



## **Can We Apply Kodaly Philosophy in Turkey as School Music Education Programme?\***

**Sibel Çoban**

Marmara University, sakinci@marmara.edu.tr

### **Abstract**

Kodály claimed that the most urgent task is to make the means of music culture accessible for as many people as possible, primarily through the schools. It is clear that Kodály's philosophy can be involved in music education at schools in order to find ways to include all students in musical learning all over the world through social and cultural transformation. In this study it will be discussed the possibility and necessity of being involved in Turkey as school music education programs and questioned how and why this inclusion will occur.

*Keywords:* Kodaly Concept, Music Education, Children Music Education.

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## Introduction

The method that is named after Hungarian composer and music pedagogue is Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) and his thoughts are practised in almost all the world countries, includes the child developmental music education. (Choksy, Abramson, Gillespie, Woods, 1986) This approach that started to be first applied in Kodaly's birth place, Kecskemet, Hungary, in 1950s. Currently, there are music education programs in which Kodaly's principles are applied and children who are brought up with these programs apart from Hungary, in almost all the Republics of old Soviet countries (Sultanova, 2011;.), in many countries of the world like USA, Australia, Japan, besides in many European countries like UK, France, Belgium. (Bonis et all, 1986).

In children's music education, the superiority and benefits of Kodaly's philosophy and method is indisputable. If we recall Kodaly's philosophy and approach to children's music education here, briefly the following titles stand out.

- A. Everyone has the right to music literacy and it is meant to be enjoyed!
- B. Singing can and should provide the foundation for all types of music.
- C. Music education should begin at the earliest possible age.
- D. A child's own culture provides his/her musical "mother tongue." Folk music is the "musical mother tongue" of the child. Folk songs provide ideal materials for music education.
- E. Only music that clearly demonstrates artistic merit (folk or composed) should be used in teaching.
- F. Only the finest musicians should teach music. The lessons should be child-centered with a discovery approach. The goal is music literacy. The teacher creates a stimulating, joyful, and invigorating atmosphere in the classroom. This is the essence of Kodály. The teacher makes the difference. (Casarow, p.2)

According to Dobszay, (1972) "If we read Kodaly's writings we discover that it was certain fundamental ideas, fundamental value-experiences that mobilized his intelligence and emotions in the direction of education and all his practical advice stemmed from these, and this advice is to be interpreted only in relation to these."

Accordingly, the inferences that Dobszay want to take the attention of music educators in Kodaly's child developmental approach as main titles are as follows;

- ✓ *Relative solmization and tonal experience,*
- ✓ *Folksong and musical value,*



- ✓ *Singing and musical imagination,*
- ✓ *School and humanistic education,*
- ✓ *Culture and personality.*

It is not necessary to repeat the uniqueness of Kodaly approach and its necessity in the children's music education here. What the Turkish children get from this process from which the children of many world countries benefit during their school education? Constitutes the main theme of this research. Accordingly the research consists of the following sub-titles.

- *Background to the Music Education Programmes and Applications at Schools in Turkey*
- *The necessity and convenience of Kodaly's approach in Turkish School music education programs.*

These titles will be interpreted based on the Kodaly philosophy that is mentioned above as six items and the inferences of Dobszay (1972).

### **Background To The Music Education Programmes And Applications At Schools In Turkey**

The music course program that is still being carried out in elementary schools in Turkey is the program that was prepared along with the two-stage extension (5+3) of compulsory education to eight years in 2006 by Ministry of Education in the same year. The main approach of the program has been prepared according to the constructivist approach.

Here under; "as well as being based on a student centered approach, it is based on the principle of a student's associating, interpreting and adopting a new information with the information and skills that he/she gained before." (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı; 2006, p.5).

In this program that has been prepared for students of elementary school grades from 1 to 8, the teaching fields placed on four learning fields the titles of which are "Listening-Singing-Playing", "Musical Perception and Grounding", "Musical Creativity" and "Music Culture". On the other hand, in the process of learning and teaching of the music course, general teaching methods are included along with the active learning methods for music courses, which show parallelism with the student oriented educational approach (Dalcroze et al as cited in Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2006, p.7, 8).

As of 2012-2013 academic year, the compulsory education was extended to 12 years and school starting age was determined to be 6 in Turkey. In this regulation that consists of three stages of four years, the music courses are limited to one hour a week. The music



courses are being carried out by classroom teachers during the first four years while in the second and third stage, they are being carried out by music teachers. Another important issue here is that music courses are included in the program as elective courses which are applied as two hours a week in the third stage (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2014).

### **The Circumstances of Music Teacher Training in Turkey Today**

The section up to here reflects the music education in elementary and secondary schools briefly and theoretically. The circumstances of training music teachers for these institutions can be summarized as follows;

In Turkey, music teachers for elementary and secondary schools are mainly trained in the faculties of education of universities. It is possible to reach the detailed information about programs, contents of the courses and circumstances of training music teachers (Konkol, Nieczyporowski, 2012, p. 32). At this stage, the attention will just be drawn on the relationship of the programs of the institutions which train music teachers and the programs of elementary school music courses with each other.

The information that is mentioned above about the fact that it is necessary to include the active learning methods (Dalcroze, Orff, Kodaly, et al) in music education takes place theoretically in the program of elementary school music courses. In parallel with this, there is no information available about the teaching of the learning methods in music teacher programs of education faculties that train music teachers. (T.C.Yükseköğretim Kurulu, 2007; p. 197, 199-200, 221).

To give information based on the observations and experiences about the practice, the followings can be stated.

Although active learning methods like Dalcroze, Orff, and Kodaly etc. are a part of the music teacher programs even though theoretically, it is known that especially the Orff approach is being taught within the context of special teaching methods I-II and game-dance and music courses in the music departments of some universities in big cities.

It is definitely necessary to introduce and teach all the methods and approaches that are known and practiced currently about training a music teacher to the pre service music teachers. In many countries of the world it is like this.

In recent years in Turkey, significant and beneficial studies have started and developed in time about the teaching of Orff approach. Especially the music teachers and pre service teachers in big cities have the chance to improve their knowledge and experience by



attending the Orff seminars and share them with their students. Owing to these seminars, the number of lecturers who are acquainted with and apply the Orff approach are increasing in the Departments of Music Education of Education Faculties as well. These seminars that are held nationally and internationally also give the music teachers the chance to share their knowledge and experience with each other and practice the best and accurate music teaching in their classes. Unfortunately, music teachers and lecturers in Turkey do not have this kind of an opportunity in learning and applying the Dalcroze and Kodaly approaches. It is not possible to teach Dalcroze and Kodaly methods in the universities of big cities apart from some universities of some big cities, especially İstanbul.

Yet Welzel, A., K. (2008, page: 439) as indicated “Comparative music education is not a luxury, but rather a necessity in the twenty-first century. Scholars and music teachers in many countries are struggling with similar problems such as teacher training, performance-based or general music education, classroom management or standards in music education. It would be useful to improve the exchange between various traditions of music education both in terms of developing more effective methods in comparative music education as an international endeavour.”

### **Convenience of Kodaly Approach in Music Education in Turkish Schools**

Kodaly child developmental music education approach is quite convenient and necessary for music education in Turkish schools. Under this title, its necessity and convenience to be included in training of music teachers and music course programs of elementary-secondary schools will be mentioned with reasons.

The necessity of Kodaly’s child developmental music education in the music education in schools in Turkey will be commented on considering the titles of pentatonizm, folk song and musical value, school and humanistic education.

### **Pentatonizm**

#### **Historical Background**

There are many resources that support the information that the origin of Turkish Folk Music is also based on modal pentatonic scales. This issue is first mentioned by Mahmut Ragıp Kösemihal (Gazimihal). He emphasized the existence of pentatonic scale in Turkish Folk music in his book (1936; 2006).



Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1986) has also mentioned that Turkish folk music is based on a pentatonic scale in the report he gave to Turkish Historical Society with the following detections;

- 1- “Pentatonizm is not a common way for all races in musical process of mankind. It has a completely racial peculiarity,
- 2- The Turkish affected the natives by creating a civilization on those places in ancient times,
- 3- Its expansion route is the same with the route of Turkish expansion”

The Hungarian Composer Bela Bartok, coming to Turkey in 1936 upon the invitation of Community Center of Ankara and organized compilation tours in Adana and around to discover the pentatonic scale of Turkish folk music on site. As a result of these tours, Bela Bartok has stated his observations and thoughts in his books and articles as the modal scale of Turkish folk music is based on pentatonizm just like Hungarian folk music. With the invitation of Bela Bartok to our country, studies on pentatonic music accelerated in Turkey. The Turkish musicians of the time consecutively published books and articles about pentatonizm. Some of them are as follows;

Ahmet Adnan Saygun’s “Türk Halk Musikisinde Pentatonizm” (1936) (Pentatonizm in Turkish Folk Music)

Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal’s; “Türk Halk Musikilerinin Tonal Hususiyetleri Meselesi” (1936) (The Issue of Tonal Peculiarities of Turkish Folk Music),

“Türk Halk Musikilerinin Kökeni Meselesi” (1936), (The Issue of Origin of Turkish Folk Music)

“Asya Türk Halk Musikisinde Pentatonizm” (Musıki Ansiklopedisi, 1947).  
(Pentatonizm in Asian Turkish Folk Music)

Ferruh Arsunar’s; “Anadolu’nun Pentatonik Melodileri Hakkında Birkaç Not” (1937)  
(A Few Notes about Pentatonic Melodies of Anatolia),

“Tunceli-Dersim Halk Türküleri ve Pentatonik” (1937). (Tunceli-Dersim Folk Songs and Pentatonic)

Sadi Yaver Ataman’s “Türk Halk Musikisinin Bir İki Karakteristiği ve Pentatonizm Meselesi” (One or two Characteristics of Turkish Folk Music and the Issue of Pentatonizm)  
(Musıki Ansiklopedisi, 1947).



“Halk Müziği Hakkında Bela Bartok’un 3 Konferansı” (Ankara, 1936). Şenel, S.; (2000, p: 34) (3 Conferences of Bela Bartok about Folk Music) that was published by Community Center of Ankara.

Getting interested in this issue, many Hungarian musicologists organized compilation tours in Turkey and published the books of them. (Sipos, 2009)

It is a fact that it was not by coincidence that Hungarian and Turkish folk songs are based on the same pentatonic scale. The first item of the ideas of Saygun that we mentioned above also gives an important clue about this fact. Many Hungarian Turcologists have carried on surveys about Turkish history, language, literature and folklore. Some of those that could be reached can be included as they serve as resources, as follows;

Hungaro-Tschuwaschica Annotirovanny Bibliografiçeskiy Ukazatel’ İssledovaniy Vengerskih Uçenih XIX-XX vv. that Yu. Dimitriyeva-K. Adgayaşi have prepared together (Hungarian Chuvashology, Summarized Biography of the Researches of Hungarian Scientists in XIX-XX. Centuries has served as a guidebook.

Other than that, many scientists like György Hazai, A. Reguli, A. Vambery, J. Budenz, B. Munkacsi, J. Melih, Z. Gomboc, Gy. Nemeth, L. Ligeti, K. Cegledi, D. Sinor, G. Berecki, Zs. Kakuk, L. Vikar, A. Rona-Tas, L. Zahemsky, A. Berta, Katalin Cegledi, K. Agyagasi, J. Sipos, Yu. Salontai-Dimitriyeva published hundreds of works about Chuvashies. (Bayram, B; 2011, p: 90)

According to Bayram (2012), the interest of Hungarian Turkologists in Turkish history, language, literature, folklore has not emerged with an orientalist point of view. Within the scope of Ural –Altaic theory, Hungarians who are the members of same language family with Turkish have carried out many researches in especially the fields of language and history to strengthen the relationships between Turkish and Hungarian societies. The Hungarian scientists have particularly given importance to the İdil-Ural territory where the language relations and ethnic intercourses are considered to be densified, especially the Chuvashies among the Turkish tribes.

During the compilation tours that Bela Bartok organized with A. Adnan Saygun in Turkey in 1936, to establish friendly relationships with the villagers for the efficiency and quality of the research, Saygun’s suggestion to Bartok to form a sentence that is more or less the same in the both languages and the following sentence that was formed may be a little sample for the language fellowship as well;





In Hungarian; “Pamuk tarlan sok arpa, alma, teve, sator, balta, csizma, kicsi kecke van”  
In Turkish; “Pamuk tarlasında çok arpa, elma, deve, çadır, balta, çizme, küçük keçi var”.  
(1991; p: 15) (There are many barleycorns, apples, camels, tents, axes, boots, little goats on the cotton field.)

Zoltan Kodaly participated in scientific tours in Hungary and various parts of Transylvania between the years of 1907- 1914, 1921-1925 as well and recorded folk melodies, about 3500 songs and dance melodies in many variants with the help of phonograph. He realized that old folk songs that were based on pentatonic scale had been preserved and got interested in the pentatonic basis of Hungarian folk music, he studied its connection with music folklore of Mari, Umdurst and Chuvashi. (Dimitriyeva-Adyagaşi, 200, p. 52-53 as cited in Bayram, p: 100).

Kodaly became the author of the “Pentatonic Music” consisted of 4 practice books that include pentatonic modal based practices. “The first one was published in 1945 and contains 100 Hungarian folksongs; in the second we can find 100 little marchess, in the third 100 Cheremis folksongs and in the fourth, 140 Chuvash melodies. Again the pedagogical principles can best be illustrated with Kodaly’s own words:

“Since I know that pentatony is for children as important as mother’s milk, my constant thought is to make more and more of it accessible.” (Szonyi, p:150)

By building it on the pentatonic scale, Kodaly presented the unique model, children’s music education approach that is named after him as a gift to children of the world.

### **Current Situation**

The convenience and necessity of Kodaly children’s music education model of Turkish music’s relationship with Hungarian music is not only about this emotional tie. Its contribution to the development of children who will get a music training through this method will make this tie much more valuable.

In the current music education system in Turkey, unfortunately the teaching of modal pentatonic scale is absent in the teaching modal which is being applied. The children are learning and singing many school songs within the scope of music education at school, however, as there is not a teaching modal about teaching notes and seconds, this songs are learned within the scope of the teachers’ own teaching methods.

According to Szonyi (1986, p. 151)





If someone is able to guess the most important intervals well or not so well, it does not mean that he can read; he can only spell. Reading must be a global reading; a whole word must be understood at a glance, then increasingly more; and from the understood whole the details must be gone into

The other view is point out that; “the musical material for education is built out of the motifs of the pentatonic system, since experience shows that the melodic turns of the pentatonic music of the Hungarian and cognate peoples, which contain no semitones, are admirably suited to developing inward awareness of sounds even in children who lack an innately keen ear for music.” (Barkoczi, Pleh, 1982, p:6)

### **Folksong and Musical Value**

In the music education of schools in Turkey, the necessity of teaching the modal pentatonic scale is also important in the aspect of the teach ability of our own folk songs. There are two important issues at this point. One of them is, like Kodaly has stated; “the folk songs of a child’s own linguistic herigate constitute a musical “mother tongue” and should therefore be the vehicle for all early instuction.” The other most important value is, “folk songs, themselves valuable as an art form, can give children a sense of cultural identity and continuity with the past” (Choksy, Abramson, Gillespie, Woods, 1986, p. 71)

The issue that folk songs are being taught within the scope of music education at school in Turkey does not compromise with the Kodaly approach. Just like in the descriptions made under the title of pentatonizm, the reason is that we do not have a common teaching model and approach. At this point, it is necessary to give some information about Turkish Music history.

### **Historical Knowledge**

Besides, the ideas about adopting, protecting and exploring the national music, which emerged as an extension of the ideas of Nationalism and Turkism that came out following the Balkan wars the issue of polyphonic music, the resource of which would be the folk music and which would be presented to the West, especially the issue of national music came to the fore. (Şenel,S. 2000; p, 28).

Following the declaration of Republic in 1923, the folk music movements considerably accelerated as well with the compilation tours. In 1936, Bela Bartok’s will to



come to Turkey could be realized as a result of a historical coincidence of this will with the program of cultural policy that Turkey put into practice during that period.

According to Bülent Aksoy's opinions that he mentioned in the preface of Bella Bartok's book "Küçük Asya'dan Türk Halk Musikisi" (Turkish Folk Music from Asia Minor) that he translated into Turkish (1991; p: 9); one of the main interests of the people who lead the cultural issues in 1930s Turkey, was in the effort to distinguish being Ottoman from being Turkish in accordance with the history perception that emerged during those years.

According to the perception under these efforts, the origins of real Turkishness was hidden in the folk culture, which is the folklore products. Therefore, the Republic period asserted the folklore as national culture. The main national representative of this attitude was Community Center. The expression of this attitude in music is separating and alienating traditional art music and Turkish folk music to each other instead of regarding them two different richness of Turkish folk music culture although they come from different origins. The argument that the Turkish folk music is based on a pentatonic ground was providing a technical reason for the efforts of separating the two music genres.

This problem has not been solved yet. Currently, Turkish Folk music, Turkish Art Music and Classical Western Music continue to exist as three separate main genres in our country.

Again according to the opinions Bülent Aksoy stated in his Preface (1991, p. 12); it did not go further than resisting in regarding the folk music as primitive form of art music and emphasizing the intersection points of the two. There have been periods during which Turkish folk music undermined and regarded as primitive and as the music of villagers. Following the declaration of Republic, with the improvement movements in all fields, Turkish public and children are introduced to Classical Western Music.

### **Current Situation**

This complicated situation reflected to the music education at schools as chaos, and this chaos still continues. In elementary and secondary music education, three genres of music are being tried to be taught at schools.

That the efforts of Turkish music culture to improve in a system and self-discovery stagnate and lose ground in the political chaos of the time and the issue continued under influence and authority of political sphere rather than music experts causes us to have the same problems in music education at schools. The later compilation tours of Bela Bartok in



Turkey could not be realized because of these circumstances as well. Currently, the teaching of samples from three music genres is included in the program or they are tried to be taught. Yet the students are just memorizing or singing these songs without the application of any of Kodaly's ideals about music education of children.

Nevertheless, responding the question why the Hungarian folk songs need to be included in the basis of music education, Kodaly states everything clearly.

Briefly why Kodaly wished to make the Hungarian folksong the basis of Hungarian music education, we should say because it is simple, because in a form which even a child can follow it communicates artistic and national cultural value of the highest order. It is quite obvious - as Kodaly writes in several places - that with this he had no desire to take a stand against foreign, European, or artistic music: "our purpose cannot be to plunge the schools suddenly to the opposite extreme by using one-sided folk material"; indeed "we have to become familiar with as large a slice of the world as possible" and "we have to open the gates towards the great foreign master, no matter what nationality they are." What has to be thrown out completely is not the great ones so often mentioned by Kodaly, not the Shakespeares and Michelangelos of music, not Gregorian music, Palestrina, Bach or Mozart, but the pedagogical study-compositions and shoddy little songs invading the schools. (Dobszay, 1972, p. 24)

### **School and Humanistic Education,**

The condition of the music education at schools in our country where the compulsory education is expanded to 12 years was mentioned in the section of 1.1. It is inevitable for music education to be affected by the general education policy of Turkey. As stated before, in directing the education policy of the country, the result that come out under the strength of political influence authority concerns us, the music educators.

To remind again; music is not in the heart of education in the Turkish school education programs. In the 12-years compulsory National Education Program, music course exist on paper but in practice, it is not the same. Music teachers can lead music courses starting from the 5th grade. As of 9th grade, music courses are elective.

In short, in the Turkish music education system of schools, this item does not correspond to Kodaly approach as well. Yet Kodaly summarized the child music education approach strikingly as follows;



“Musical literacy should not be the property of chosen few, but a general knowledge of all. It is not too many centuries ago that the ability to read words was the privilege of the elite. If the language of music becomes a known language, enjoyment of music will certainly increase and quality of life itself improve.”

### **Current Situation**

Child music education is unfortunately a qualification of selected children. Conservatories raise Professional musicians. Only the children who are successful in the entrance exam have the chance to be educated in these institutions. Private music courses provide an amateur music education, and the private instrument trainings are very common in big cities recently. Consequently, the gap in the required music education at schools is being closed by families who have sociocultural and socioeconomic opportunities.

The argument usually put forward against giving music equal importance with mathematics and reading in the elementary school is that “there isn’t enough time in the school day....”; that time would have to be stolen from more important subjects.”

Currently in Turkey, there is not enough time for music in the daily program of schools which are full of maths, science, language etc. courses. The course hours left for music and the practice without any principle also reflects the situation. Except a few private schools, child music education is still unfortunately a matter of debate from the aspect of importance and necessity that has been insistently stated by Kodaly.

The followings can be stated if we assess the convenience of Kodaly approach to the music education at schools in Turkey from the aspect of the physical conditions of the classrooms. The children sit at the desks in the classroom order. The Kodaly approach is also convenient from this aspect to be applied in Turkish school system. Without the need of a special, wide and empty space, the students are able to participate in the course while sitting at the desks. Besides the indispensability of Kodaly approach for education, it is a minor but worth to mention detection.

It is also impossible to deny Kodaly’s ideas from the aspect of humanistic education. According to Kodaly; "music is unconditionally necessary to the development of a human being. . . not some dispensable article of amusement." (Dobszay, 1972, p. 30).

Additionally “It is to provide the coming generations with fuller lives, to open to them the limitless possibilities of participation in music as a means of filling some fifty hours a week of nonworking time average adult now enjoys. Leisure time is increasing as work



becomes even more automated. Education should prepare people for that time as well as for 40 hours spent earning living.” (Choksy, 1986, p.72)

### **Discussion**

In this research, the condition of the music education at schools in Turkey has been assessed from past to present. During this assessment, it has been related to Kodaly’s children’s music education approach. Why is such an assessment necessary? In fact this question has a single response, which is; Kodaly children’s music education philosophy; from the aspects of perception, his principles of teaching the music he puts forward, its adaptability to the music education system at schools in Turkey etc. it is regarded to be quite convenient and necessary. Even now it is regarded to be late to start practicing it. The common points have already been defined with titles. Even only these three main reasons are enough to introduce the approach to Turkish children.

According to the real picture that is revealed, there is not a common teaching model at schools. Teachers, as a result of the information and experience they gain during their music teacher education processes, try and find their own ways. What is to be done is;

In the process of training pre service music teachers, the current music teaching approaches could be reorganized under common principles and programs in all the Universities that train Music Teachers in Turkey. Ministry of National Education and Board of Higher Education could organize periodical in-service courses and workshops about a common teacher training application program. Thus a common perspective could be generated.

By regulating the music courses of elementary and secondary schools, the revision of the practices about the teaching of these classes is needed. The ones who are still teaching in elementary and secondary schools could be included in the common teaching principles by being trained through in-service courses and workshops.

The music courses of elementary and secondary school could be restructured according to the needs by being reconsidered from the aspect of hours and process.

Kodaly music education approach could be gained operability by being adapted for Turkish music education. This last item is very important. Because, the necessity and need that has been put forward by the article will be realized mostly by this way. Qualified generations who are aware of world music culture, who know about music, who can read and



write in music language, who can compose music and can generate a perspective up to a level, educated, productive will be raised with reference to their own musical inheritance.



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