



## **An investigation into gender representations in an English coursebook**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since the stereotypical gender representations in coursebooks produce inequalities and lead to keep the existing inequalities in society, this issue of hidden curriculum was the focus of this study. This study aimed to investigate the four units of the ELT coursebook “Progress” in order to find out what occupational roles, leisure time activities and household activities are assigned to male and female characters, the proportion of male characters to female characters in images and how gender is positioned in the visual discourse. The results of the analysis reveal that the coursebook has positive messages in relation to gender representations but still has a sexist point of view in terms of the categories that were examined throughout the study. This indicates that there is an improvement regarding gender representations; yet, it does not present a fair representation of female and male characters in all categories.

### **Keywords**

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gender representation,  
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## **Introduction**

“Every human being is born with a sex and into a gender, which is a formation of roles molded by society and culture” (Söylemez, 2010, p. 751). Biological sex is formed by genetic and anatomical features, whereas gender is an acquired identity that is learned (Yılmaz, 2012). Gender identity is under everlasting construction with the influence of the factors such as family, school, media, and language we are exposed to (Aydınöğlü, 2014). Throughout the socialization process in society and culture, gender roles assigned to men and women by society form the basis of the development of gender identity. Some of the psychological theories of gender identity development and gender roles are evolutionary theory (Buss, 1995; Shields, 1975), object relations theory (Chodorow, 1989), gender schema theory (Bem, 1981) and social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

According to evolutionary theories, gender identity development is related to the genetic differences between men and women. According to functionalists like Shields (1975), the function of women is different from and complementary to the function of men. To fulfil these different and complementary functions which are necessary for their survival, men and women have evolved differently. As for sociobiologists (e.g., Buss, 1995), different sexual and reproductive strategies lead to behavioural differences among genders. This scientific sexism gives the socially determined subservient and domesticated roles to women (Bohan, 1992). In contrast to evolutionary theorists, object-relations theorists put emphasis upon the effects of socialization on gender development. The early relationship between

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mother and child affects boys and girls differently (Yılmaz, 2012). All infants “identify” with the female parent. The qualities the mother has are internalized by the infants to form their personality. Thus, the feminine qualities of the women which reveal in their relationships with their infants form the core of the infant’s identity. Also, since the mother fulfils the baby’s desires, the child associates all gratification with their mother’s presence (Williams, 1993). However, to be able to learn the male role in the society and personality attributes related to that role, boys are forced to replace their identification with the mother with a masculine identification. They have to define masculinity as what is not feminine because adult men are absent during the waking hours of young children. Thus, boys decry everything associated with the female role as inferior. This leads to the loss of their original, fulfilling attachment to their mother. This separation to develop gender identity as male devalues women’s role in the society (Parsons, 1952). On the other hand, since fathers are rarely in intimate contact with their daughters and their mothers provide erotic gratification to them, femininity and heterosexuality lead to problems for girls. They have to accept men’s negative perception of their feminine identification and have to agree with financial dependency on men. (Parsons, 1952). As for gender schema theory (Bem, 1981), children develop their perceptions of gender roles depending how their cultures and societies define the roles of women and men. They internalize their perceptions which have become unchallenged core beliefs or a gender schema. Eventually, to be able to incorporate their self-concepts into their gender schema, children will try to have the traits and behaviours that they consider suitable for their gender (Yılmaz, 2012). Finally, according to social role theory, there are communal and agentic dimensions of gender-stereotyped characteristics. Domestic roles are generally regarded as communal and less agentic. Women are seen in more communion. However, public activities are regarded as more agentic, less communal. This agentic attribute is associated with men (Eagle, 1987).

All these psychological theories of gender identity development and gender roles give females and males gender-stereotyped traits, role behaviours, physical characteristics and occupations which affect men and women differently. For example, women are expected to work in domestic and less interesting jobs, to be passive, cooperative, caretakers, beautiful, slim and attractive whereas men are expected to do various adventurous, interesting and socially respectable jobs, to be aggressive, competitive and they do not need to look after themselves and pay attention to their physical appearances. Both genders might be judged by how well they adapt these stereotypes, which leads to social and psychological pressure upon both males and females (Yılmaz, 2012). In relation to the gender representations and roles, the feminist movement brought the concept of sexism into use to identify discriminatory practices and ideologies against women. In doing so, feminist theory aims to investigate how the representational systems of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class are mutually constructed in a given context, community, society or a field of study (Demir & Yavuz, 2017), and also aims to find out the instances of sexism which women are consistently disturbed (Lakoff, 1975).

Schools as agencies of socialization have an important role in the process of gender identity development through modelling behaviours and skills (Yılmaz, 2012). However, educational institutions and their teaching and learning materials are prone to sexism. Therefore, the visual, verbal and other kinds of informational contents may change consciously or unconsciously the learners’ opinions and beliefs about their future roles and their choice of professional goals. For instance, if gender is presented through gender-stereotyped images and verbal symbols, this modelled attitude may limit the potential of the children and what they want to be and to do. (Bandura, 1971). These gender-stereotyped

images and verbal symbols might reinforce the existing inequality in society (Sivaslıgil, 2006).

As in the role of schools in forming gender perceptions, teaching materials, especially coursebooks, which are a significant part of curriculum and course development, have an impact on gender perceptions. Coursebooks present the ideological content, gender-biased representations, and stereotypical features, which affect both learners and teachers' values, behaviours, worldviews, and mindsets (Söğüt, 2018). More specifically, ELT coursebooks are considered as ideal tools for the embodiment and transmission of these contents through illustrations, subjects, example sentences, reading passages, questions and other activities (Khalid & Ghania, 2019). Studies on gender representations in ELT coursebooks show that there is widespread discrimination in favour of males who are presented as dominant, strong emotionally and physically and in a wider variety of social and occupational roles. In contrast to male representation, the female is presented as weak and inferior (Khalid & Ghania, 2019).

Since the 1970s, how gender is represented in coursebooks has been examined by many scholars in Western countries (Cincotta, 1970; Hartman & Judd, 1978; Helinger, 1980, as cited in Sivaslıgil, 2006). The findings of studies show that women and men are presented in traditional roles (Sivaslıgil, 2006). Yet, gender representation in coursebooks is an issue that has been recently paid attention to in Turkey (Sivaslıgil, 2006). The Turkish Ministry of Education tries to exclude gender stereotyping and negative imaging of genders from the curriculum and coursebooks due to the fact that gender representations have a significant impact on the process of meaning-making and the development of the concept "gender" in children's mind (Demir & Yavuz, 2017). To be able to examine how gender is portrayed in the ELT coursebooks published by the Turkish Ministry of Education, several researchers conducted studies (Arslan Özer, Karataş & Ruken Ergün, 2019; Aydınoglu, 2014; Bilgin, 2013; Demir & Yavuz, 2017; Sivaslıgil, 2006; Söğüt, 2018; Yılmaz, 2012).

Sivaslıgil (2006) conducted a study that aims to investigate how gender ideology is presented through gender representations in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursebooks published by the Ministry of Education. The findings show that there is an imbalance in terms of the depiction of gender roles. Nearly in all categories used in content analysis such as frequency of appearance, amount of talk, representations in family roles and other social and occupational roles, distribution of household responsibilities and spare time and leisure time activities, females were underrepresented. On the other hand, both genders performed an equal amount of strategies of turn-taking and initiating new conversation. Yılmaz (2012) conducted a study on whether the textbook writers and publishers take the gender issues into consideration while revising the coursebooks. For this purpose, the recently revised ELT coursebooks were analysed through comparing with their first editions in terms of presence of female and male characters, the number of characters represented as family members, distribution of occupational activities, division of household activities, variety of leisure activities and adjectives used to describe genders" (p. 79). The results show that the first editions of the coursebooks are prone to sexism whereas gender representations in the last editions are more balanced in all investigated categories. In the first editions, the imbalanced representation of gender might be the result of how people perceive the women in patriarchal societies. The balanced gender representation in the last editions may be the result of the changing perception of women in society due to the increase in educational level of women (Yılmaz, 2012). According to the results of the study conducted by Bilgin (2013), gender representations in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELT coursebooks published by the Turkish Ministry of Education are imbalanced in terms of occupational roles, power issues, and

domestic roles. This imbalance may affect the students' self-esteem and self-image. Similarly, the research results of Demir and Yavuz's study (2017) show that there is no indicator of gender inequality in the coursebook series *Yes, You Can* published by the Ministry of Education. As for the study conducted by Söğüt (2018), the high school English workbooks and coursebooks published by the Turkish Ministry of Education were examined. The findings show that adjectives with negative connotations such as anti-social, alone, and stressful mostly are attributed to females and jobs related to indoor jobs such as waitress, housekeeper, nurse, and teacher are assigned to the female. Male mostly perform more prestigious outdoor jobs such as astronomer, executive director, researcher, and climber. According to the report of the Turkish Statistics Institute in 2013, 31.5% of human labour belongs to women whereas 71.6% belongs to men. The attribution of a narrower range of roles to females may be the result of these social facts and statistics which shape the values and viewpoints of members of the society. Finally, Arslan Özer et al. (2019) investigated text characters and pictures of the primary school Turkish textbooks through document analysis to find out how messages are given about gender. The results indicate that both genders are presented with both masculine and feminine roles. All colours are used for both genders. Female characters are mostly depicted with dress, skirt, shirt and t-shirt. Male characters are mostly worn with trousers, shirt and t-shirt. Yet, the female wears trousers in their daily life. Thus, the characters are presented with gender stereotypes. The number of male characters is more than the number of female characters in the primary school Turkish textbooks. Also, female characters are portrayed in more home-related pictures, which shows the division of labour is not presented enough in textbooks. In terms of physical appearance, females and males are depicted as not different among themselves. This may limit the gender perceptions of children and may cause them to act negatively and in a biased way towards individuals with different physical appearances.

The findings of all these studies show that coursebooks are prone to sexism in terms of different categories and generally favour male characters in all categories. Considering the upturn in gender stereotypes in the recently published ELT coursebooks, there should be fresh research studies to show how gender is portrayed in ELT coursebooks. For this purpose, the present study aims to investigate gender representations in the ELT preparatory class coursebook "Progress" published by the Turkish Ministry of Education in 2019. In the light of this aim, the following research questions are answered within the scope of the study:

RQ 1: What occupational roles, leisure time activities and household activities are depicted for male and female characters?

RQ 2: What is the proportion of male characters to female in images?

RQ 3: How is gender positioned in the visual discourse?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

To answer these research questions, a qualitative research method was conducted. The qualitative research method presents descriptive data which includes the detailed analysis of documents, photographs and scripts. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that "the data collected take the forms of words or pictures rather than numbers" in qualitative research (p. 5). In this regard, qualitative content analysis of visual and textual materials in the coursebook was employed for analysing the collected data. The content analysis presents information about

the written and visual materials through analysis, interpretation, summary, description and examination of those materials.

### Materials

The data of the present study was collected from the prep-year ELT coursebook “Progress” published by the Turkish Ministry of Education in 2019. This coursebook was chosen because it has to be used by the prep-year classes at all state schools in Turkey. The coursebook provides a data set of 413 pages. It has 20 units. However, since the time was limited to conduct content analysis for the whole book, in this present study, four units were chosen through purposeful sampling in the light of research questions due to the representation of samples for the particular categories such as occupational roles, leisure time activities and household activities. These units were Unit 3A Action (pp. 54-59), Unit 5 Celebrities (pp. 92-109), Unit 15 Sports (pp. 290-307) and Unit 16C For Household Chores (pp. 322-327).

### Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to examine the gender representations in Progress. Content analysis is defined as the counting of the words, phrases, or grammatical structures within particular categories (Dörnyei, 2007, as cited in Söylemez, 2010). For this purpose, the four units of the coursebook were scanned for occupational roles, leisure time activities and household activities. These categories were based on the categories that were used in the previous studies mentioned in the literature review section of the present study.

“Leisure time activities or free time activities can be defined as activities which are performed in one’s spare time after work/school or at weekends” (Yılmaz, 2012). The activities assigned to men and women might be stereotypical representations such as taking care of children, or performing indoor activities (reading, watching TV, cooking, etc.) for female characters; outdoor activities (playing football, riding bicycle and driving car) for male characters (Yılmaz, 2012). In this study, the gender distribution of the activities was investigated.

Helvacıoğlu (1996) stated that female characters are assigned to domestic activities such as cleaning, cooking, shopping, child care whereas male characters are assigned to gardening and mending, which are outside activities. While investigating the distribution of household activities that are assigned to men and women, the statistics of TISK (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013) were also taken into consideration.

Occupational roles are also part of gender stereotypes. The results of other studies show that the female characters are generally presented as cooks, cleaners, housewives, nurses, teachers, etc. (Bilgin, 2013). Male characters are presented in high-status occupations as engineers, architects, athletes, writers, journalists (Helvacıoğlu, 1996). In this present study, the occupations were categorized as traditional and non-traditional regarding the classifications by Helvacıoğlu (1996), Arslan (2000) and the list provided by the United States Department of Labour (USDL) Women’s Bureau (2018).

As for visuals, content analysis was conducted through analysing and detecting pictures and illustrations in all four units. Content analysis was used for examining the proportion of the male characters to female depicted in pictures of the coursebook. For the third research question, gender presented in images was expected to be detectable. If the image did not show the gender of the character, this image was excluded from the analysis.

Also, the activity was expected to be detectable to categorize the images. The images were entered into SPSS version 22.0 so that the frequencies can be analysed. The images were categorized in terms of sports, leisure time activities, work, and studies and research as they were categorized by the previous studies in the field, and in terms of female, male and together representations of the characters.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **RQ 1: What occupational roles, leisure time activities and household activities are depicted for male and female characters?**

As it is seen in Table 1, there are 38 occupations mentioned throughout the four units. Twenty-four of these occupations are assigned to men whereas fourteen of them are assigned to women. The findings show that limited occupational roles are assigned to female characters in the coursebook when compared to male characters. Similarly, Demir and Yavuz (2017) also reports that men are overrepresented in terms of quantity of occupations. According to the results of the study conducted by Yılmaz (2012), male characters are presented to have more opportunities than female characters in the business. The findings of Bilgin's study (2013) also reveal that female characters in the coursebook are underrepresented when compared to males in terms of occupation.

The number of female characters depicted as working women are less than male characters in coursebooks. According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1971), modelling of female and male characters in the coursebook has an impact on the learners' perceptions of their roles in society. Therefore, this underestimation of female characters in the coursebook may lead learners to have misleading perceptions of the place of women in society. These misleading perceptions cause a lack of recognition of women in society, which makes most women still invisible (Yılmaz, 2012).

As it is seen in Table 1, female characters are portrayed in more non-traditional occupational roles. The male characters are assigned to more traditional occupational roles than females. The findings indicate that non-traditional roles assigned to female characters outnumber those assigned to males. However, when these non-traditional roles of female characters are compared with occupational roles assigned to males, female characters are presented in occupations that are less paid and less professional. On the other hand, occupations such as doctor, soldier, scientist, author, basketball player and the other occupations traditionally assigned to males are still associated only with men.

In the study conducted by Yılmaz (2012), the findings demonstrate that female characters are presented in more non-traditional occupational roles compared to male characters in the coursebook. Similar to the findings of the current study, these non-traditional occupations are less professional and less interesting than the occupations that are assigned to male characters. In another study, Demir and Yavuz (2017) found out similar findings in terms of the quality of occupations.

*Table 1. Occupations Assigned to Female and Male*

Female	Male	
1. Student ***	1. Student *	15. Football Player *
2. Cabin Crew ***	2. Soldier*	16. Wrestler *
3. Musician ****	3. Famous Vlogger *****	17. Climber *
4. Actress ****	4. Scientist (x2) *	18. Athlete *****
5. Model ***	5. Molecular biologist *	19. Weightlifter *
6. Historian *****	6. Cosmologists *****	20. Author *
7. Physics Engineering ****	7. Astrophysicist *****	21. Physician*
8. Figure Skater *****	8. Basketball player *	22. Head of team *
9. Sports Analyst ****	9. Child Actor *	23. Coach *
10. Tennis Player ***	10. Photographer *	24. Doctor*
11. Athlete ****	11. Choreographer *****	
12. Traveller *****	12. Costume Designer *****	
13. Lawyer ****	13. Boxer *	
14. Gymnast ****	14. Marathon Runner	

\* Careers defined as „traditional“ for males

\*\* Careers defined as „non-traditional“ for males

\*\*\* Careers defined as „traditional“ for females

\*\*\*\* Careers defined as „non-traditional“ for females

\*\*\*\*\* Careers that were not able to be defined for not being included in any of the classification tools. The reason for some of the occupations not to be able to be classified is that when the base (total employed, both sexes) is less than 50k, data pertaining to occupations are not shown by the USDL.

Leisure time activity is another category that is set to analyse coursebooks in terms of gender-based stereotypical representation of females and males (Yılmaz, 2012). As it is seen in Table 2, female characters do fewer activities to spend their free time than male characters. Female characters do 17 activities and male characters do 25 activities in total. When the list of leisure time activities is examined, ‘playing football, basketball’ which are traditionally assigned to male characters in coursebooks are again assigned to male characters. ‘Playing tennis’ which is usually associated with women wearing miniskirts (Demir & Yavuz, 2017; Yılmaz, 2012), is associated with male characters in the current study. That makes it a common activity for females and males. Yılmaz (2012) states that male tennis players who have been recently famous may be the cause of this change in coursebooks. Female characters are presented to do ‘Korean Martial Arts and Karate’ which requires physical power. These non-traditional leisure time activities give positive indirect messages to the learners so that they can perceive these sports as preferable by both genders.

‘Playing a musical instrument’ is an activity that is assigned to both genders. Nonetheless, female characters are presented more to play a musical instrument or sing a song in the present study. According to Yılmaz (2012), this is because of the fact that the female is generally accepted as more romantic and emotional in a gender-biased way. In the current study, ‘reading’ is assigned to male characters. Contrary to that representation of males, the findings of another study (Yılmaz, 2012) show that female characters are

presented to read because reading can take a person away from the problems of the world and female is the one who has the problems in society and family life.

*Table 2. Leisure Time Activities assigned to Female and Male*

Interests genre	Female		Male
Sports	1. Korean Martial Arts	Sports	1. Riding a bike
	2. Roller skating		2. Playing tennis (x2)
	3. Doing karate (x2)		3. Swimming
	4. Exercising		4. Gymnastics
	5. Combat sports		5. Playing volleyball
	6. Riding horse		6. Playing football
	7. Hiking (x2)		7. Doing fitness
	8. Going to gym		8. Racing as sprinter
Music	9. Playing the piano (x2)	Music	9. Climbing
	10. Playing the cello		10. Riding a horse (x4)
	11. Singing		11. Hiking
	12. keening on classical music		12. Doing exercise
			13. Playing piano or guitar
Books		Books	14. Like reading
Hobbies	13. Playing chess	Hobbies	15. Discovering new places
	14. Dancing		16. Visiting new countries
	15. Going to cinema		17. Taking photographs
	16. Acting		18. Trying out new cuisines
	17. Fishing		19. Learning how to cook
			20. Collecting postcards from different countries
			21. Love sending postcards to friends and family members
			22. Playing video games

23. Painting
24. Dancing (x2)
25. Rowing in the river (x3)

As it is seen in Table 2, female characters are presented to go to the gym. ‘Going to gym’ is perceived as a sport which is performed by females to lose weight and to keep fit. Yılmaz (2012) states that coursebooks present indirect messages supporting the gender-biased representation of women as giving importance to and taking special care of their physical appearance by aiming to be physically appealing. ‘Swimming and doing exercise’ are generally assigned to female characters due to the same cause of going to the gym; however, the current findings show that male characters also perform these activities in the coursebook. Activities such as ‘hiking, roller skating, going fishing’ are assigned to male characters in other ELT coursebooks. The findings of the current study indicate that both female characters and male characters are able to perform these activities. On the other hand, dancing is an activity generally presented to be done by female characters; but in this coursebook, male characters are also presented to go dancing. Similarly, cooking is associated with female characters in the coursebooks since it is accepted as a household activity for females (Yılmaz, 2012). Yet, the present study shows that ‘learning to cook’ can be assigned to male characters. Riding a bike, which can be performed both to lose weight, and just to have fun, is shown to be performed by both genders. In contrast to the results of Yılmaz’s study (2012), discovering new places and visiting new countries are only the social activities performed by male characters. Finally, playing board games like chess is generally accepted as games played by family members. In these specific units of the coursebook, it is only assigned to female characters. However, the other units should be examined to reach a general conclusion.

The last category to analyse the coursebook in terms of gender representation is household chores. The activities performed by the female and male characters are given in Table 3. According to Mkuchu (2004), the stereotypical household chores performed by female characters involve tasks such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of children whereas male characters carry activities out of the house; gardening, and mending (as cited in Sivaslıgil, 2006).

*Table 3. Household Chores Assigned to Female and Male*

Female	Male
1. Cleaning Kitchen	1. Vacuuming Carpets
2. Cooking Dinner	2. Cleaning windows
3. Doing laundry	3. Watering all plants
4. Cleaning Cloths	4. Changing cat’s lifter
5. Folding the dried ones	5. Ironing clothes
6. Dusting shelves	6. Taking out the garbage
7. Setting the table	7. Setting the table

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8. Tidying up bedrooms	8. Tidying up bedrooms
9. Changing beddings	9. Changing beddings
10. Cleaning house	10. Sweeping the pathway
11. Taking care of a baby at home	12. Mopping the floor
	13. Mowing the lawn

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The results in Table 3 demonstrate that household chores performed by female characters are approximately equal to those performed by male characters. When compared to the tasks of female characters, male characters are involved in activities outside the house; such as ‘mowing the lawn, watering all plants, taking out the garbage, and sweeping the pathway’. This distribution of household chores is also seen in real life according to the report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (2013). The report proves that in real life, the male spends more time for gardening, repairing and construction, and also shopping than the female does. ‘Changing the beddings, tidying up bedrooms and setting the table’ are the responsibilities of both male and female characters. Similarly, Sivaslıgil (2006) reports that these responsibilities belong to both female and male characters in the coursebooks. All tasks such as ‘dusting, cooking, doing laundry, cleaning clothes, etc.’ related to cleaning the house, are assigned to females. As for ‘taking care of a baby at home’, it is also assigned only to female characters. This shows that taking care of a baby is presented as the domain of female (mothers). Finally, contrary to gender stereotypes, ‘vacuuming carpets, cleaning windows and ironing clothes’ are presented as the domain of the male. This may be the result of the involvement of women in the business world and changing roles of women and men in real life.

### **RQ 2: What is the proportion of male characters to female in images?**

Porreca (1984) states that low visibility is one of the most analysed indicators of sexism (as cited in Demir & Yavuz, 2017). Since illustrations are powerful tools for people to make sense of the world, the proportion of the illustrations make an important contribution to this process (Vandergrift, 1997; as cited in Sivaslıgil, 2006). According to the reports of the United Nations Population Fund (2019), the world population has reached 7.7 billion. 49.6% of the total population in the world is female whereas 50.4% of the total population is male. More specifically, 50.1% of the total population in Turkey is female whereas 49.9% of the population is male. These percentages of the total population in Turkey and the world show that the number of the female population and the male population is almost equal to each other. In order to avoid a sexist point of view in the representation of females and males in the coursebooks, the visibility of the female and male characters should be approximately equal to each other (Yılmaz, 2012).

The analysis of four units indicates that there are 77 pictures which include human-being. Thirty-seven of them were excluded from the study since gender or activity was not detected. There are 40 pictures left to be analysed. Fourteen of these pictures are female characters (35%) whereas 15 of them are male characters (37.5%). Eleven pictures include both female and male characters together (27.5%). The visibility of both genders in visual discourse is approximately equal in terms of the number of pictures. Similarly, Demir and Yavuz (2017) report that in terms of visibility in illustrations, both males and females are equally accepted as important and there is a balance. The findings of the study conducted by

Söylemez (2010) also show that there is a near balance in the visibility of both genders in the coursebooks.

### RQ 3: How is gender positioned in the visual discourse?

40 pictures were categorized according to the categories used in previous studies. Table 4 demonstrates that male characters are presented to do sports more than female characters in the visual discourse. In these pictures, male characters are depicted as windsurfing, skiing, boxing, playing football, and running, which are traditionally assigned to males. Cycling, riding a horse, and free-diving are performed by female characters. Yet, in another picture, a woman is riding a horse while a man is walking beside the horse by holding the horse rein. The position of the man symbolizes the possession or the control over power in the picture (Söylemez, 2010). Male and female characters jointly perform sports such as skating, doing exercise, and hiking.

*Table 4. The Activities assigned to Female and Male in Visual Discourse*

		Gender			Total
		Female	Male	Together	
Activities	Sports	3	10	4	17
	Leisure time	5	0	2	7
	Domestic works	4	4	3	11
	Work	1	0	2	3
	Studies and Research	1	1	0	2
	Total	14	19	15	40

In terms of leisure time activities, female characters are presented to knit, paint, do shopping and take photographs. Similarly, Söylemez (2010) reports that ‘painting, knitting and doing shopping’ are classified as only female activities. It is clear that the coursebook in question presents a sexist view in terms of assigning these activities only to female characters. Yet, although ‘fishing’ is generally accepted as a male activity, this activity is presented with female characters. ‘Going to the cinema and walking’ are jointly performed by female and male characters. However, as it is seen in Table 4, male characters are not presented to do any leisure time activities.

According to the report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (2013), in Turkey, the female spends 5.28 hours each day for domestic work whereas the male just spends 51 minutes for domestic work. In addition, the male is not involved in domestic works such as ironing, washing, and sewing. However, as it is seen in Table 4, domestic roles are equally assigned to male and female characters. In the visuals, ‘cooking, gardening and taking care of children’ are jointly performed by male and female characters. There is just one picture that presents the role of the female as a mother and the role of the male as a father. Laundry, dusting and cleaning windows are pictured with only female characters whereas mopping the floor and vacuuming the carpet are presented with male characters. In the distribution of domestic roles, it is seen that responsibilities are equally shared by both genders. Yılmaz (2012) states that in spite of the fact that household responsibilities generally are associated

with female, male characters are depicted as helping with these responsibilities more frequently.

As for the category 'work', in two visuals used in the coursebook, female and male characters are given together and are presented as radio reporters. The body posture and the position of characters such as sitting, and standing are important for the visual discourse because they are the indications of possible meanings (Khalid & Ghania, 2019). In one of those pictures, a male character and a female character are sitting next to each other and the male character engages in a conversation with the female character who seems to be listening. This may be due to males accepted as more sociable in terms of starting a conversation (Bilgin, 2013). In the second picture which includes radio reports, the female character is directly looking at the viewer and her posture shows self-confidence whereas the male character is blurred and is positioned at the back of the female character. Khalid and Ghania (2019) state that only female characters are directing their eyes towards the viewer to create a demand for interaction. In another picture, female characters are presented as fashion models, which is traditionally assigned to female characters. Finally, female characters are presented to be happy to do study or research whereas male characters are presented to be exhausted.

### Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine whether the ELT coursebook published by the Ministry of Education presented any sexist point of view as a part of the hidden curriculum through text and visual discourse. To this end, the coursebook was analysed in the light of several categories such as occupations, leisure time activities, household chores, the proportion of female and male characters in the visual discourse and the activities depicted in the visuals.

The findings show that there is inequality in terms of the quantity of occupations assigned to female and male characters. Male characters are presented to be involved in occupational roles more than female characters. Yet, female characters are presented to do more non-traditional occupations than male characters. As for the quality of the occupations, those who are assigned to female characters are less paid and less professional than the male characters. Similar to the other studies (Demir & Yavuz, 2017; Yılmaz, 2012), male characters are again associated with occupations that are traditionally assigned to them, and more professional.

In the category of leisure time activities, male characters are presented to do more activities than female characters. In terms of sports, hobbies, music and books, female and male characters are depicted to do activities that are both non-traditional and traditional. Some of the activities which are generally assigned to either females or males are performed jointly. This shows that there is a change in the representations of females and males in a positive way.

The number of household chores done by either female characters or male characters is approximately equal to each other. Although male characters are depicted in doing household chores than they were depicted in the other coursebooks, in terms of quality, they generally do tasks related to outside of the house such as gardening and mowing the lawn. Similar to the findings of Sivaslıgil's study (2006), female characters are again under the burden of cleaning the whole house even if some of the responsibilities are shared by male characters.

As for the analysis of the visual discourse, the proportion of the distribution of male and female characters are approximately equal to each other. The coursebook does not show

any sexist tendencies in terms of the visibility of both genders. However, the activities depicted in the pictures present some sexist point of view. In terms of sports, male characters perform sports that require physical power or are traditionally assigned. Female characters are presented to do both traditionally and non-traditionally assigned sports. As for leisure time activities, female characters are presented to knit, paint and do shopping. This representation of females in the coursebook is part of a sexist point of view. Yet, male and female characters are presented to go to the cinema and to walk together. There is no picture including only a male who performs leisure time activity. Fishing is performed by female characters although it is seen as a male activity. There is an equal distribution of domestic roles in visual discourse. In the whole units that were examined in this study, there is just one picture that includes a mother and a father. They are depicted as sharing the responsibility of taking care of children. In terms of the category of 'work', males and females are depicted together; however, the postures of them in the picture gain importance. In one of the pictures, the male character seems more dominant whereas, in the other, the female seems dominant. When these pictures were examined in terms of the way that they look at the viewer, the female character is looking directly at the viewer because they demand for interaction. This representation is also part of a sexist point of view.

The present study investigated four units of the ELT coursebook called 'Progress'. The rest of the units should be investigated to be able to portray the overall state of sexism in the whole coursebook. Since the current study examined the coursebook through limited categories such as occupations, leisure time activities, domestic roles and visuals, further research might investigate how the amount of talk and turn-taking are distributed. On the other hand, the teachers and students' evaluation of activities in terms of gender representation might be the focus of further studies.

School is an institution where our identity, skills, and characteristic features are developed. This place reinforces and constructs feminine and masculine gender roles. The materials and the curriculum used in that institution present these roles in a hidden and complicated way (Arslan, 2000; as cited in Söylemez, 2010). The coursebooks have an important role in forming our view of self, society, culture, and a country. They reflect political and social states of the culture and needs, norms and values of a society and educational priorities. In doing so, the coursebooks present a point of view to their readers. The stereotypical gender representations in coursebooks produce inequalities and help to maintain the existing inequalities in society. As can be depicted from the findings, coursebooks still have stereotypical gender messages. To be able to exclude these sexist points of views from the coursebooks, the Ministry can train the coursebook writers to consider gender stereotyping, how it is presented in visual and text discourse, how the proportion of male and female characters depicted in the coursebooks affects the sexual stereotyping. These studies that rely on the subject of gender representations in the coursebooks can be a guideline for the training programmes.

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