

An Investigation into Guitar Methods Used in Amateur Guitar Education

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Berk Ceviz

Freelance Researcher, Turkey

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1892-6381>

Günay Akgün

Gazi University, Turkey

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3775-567X>

Abstract

The study examined the content of methods used in amateur guitar education, namely “Guitar Method for Children” (Bülent İşbilen & Özhan Gölebatmaz), “Classical Guitar Method” (Ahmet Kanneçi), “Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar” (Bülent İşbilen & Güray Demir), “Classical Guitar Method” (Murat İşbilen), “Arenas I” (Rodriguez Arenas), “Guitar Method I” (Ziya Aydıntan), and “Introductory Method for Classical Guitar” (Bekir Küçükay). The research employed a scanning model. In the data collection phase, methods were obtained, and their contents were examined for topics such as the Historical Development of Classical Guitar, Basic Information, Tuning of the Guitar, Nails, Starting Positions, Visuals, Study and Piece Descriptions, Speed Terminology, and Table of Contents. The results, presented in tables, revealed that two of the methods lacked a table of contents, speed terminology was only presented in one method for all pieces and studies, and topics such as nails and tuning of the guitar were not covered in most methods.

Keywords: Guitar Methods, Amateur Guitar Education, Method Analysis.

Introduction

In today’s world, individuals mostly fulfill their amateur music education and related instrument training needs through private tutorial centers, public education centers, and courses offered by foundations. The number of individuals interested in amateur music is steadily increasing.

Amateur music education is directed towards those who have a personal interest, enthusiasm, and inclination towards music or a specific branch of music, aiming to provide effective musical participation, enjoyment, and satisfaction. Its goal is to instill the necessary musical behaviors to achieve and enhance musical engagement as much as possible (Uçan, 2005). Activities such as private and group instrument courses, vocal lessons, and learning programs related to music production can serve as examples of amateur music education.

The guitar, with its sound quality, playability, and polyphonic structure, is an instrument that appeals to the ear and is widely preferred. In institutions providing amateur education, the guitar is one of the most commonly chosen instruments.

[Kanneçi \(2009\)](#) defines guitar education as the process of “learning to recognize, play, and use the instrument, acquiring behaviors to interpret the composer’s intentions in musical works based on form knowledge.” The classical guitar can be used both as a solo and accompanying instrument, and classical guitar education is a significant subheading under amateur instrument education in Turkey.

In institutions offering amateur music education, guitar instruction is implemented with the use of methods, sheet music, and other materials. The instructor’s choice of resources will determine the strategy of the education. It can be said that the path taken in education can determine its quality. Therefore, in this research, examining the resources used in institutions providing amateur music education is considered important.

Method

Research Design

In this research, qualitative research methods were based. Qualitative research could be defined as the research where such qualitative data collection methods as observation, interview and document analysis are used and a process is followed to determine the perceptions and events in a natural setting in a real and holistic way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

The current study has a descriptive design based on document analysis model. Document analysis contains the analysis of the written materials comprising information about the target phenomenon and phenomena to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

Working Group

In the current study, the guitar methods “Guitar Method for Children” (İşbilen & Gölebatmaz, 2012), “Classical Guitar Method” (Kanneci, 2009), “Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar” (İşbilen &

Demir, 2012), “Classical Guitar Method” (İşbilen, 2012), “Arenas I” (Arenas, 2012), “Guitar Method I” (Aydıntan, 2012), and “Introductory Method for Classical Guitar” (Küçükay, 2004) was investigated.

Data Collection Tools

At the stage of data collection in this study, documentary scanning method was benefitted. Documentary scanning is a data collection technique out of present registry and documents. Documentary scanning comprises the processes of finding the sources for a certain purpose, taking notes and evaluating (Karasar, 2020). The methods to be investigated were obtained and were investigated in terms of their content.

Data Analysis

The methods which are the topic of the investigation was investigated in peculiar with the topics, classical guitar history, preliminary instructions, tuning, nail shapes, initial position, presence of visuals, presence of explanations alongside studies and pieces, presence of speed terminology in studies and pieces and presence of table of contents. The data obtained was expressed descriptively.

Findings and Comment

Carcassi Guitar Method is made up of 12 chapters. The chapters of the method and the information regarding the topics in the chapters are given in the table below.

Table 1 Classical Guitar History Topic

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Classical Guitar History	+	+	+	+	-	-	+

As a result of the conducted examination, it was observed that two of the methods did not cover the topic of classical guitar history, while the other five methods included information on this subject.

When the information at the beginning sections of the methods is compared, it is observed that two methods start with information about the guitar, while the other five methods commence with the topic of musical notation.

Table 2 Preliminary Instructions

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Preliminary Instructions	Musical Notation	Musical Notation	Guitar Information	Guitar Information	Musical Notation	Musical Notation	Musical Notation

Table 3 Tuning

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Tuning	-	-	-	+	+	-	+

According to the comparison regarding the presence of information about tuning the guitar, it is observed that 3 methods include information on this

topic, while in 4 methods, no information related to tuning is encountered.

Table 4 Nail Shapes

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Nail Shapes	-	-	-	+	+	-	+

According to the comparison regarding the presence of information about nails, it is observed that 3 methods include information on this topic,

while in 4 methods, no information related to nails is encountered.

Table 5 Initial Position

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Initial Position	I. Position	I. Position	Empty Strings	Empty Strings	Empty Strings	I. Position	VII. Position

In the studies to be conducted on the guitar, the methods “Children’s Guitar Method,” “Guitar Method I,” and “Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)” start from the 1st position. In the “Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar,” “Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci),” and “Arenas I” methods, after

exercises on open strings and right-hand technique, the studies commence from the 1st position. In the “Introductory Method for Classical Guitar,” the studies start from the 7th position. It is mentioned in the preface of the method that a technique based on the 7th position is applied.

Table 6 Presence of Visuals

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Visuals	+	+	+	+	-	+	+

No visuals are included in the Arenas I method. In all other methods, the presentation of various

topics is supported with visuals.

Table 7 Presence of Explanations Along side Studies and Pieces

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Explanations	-	-	+	+	-	+	+

In Guitar Method I, Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci), Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar, and Introductory Method for Classical Guitar, detailed explanations are provided alongside

the studies and pieces to be played. In the other methods, explanations are given while covering the topics, but no explanations are provided during the exercises.

Table 8 Presence of Speed Terminology in Studies and Pieces

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Speed Terms	-	-	Some	-	Some	Some	+

In Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen), Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci), and Children’s Guitar Method, there is no information regarding the recommended speed during the practice of studies and pieces. However, in Guitar Method I, Arenas I, and Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar,

information about the desired speeds during the practice of studies and pieces is provided using speed terminology. Some pieces and studies do not include speed terms. In the Introductory Method for Classical Guitar, the expected speed for each exercise is specified with metronome values.

Table 9 Presence of Table of Contents

	Guitar Method for Children	Classical Guitar Method (İşbilen)	Easy Training Method for Classical Guitar	Classical Guitar Method (Kanneci)	Arenas I	Guitar Method I	Introductory Method for Classical Guitar
Table of Contents	+	+	+	-	+	-	+

The examination results reveal that the table of contents is not present in 2 methods, while it is found in all other methods.

Discussion

The findings of this investigation shed light on the various approaches and deficiencies within the guitar methods commonly used in amateur guitar education. Firstly, it is evident that there is a disparity among the methods regarding the coverage of essential topics such as classical guitar history, preliminary instructions, tuning, nail shapes, initial position, presence of visuals, explanations alongside studies and pieces, presence of speed terminology in studies and pieces, and the presence of a table of contents.

One notable observation is the inconsistency in addressing foundational topics across the methods. For instance, while some methods provide

comprehensive information on classical guitar history and preliminary instructions, others neglect these aspects entirely. This lack of uniformity may lead to gaps in students’ understanding and appreciation of the instrument’s historical and technical aspects.

Moreover, the absence of certain crucial topics like tuning and nail shapes in several methods raises concerns about the comprehensiveness of the instructional materials. These elements are fundamental to developing proper technique and sound production on the guitar, and their omission may hinder students’ progress and proficiency.

Additionally, the variation in the starting positions for studies and pieces among the methods underscores different pedagogical approaches. While some methods advocate for beginning in the 1st position, others introduce higher positions or alternative techniques early on. Understanding the rationale behind these choices can inform educators’

decisions in selecting appropriate methods based on students' skill levels and learning preferences.

Furthermore, the presence of visuals and explanations alongside studies and pieces emerges as a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of instruction. Visual aids can enhance comprehension and retention, especially for complex musical concepts and techniques. Similarly, detailed explanations provide valuable insights into the musical interpretation and technical execution of repertoire, facilitating students' musical development.

The inclusion of speed terminology in studies and pieces also varies across the methods, indicating differing emphases on tempo and rhythmic precision. While some methods provide explicit guidance on tempo markings, others leave this aspect open to interpretation or provide minimal direction. This discrepancy highlights the importance of clear pedagogical instructions to facilitate consistent and accurate performance practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this investigation highlights the diverse landscape of guitar methods used in amateur guitar education, revealing strengths, and weaknesses in their content and approach. While certain methods excel in providing comprehensive instruction and support materials, others exhibit notable deficiencies in crucial areas. To address these shortcomings and enhance the quality of guitar education, educators and curriculum developers must critically evaluate existing methods and strive for greater consistency, inclusivity, and pedagogical effectiveness. By identifying and addressing gaps in

instructional materials, educators can better equip students with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to achieve proficiency and enjoyment in guitar playing. Moreover, fostering collaboration among educators, method authors, and industry stakeholders can facilitate the development of innovative and inclusive educational resources that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of aspiring guitarists in the amateur music community.

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Author Details

Berk Ceviz, Freelance Researcher, Turkey, **Email ID:** brkceviz@gmail.com

Günay Akgün, Gazi University, Turkey, **Email ID:** gunaya@gazi.edu.tr