

# An evaluation of the usability of Ahıska Lullabies as music educational material

**Gülnihal Gül**

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of Fine Arts, Division of Music Education, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye.  
Email: gulnihal@uludag.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0001-9437-2419

**Murat Mevlütoğlu**

Master's Student, Department of Fine Arts, Division of Music Education, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye.  
Email: 802241032@ogr.uludag.edu.tr ORCID: 0009-0005-5083-4921

**Tugay Bütün**

Corresponding Author, Researcher, Department of Fine Arts, Division of Music Education, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye. Email: tugaybutun@uludag.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0002-6970-1003

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## Abstract

Lullabies, with their lyrics, musical structures, and functions, are musical elements shaped directly by the psychology, customs, traditions, and tastes of their respective societies. They contribute significantly to fulfilling the emotional needs of both parents and children. This research aims to identify lullabies within the culture of Ahıska Turks, examine their melodic and lyrical structures, and evaluate their potential use as materials for music education. It is essential in Turkish music research to explore significant cultural elements such as Ahıska folk songs, particularly lullabies, which reflect a comprehensive range of cultural characteristics, and transform them into educational materials. An exploratory sequential mixed-method design was employed in this study. In the first stage, qualitative data were collected from 13 Ahıska women residing in Türkiye, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and the USA. The lullabies gathered were analyzed through descriptive analysis. In the second stage, two field experts evaluated the lullabies' usability as music educational material using the Scale of Opinions on the Educational Usability of Lullabies. The findings revealed that the 14 lullabies collected from the Ahıska region exhibited rhythmic patterns in 4-time, 9-time, 11-time, 12-time, and free rhythm; melodic ranges spanning intervals of 4, 5, 6, and 8 notes; and syllabic structures with free verse, heptasyllabic (7), octosyllabic (8), and decasyllabic (10) meters. Additionally, these lullabies were identified as belonging to maqams such as Hicaz, Uşşak, Hüseyinî, Segah, Rast, and Çargah, encompassing themes including wishes and aspirations, affection and tenderness, religious motifs, poverty and lamentation, complaints about customs and traditions, longing for children, praise, and love. Specifically, 28.5% included themes of wishes-aspirations/affection-tenderness, 14.2% contained complaints about customs-longing for children, another 14.2% expressed wishes-aspirations alone, 7.1% covered wishes-aspirations/praise-affection, 7.1% religious elements, 7.1% affection-tenderness, 7.1% praise-affection, 7.1% wishes-aspirations/affection-tenderness/religious elements, and 7.1% poverty/lamentation. Expert evaluations confirmed that these lullabies possess high efficacy for use as music educational materials.

## Keywords

*Ahıska lullabies, Ahıska Turks, cultural symbols, music education materials, lullabies*

## Introduction

Lullabies, as elements of oral tradition encompassing the essence of folk traditions, reflect the literary, aesthetic, and cultural language of oral heritage. They are performed not only to lull children to sleep but also as a means of education (Sertdamir, 2018; Çek, 2015; Güneş, 2010; Orhan, 2018). Although the exact origins of lullabies as a form of folk literature remain

unknown, historical records indicate that in Anatolia—dating back to the Sumerians—children's earliest education was provided by mothers and that they were nurtured through lullabies and hymns (Özgül, 2011).

In Japanese, the term *komoriuta*, translated into Turkish as “child-protection song,” refers to lullabies (Şahin & Göher, 2021). These are regarded as essential elements

that contribute to the establishment of an emotional bond between mother and infant. Through lullabies, mothers convey their feelings, thoughts, dreams, and affection to their children (Özdemir, 2020; Arslan Kılıçoğlu et al., 2022).

The lyrics and musical structure of lullabies are directly associated with their functions and shaped by the psychology, customs, traditions, and aesthetic preferences of the society to which they belong (Bogomolava, 2020; Ilyina & Sumsova, 2019). As cultural artifacts, they serve to meet the emotional needs of both child and parents while supporting the child's social and educational development (Saadanbekova, 2022). Beyond their primary functions—such as soothing, comforting, inducing sleep, and awakening—they also transmit national and spiritual values, as well as social norms like sensitivity toward people and nature. Furthermore, lullabies aim to ensure that the child enjoys a sense of security and experiences restful sleep, free from fear (Bogomolova, 2020; Shabdanbaeva, 2021; Şen, 2010).

A review of national and international literature reveals numerous studies examining the effects of lullabies on children. These include research on their contributions to child education (Gelişli & Yazıcı, 2016; Güneş, 2010; Kabadayı, 2009; Uğurlu, 2014; Nadakumara, 2018) as well as studies exploring lullabies across different cultures (Aydoğmuş, 2020; Koçkar et al., 2018; Özgün, 2021). Additionally, the literature also features research addressing the use of lullabies as instructional music materials (Davis, 2005; Özeren, 2006).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Music education is an interdisciplinary field that contributes not only to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of individuals but also to their cultural and aesthetic growth. In this context, it is of great importance that the materials employed during the educational process are both pedagogically and culturally appropriate. Accordingly, the use of lullabies

as instructional music materials, given their potential to support children's musical, linguistic, and cultural development, is considered essential. It is well-documented that many approaches to music education encourage the incorporation of lullabies into educational practices.

Within this framework, the Kodály Method—recognized as one of the contemporary music education approaches—advocates for individuals to learn music through materials derived from their own cultural roots and emphasizes the inclusion of local folk melodies in the educational process (Yiğit, 2000). Similarly, the Orff-Schulwerk approach highlights the significance of using rhythmic patterns in improvisational training (Özbay & Can, 2020). In this respect, the simple melodic and rhythmic structures of lullabies render them highly suitable for such educational applications.

Lullabies are acknowledged for their crucial role in enhancing emotional perception and fostering musical awareness at an early age. Furthermore, they serve as cultural artifacts that shape the language, values, and musical sensibilities of societies. From this perspective, incorporating lullabies belonging to communities whose cultural continuity is perceived to be at risk—such as the Ahıska Turks, whose historical trajectory has been marked by forced migrations and deportations—into music education can contribute to the preservation of this intangible cultural heritage.

The Ahıska Turks, who are considered an integral part of the Anatolian Turkish cultural sphere, occupy a significant position in terms of Turkish culture and its associated elements, including lullabies. Ahıska, located in the northeastern part of Turkey within the borders of Georgia, represents one of the oldest Turkic homelands (Akpınar, 2016). Geographically, Ahıska is bordered by Georgia to the north and east, Armenia to the south, Turkey to the southwest, and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Georgia) to the west (Kurt, 2017).



Figure 1. The Ahıska Region and its surroundings (web 1)

Until 1828, the Ahıska Turks resided within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Following the Ottoman-Russian War, they were displaced from their ancestral homeland as a result of forced migration policies (Poyraz & Güler, 2019; Karabulut & Gençer, 2022). The community has since experienced the long-lasting political and social consequences of the “1944 Ahıska Deportation” and the “1989 Fergana Events”, and today they remain scattered across ten different countries.

Historically, the Ahıska Turks have maintained a robust oral tradition, which has been transmitted across generations. The survival of individuals who were born and raised in Ahıska and subsequently deported provides valuable opportunities for ethnographic documentation and observational studies of Ahıska cultural heritage (Aliyeva Çınar, 2020).

Despite exposure to diverse cultural environments, the Ahıska Turks have preserved their cultural identity by sustaining a relatively closed social structure. This strategy has facilitated the retention of cultural distinctiveness and ensured the continuity of intergenerational cultural transmission (Aydingün, 1998).

Oral cultural forms—such as proverbs, epics, folktales, narratives, and lullabies—constitute a core component of Ahıska

ethnopedagogy and continue to hold an essential role in the community’s educational practices. Furthermore, Ahıska Turks residing in diaspora communities outside their homeland actively share and perpetuate this oral and written heritage (Aliyeva Çınar, 2020).

Music occupies a particularly significant position within Ahıska cultural life, reflecting both the geographical contexts inhabited by the community and the historical circumstances they have endured. The repertoire embodies collective experiences, encompassing expressions of grief, joy, and resilience (Karabulut & Gençer, 2022).

Throughout history, Ahıska musical culture has emerged as a key element in preserving cultural identity. In terms of genre, it is classified into four primary categories: “*Laments and Lullabies*,” “*Epics and Quatrains*,” “*Folk Songs*,” and “*Wedding Music*.” Research further indicates that, due to regional interactions, Ahıska music exhibits notable similarities with the musical traditions of Azerbaijan as well as those of the Kars, Erzurum, and Artvin regions of Turkey (Devrisheva, 2006; Şen & Delice, 2014). Particularly after the 1944 deportation, the migration of Ahıska Turks to different regions and their subsequent interaction with local cultures resulted in discernible changes within their traditional musical repertoire.

This process has led to distinct differences between earlier and contemporary forms of Ahıska musical expression (Dönmez, İlgar, & Polat, 2020).

Given their geographical displacement, the Ahıska Turks are assumed to have become increasingly distanced from their folkloric, cultural, and literary traditions (Dinç, 2021; Dönmez et al., 2020). Nevertheless, lullabies originating from this community are regarded as integral components of the Turkish cultural heritage within Anatolia, as they embody the cultural characteristics of the Ahıska Turks. In this respect, these lullabies possess significant potential for use as educational music materials, both musically and literarily.

### **Literature Review**

When examining national and international studies, it is evident that research focusing on the effects of lullabies on children is widely represented. In their study, Gelişli and Yazıcı (2016) emphasized that lullabies are versatile tools that support children's linguistic, social, emotional, and cognitive development while also reinforcing a sense of security and enhancing communication. Similarly, Güneş (2010) pointed out that lullabies increase sound and word awareness during early childhood, forming the foundation of language skills, and highlighted their contribution to both mental and emotional development. Kabadayı (2009) noted that lullabies contribute to children's mother tongue development as well as to cultural and cognitive awareness, underscoring the importance of parents making conscious choices when selecting lullabies. Uğurlu (2014), on the other hand, described lullabies as a powerful medium for the transmission of cultural memory, drawing attention to their functional role in constructing social identity and conveying values to future generations. Likewise, Nandakumara (2018) asserted that lullabies play an influential role in children's language acquisition, particularly in recognizing sound features and expanding vocabulary.

In addition to these studies that demonstrate lullabies as multidimensional educational tools supporting linguistic, cognitive, and cultural development, research on lullabies from different cultures is also available in the literature. Aydoğmuş (2020), in his study, highlighted that Kazakh lullabies not only nourish the child's inner world but also serve as an effective means of cultural identity transmission. Similarly, Koçkar et al. (2018) revealed that the lullaby-singing traditions of Karachay-Malkars living in the diaspora continue to be passed down through generations, even amid migration and cultural transformation processes, as a fundamental element of oral tradition. Özgün (2021) examined the vocabulary of Uzbek lullabies, emphasizing their significance in terms of linguistic richness and cultural authenticity, and noted that lullabies are valuable resources not only for child development but also for language preservation and the continuity of cultural identity.

The literature also includes studies on the use of lullabies as instructional music material. Davis (2005) argued that lullabies could serve as a fundamental material for transmitting cultural identity through education and as a significant component in music education that supports children's identity development. Similarly, Özeren (2006) investigated the role of musical works created for children in shaping social musical awareness and language development, indicating that the use of lullabies as educational material effectively enhances children's language skills and reinforces cultural musical consciousness.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is considered that the Ahıska (Meskhetian) Turks, who are among the Anatolian Turks, hold an important position in terms of Turkish culture and its elements, including lullabies. Having lived within the borders of the Ottoman Empire until 1828, the Ahıska Turks were displaced from their homeland as a result of compulsory migration policies

following the Ottoman-Russian War (Poyraz & Güler, 2019; Karabulut & Gençer, 2022). The “1944 Ahıska Deportation” and the “1989 Fergana Events,” whose political and social consequences persist to this day, have led them to live in a dispersed manner across ten different countries. Due to their distance from their homeland, it is assumed that the Ahıska Turks have also been separated from their folkloric, cultural, and literary traditions (Dinç, 2021; Dönmez et al., 2020). The lullabies belonging to this community are considered part of the cultural heritage products of Turkish culture in Anatolia and reflect the cultural characteristics of the Ahıska Turks. For these reasons, such lullabies are regarded as potentially valuable musical and literary resources that can be utilized as educational music materials.

### Research Purpose and Problem

Ahıska (Meskhetian) lullabies, which are considered a “*cultural symbol*” of the society to which they belong (Yavuz, 2019), are thought to embody values that contribute to shaping a child’s future life (Gül, Mintaş & Engür, 2020; Hökelekli, 2010) as well as characteristics that can influence their linguistic, social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development (Şahin & Göher, 2021; Kumtepe, 2015; Chen-Hafteck, 1997). Based on this perspective, the present study aims to identify the lullabies within the cultural context of the Ahıska Turks and to determine the extent to which these lullabies can be utilized as educational music material. This research is considered significant as it provides a holistic perspective on Turkish cultural lullabies, evaluates the usability of Ahıska lullabies as instructional music resources, and thus contributes to the field.

- In line with this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:
- What are the themes of the lullabies sung by the Ahıska Turks?
- What are the modal and rhythmic characteristics of these lullabies?

- What are the pitch ranges of the lullabies sung by the Ahıska Turks?
- What are the syllabic meter structures of these lullabies?
- To what extent can Ahıska lullabies be used as educational material in music education?

### Method

This section provides information regarding the research design, study group, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

### Research Design

This study employed an *exploratory sequential mixed methods design* (Ayden & Gündoğdu, 2022; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the first phase of the study, lullabies collected from Ahıska (Meskhetian) women through a narrative research approach were analyzed. The modal, melodic, and literary structures of these lullabies were identified using descriptive analysis. Based on the qualitative findings and the relevant music education literature, five fundamental criteria were established, and an assessment tool was developed accordingly.

In the second phase, 14 Ahıska lullabies were evaluated by two field experts using a four-point Likert-type scale designed around these criteria. This procedure generated quantitative data that complemented the qualitative process.

The application of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.



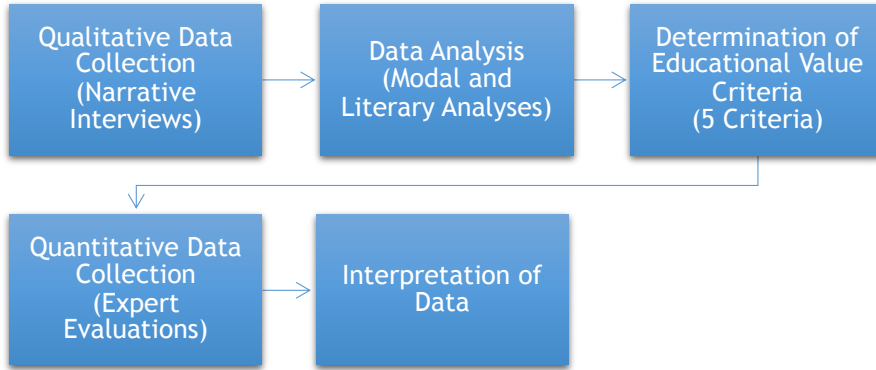


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research methodology

### Study Group

In determining the study group for this research, the snowball sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling techniques, was employed. This method is commonly used in cases where access to the population is difficult and information about the population is limited; it facilitates reaching the population and obtaining rich data. In snowball sampling, the researcher aims to

explain different phenomena by accessing individuals through other individuals and, subsequently, related cases (Baltacı, 2018; Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2001).

For the study, interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online with 13 Ahıska (Meskhetian) Turkish women residing in Turkey, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and the United States. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Participant	Country of Residence	Number of Children	Age
P1	Russia	6	86
P2	Russia	2	50
P3	Türkiye	4	66
P4	Türkiye	5	60
P5	Türkiye	5	60
P6	Türkiye	4	50
P7	Russia	3	51
P8	Türkiye	3	95
P9	Türkiye	4	67
P10	Türkiye	4	53
P11	USA	2	43
P12	Kyrgyzstan	8	84
P13	Türkiye	4	66

As shown in Table 1, the participants were found to reside in Russia (n = 3), Turkey (n = 8), the United States (n = 1), and Kyrgyzstan (n = 1). Additionally, it was determined that the participants had two children (n = 2), three children (n = 2), four children (n = 5),

five children (n = 2), six children (n = 1), and eight children (n = 1). Their age distribution was as follows: 40-49 years (n = 1), 50-59 years (n = 4), 60-69 years (n = 5), 80-89 years (n = 2), and 90 years and above (n = 1).

## Data Collection

In the first phase of the study, data on the lullabies sung by the Ahıska Turks were collected using an interview guide. The interview guide consisted of a structured list designed to remind the interviewer of essential rules, include the interview questions in a specific order, and facilitate the recording process when necessary. Within the scope of the research, participants were asked the question: “Could you provide examples of lullabies sung in Ahıska?” The data were collected through audio recordings.

## Scale for Opinions on the Usability of Lullabies in Music Education

In the second phase of the study, a measurement tool developed by the researchers was used to evaluate the usability of Ahıska lullabies as instructional material in music education. The criteria included in this tool were derived from a review of the relevant literature. The criterion “Rich content that enhances musical skills” was based on studies by researchers such as Hallam (2010) and Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2013), which emphasize the importance of melodic structures that support children’s rhythmic,

melodic, and auditory awareness skills. The criterion “Educational appropriateness of semantic structure” was grounded in the works of Chen-Hafteck (1997) and Hökelekli (2010), which highlight the contribution of the verbal content of lullabies to children’s cognitive and emotional development.

Within the scope of the role of lullabies in the learning process, the criterion “Verbal, melodic, and rhythmic repetitions supporting learning” was supported by the Kodály (1974) approach and Hallam’s (2010) findings on the impact of repetition on learning. The criterion “Educational appropriateness of melodic and rhythmic structure” was established based on Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development and Ilari’s (2002) studies on early childhood music perception, which explain the effect of musical structures appropriate to children’s age and developmental levels. Finally, the criterion “Transmission of cultural identity and memory” was developed with reference to studies by researchers such as Uğurlu (2014) and Davis (2005), who examined the function of lullabies as cultural transmission tools. The instrument was finalized based on expert opinions from two specialists in the field.

Table 2. Criteria for evaluating the usability of lullabies as music education materials

Criterion	Criterion Name	Theoretical Basis
1	Rich content that enhances musical skills	Studies by Hallam (2010) and Campbell & Scott-Kassner (2013)
2	Educational appropriateness of semantic structure	Chen-Hafteck’s (1997) studies on lullabies and Hökelekli (2010)
3	Verbal, melodic, and rhythmic repetitions supporting learning	Kodály (1974) approach and Hallam’s (2010) findings
4	Educational appropriateness of melodic and rhythmic structure	Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development and Ilari’s (2002) early childhood music perception studies
5	Transmission of cultural identity and memory	Studies by Uğurlu (2014) and Davis (2005) on lullabies as tools of cultural transmission

The scale was designed to be rated by experts on a 4-point scale ranging from 1

(inadequate) to 4 (excellent) (see Appendix 1).

## Data Analysis

The lullabies obtained through the interview guide were analyzed both musically and literarily using content analysis, one of the document review techniques. Content analysis, which involves examining recorded forms of human communication, systematically and quantitatively identifies specific characteristics of expressions in a document, allowing for inferences about the text (Gönç Şavran, 2012).

The collected lullabies were classified according to their themes, based on classifications found in the relevant literature (Dilek et al., 2019; Şimşek, 2016). Musical analysis of the lullabies was conducted according to Turkish Music Theory, focusing on pitch range characteristics, while literary analysis examined poetic structure, meter, and thematic content.

In the second phase of the research, the scale developed by the researchers was used to assess the usability of 14 Ahıska lullabies as instructional music material based on five fundamental criteria. Two field experts evaluated each lullaby against these five criteria using a rating system from 1 (inadequate) to 4 (excellent). For each criterion, average scores were calculated for every lullaby, thereby determining their overall level of usability. Inter-rater reliability between the two experts was calculated using the ICC(3,2) model, resulting in 0.73, which indicates a good level of agreement (ICC(3,2) = 0.7278).

## Findings

### Analysis of Ahıska Lullabies in Terms of Melodic and Verbal Structures

In this section, the lullabies obtained from the interviews were analyzed in terms of their melodic and verbal structures.

## General Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Table 3. General Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Lullaby	Syllabic Meter	Rhythmic Pattern	Modal Structure	Pitch Range	Theme
Lullaby 1	7-syllable	Free	Hicaz	5 notes	Wish/Desire - Love/Affection
Lullaby 2	Free	Free	Segah	5 notes	Wish/Desire - Love/Affection
Lullaby 3	7-syllable	11/8 (2+3+3+3)	Uşşak	6 notes	Religious Elements
Lullaby 4	7-syllable	4/4	Hicaz	4 notes	No Theme
Lullaby 5	7-syllable	Free	Hicaz	5 notes	Poverty - Complaint
Lullaby 6	10-syllable	Free	Hüzzam	4 notes	Praise - Love
Lullaby 7	7-syllable	12/8 (2+3+3+2+2)	Hicaz (Hümayun)	6 notes	Wish/Desire - Love/Affection
Lullaby 8	Free	Free	Hüseyini	5 notes	Wish/Desire - Praise - Love
Lullaby 9	8-syllable	Free	Uşşak	6 notes	Complaint about Customs - Longing for Child
Lullaby 10	7-syllable	Free	Rast	4 notes	Love/Affection
Lullaby 11	7-syllable	4/4	Hicaz	5 notes	Wish/Desire - Love/Affection - Religious Elements
Lullaby 12	8-syllable	4/4	Hüseyini	8 notes	Wish/Desire
Lullaby 13	Free	Free	Çargah	5 notes	Complaint about Customs - Longing for Child
Lullaby 14	Free	9/8 (2+2+2+3)	Segah	6 notes	Wish/Desire - Love/Affection



As shown in Table 3, the 14 lullabies collected from the Ahıska region were found to have rhythmic patterns in 4/4, 9/8, 11/8, 12/8 meters as well as free rhythm; pitch ranges spanning 4, 5, 6, and 8 notes; syllabic meters including free, 7-syllable, 8-syllable, and 10-syllable structures; and modal structures

based on Hicaz, Uşşak, Hüseyini, Segah, Rast, and Çargah scales. The thematic content of these lullabies included wishes and desires, love and affection, religious elements, poverty and complaint, complaints about customs, longing for a child, and praise combined with love.

### Rhythmic Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Table 4. Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies by rhythmic patterns

Rhythmic Pattern	f	%
4/4 Meter	3	21.42
9/8 Meter	1	7.10
11/8 Meter	1	7.10
12/8 Meter	1	7.10
Free Rhythm	8	57.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 4, 57% of the 14 lullabies that constituted the research data were in free rhythm, while 21% were in 4/4

meter. Lullabies in 9/8, 11/8, and 12/8 meters each accounted for 7.1%.

### Modal Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Table 5. Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies by modal structures

Modal Structure	f	%
Hicaz	5	35,7
Hüzzam	1	7,1
Hüseyini	2	14,2
Çargah	1	7,1
Uşşak	2	14,2
Rast	1	7,1
Segah	2	14,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 5, 35.7% of the 14 lullabies analyzed in the study were based on the Hicaz mode. Hüseyini, Uşşak, and Segah each

accounted for 14.2%, while Hüzzam, Çargah, and Rast were represented at 7.1% each.

### Pitch Range Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Table 6. Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies by pitch range

Pitch Range	f	%
4 notes	3	21.42
5 notes	6	42.85
6 notes	4	28.57
8 notes	1	7.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 6, 42.8% of the 14 lullabies analyzed had a pitch range of 5 notes, 28.5%

had 6 notes, 21.4% had 4 notes, and 7.1% had 8 notes.

## Syllabic Meter Characteristics of Ahıska Lullabies

Table 7. Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies by syllabic meter

Syllabic Meter	f	%
7-syllable	7	50.0
8-syllable	2	14.2
10-syllable	1	7.1
Free	4	28.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 7, 50% of the 14 lullabies analyzed were written in a 7-syllable meter, 28.5% were in free meter, 14.2% in 8-syllable meter, and 7.1% in 10-syllable meter.

Table 8. Examples of Ahıska Lullabies by Syllabic Meter

Turkish	English
<i>Nanni dedim bu baştan Yüzün örtem kumaştan Nanni balama nanni Nanni yavruma nanni (Ninni 4)</i>	I called you “nanni. Let me cover your face with cloth. Nanni, my darling child, nanni, Nanni, my little one, nanni (Lullaby 4)
<i>Pencerenin yan şuşası Yandı bağrımım köşesi On bir ayın manavşası Nanni (da) balam nanni nanni (Ninni 9)</i>	The side windowpane Ignites the corner of my heart Violet of the eleven months Nanni, my darling, nanni nanni (Lullaby 9)
<i>Tagdaki atlar çamani otlar Tembel avratlar yavruma kurban Tağın maralı sümbül saralı Dünyanın vari balama kurban (Ninni 6)</i>	The horses on the mountains graze on the grass; Let the lazy girls be sacrificed for my baby; The deer on the mountain are hyacinth gold; Let the whole world be dedicated to my baby (Lullaby 6)
<i>Nanni yavruma nanni yavruma Yuhlasın da güller kohlasın balam Nanni diyem da yuhlasın Gözal rüvalar görsün banım balam Abasının tatlı yavrusı, abasının güzel melegi Yuhlasın da güzel güller kohlsın banım yavrum Yuhlasın da rüvasında güzel şeyler görsün banım balam Nanni nanni nanni (Ninni 8)</i>	Nanni to my baby Nanni to my baby Smell the roses, my child. I can call her Nanni and she will boo Let your eyes see your dreams, my dear. His sister’s sweet baby, his brother’s beautiful angel Smell the beautiful roses, my child. May you see beautiful loves in your dreams, my dear. Nanni nanni nanni (Lullaby 8)

## Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies by Themes

Table 9. Distribution of Ahıska Lullabies according to themes

Themes	f	%
Wish/Desire	2	14.2
Wish/Desire / Praise-Love	1	7.1
Wish/Desire / Love-Affection	4	28.5
Religious Elements	1	7.1
Love-Affection	1	7.1
Praise-Love	1	7.1
Wish/Desire / Love-Affection / Religious Elements	1	7.1
Complaint about Customs / Longing for Child	2	14.2
Poverty / Complaint	1	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 9, 28.5% of the 14 lullabies in the sample contained themes of wish/desire and love/affection; 14.2% addressed complaints about customs and longing for a child; another 14.2% focused solely on wish/desire. Themes such as wish/desire combined

with praise-love, religious elements, love-affection, praise-love, wish/desire with love-affection and religious elements, and poverty/complaint were each represented by 7.1%.

### Examples of Ahıska Lullabies by Theme

Table 10. Examples of Ahıska Lullabies according to their themes

Turkish	English
<i>Allahın verdugisin Gönlümün sevduğisin Muhammed ummatisin Hayatın kıymatisin (Ninni 11)</i>	You are God's own gift to me, Beloved darling of my heart, A member of Muhammad's Ummah, The very treasure of my life (Lullaby 11)
<i>Geceden yurdumdan gettim Acep ben yavrumu neyttim Kaynatamdan hicab ettim Nanni (de) balam nanni nanni (Ninni 9)</i>	I slipped away from home under cover of night; Oh, where have I lost my baby so dear? From my father-in-law's gaze I veiled in my fright; Nanni, my darling, nanni nanni (Lullaby 9)
<i>Tagdaki atlar çamani otlar Tembel avratlar yavruma kurban Tagın maralı sümbül saralı Dünyanın vari balama kurban (Ninni 6)</i>	The horses on the mountains graze on the grass; Let the lazy girls be sacrificed for my baby; The deer on the mountain are hyacinth gold; Let the whole world be dedicated to my baby (Lullaby 6)
<i>Nanni dedim yaz geldi Çarşıya kiraz geldi Aldım beş-on paralah O (da) yavruma az geldi (Ninni 5)</i>	I sang "nanni" when summer came, To market came cherries ripe and fair; I bought but five or ten small coins' worth, Yet even that was little for my dear (Lullaby 3)
<i>Nanni balama nanni, Nanni yavruma nanni Nanni diyem avudem Ah sütta verem büyüdüm (Ninni 1)</i>	Ninni, ninni for my child, Ninni, ninni for my baby dear, Softly I sing "nanni" to soothe and beguile, White milk I give to nourish you here (Lullaby 1)

### Usability of Ahıska Lullabies in Music Education

Table 11 presents the expert evaluations regarding the usability of Ahıska lullabies in music education.

Table 11. Expert evaluation scores on the usability of Ahıska Lullabies in music education

Lullaby	Expert 1	Expert 2	Avg. Score
Lullaby 1	20.0	20.0	20.0
Lullaby 2	20.0	19.0	19.5
Lullaby 3	15.0	18.0	16.5
Lullaby 4	20.0	20.0	20.0
Lullaby 5	18.0	19.0	18.5
Lullaby 6	17.0	20.0	18.5
Lullaby 7	16.0	15.0	15.5
Lullaby 8	20.0	19.0	19.5
Lullaby 9	19.0	20.0	19.5
Lullaby 10	20.0	20.0	20.0
Lullaby 11	19.0	19.0	19.0
Lullaby 12	20.0	19.0	19.5
Lullaby 13	18.0	20.0	19.0
Lullaby 14	18.0	18.0	18.0

As shown in Table 11, the scores assigned by two field experts to 14 Ahıska lullabies were based on five predetermined criteria assessing their usability as instructional material in music education. Among the expert evaluations, Lullabies 1, 4, and 10 received the highest scores, while Lullaby 3 had the lowest score. Considering the expert assessments overall, it can be stated that the Ahıska lullabies included in the study largely meet the criteria for use as educational music material at a high level.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was determined that eight of the Ahıska lullabies were written in free rhythm, while three were composed in 4/4 meter. In addition, the lullabies exhibited modal structures characteristic of Hicaz, as well as Segah, Hüseyini, Uşşak, Rast, Çargah, and Hüzam. Furthermore, the lullabies analyzed in this study were found to have pitch ranges of 4, 5, 6, and 8 notes and to employ syllabic meters of 7, 8, and 10 syllables, as well as free forms. Similar studies in the literature also provide musical analyses of lullabies. For instance, Yılmazoğlu (2020) reported that Anatolian lullabies are often performed in 7- and 8-syllable meters and predominantly utilize modes from the Hüseyini, Uşşak, and Hicaz families, particularly Hicaz Hümayun. Similarly, Kumtepe (2015) found that most lullabies examined in his study remained within one octave and consisted of intervals of sevenths, sixths, fifths, fourths, tenths, and elevenths. Based on these findings, it can be stated that Ahıska lullabies share similar musical characteristics with Anatolian lullabies.

The thematic analysis of the lullabies revealed that they primarily include elements of wish/desire, praise and affection, complaints about customs, and religious motifs. Consistent with these results, other studies have shown that lullabies often reflect traditions, kinship relationships, and expressions regarding a child's future (Yılmazoğlu, 2020; Kumtepe, 2015; Şahin

& Göher, 2012). Likewise, Özdemir and Sarı (2020) reported that lullabies reflect familial love. From this perspective, it can be suggested that Anatolian lullabies, which contribute to the infant's emotional and cognitive development and foster emotional bonding with the family, share similar thematic characteristics.

Expert evaluations conducted using the developed assessment tool revealed that Ahıska lullabies generally contain rich content supportive of musical skills, demonstrate pedagogical appropriateness in terms of verbal and melodic structures, and include repetitive elements that facilitate learning. Additionally, their simple melodic structures make them highly applicable in educational contexts. Beyond their educational potential, the lullabies were also found to serve as strong carriers of cultural identity and collective memory. Supporting these findings, Kumtepe (2015) concluded that lullabies should be incorporated into music education. Similarly, Karakaya (2004) and Ungan (2009) emphasized that lullabies are not only emotional and social tools but also valuable educational materials. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ahıska lullabies, evaluated as generally falling between the "adequate" and "excellent" levels in terms of usability as educational music material, will make significant contributions to music education from both pedagogical and cultural perspectives.

## **Recommendations**

It is considered essential and important to use songs that develop children's musical sensitivity and strengthen their language and communication skills as instructional materials, particularly in early childhood education (Raposo & Vieira, 2012). Ahıska lullabies, regarded as a rich part of Anatolian heritage and, consequently, Turkish culture, reflect the traditional musical culture of the Ahıska people and the characteristics of Turkish music (Avci, 2012). For this reason, these lullabies are believed to contribute to the transmission of social values,

traditions, and belief systems, and they are recommended for use as educational music materials due to these features.

Gaining knowledge about different musical genres is of great importance for the musical acculturation of students, as well as the development of their aesthetic sense and musical understanding. In this regard, music teachers and prospective teachers should acquire knowledge of Turkish musical culture and the diversity of music cultures from different countries, incorporating this diversity into their educational practices to ensure a more effective and productive music education process in their professional lives.

Lullabies, as memory carriers that reflect the beliefs, traditions, customs, and values of their respective cultures, represent a repertoire that contributes to preserving national cultural characteristics. From this perspective, compiling and documenting lullabies from different Turkic communities and analyzing them both musically and textually to identify similarities and differences is considered necessary for safeguarding the cultural memory of Turkish heritage.

### Research Limitations

The study was limited to examining the usability of Ahıska lullabies as instructional material in music education. A total of 14 lullabies obtained through the narrative research method were analyzed.

### Disclosure Statement

There is no conflict of interest in this study. The authors worked collaboratively throughout the research process. This study was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Committee of Bursa Uludağ University, Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Board, dated 23.06.2023, decision number 29. All authors contributed equally to the research. No financial support was received for this study.



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### Web Sites

**Web 1.** <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/atalari-ahiska-surgununu-yasayan-prof-dr-askeroglu-bu-sadece-bir-surgun-degil-turkleri-bitirme-planliydi/3053202>

# Appendix 1. Scale for Opinions on the Usability of Lullabies in Music Education

Scale for Opinions on the Usability of Lullabies in Music Education																					
<b>Description:</b> This scale was developed to determine your opinions regarding the usability of lullabies as educational material.																					
<b>Criterion 1:</b> Rich content that enhances musical skills; <b>Criterion 2:</b> Educational appropriateness of semantic structure; <b>Criterion 3:</b> Verbal, melodic, and rhythmic repetitions supporting learning; <b>Criterion 4:</b> Educational appropriateness of melodic and rhythmic structure; <b>Criterion 5:</b> Transmission of cultural identity and memory.1 Inadequate, 2 Partially adequate, 3 Adequate, 4 Excellent.																					
	Criterion 1				Criterion 2				Criterion 3				Criterion 4				Criterion 5				Total
Lullabies	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Lullaby 1																					
Lullaby 2																					
Lullaby 3																					
Lullaby 4																					
Lullaby 5																					
Lullaby 6																					
Lullaby 7																					
Lullaby 8																					
Lullaby 9																					
Lullaby 10																					
Lullaby 11																					
Lullaby 12																					
Lullaby 13																					
Lullaby 14																					

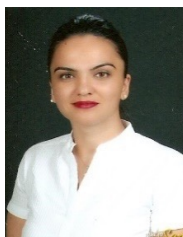


## Appendix 2. Lullabies Included in the Study

Lullabies Included in the Study					
Lullabies	Modal Structure	Source Person	Age	NC	CR
Lullaby 1	Hicaz	Zarbiyye Davruşeva	86	6	Russia
Lullaby 2	Segah	Maynaz Dursunova	50	2	Russia
Lullaby 3	Uşşak	Bağda Eminova	66	4	Türkiye
Lullaby 4	Hicaz	Faminaz Hasratova	60	5	Türkiye
Lullaby 5	Hicaz	Faminaz Hasratova	60	5	Türkiye
Lullaby 6	Hüzzam	Bağdagül Hasanova	50	4	Türkiye
Lullaby 7	Hicaz(Hümayun)	Heyriye İskenderova	51	3	Russia
Lullaby 8	Hüseyini	Güller Kurbanova	95	3	Türkiye
Lullaby 9	Uşşak	Genime Rıdvanova	67	4	Türkiye
Lullaby 10	Rast	Zerniç Aliyeva	53	4	Türkiye
Lullaby 11	Hicaz	Şaide Burhanova	43	2	USA
Lullaby 12	Hüseyini	Gülşan Burhanova	-	-	-
Lullaby 13	Çargah	Ayşe Ziyaeva	84	8	Kyrgyzstan
Lullaby 14	Segah	Faminaz Hasratova	60	5	Türkiye

**NC:** Number of Children **CR:** Country of Residence

## Biodata of Authors



Assoc. Prof. **Gülnihal Gül** was born in Gümüşhane, Türkiye, and completed her primary and secondary education in Bursa. She graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Music Department, in 1997. In 1999, she started working as a lecturer in Vocal Education at the Department of Music Education in the same faculty. She completed her master's degree at Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, in 2000. Between 2001 and 2005, she continued her vocal studies with Hülya Kazan, an artist from the Ankara State Opera and Ballet. In 2012, she earned her Ph.D. from Uludağ University's Institute of Social Sciences. Currently, she is an Associate Professor in Vocal Education and serves as the Head of the Music Education Department at Bursa Uludağ University.

**Institution:** Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Division of Music Education

**Email:** gulnihalgul@gmail.com

**ORCID:** 0000-0001-9437-2419

**ResearchGate:** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Guelnihal-Guel>

**AcademiaEdu:** <https://independent.academia.edu/GÜLGÜLNİHAL>



**Murat Mevlütöğlu** was born on April 24, 1994, in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan. In 2010, he completed his piano education at Oktyabrskoye Music School. In 2011, he began vocal training under Anara Jusupbekovna Tajibayeva in the voice class at Murataly Kurenkeev Fine Arts High School in Bishkek. After successfully completing his high school education in 2015, he graduated. In 2018, he was admitted to Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Division of Music Education. During his undergraduate studies, he continued his vocal training with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülnihal Gül. Throughout his undergraduate education, he performed works by notable composers such as Puccini, Leoncavallo, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Saygun, participating in various university events. He graduated in 2022 and, in the same year, was accepted into the master's program in Music Education at Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Fine Arts Education. He has participated in numerous concerts and events throughout his education and is currently continuing his graduate studies at Bursa Uludağ University in the Department of Music Education.

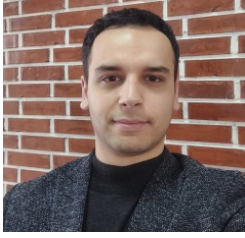
**Institution:** Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Fine Arts Education, Music Education Division

**Email:** muratmevlutoglu1994@gmail.com

**ORCID:** 0009-0005-5083-4921

**ResearchGate:** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Murat-Mevluetoglu-2>

**AcademiaEdu:** <https://independent.academia.edu/MuratMevlütöğlu>



Resercher, **Tugay Bütün** was born in 1996 in Bursa, Türkiye. He graduated from Zeki Müren Fine Arts High School and the Turkish Folk Music Department of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality in 2014. He completed his bachelor's degree in music teaching at Bursa Uludağ University in 2019 and his master's degree in 2021. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in the same department.

In 2008, as a member of the Bursa Science and Art Center Polyphonic Choir, he received a bronze medal at the International Choir Competition in Bratislava, Slovakia. In 2014, he passed the entrance exam for the TRT Ankara Radio Turkish Folk Music Youth Choir as a bağlama performer. In 2017, 2018, and 2019, he participated in the European Jazz School Project in Marburg, Germany, performing with bağlama and kaval. In 2020, he won the "Achievement Award," the highest honor in the category of Bağlama Performance at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Young Instrumentalists Competition. He also worked as director and performer in three regional folk music albums titled *Songs from the Foot of Uludağ I-II-III*, as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. Since 2022, he has been working as a research assistant in the Department of Music Education at Bursa Uludağ University.

**Institution:** Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Division of Music Education

**Email:** tugaybutun@uludag.edu.tr

**ORCID:** 0000-0002-6970-1003

**Personel web site:** <https://avesis.uludag.edu.tr/tugaybutun>

**ResearchGate:** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tugay-Buetuen>

**AcademiaEdu:** <https://independent.academia.edu/BütünTugay>

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