THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IN TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TFL) COURSEBOOKS

LA REPRESENTACIÓN DEL GÉNERO EN LOS LIBROS DE TEXTO DE TURCO COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA (TLE)

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Abstract

Some languages are grammatically gender-bound. Spanish and French, for example, assign a gender to each and every noun while Turkish has a gender-free grammatical system. However, no language is completely genderless. The overall purpose of this study is to examine the linguistic and non-linguistic manifestation of gender in Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) coursebooks. To that end, the portrayal of women and men in three volumes of the coursebook series *Yeni Hitit Yabancılar için Türkçe Ders Kitabı* (The Yeni Hitit Turkish Coursebook for Foreigners) has been studied using content analysis. In this study, the coursebook series has been quantitatively analysed with respect to the visibility of female and male characters in the visuals and written context and first-place occurrences and the number of words uttered by both sexes in mixed-gender conversations. Female and male characters in the coursebook series have also been compared according to their professional roles, hobbies and interests, representation in the public and private sphere and the number and quality of descriptive adjectives. The findings have shown that although men are slightly over represented in the visuals and written content, the authors of the series seem to have achieved a balanced manifestation of female and male characters in the dialogues. However, men are represented in a wider range of professional roles than women. There is no major difference between women and men with regard to the frequency of descriptive adjectives.
Key Words: Turkish, Coursebook, Gender Bias, Language Teaching, Foreign Languages.

Resumen

Algunas lenguas están ligadas gramaticalmente al género. El español y el francés, por ejemplo, asignan un género a todos y cada uno de los sustantivos, mientras que el turco tiene un sistema gramatical sin género. Sin embargo, ningún lenguaje es completamente sin género. El propósito general de este estudio es examinar la manifestación lingüística y no lingüística del género en los libros de texto de turco como lengua extranjera (TLE). Con ese fin, se ha estudiado la descripción de mujeres y hombres en tres volúmenes de la serie de libros de texto *Yeni Hitit Yabancılar için Türkçe Ders Kitabı* (El libro de cursos de turco de Yeni Hitit para extranjeros) utilizando análisis de contenido. En este estudio, la serie de libros de curso ha sido analizada cuantitativamente con respecto a la visibilidad de los personajes femeninos y masculinos en las imágenes y el contexto escrito y las ocurrencias en primer lugar y el número de palabras pronunciadas por ambos sexos en conversaciones de género mixto. Los

personajes femeninos y masculinos en la serie de libros también se han comparado de acuerdo con sus roles profesionales, pasatiempos e intereses, la representación en la esfera pública y privada y la cantidad y calidad de los adjetivos descriptivos. Los hallazgos han demostrado que, aunque los hombres están ligeramente sobrerrepresentados en las imágenes y el contenido escrito, los autores de la serie parecen haber logrado una manifestación equilibrada de personajes femeninos y masculinos en los diálogos. Sin embargo, los hombres están representados en un rango más amplio de roles profesionales que las mujeres. No hay una diferencia importante entre mujeres y hombres con respecto a la frecuencia de los adjetivos descriptivos.

Palabras clave: turco, libro de texto, prejuicios de género, enseñanza de idiomas, lenguas extranjeras.

1. Introduction

We all have characteristics that come from the birth. One of them is sex, which indicates the state of being male or female. Often confused with sex is gender, a term that involves social and culture-based sex (Butler, 1999; Bhasin, 2003). Gender was used only as a grammatical term until the1970s. Having been borrowed by the British writer Ann Oakley (1972) to be used in the field of sociology as a sociological term, it is now treated as a cultural phenomenon.

The terminological difference between sex and gender was first clarified by John Money (1955), a scholar working in the areas of sexual identity and biology of gender. After he expanded the scope of the term to introduce *gender roles* as a new terminology, taking into account all the non-genital and non-erotic but also sociological applications of the society (masculinity or femininity), the social area beyond the physical structures was brought into view. Contemporary definitions of gender are in line with his approach. For example, the United Nations Population Fund defines gender as "… the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female" (UNFPA, 2005). In a similar way, the World Health Organization (WHO) differentiates gender and sex suggesting that "'gender' describes those characteristics of women and men that are largely socially created, while 'sex' encompasses those that are biologically determined" (WHO, 2016). Still, it is impossible to make a clear- cut distinction between sex and gender, since the expectations of a culture or society (gender) and the physical body of a man or woman (sex) are not completely independent from each other. In other words, the cultural constitution of gender involves the biological sex (Dökmen, 2004).

Social roles assigned by society to men and women often lead to gender stereotypes, which can be negative or positive generalizations that tend to be inaccurate (de Beauvoir, 1970). Although most people are aware that such assumptions are often untrue, they cannot avoid their influence. For example, society falsely assumes that marriage and having kids is an ultimate life goal for women, and all men love sports and cars. Brought up believing this, parents buy cars, trucks, fire engines, police cars or guns for boys, but dolls, kitchen utensils or cosmetics for girls. Without questioning, they decorate their children's rooms in blue if it is a boy and pink if it is a girl. Just like in the case of toys, parents opt for names that suggest some kind of naivety, such as flower names if they are picking a name for a girl but opt for names that symbolize strength and power if the name is intended for a boy. All these choices are made without giving them much thought and implicitly teach children the kind of

person society expects them to be. Being largely prescribed, these examples present a rather simplistic, historic view of gender roles. However, they sadly continue to exist in all kinds of educational materials.

There have been many gender studies which focus on educational and non-educational print materials. A review of educational studies by Turkish researchers indicates that there has been a major interest in gender bias and the (in)visibility of women in educational materials and inequality in the roles assigned have been frequently studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) coursebooks, while it is a relatively untouched field for Turkish as a Foreign Language (TFL) coursebooks. Several Turkish researchers focused in their studies on gender in ELT coursebooks produced by Turkish authors.

Çubukçu and Sivaslıgil (2007), for example, examined the 7th grade ELT textbook 'Let's Speak English', published by the Turkish Ministry of Education, in terms of gender ideology by taking female and male figures as their sample and analyzing verbal and nonverbal features of the textbook. They found that the visibility of men was higher than that of women (M:W=63:37) on the whole, but lower in the domestic sphere. Their findings indicated gender inequality in traditional roles and gender roles in the content of this textbook.

Another study that reviews three ELT coursebooks used in Turkish state schools during the first four years of education was carried out by Aydınoğlu (2014). In her findings, the author highlights that in one of the coursebooks, the writers seem to be aware of gender bias and try to avoid stereotyping. For example, in the unit teaching the parts of a house, the household is seen at the roof rather than inside the house for the fear of creating a stereotype. She also asserts that another coursebook reviewed "…is dangerously full of gender bias" (Aydınoğlu, 2014, p. 238).

Another study investigating gender bias in ELT coursebooks produced by the Turkish Ministry of Education to be used Turkish state schools revealed similar results. Evaluating representation of genders in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade coursebooks, Bilgin (2013) observed an overall balance in gender representation; however, the author called for a need for the re-evaluation as imbalances exist when each grade level is examined separately according to the categories applied in this research. In a more recent study, Demir & Yavuz (2017) reviewed another ELT coursebook series- *Yes You Can*- published by Turkish Ministry of Education and reported a fair gender representation. Yet, in that coursebook series, men significantly outnumbered women in terms of the variety of occupations they were assigned.

A very comprehensive project was carried out by Aratemur Çimen & Bayhan (2018) to study gender and secularism in newly published textbooks by The Ministry of National Education. For the purposes of their project, the authors chose a total 16 books for grades 1, 5 and 9, which they analyzed using critical discourse analysis. With regards to gender equality, they spotted a significant change in Turkish textbooks for grades 1 and 5, the history and Religious Culture and Morality textbooks for grade 9 and history textbook for grade 9. Two very striking findings of the project were "removal of women" from Grade 9 history textbook and "gender discriminative content" in Grade 1 Turkish textbook. (Aratemur Çimen & Bayhan, 2018).

"A Thematic Analysis of Women in the Turkish Novel of the Tanzimat Period" by Karabulut (2013) is another study that reviews gender roles in non-educational print materials. Novels written in that period focused particularly on women rights, freedom and education, reflecting the social transition of Turkish and Ottoman social life. In these novels, Turkish men and women were assigned opposite roles. Men in these novels were free and outside the home, whereas women had domestic roles at home. Nevertheless, novelists did give women some occupations, though usually only as teachers, tailors and servants. This is definitely a strong indicator of the traditionally subordinate role assigned to Turkish women in that period. Looking at more current non-educational material reveals that not much has changed with regards to the representation of women.

In his article "Similar Women Characters in Turkish Folk Tales and Novels," Doğramacıoğlu (2015) examined female characters in three different literary types: folk tales, modern novels and stories. He found out Turkish women were described in folk tales as heroines with supernatural powers, fighting and travelling alone in the mountains and flying on the air of their own accord. However, in the novels and stories, they are given more earthly roles as step-mothers or mothers. In conclusion, the study underlines that women are the core of Turkish society and it is crucial to note that women have a wider variety of roles.

In addition to the studies on educational and non-educational print materials used in Turkey, there are also studies that focus on coursebooks for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Firstly, Mineshima (2008) investigated how gender is represented in EFL textbooks used in upper secondary English classes. This controversial research revealed that the number of male and female characters (F:M=29:33) and the number of words spoken by males or females (F:M=245:247) are nearly the same. The number of occupations (F:M=9:10), interests (F:M=22:21), family roles (F:M=10:9) and school subjects (F:M=5:5) were also close to each other and the pictures too provided gender equality. These findings constituted ample evidence that the book was a fairly egalitarian representation of the two genders, emphasizing men's contribution to household chores.

Believing in the necessity of evaluating coursebooks from a gender perspective, Arıkan (2005) studied two ELT coursebooks: *The Headway* and *Think Ahead to First Certificate*. Arıkan justifies his choice of these coursebooks with the longtime popularity of the former around the world and the widespread use of the latter in schools in Turkey. The review of the coursebooks revealed gender as one of the problematic areas along with age and social class due to unbalanced representation.

"Gender Representations in the Finnish EFL Textbook Series *'The News Headlines'* and *'Smart Moves'* " by Saarikivi (2012) is another study whose focus is on gender in EFL coursebooks. The purpose of this comprehensive study was to compare the EFL coursebook *'Smart Moves'*, used in Finland in the 7th and 9th grades, to the coursebook series *'The News Headlines'*, published ten years ago, in terms of gender representations. The aim is to investigate how gender is represented in these books, discourse elements of different genders and if these discourse elements are hegemonic or deviant. The evaluation of the coursebooks reveals a slight male dominance, imbalance in the number of male and female characters in favour of male characters- although not so drastic in *Smart Moves-*

and that gendered characters were clearly distinguished from each other in terms of looks, interests and actions. Besides, profession-wise, male characters were depicted in a more powerful position. The author concludes that the depiction of genders in these coursebook series contradicts with the the official curriculum, which promotes gender equality.

The studies described here provide us with a background on gender bias in educational and non-educational materials. The findings in the literature signal an underrepresentation of women in the EFL coursebooks produced both by local and foreign publishers and calls for a serious need to review TFL coursebooks from a gender perspective.

1.2. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the '*Yeni Hitit'* coursebook series from a socio-linguistic and cultural perspective rather than a purely language-teaching point of view, and to discover how gender is represented by reference to visuals and written content, first-place occurrences in conversations, and the number of words uttered by male and female characters. The inspection of the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series from such an unexplored perspective will give us a general picture of how evenly each gender is represented, how female and male characters are described, and which social, domestic and professional roles are attributed to these characters. In a generic sense, this study will help us find out whether or not gender bias is present in this coursebook series, or to what extent it is present. Such a review will also raise awareness about the significance of the equal and unbiased manifestation of gender in foreign language teaching coursebooks.

1.3. Research Questions

In line with the aims stated above, this study poses the following research questions which embody the visual and written aspects of gender representation in the coursebook series:

1. Are female and male characters evenly represented in the visuals in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

2. Are female and male characters evenly represented in the written text of the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

3. Do female and male characters share an equal number of words, in approximate terms, in dialogues in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

4. Do female and male characters share equal first-place occurrences in conversations in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

5. What occupational roles are attributed to female and male characters in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

6. What hobbies and interests are attributed to female and male characters in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

7. To what extent are female and male characters present in the public and private sphere in *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series?

2. Method

2.1. Materials

This study is a content analysis of the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series 'Türkçe Ders Kitabı (*New Hitit: A Turkish Coursebook for Foreigners*)', developed and published by Ankara University Turkish and Foreign Language Practice and Research Center (TÖMER) in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) guidelines. This series was chosen as the corpus of the study among other TFL coursebook series available, for it is one of the earliest and frequently-used coursebooks published to teach Turkish to foreigners. Having been published over 10 years ago, it is still widely used for the purposes of teaching Turkish to foreigners living in Turkey and abroad. It is available in three levels of language proficiency ranging from elementary to advanced. Each level in the series comes with a coursebook, workbook and a teacher's book. This study is limited to the analysis of the coursebook only.

2.2. Procedures

The data analysis procedures used in the examination of gender representation in *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series include the content analysis of each level with reference to the overall categories of visibility in visuals and written content, 'firstness' in dialogues, occupational roles, hobbies and interests and adjectives used. The category of visibility was measured based on the number of female and male characters in the visuals and the written content. In order to find out whether there was a balanced representation of women and men, the researchers manually counted the number of female and male characters in the visuals, male and female names occurring in the written content, number of women and men in written and recorded dialogues, and the number of words uttered by female and male characters in mixed-gender dialogues. The category of 'firstness' was explored using the criterion of the relative frequency with which the woman or the man initiated the exchange in mixed-gender conversations. Besides, the manifestation of female and male characters was considered with regard to the quality of descriptive adjectives used, the attribution of domestic, social and professional roles and the representation of both genders in the public and private sphere.

3. Findings and Discussion

This section of the study details the findings with regard to the visibility of female and male characters in the visuals and written content of three levels of *the Yeni Hitit* coursebook series. The results are presented in tables and then discussed.

3.1. Gender Visibility

"Visibility refers to the actual presence of female characters both in text and in illustrations" (Nagatomo, 2010, p. 55). Sexism is often invisibly present in textbooks through the omission or under-representation

of female characters in the images, texts, and dialogues. Therefore, this study investigates gender visibility in the visuals and written content.

3.1.1. Gender Visibility in the Visual Content

Modern language coursebooks are full of colourful visuals depicting the lives of fictional characters or real people from different strands of society. Besides helping us teach or elicit the target vocabulary and language forms, these visuals convey the lifestyles, routines, beliefs, and other cultural elements of a given society.

The under-representation of one gender through the visuals in a language coursebook is the most observable and self-evident form of sexism in educational materials. Ansary and Babaii (2003) argue "sexism, though embarrassing and undesirable, is subliminal and mirrors the institutionalized, unfair and inexcusable sex discrimination to the disadvantage of women in society" (p. 184). The selection of the visuals in a language coursebook is, therefore, very important as they may transmit implicit or explicit messages to the learners. These visuals communicate an impression of the distribution of male and female roles and the visibility of each gender in society. The following table (Table 1) details the relative frequency of occurrence of female and male characters in the three volumes of the Yeni Hitit coursebook series.

Gender	Language Levels			Total
	Volume 1 (A1&A2)	Volume 2 (B1)	Volume 3 (B2)	
Female	228	121	103	452
Male	215	122	106	443

Table 1. Visibility of Female and Male Characters in the Visuals

Female and male characters in the illustrations and photos were manually counted in order to explore gender representation in the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series. Small-sized photos with busy images were excluded due to the difficulty of gender identification in these visuals. The physical count of the presence of female and male characters revealed the number of female characters to be 228 in volume 1, 121 in volume 2, and 103 in volume 3. The number of male characters in volume 1, volume 2 and volume 3 was found to be 215, 122, and 106 respectively. The total number of female and male characters in Table 1 indicates there is no major difference in the numerical representation of the female and male characters although the total number of male characters is slightly higher. In that sense, the authors seem to have achieved a balanced appearance of female and male characters through their choice of visuals. These findings bear similarity with the findings of former studies on the analysis of language coursebooks produced in Turkey. Aydınoğlu (2014) and Bilgin (2013) also report coursebook writers' awareness about and effort to avoid gender-bias. However, the equality or proximity in the frequency of female and male characters does not necessarily imply that there are no gender-biased messages in the roles assigned to the two genders or in their actions, interests, and occupations as depicted in the visuals.

3.1.2. Gender Visibility in the Written Content

Language teaching coursebooks tend to follow a similar pattern regardless of the language they teach. Starting with a set of attractive topic-related visuals, each unit proceeds with a text, which serves the purpose of presenting target vocabulary and grammar in context. A balanced and egalitarian representation of the two genders in these texts is as important as in the visuals. Therefore, the occurrence of Turkish and foreign female and male names in the reading texts, dialogues, exercises and grammar boxes in the three volumes of the *Yeni Hitit* Coursebook series were manually counted to establish the extent to which each gender was represented in the written content. Unisex Turkish names, such as Deniz and Özgür were excluded from the total. Table 2 displays the frequency of female and male names in each volume of the series.

Gender	Language Levels According to CEFR			Total
	Volume 1 (A1&A2)	B1 (B1)	B2 (B2)	
Female	273	142	56	471
Male	254	184	90	538

Table 2. Visibility of Female and Male Characters in Written Content By Name

Scanning three volumes of the series revealed that the total number of male names outnumbered the female names, indicating a male dominance in the written content. According to Table 2, the number of female and male names is respectively 273 and 254 in Volume 1, 142 and 184 in Volume 2, and 56 and 90 in Volume 3. Only volume I has a higher representation of female characters. This points out a lower visibility for women in the texts, exercises, and dialogues.

The examination of the female and male Turkish names used in the coursebooks shows that the authors preferred naming both female and male characters using traditional and popular Turkish names. Some of the names used for fictional female characters in the reading texts, exercises and dialogues included: Ayşe, Elif, Ece, Burcu, Ceren, Demet, Aslı, Berrin, Tuba, Esin, Melek, Sema, and Sevgi, . Examples of names for the fictional male characters include: Emre, Ali, Murat, Yaman, Can, Cem, Mert, Kemal, Arda, Mehmet, and Bora. The names of these fictional characters in the coursebook series reflect the nature of female and male names used in Turkish language. Female names reflect a more gentle and peaceful quality in contrast to the more assertive nature of male names. For example, the female names Burcu, Melek, Sema, and Sevgi respectively mean a beautiful smell, angel, the sky, and love. However, male names Yaman, Mert, Kemal and Bora refer to strong personality characteristics, Yaman meaning strong or efficient, Mert meaning trustworthy, Kemal meaning mature or knowledgeable, and Bora meaning a gale. The meanings of these names are a reflection of the respective traits expected from women and men in Turkish society. While female names make reference to beauty or naivety, male names tend to pertain to physical strength or strong personality characteristics.

3.1.3 Gender Visibility in Dialogues

Dialogues in language coursebooks present learners with sample conversations between two or more speakers to model the functions or usage of the target language. Although they may not always be completely authentic, they are expected to be meaningful and resemble a real-life context, reflecting moments from the lives of people who use the target language for genuine purposes as a part of their everyday lives. In that sense, dialogues are also a good way to teach the target culture. Through the dialogues, learners recognize how the speakers of the target language greet each other, start and end a conversation, how directly or indirectly they express their ideas, etc. They also mirror the place of each gender in the target culture. Table 3 displays the number of female and male characters in written and recorded dialogues in the three volumes of *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series.

| Gender | Language Levels According to CEFR | | | Total |
	Volume 1 (A1&A2)	Volume 2 (B1)	Volume 3 (B2)	
Female	44	15	5	64
Male	55	**7**	12	74

Table 3. Number of Female and Male Characters in Dialogues

There are 56 written and recorded dialogues of varying lengths in Volume 1. Of these dialogues, only 18 are between a female and a male character. In all the dialogues in Volume 1, 44 of the interlocutors are women, and 55 are men. Volume 2, on the other hand, includes longer texts and fewer dialogues. The total number of dialogues in Volume 2 is 11. Of these dialogues, 7 are between a female and male character. In total, there are 15 female and 7 male interlocutors. Finally, Volume 3 consists of a total of 9 dialogues. Four are between a female and male a character. The number of female and male participants in all the dialogues in Volume 3 is respectively 5 and 8. Table 3 illustrates that male characters have a higher presence in the dialogues in terms of the number of characters.

The following table (Table 4) displays the number of words spoken by female and male characters in these mixed-gender dialogues, with a view to revealing which gender is more visible in the dialogues.

| Gender | Language Levels According to CEFR | | | Total |
	A1&A2	B1	B2	
Female	494	826	454	1774
Male	514	944	303	1761

Table 4. Number of Words Spoken by Female and Male Characters in Dialogues

3.2. Firstness

'Firstness' in conversations refers to the number of times a male or female character appears first in a reading, a dialogues or an exercise" (Nagatomo, 2010, p. 56). Table 5 displays the respective first place occurrences of female and male characters in the three volumes of the series.

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Gender	Language Levels According to CEFR			Total
	Volume 1 (A1&A2)	Volume 2 (B1)	Volume 3 (B2)	
Female	10	3	2	15
Male	8	4	2	14

Table 5. Firstness of Female and Male Characters in Texts in Dialogues

Table 5 suggests that female characters initiated a mixed-gender conversation 10 times in Volume 1, 3 times in Volume 2, and 3 times in Volume 3, while male characters started a conversation 8 times in Volume 1, 4 times in Volume 2, and twice in Volume 3. In total, female characters initiated a slightly higher number of mixed-gender conversations than male characters, but the difference is not major. Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland (2010) claim that "If one sex *initiates* conversation more often than the other, the 'initiating sex' will end up having more active practice in the skill of initiating conversation" (p. 473). The findings of this study also indicate a correlation between 'firstness' and the number of words spoken by each sex.

3.3. Occupations

Gender stereotypes refer to inaccurate generalizations about the characteristics of a particular gender. Porreca (1984) writes that the representation of women and men in occupational roles is another manifestation of sexism. Thus, in order to further investigate gender roles in the three volumes of the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series, the occupational roles of female and male characters have been listed. Table 6 shows occupational roles according to gender.

Gender	Occupations		
	Volume 1	Volume 2	Volume 3
Female	Pharmacist, shoe seller, teacher, banker, taxi driver, actress, general manager, fashion designer, librarian, TV presenter, secretary, housewife	civil engineer, sales assistant, call-centre employee, carpet maker, executive assistant, doctor, athlete, teacher, model, dancer, actress, correspondent, white-collar worker	dancer, lottery ticket seller, student, musician, astronaut
Male	public servant, waiter, pilot, mail carrier, banker, student, radio programmer, bagel seller, florist, musician, medical technician, athlete, teacher, taxi driver, soldier, doctor, architect, white-goods seller, delivery person, dentist, footballer, lawyer, artist, dancer, police officer, swimmer, cameraman, bus driver	Carpenter, civil engineer, call-centre employee, sales representative, journalist, director, newsreader, rally driver , DJ, photo journalist, athlete, actor, sculptor, musician, artist, ceramicist, graffiti artist, soldier, teacher, cartoonist, street vendor, director, painter, drummer	dancer, singer, musician, nobel prize winner, comedian, architect, astronaut, astrologer

Table 6. Occupational Roles According to Gender

Scrutiny of the visuals in three volumes reveals some gender-bias in terms of the distribution of occupational roles. The findings show that, although both genders are represented in various professional roles throughout the book, men are depicted in a wider range of occupational roles- both high and low paying jobs- than women. For example, in volume 1, men are portrayed as waiters, pilots, mail carriers, radio programmers, bus drivers, photographers, students, soldiers, doctors, etc., while female characters are shown performing a more limited range of jobs, such as teachers, housewives, fashion designers, TV presenters, and pharmacists. A similar imbalance exists in Volumes 2 and 3, although in these cases it is less marked. The variety of jobs assigned to each gender is a true indicator of gender (in)equality in language coursebooks. Other studies, such as Hall (2014), Gharbavi (2012) and Söğüt (2018) have also reported a similar fashion in language teaching coursebooks.

3.4. Hobbies and Interests

Another area in which gender stereotypes and sexism can manifest themselves is hobbies and interests. Table 7 illustrates the hobbies and interests attributed to female and male characters in three volumes of the *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series.

| Gender | Hobbies and Interests | | |
	Volume 1	Volume 2	Volume 3
Female	painting, photography, canoeing, trekking, jewellery design, dancing, cooking, shopping, exercising, horse-riding	swimming, horse-riding, exercising, shopping, reading, playing a musical instrument, knitting, dancing	reading, rock-climbing, cleaning, shopping, dancing, listening to music, meditating, watching TV
Male	playing chess, reading, playing a musical instrument, canoeing, trekking, playing tennis, painting, skiing, cycling, motorcycling	skiing, wrestling, archery, pole vaulting, rowing, body building, playing the flute, pottery, painting, acting	dancing, playing a musical instrument, listening to music, watching TV

Table 7. Hobbies and Interests According to Gender

Throughout the series, both male and female characters are shown engaged in a variety of hobbies and interests. Although there is no major difference between the two genders on a numerical basis, there is evidence of a gender-biased attitude in the way hobbies and interests are presented. For example, there is a striking disparity in the number of female and male characters in Unit 2 "Şimdi Spor Zamanı/ It is Time to Do Sports" and Unit 4 "Bu Yıl Moda Ne?/ What is Fashionable This Year?" in Volume 2. Unit 2 illustrates a vast number of male athletes engaged in various sports, such as wrestling, skiing, pole vaulting, rowing, body building, etc. as opposed to three female athletes in horse riding, swimming and tennis. However, addressing "a conventionally female hobby", Unit 4 depicts a surprisingly high number of female characters. The frequency of female characters in this unit is three times higher than that for the male characters. These examples indicate that, although the two genders

are evenly represented numerically, they are not portrayed equally in terms of their professional and social standing.

3.5. Public and Private Sphere

Sexism may also manifest itself in a coursebook through the unequal representation of women and men when shown in public and private spheres. Table 8 displays the frequency of female and male characters as represented in these contexts.

Gender	Sphere	Language Levels According to CEFR			Total
		A1&A2	B1	B2	
Female	Public	74	35	53	162
	Private	12	6	3	21
Male	Public	94	52	76	222
	Private	2	0	1	3

Table 8. Female and Male Characters in the Public and Private Sphere

Table 8 demonstrates that men are depicted in the public sphere more often than women. They are shown outside their homes performing traditional non-domestic roles, working in their office jobs, doing physical exercise, etc. The book also includes some pictures where men are portrayed as fathers or babysitters, spending time with (their) children, but these are very few in number. The private sphere, on the other hand, is feminized in almost all the visuals and dialogues. Female characters are depicted doing domestic chores, such as cleaning and cooking, or as mothers looking after their children. Examples of rare exceptions among the professional roles are the presence of a female taxi driver and also the appearance of a male nanny.

3.6. Adjectives

The type and frequency of adjectives describing both genders was also examined. The results are shown in Table 9.

Gender	Type of Adjective	Language Levels According to CEFR			Total
		A1&A2	B1	B2	
Female	Possessive	32	23	37	92
	Descriptive	7	5	7	19
Male	Possessive	10	17	14	41
	Descriptive	4	4	6	14

Table 9. Adjectives used in describing female and male characters

According to 9, a higher number of descriptive and possessive adjectives were used throughout the three volumes of the series to refer to female characters. The analysis of the adjectives revealed that descriptive adjectives used for women present them as emotional personalities and focus on their

physical features (slim, beautiful, attractive, young, etc.) and marital status. However, men are depicted as athletic characters and with dominant roles in the public sphere. For example, in Volume 1 Unit 9.2 "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus," women define themselves as 'beautiful,' while men claim that they are 'charismatic.' In the same unit, women boast of their ability to cook and freedom to wear high heels, while men brag about being able to open jars, having freedom to go out late at night and to take off their shirts on a warm summer day.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1. Concluding Remarks

Gender inequality in educational materials has long been a popular research topic. However, it has remained rather unexplored in TFL. For that reason, this study has examined gender representation in TFL coursebooks to find out whether the genders are equally represented in visuals and in written content on a numerical basis, and also to discover whether gender bias exist in the portrayal of women and men in terms of professional roles, hobbies and interests, their representation in the public and private sphere and the use of descriptive adjectives. The results have showed that there seems not to be a major difference in the numerical representation of women or men in the visuals and in written content. With regard to the representation of each gender in the dialogues, it was found that, although the use of the frequency of the male characters featured in the dialogues is higher, mixed-gender dialogues are female-dominated in terms of the number of words used and 'firstness.' The analysis of occupational roles and interests have indicated that men are portrayed performing a wider variety of jobs- both low and high paying jobs. Similarly, a gender-biased tendency has been found in hobbies and interests. For example, female characters seem to be more often portrayed engaged in shopping, fashion-related activities, knitting, and so forth while sports are preferred by male characters. Not surprisingly, the public sphere is generally male dominated, and women are depicted more often doing the chores and housework and taking care of children. Descriptive adjectives about emotions and positive physical properties have been used for women, whereas the adjectives describing the dominant roles and duties of men have been used.

The *Yeni Hitit* coursebook series seems on the surface to have strived for an egalitarian approach in its representation of women and men in a numerical sense, yet there still seems to have traditional portrayal of genders. A closer look at the visuals and written content indicates that improvement is needed to achieve an equal representation of both genders with regards to their occupational roles, domestic roles, hobbies and interests. Although the coursebook series offers a balanced proportion of male and female characters, it is not completely free of gender bias in describing and depicting the genders. To achieve that, throughout the coursebooks, through visuals as well, women need to be assigned a wider range of occupational roles, be visible in the public sphere as much as the private sphere, engage in non-traditional hobbies and interests, while men need to be more widely represented in the private sphere.

Despite the obvious efforts by the authors to achieve a quantitatively equal representation of both genders throughout the series, they could not avoid stereotypes or go beyond the fixed roles assigned to each gender by the society.

4.2. Suggestions

Considering the crucial role, educational materials might play in strengthening existing believes and ideas as much as transforming a society; it is uncontroversially important to highlight the need to ensure gender balance and equality in a deeper sense in educational materials. There is no doubt that gender equality will be achieved in real life once it is achieved in educational materials. Therefore, during material development, authors themselves should be aware and beware of the gender bias that the male-dominated society imposes on its citizens. In the development and choice of the characters, for example, utmost attention should be paid to avoid reinforcing all kinds of existing gender stereotypes. It must be borne in mind that these materials go one step ahead of the society and may play a leading role in boosting gender equality by depicting women and men in unorthodox roles. Last but not the least, the equal and balanced representation of genders both in visuals and written texts in foreign language teaching materials should receive as much attention as the literal and educational content, since they do not only present a new language but also introduce cultural and intercultural elements.

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