



Comparison of Turkish and Western children's songs in terms of measure keys¹

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Abstract

Children songs are one of the factors helping children love music, develop their music skills, contributing to cognitive development particularly during early childhood. Although it is considered that most children's songs are similar in terms of voice area and musical structure, the musical and cultural components of the society where they belong may be reflect in some differences in the children's songs. There are essential similarities and differences between Turkish and Western children's songs. They can be seen in several factors such as theme, tonal and rhythmic structures. The measure keys of the songs may also display both difference and similarity in this respect.

This study, based on "general scanning model" and "relational scanning model", has been conducted on 1000 Turkish Children's songs and 1000 Western children's songs. As a result of the study, determined that measure key counts are highly different but the most frequently used measure keys are parallel.

Key words: Turkish Children's Songs, Western Children's Songs, Measure Key, Rhythmic Structure, Musical Analysis

¹ This study constituted from the doctorate thesis which name is "The Comparative Analysis of Turkish and West's Children Songs"

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Introduction

The songs made for children with their lyrics and melodies are defined as “children's songs” (Seyrek, n.d., s.13). Children's songs are inevitable part of music. Children songs helping children love music and develop their music skills as well as teaching social rules, national values, contributing in personal development, accompanying games, making children happy, providing interpersonal communication and particularly contributing to cognitive development and language development during early childhood are also a very important milestone in general music teaching. Lullabies, rigmaroles, narration and story-telling songs, folk songs and other school songs are considerably important in music education.

One of the main components in general music education is children's songs. Because songs are the most common and comprehensive, effective and efficient, permanent and the nobles musical communication means in formal general music education (Uçan, 2003, s.7).

Within the scope of children's songs, are “adapted songs” which are borrowed from melodies of foreign countries and lyrics of which are re-written in mother tongue; “emulation songs” composed by composers of a society, originated from music of other societies, and songs “unique to the society songs” taking its origins from the society. Besides the songs falling in those groups, children's songs also contain folk songs that can be sung by children, rigmaroles, jingles and lullabies as well as songs made by use of popular melodies from time to time.

There are several songs melody of which have been adapted from the Western melodies and emulation songs from Western music in Turkish children songs. Particularly, during the years after foundation of Republic Turkish lyrics were made for Western melodies as well as new compositions by use of Western music rules were made. However, the problem of the prosody (lyrics-music harmony) seen in transferred songs and problem in harmony of lines, melodies encountered from time to time have led the composers to compose by use of local styles, melodies and rhymes . In this case, the fact that children's songs having musical melodies and Turkish rhythms are favourite is a big factor. It has been started to use Turkish melodies and rhythm forms frequently and to use anonymous melodies in Turkish children's songs after 1970s.

Today Turkish children's songs are composed by use of Western music tones, melodies and Turkish music styles and rhythms. There are some essential similarities and differences between Turkish and Western children's songs. However, size and nature of such similarities and differences have not been studied much until now.

Measure key is one of the variable factors of children's songs. Measure key displays the number unit keys in one measure key and form of sequence of the units in a piece of music.

The purpose of this study is to find out the measure keys of Turkish and Western children's songs and to establish the similarities and differences between two groups statistically.

Research significance

This study is essential as it presents statistical results about the subject, and it suggests the degree of similarities in terms of simplicity unique to the children's songs on basis of measure keys of Turkish and Western children's songs as well as difference in terms of musical culture they belong to. Furthermore, reliability, the validity and importance of the results increase as the study has been conducted on a wide sampling consisting of 2000 songs.

Method

In the scanning models, current status and conditions are tried to be maintained as they are (Kaptan, 1998, s.59). In this study, "general scanning model" and "relational scanning model" have been used to find out and compare the measure keys of Turkish and Western children's songs.

The population of this study is Turkish children's songs and Western children's song fields and the sample is 1000 Turkish children's songs and 1000 Western children's songs.

Limitations: The transferred songs whose lyrics are Turkish but melody is foreign have not been included in the study. The term of "Western" in this study includes Central and Western European Countries and Northern American countries.

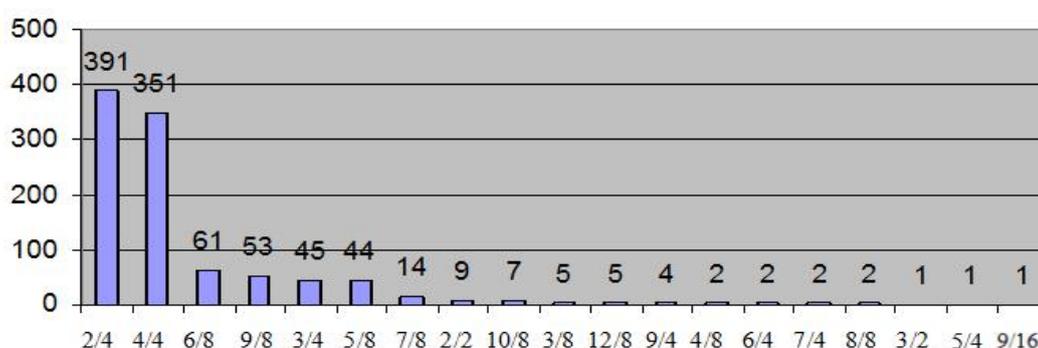
Collection of Data: The data have been obtained by means of scanning the literature. The children's songs studied under this study were obtained from libraries, albums, educators, private archives.

Findings and discussions

Upon comparison of Turkish children's songs and Western children's songs in respect to measure keys, it has been found out that Western children's songs have total 10 measure keys while Turkish children's songs have total 19 measure keys. Almost two times of measured keys in Turkish children's songs in respect to Western children's songs are seen. It is because the measure keys such as 9/8, 5/8, 7/8 used in Turkish music frequently are reflected in children's songs too.

The following graphics show the frequency of use of measure keys in Turkish children's songs firstly and then in Western children's songs.

Graphic 1. Measure keys and frequency of use of them in Turkish children's songs



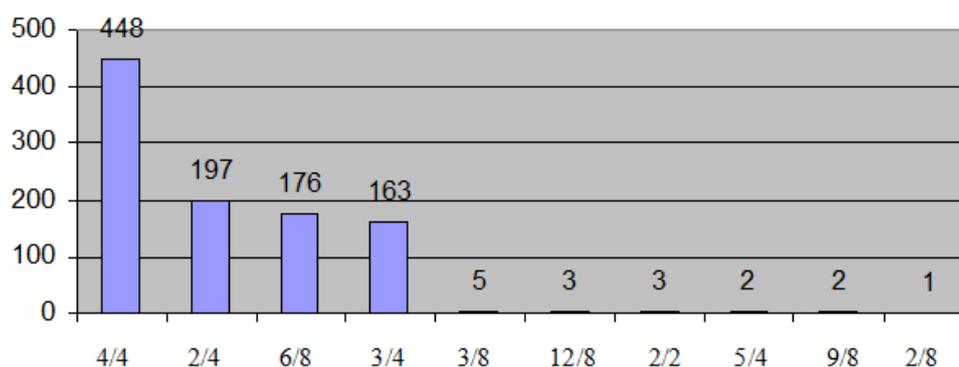
Graphic 1. shows that the measure key which is used most frequently in Turkish children's songs is 2/4. Measure key of 4/4 is the second most frequently used one. The measure keys of 2/4 and 4/4 has the rate of use corresponding to 74,2% in all Turkish children's songs.

Although total 19 measure keys have been used in Turkish children's songs, the number of songs where the measure keys of 2/4, 4/4, 6/8, 9/8, 3/4, 5/8, 7/8 is used is 10 at the most. The rate of the said seven measure keys in all Turkish children's songs is 95,9%.

The most important reason for frequent use of measures keys of 2/4, 4/4, 6/8 and 3/4 is the simplicity of children's songs in terms of form. The measure keys of 9/8, 5/8 and 7/8 are the measure keys used frequently and favoured in Turkish music. As it is understood from Graphic 1, this effect is also seen in Turkish children's songs.

Graphic 2. shows frequency of use of measure keys used in Western children's songs.

**Graphic 2. Measure keys and frequency of use of them
in Western children's songs**



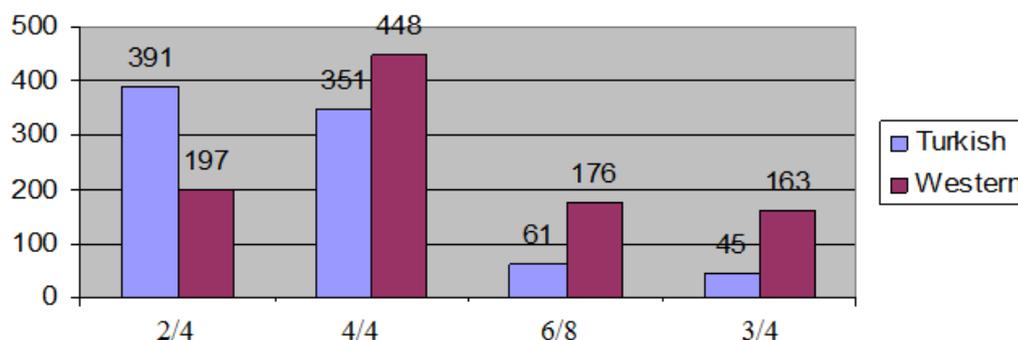
Graphic 2. shows that the measure key most frequently used in Western children's songs is measure key of 4/4 with a high rate. The measure key of 4/4 has use rate of 44,8% in all Western children's songs. Although total 10 measure keys are used, measures other than 4/4, 2/4, 6/8 and 3/4 have been used in at most 5 songs. The rate of the said four measure keys in all Turkish children's songs is 98,4%.

Measure keys of 2/4 and 4/4 in Turkish children's songs and Western children's songs have the biggest use rate. However measure key 2/4 is the most used key in Turkish children's songs, 44,8% of Western children's songs have been composed in measure key of 4/4. Although measure keys of 6/8 and 3/4 are the measure keys frequently used in both groups, while measure keys of 9/8, 5/8, 7/8 are used more in Turkish children's songs, measure key of 9/8 has been used twice and measure keys of 5/8 and 7/8 have not been used at all in Western children's songs.

Turkish children's songs have more measure keys. The reason there of is the frequent use of measures unique to Turkish music in Turkish children's songs. Despite diversity, since the frequently used measure keys are similar, the correlation between measure keys in Turkish and Western children's songs is **0,83**

Graphic 3. shows comparison of measure keys used in at least 10 songs of Turkish and Western children's songs.

Graphic 3. Comparative graphic of measure keys used in at least ten(10) songs commonly in Turkish and Western children's songs



Displaying the distribution of measure keys used in at least 10 songs commonly in both groups of Turkish and Western Children's songs, the Graphic 3 shows that use of measure key of 2/4 is more in Turkish children's songs, while use of measure keys of 4/4, 6/8 and 3/4 is more in Western children's songs. The reason for this is the fact that Turkish children's songs are composed in various measure keys while Western children's songs are mostly in the four measure keys indicated in Graphic 3.

Conclusion

In this study where measure keys used in Turkish and Western children's songs are studied comparatively, it has been discovered that 19 measure keys have been used in Turkish children's songs while 10 measure keys have been used in Western children's songs. It is because of the fact that the measure keys such as 5/8, 7/8, 9/8 frequently used in Turkish music are also used in children's songs. This case is also considered as reflection of richness of Turkish music into Turkish children's songs.

Despite the difference in the number of measure keys, frequently used measure keys have indicated similarities because of structural simplicity in children's songs. For that reason, the correlation between Turkish and Western children's songs has been calculated as 0,83 This indicates a high relationship.

Measure key of 2/4 is the most used measure key in Turkish children's songs while it is 4/4 in Western children's songs.

I would like to thankfulness Professor Dr. M. Cihat CAN for his support.

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