of these French sentences into Turkish are given. After this introduction, we move on to the grammar part. Grammar part names, types, and features; articles; adjectives, their properties, and classes; feminine and masculine; verbs, conjugation rules, tenses, regular and irregular verbs; pronouns and their types; envelopes; conjunctions; It consists of 11 parts, including prepositions and exclamations. Plenty of vocabulary and translation exercises are included at the end of each chapter. The vocabulary feature has simple words and elements such as phrases and predicates. All of the exercise sentences are available in both French and Turkish. Again, in each section, helpful information is given under the heading "Notions Utiles" information about French sentence construction is seen in these sections.

When we look at the book in general, it is possible to say that it is not intimidating for those who want to learn

French but facilitating and encouraging. It can be easily said that when the given instructions are followed to the end and the necessary exercises are done, it will carry the reader to a critical point in French knowledge. In addition, it should be said that the language of the book has a simple and easily understandable expression according to the period, by the purpose (Mustafa Fazıl, *Hocasız Fransızca Öğrenmek Usulü*, Şirke-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1890, 343 s).

2.3 *Nev Usul Hocasız Fransızca*

This work, which belonged to the same author and was published five years after the previous one, can be considered a continuation of the book examined above. As the name suggests, the book, which offers a new method, consists of the teacher and the student. The interesting point is that the author wrote the part that belongs to the teacher, not for a teacher to use, but for the learner. In other words, this part will be a teacher for the learner in terms of method. To benefit from the book, the author gives the following advice: To take a break when you get bored, read aloud, write as well as read, not move on from one topic to another without completing it, repeat the studied part one day later, try to make sentences with the learned words.

The “only for the teacher” part consists of reading lessons, verb conjugations, and translation studies. These studies are usually given in Latin letters; their pronunciation is included in the student’s region. It should be said that the book, which presents a working method that confuses this respect, is not very useful. But on the other hand, keeping the vocal parts very wide offers a significant advantage to the learners. Because although there were many French-Turkish dictionaries published at that time, it can be difficult for a substantial part of the society to access and even buy these dictionaries.

Author Mustafa Fazıl added a presentation by Ahmet Mithat Efendi to the beginning of his book. In this presentation, “I read the book with an effort to criticize, I could not find a place to object to its subject.” Says Ahmet Mithat Efendi, who is considered an authority for that period’s media, literature, and cultural life. For this reason, it would not be wrong to say that the author seeks to establish a reputation for his book thanks to Ahmet Mithat’s presentation. In addition, as the author states in the foreword, especially around his first book, “There is no French without a teacher.” There have been some criticisms. Some of these criticisms were also reflected in the press of the period (Gülmez, 2013, pp. 199–200). It can also be thought that he wanted to prevent these criticisms by writing a presentation to Ahmet Mithat (Mustafa Fazıl, *Nev Usul Hocasız Fransızca*, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1895, 158+136 s).

2.4 *Kendi Kendine Fransızca Yahut Mükemmel Elifba-yı Fransevi*

The author’s name is mentioned only as “Nüzhet” on the cover of the work. Still, since the word “Nüzhet Pasha” is mentioned as the author of the book titled *Self-German or Perfect German Elifba* (1914), which was prepared in the same way from the same publishing house, the author of the French text is also the same person, namely Mehmet Ali Nüzhet Pasha. Should be. Book; It includes the pronunciation of the letters in the French alphabet, the sounds together, the vocal parts of the frequently used words, frequently used practical sentences, tenses, and verb conjugations. This study, which deals with some basic subjects of French without too much detail, can be considered a beginner’s booklet for students, even though it has deficiencies such as the inadequacy of pronunciation information and the randomness of the subjects it covers (Nüzhet, *Kendi Kendine Fransızca Yahut Mükemmel Elifba-yı Fransevi*, Gayret Kütüphanesi, İstanbul, 1913, 48 s).

2.5 *Hocasız Fransızca Öğrenmek*

On the book’s cover, instead of the author’s name, there is an abbreviation “P.S.” For this reason, the author’s name is referred to as “Peyami Safa” in the library records. The fact that Peyami Safa, a famous Turkish writer, has a work called *French Grammar* published in 1942 among hundreds of books written by him, and that he learned French by himself (Ayvazoğlu, 1999, p. 47), makes it possible that he wrote the book called *Learning French without a Teacher*.

The following sentences he wrote on the book’s cover to promote the book reveal the author’s claim: “Everyone who reads and writes in Turkish can read and write French correctly in the first five lessons thanks to this book. He progresses quickly in other lessons, learns vocabulary (words), understands what he reads better, and translates from Turkish to French and from French to Turkish. Even those without primary school education can learn French on their own with this book.” The author states that for this purpose, he gives place to more applications with grammatical rules and grammatical terms not to tire the reader’s mind, and those who want can find these concepts and practices in the footnotes.

As in the other books reviewed, this book also does not have a table of contents. In the first part, called “Preparation to Read and Write in French,” after the letters in the French alphabet are written together with their

Turkish pronunciation, examples of which letters should be read and where they should not be read. In the second part, “gender of the words” (feminine, masculine), article, plural formation in words, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, regular and irregular verbs, case suffixes, spelling and pronunciation of personal names, frequently used words and prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, conditionals are explained in a well-organized page structure with understandable and straightforward expressions by the purpose. Pronunciation is given in the first place of a term when the exact phrase is repeated later. It is unnecessary to provide the pronunciation again, but there are many words whose accent is forgotten, which is missing in the parts where numbers, month, and day names are given. After each title, translation texts were added, giving the French and Turkish versions. These texts have been chosen in short sentences to reinforce the subject. However, there are some inaccuracies in the translation order. For example, “Je Suis riche.” and “Tu es pauvre.” sentences in the wrong order “I am poor.” and “You are rich.” (P.S., 1928, p. 56).

At the end of the book, there is a list of 250 sentences that can be used in daily conversations (P.S., 1928, 195–206). In this respect, the book also has the quality of a speaking guide. In addition, a few simple poems under the title of “Easy Poems” have been added to the last parts of the book. These are Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian’s fable “Le Roi de Perse”, a short excerpt from Alphonse de Lamartine’s poem “Hymne au Soleil”, and a part of Hilaire Belloc’s poem “L’oiseau”. The lyrics were included in the book without giving the names of the poets (P.S., 1928, 206–208).

The order of the subjects from the simple to the complex, the variety of examples, the richness of the vocabulary, the shortness of the sentences in the exercises in the form of translation according to the level, and the presentation of the pronunciation forms are the superior sides of this textbook. In this respect, it is suitable for “self-learning”. In addition, the fact that it was written when Turkish was significantly simplified made the language of the book extremely easy to understand (P.S., Hocasız Fransızca Öğrenmek, Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, İstanbul, 1928, 208 s).

3. Discussion and Conclusion

Foreign language teaching, which emerged as a part of the Ottoman Empire’s need for innovation, could not be successful for various reasons. The leading causes are teacher shortage, low schooling rate, uncertainty and arbitrariness, alphabet difference, lack of planning, and material inadequacy. Among all these disruptions, the “learning a foreign language by oneself” books, which are written under various names and are very few, are works that were created with the thought of filling a gap in the field and with good intentions. Another point that should be mentioned here is that although French comes to mind when talking about a foreign language in the period mentioned above, after the 1910s, a few books have been written for the “self-learning” of German and English (Nüzhet, 1914, 1917; SMT, 1919; Enver, 1919). However, the number of books written in this genre, including the books reviewed above, does not exceed 10, as far as we can see.

Naturally, some of the books written in French were used or taken as an example when writing the self-learning French books that we examined. However, the source used/translated from these works in the book *Mükâleme-i Sibyan* has been stated. Others do not have any source. The authors have made different preferences in terms of subject order, narration and examples, and they wrote in a way they think Turkish readers can learn quickly.

The most crucial aspect of self-learning in the 19th century was the issue of pronunciation. Perhaps the only source (depending on one’s place of residence) for the out-of-school person to learn how to pronounce French words is the books they read. Therefore, the French pronunciations must be written in self-learning books. Only one author did not pay attention to this issue; other authors gave accents (more or less).

Considering the intended audience, the language used in such books is also essential. Since people with deficiencies in formal education are mainly targeted, care should be taken to ensure that the narration is straightforward the style is instructive and plain. The use of the page is not complicated. In this respect, the most successful among the books is Peyami Safa’s book. Since Peyami Safa is a self-taught writer, it is clear that he also benefited from his personal experience while writing his book.

Another remarkable point in the books is that the vocal parts are affluent. In order to eliminate the need for the use of a dictionary, at least at a basic level, the most used words and phrases in French are included with their use in a sentence. Again, almost all of the books are translated into French with their Turkish equivalents. The use of short sentences in the texts in this exercise (practice) section is an application that will encourage and motivate the student in terms of convenience.

Since we do not have sufficient statistics today, it is impossible to show clearly the issues such as how many times these books were published, the number of editions, and to what extent they were favored by Turkish

society. However, after the Tanzimat, it is inevitable that the Turkish intelligentsia and community, who knew the West and admired what the West produced in every field, had a strong need and enthusiasm to learn a foreign language. The fact that the number of Muslim Ottoman citizens who send their children to non-Muslim or minority schools, instead of public schools, due to both the quality of education and the opportunity to learn languages, is not low (Güçtekin, 2017, p. 44) is one of the indicators of this. In addition, it is seen that the number of newspapers and magazines published in French in the Ottoman country until the Republican period was 701 (Demircan, 1988, p. 45). Considering that these did not only appeal to non-Muslims and minorities, an intense “French atmosphere” was formed in the country. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that “French without a teacher” books, which were written in this atmosphere and stand out with their practical aspects, are attractive not only for those who try to learn foreign languages but also for students who attend school.

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