Gender Stereotypes and Gender Roles Revealed in the Students Written Work

Gonca Ekşi

gonca969@yahoo.com

Abstract

Masculinity and femininity are two words that entail two opposite images with distinct sets of behaviour and personal attributes. Regardless of how well these definitions fit to each individual man and woman in society, these gender stereotypes are maintained and transmitted within the society throughout years. In return, gender stereotypes and roles affect men and women in society. In this study, 96 English Language Teaching (ELT) junior students are given a questionnaire to get socio-economic information about them and their families. Later, the samples of their process writing work in Advanced Reading and Writing Course I are scanned to find expressions revealing their ideas about gender stereotypes and gender roles. These expressions and their frequency are listed. It is thought that this study will reveal gender stereotypes and roles shared by the average language students at universities.

Key Words: Gender stereotypes, gender roles, socialization,

Özet

Erkeklik ve kadınlık farklı bir grup davranış ve kişilik özellikleri taşıyan iki zıt imaj yüklenmiş iki sözcüktür. Bu tanımların toplumdaki her bir kadın ve erkek bireyi ne kadar iyi tanımladığı dikkate alınmaksızın, cinsiyet stereotipleri yıllar boyunca toplumda geçerliliğini sürdürür ve aktarılır. Bunun karşılığında, cinsiyet stereotipleri ve rolleri toplumdaki kadın ve erkekleri etkiler. Bu çalışmada, 96 İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) birinci sınıf öğrencisine sosyo-ekonomik geçmişleri ve aileleri ile ilgili bilgi edinme amacıyla bir anket verilmiştir. Daha sonra, İleri Okuma ve Yazma I dersindeki yazı örnekleri gözden geçirilmiş ve cinsiyet stereotipleri ve cinsiyet rolleri ile ilgili görüşlerini açığa çıkaran ifadeler bulunmuştur. Bu ifadeler ve sıklıkları listelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın üniversitelerdeki ortalama dil öğrencilerinin cinsiyet stereotiplerini ve rollerini ortaya çıkardığı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet stereotipleri, cinsiyet rolleri, sosyalleşme

1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike *sex*, which is a biological term for being either male or female depending on the sex organs and genes, *gender* is socially constructed and is culture-bound. In other words, each culture establishes its own meanings for the terms male and female and has subjective expectations as to what types of behaviour are appropriate for each gender. When exaggerated, these expectations of gender roles become gender stereotypes. Thus, gender is constructed by people, not by biology, and this construction is shaped by historical, cultural, and psychological processes (Basow, 1992:2-3).

Stereotypes are commonly shared overgeneralizations about members of a social group and are learned as a part of the process of growing up in a given society so called as socialization. It is universal that children acquire their roles in their society and the behaviours that go with these roles. As to gender stereotypes, Ashmore and Del Boca (1979) define them as "structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men". People acquire gender stereotypes as they acquire information about the world and their own roles in it during the process of socialization.

Gender Stereotypes and Gender Roles

Studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated that when people were asked to list as many descriptors as possible for the terms *masculine* and *feminine,* there was a broad consensus regarding the personality traits that they attribute to men and women, regardless of the age, sex, educational level, religion or marital status of the respondents. Most people tended to use similar distinctive clusters of traits for each gender (I. Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; P. A. Smith & Midlarsky, 1985; Spence & Sawin, 1985). In the study carried out by Broverman et. al. (1972), most of the respondents (74 college men and 80 college women) agreed that 41 traits clearly differentiated between men and women. The competency cluster involved 29 male-valued items such as, aggressive, dominant, competitive, not very emotional etc. whereas the warmth-expressiveness cluster involved 12 female-valued traits such as gentle, tactful, aware of feelings of others and so on.

Research also show that gender stereotypes do not only exist in personality traits but in three more areas as well; namely, masculine and feminine roles, occupations and physical characteristics (Deaux and Lewis, 1984; P. A. Smith & Midlarsky, 1985; Spencer & Sawin, 1985). To be more precise, we attribute certain roles to each gender, such as the head of the house or the caretaker of children and certain occupations to men and women such as the truck driver and the secretary respectively and certain physical characteristics, such as broad shoulders and grace respectively.

Bases of Gender Stereotypes

The all-or-non categorizing is in gender stereotyping may fall too short to define individuals. So, what are the gender stereotypes based on? There are basically two theories regarding the origin of gender stereotypes: the *kernel of truth* theory and the *social–role* theory.

The "kernel of truth" theory assumes that there are indeed differences of behaviour between the sexes and that gender stereotypes, though exaggerated, simply reflect them (Basow, 2000).

The social-role theory of gender stereotypes holds that the stereotypes arise from the different social roles typically held by men and women (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). The theory maintains that it is the division of labour and tasks between women and men that accounts for the content of gender stereotypes. That is, men are likely to play with guns, know how to change a flat tire, repair the leaking tap and be employed as adults whereas women are likely to play with dolls, bake well, look after children and be homemakers as well as employed as adults. Briefly, because typically men and women do different things, people make assumptions about men's and women's innate traits and abilities. The social-roles also reflect even in the division of occupations. Traditionally female jobs such as nurse, kindergarten teacher, require mainly communal qualities; on the other hand, traditionally male jobs, such as manual labourer, executive, require mainly agentic or masterful qualities.

The social-role theory is also compatible with social stratification theory, which holds that gender roles are actually status roles; that is, that the male role is the socially dominant one while the female role is the socially subordinate one. The stereotypic roles, traits and jobs are actually status-linked. For example, a person (male or female) assigned to a dominant position will be more authoritative and agentive, or vice versa.

In short, the two theories of gender stereotypes differ with respect to casual factor. While one maintains that existing small differences between sexes create the exaggerated stereotypical images, the other holds that assigned gender roles create the stereotypes and gender differences in behaviour.

Socializing Forces

Gender stereotypes and roles are learned. Men and women are expected to display different behaviours, especially in four major behavioral areas: *personality development and temperament*, *communication patterns*, *prosocial behaviours* (those that facilitate interpersonal relationships) and *power-related behaviors* (Basow, 1992:53). Socialization

process works to encourage boys and girls to conform to social roles that are appropriate for males and females and to adopt gender appropriate behaviours.

Children acquire information about the world from the environment. Messages about gender and gender appropriate behaviour can come from parents, teachers and peers and be found everywhere, for example, in the language, play activities, school, religion and the media. First of all, children receive messages about how their society views both sexes from the moment they begin to understand spoken word. For example girls and boys are given different toys starting from birth and they develop gender appropriate toy preferences very early. School environment also conveys gender messages. Teachers have a substantial role in gender socialization. Likewise, instructional materials, curricula, school organization and the general school atmosphere form a hidden curriculum that convey messages about stereotypic gender differences without the conscious awareness of either the students or the teachers. In religious messages and media depictions, the two sexes are depicted different in behaviour and status. As a result, in the process of socialization, through direct reinforcement, modeling and imitation, the child develops a gender schema and develops a gender identity.

Effects of Gender Stereotypes and Gender Roles

Rather than resulting from real behavioral differences, it is more likely that belief in the stereotypes give rise to some behavioral differences between females and males. That is, stereotypes function as part of sex role expectations and people learn and are influenced by them. Even though they may not fit individuals, they have power as standards to which men and women are expected to conform. In this respect, gender stereotypes and roles are also powerful forces of social control. People are often expected to conform to them and be socially acceptable.

Gender stereotypes also have a *self-fulfilling prophecy* trait, in other words, they may involve in activities that are gender-appropriate and as a result, they may fulfill the stereotype. Men or women view themselves in the prescribed way and develop appropriate characteristics either consciously or unconsciously and thus, they end up acting in accord with the stereotypes.

In this study, an experiment has been carried out to investigate the stereotypic ideas that a group of junior university students have. The written work of students who are taking the Advanced Reading and Writing I course is examined to find and collect the expressions that reveal gender stereotypic views.

2. METHOD

Subjects

The subjects are 96 junior English Language Teaching (ELT) students who are taking Advanced Reading and Writing I course. 79 female and 17 male students participated in the experiment. Female students are considerably high in number because, in a typical language class, male students are much fewer. The subjects were not told that their written work will be examined so that they would not know their ideas are to be evaluated. It is hoped that this will minimize manipulation stemming from self-awareness. Throughout the course, it was a common practice for them to write different kinds of paragraphs. Later the subjects were given a demographic information questionnaire to get a general profile of them. Below are the results of the questionnaire.

TABLE 1

The Socio-economic Background of Subjects

AGE	Male Students	Female Students	INCOME	Male Students	Female Students
18	2	16	Low	1	3
19	6	38	Average	15	75
20	6	23	High	1	1
21	3	2	**MOTHER**		
FROM			Working	2	23
Village	1	2	Homemaker	15	56
Town	8	21			
Medium-size city	5	35			
Large city	3	21			
REGION					
Marmara	-	4			
Aegean	2	11			
Central Anatolia	4	27			
Mediterranean	4	16			
Black Sea	5	17			
Eastern Anatolia	-	1			
Southeast Anatolia	-	2			

The average ELT student participating in this experiment appears to be 19 or 20 years old. Most of the male students are from a town or a medium-size city. Those from a village or a large city are relatively fewer. As to female students, those coming from villages are very rare. Many come from a town, a medium-size city or a large city. There are no male students from the regions of Marmara, Eastern Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia. The majority of the male students are from Central Anatolia, Mediterranean or the Black Sea regions. The female students are from Central Anatolia, Mediterranean and the Black Sea and Aegean regions. Those from the Marmara Region, Eastern Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia are very few. In Turkey, the regions in the West are generally regarded as more modern and less traditional whereas the ones in the East are much more traditional and conservative. Most cities in Central Anatolia are regarded as traditional; however, Ankara, as a large capital city, may not fit in the description. Both female and male students come from families of average income. The mothers of the majority of the male students are homemakers. On the other hand, only one thirds of the mothers of female students are employed. A total of merely 18% of the students' mothers happen to be working. The overall picture appears to indicate that the average student is from a medium-size city which is in the more traditional parts of Turkey and is from a middle-class family in which the mother is not very likely to be employed. The students seem to be raised in an environment which supposedly has more clear-cut roles for genders.

Procedure

In the first year academic writing course taken at the first term, the students are expected to start process writing with the paragraph level. After studying the features of a good paragraph, the students are required to write different types of paragraphs, such as cause-effect paragraphs, compare and contrast paragraphs, opinion paragraphs and so on. In this experiment, the subjects are given different topics to write about on repeated occasions throughout the term. Depending on the type of the paragraph, they are given topics on which they are likely to express their gender stereotypic views. The topics are as follows: compare and contrast paragraphs about women's and men's outlook on and attitude towards money, life, sports, marriage and career, a cause and effect paragraph about divorce and an opinion paragraph about "A best friend can only be the same sex as you". The process writing samples of students are collected to be examined. All expressions involving gender stereotypes or roles are collected and counted. Below are the tables showing gender stereotypical statements of male and female students. The statements might not be expressed with the exact words by each student, however, they represent any statement that can be paraphrased in the same way.

3. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

TABLE 2

Gender Stereotypical Statements from the Cause-and-Effect Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Money is another reason for divorce. If the husband earns more money than the wife, it is not a big problem, but if the wife has more money, it is a bit hard to accept for the husband.	2	2
Financial problems may also lead to divorce. If a man cannot live up to his family's expectations, the woman may want a divorce.		3
Different educational levels of couples may also lead to disagreements for they will have different outlooks on life. (no reference to gender)	2	12
Some men would not want their wives to be more educated or to have a higher position at work	2	4
Some other factors, such as alcoholism and infidelity, may cause divorce. (no reference to gender)	3	12
Generally, one of the main reasons of divorce is the unfaithfulness of men. Women are more loyal in their relationships. Men may get bored with their marriages and cheat on their wives.		12
Men may treat their wives violently. Domestic violence may lead to divorce.		6
Families of the couples interfere in their marriage and this may cause serious problems in marriage. (no reference to gender)	3	18
Jealousy or limiting each other's lives may cause problems between couples. (no reference to gender)	1	2
However, it is generally the men who limit the other's life. In fact, women let their husbands restrict them.		5
Infertility might be another cause as every couple wants to have a baby. (no reference to gender)		3

If a woman has health problems that prevent her from having a child, the husband may want a divorce.		2
Too much difference in the ages of the couples may cause problems. (no reference to gender)		4
Being a divorced woman creates a lot of problems especially in the country.	1	4

The causes and effects of divorce that the students stated in their paragraphs revealed many gender stereotypical statements; for example, the man is seen as the bread-winner in the family. It is also mentioned that it would be a problem if the woman earns more money than her husband. A total of 6 students point to the discomfort men would feel if their wives held higher educational or occupational positions. The image of males as the more dominant sex appears to be strongly held by the students, as it is in many cultures.

Alcoholism and infidelity are listed as factors that might lead to divorce by a total of 15 students (3 male students and 12 female students) without any reference to gender. However, 12 out of 76 female students attributed infidelity to an act that only men do. They define women as the loyal partner in marriages. 6 female students note that men create domestic violence in the family. In power-related relations, men show aggressive behaviour. Women, on the other hand, appear to be more sensitive about the consequences of aggression such as guilt or anxiety about hurting someone else. Parents also seem to be more tolerant of certain forms of aggression in their sons than in their daughters such as physically defending oneself in a fight with the same sex peer. As a result, men are at times expected to exhibit some aggressiveness. Although none of the male students referred to domestic violence as a cause of divorce, 6 female students identified men as the cause of domestic violence.

A total of 21 students, both male and female, state that interference of the families of the couples as a factor that may result in problems in marriage without any reference to gender. This clearly indicates the traditional approach towards marriage in the Turkish society, in which the son or the daughter never ceases to be the child even if they are old enough to be married.

In intimate relationships, men traditionally have been able to dominate women physically and economically. 8 students (1 male student and 7 female students) point to the fact that jealousy and limiting the partner's life may cause problems in marriages. However, 5 of these students claim that it is something that men do and that women let their husbands restrict them. Gender stereotypes suggest that women should be less dominant and be in less

need for power. Therefore, the display of power and dominance in society appears to result from gender roles, expectations and experiences.

As the main function of a family is seen as having children, infertility is stated as one of the reasons for divorce by 4 female students, one of whom names men as the one who would want a divorce when their wives cannot have children. Surprisingly, none of the male students make any reference to infertility as a cause for divorce. Moreover, a total of 5 students (1 male and 4 female students) assert that women are likely to experience difficulty and pressure in the society when they are divorced. These two statements suggest that in a male-dominated society, a woman is valued in terms of marriage and what she can contribute to that marriage.

TABLE 3

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Marriage from the Compare-and-Contrasts Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Women want to get married to a wealthy man but men don't have a chance like that.	1	
Sometimes women marry for economic reasons- to find someone to look after them.		3
Men generally do not marry a woman older than them but women do not care about age.	3	
Women have more responsibilities regarding household chores. They are supposed to care for the children. Men, on the other hand, have some other responsibilities such as earning money. (They are more active outside of the house)	3	6
Women have more responsibilities in the family such as the household chores even if they are employed outside.		12
Women are more patient and constructive towards marriage. Men, on the other hand, may put an end to their marriage even because of an ordinary problem.		2
Women are more eager to get married. Men, on the other hand, are put off at the thought of responsibilities and the belonging.	2	
Men are keen on their freedom. They don't want to be restricted.	6	15

They don't want the responsibilities marriage brings.		
Marriage is important for women to set up their own lives. There is public pressure on them regarding their relationship with men.	2	
Women marry for love. They dream about their wedding ceremony, their wedding dress, having a sweet baby and the like whereas men do not have any dreams like this. They marry to get a more comfortable life.	5	6
Their needs and expectations with regard to marriage are different. Women want to share the difficulties of life with someone; they do not want to be alone. Men, on the other hand, marry to get a more comfortable life and think their share of the duties is merely to gain money.		18
For women, love is a sacred feeling and should lead to marriage. However, men don't always think so.		9
Men fall in love easily whereas women are more choosy.	1	5

Seeing men as the bread-winner in the family is clear in the statements regarding how men and women view marriage. The students expressed that it is not appropriate for men to get married to a woman who is much wealthier and that women sometimes marry so that a man would look after them.

As to age differences in marriage, 2 male students point that men would not want to marry a woman of older age, yet this is not a problem for women. This statement is in line with the ones in the table above, which express that women should have the ability to give birth. In most societies, beauty, youth and domestic abilities are the features that are sought after in women.

Distribution of labour in marriage appears to one of the main points of difference between men and women roles. Both male and female students draw attention to the traditional responsibilities expected of men and women; namely, earning money and taking care of the house and the children respectively. What is more, 12 female students point to the fact that women are still responsible for domestic chores even if they are employed and earn money. Female students complain that men avoid sharing household chores even when their wives work outside. The prevailing belief in men is that it is always the women's job to take care of the children and the house.

The students also draw a clear distinction between the men's and women's attitude towards marriage. A total of 21 students (6 male and 15 female students) state that men are not very keen on getting married because they are keen on their freedom and they want to avoid the responsibilities that marriage brings. 11 students (5 male and 24 female students) affirm that men marry to get a more comfortable life. Women, on the other hand, marry for love or to share the life. These statements also indicate the widespread assumption that it is the women's duty to do the housework so that men can lead a comfortable life. While men are thought to fall in love easily, women are depicted as having more romantic dreams about marriage and being choosier before deciding to get married, probably because it is a very serious decision in their lives. 2 male students assert that women want to get married to be free of the societal pressures on them. 2 female students state that women are more eager to maintain their marriages whereas men tend to give up at the slightest problem. This statement is in line with the one in the table above regarding the pressures awaiting divorced women in the society. It is likely that women try more to overcome problems in marriage to avoid divorce as they will not feel comfortable in the social life as a divorced woman. In short, especially in conservative circles, marriage liberates women to a certain extent, in return for which they are expected to provide a comfortable life for their spouses.

TABLE 4

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Career from the Compare-and-Contrasts Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Some women do not hurry to get married so as to make a successful career without a husband and a baby. However, men think they can have a career being married.	1	3
Women are generally more ambitious in the work place. They do their best and it is important for them to get their economic freedom so as to feel in comfort and be independent.		6
Men are more competitive in their jobs. They can't stand failure.		2
It is unfair to expect women to only sit at home and look after children. They should also have a career. Historically, women used to care for the household and look after the children while men brought bread to the house. Yet, things have changed.		5

		2
What's more, many men won't want their wives to make a career and earn more money than them since they would feel inferior to their wives. However, women don't make a problem out of it.		2

A total of 4 students (1 male, 3 female students) stated that working women may experience difficulty making a successful career when they are married due to the responsibilities within the house. However, men are regarded as free of these responsibilities. 5 female students name this situation as unfair. As a way of getting free of this burden, 6 female students state that it is important for women to have economic freedom. 2 female students express that men are not eager to have successful career women who earn more money than them. It seems that certain types of achievement are culturally associated with males, such as career and athletic achievement, whereas other activities, usually not even defined as achievements such as nurturing interpersonal relationships, are associated with females. Women as expected to achieve less than men, especially in terms of money and career success, and when they don't, they are viewed negatively.

TABLE 5

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Money from the Compare-and-Contrasts Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
It's the men's job to earn money, for women it is optional.		5
Men and women spend money to completely different things. Men are more careful with money, but women like shopping and spending a lot of money.	6	4
Men spend money inconsiderately; however, women always try to keep money for hard days.		4
Men attach more importance to earning money. Women prefer a peaceful life.		5
Men think women are extravagant and spend too much money on shopping or on unnecessary things. Yet, they tend to spend too much money on electronic goods and the stuff like that.		2

As to attitudes towards money, the consensus is that men and women spend money to different things, which reflects their different needs and interests. However, it is interesting to note that both sexes accuse the other sex of spending money for unnecessary things. To be precise, women are thought to spend too much money shopping whereas men are believed to spend no less money on their own interests such as electronic goods. 5 female students think it is more important for men to earn money. According to gender stereotypes, males are generally more competitive than females. That is, males appear to be more concerned with winning, especially when money is concerned.

TABLE 6

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Sports from the Compare-and-Contrasts Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Men and women have different attitudes to sports. To begin with, men are always fond of all kinds of sports from their childhood. They not only watch sports but play them as well.	3	6
On the other hand, women don't have any interest in sports. They think it is boring and it doesn't make any sense to them.	3	6
Women do sports for health and fitness. For men it is entertainment and group activity with mates.	2	2
Their interests are different. Women are more interested in fashion and art whereas men are interested in sports and politics.		2

Sports appear to be one of the areas that display a wide discrimination between the attitudes of men and women. Both male and female students agree that sports are much more important in men's lives and that they like to do sports, watch sports events and enjoy the competition. However, women are said to have little in sports; and when they do, it is often out of health or beauty concerns. This difference in attitudes towards sports is mainly due to how girls and boys are brought up. The play activities that girls and boys engage in differ a great deal and often reflect gender appropriate preferences that the society expects from them. Girls spend more time in individual, less competitive games with fewer rules such as jumping rope, playing house. Boys are encouraged to play organized, competitive and mostly team games such as basketball and football.

TABLE 7

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Personality Traits from the Compare-and-Contrasts Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Men are calmer and more realistic while women are more emotional and sensitive. They show their feelings more often cry more easily and emphasize more.	4	19
Men are not talkative but women like to share their feelings and they are more expressive.	1	5
Women's family ties are much stronger than men. They care about their families and their friends more than men. They are much considerate and kinder.		15

A total of 23 students (4 male and 19 female students) note that it is the women who are emotional and who can sympathize. Men do not appear to be open to share their feelings. Socialization process works to encourage boys to mask their emotions while girls continue to express their feelings relatively freely. Such differences, becoming more extreme during adolescence, clearly conform to gender stereotypes of women being emotional. 15 female students state that women show affection more openly and care much more for their families and friends. They are defined as considerate and kind towards others. The different roles assigned to men and women maintain in communication and interaction patterns, agentic and interpersonal respectively. For example, women are expected to be politer in their speech than males. Men communicate dominance and power more than women. As to interpersonal relationships, females appear to be more concerned with and expert in behaviours such as affiliation, empathy, nurturance, and so on.

TABLE 8

Gender Stereotypical Statements about Friendship from the Opinion Paragraphs

	Out of 17 male students	Out of 79 female students
Gender difference is an obstacle in friendship. A best friend can only be the same sex as you because you won't have enough to share with a friend from the opposite sex. A friend who is the same sex as you can understand you better.	4	14
You can have a good friend from the opposite sex, but your best friend is from the same sex as you (because of the things you share or do together).	2	2
Boys and girls have different interests and needs. For example, boys don't like going shopping and girls don't like watching football.	1	4
Boys and girls are brought up in a different way. They behave in a different way in the society. They are not treated in the same way even in the family.		3
A best friend shouldn't necessarily be the same sex as you. People from different sexes may well understand each other. Different outlooks, reactions and the like might provide a healthier relationship.		11
Sex determines the how close friends from different sexes can stay in societies. People may misunderstand close friendship between boys and girls (in Turkey). When they are too close, it is likely that there will be an emotional relationship between them sooner or later.	2	3

As to their ideas regarding the topic friendship with the opposite sex, there seems to be a consensus that "A best friend can only be the same sex as you". A total of 22 students believe that one can be best friends with someone of the same sex because of the things that they can share. Boys are girls are said to have different needs and interests. This fact is attributed to the fact that they are brought up in different ways in the society. 3 female

students expressed that boys and girls are not treated in the same way even in the family. These statements are in compatible with the social-role theory, which holds that the environment can affect the development of gender differences in children through differential treatment and differential expectations. People are in a great deal of agreement as to what constitutes gender stereotypes, and these stereotypes are learned in the early childhood. Increased societal pressures to conform to gender expectations come with puberty. Adolescent girls and their male peers may actually spend much of their time doing different activities, which encourages different traits and behaviours to develop.

Interestingly though, 11 female students affirm that the differences in interests and needs do not necessarily make it impossible for boys and girls to be best friends; on the contrary, it might well be an enriching experience. However, 5 students suggest that a very close relationship between a boy and a girl is prone to be misunderstood in the society and is very likely to develop into a romantic relationship sooner or later.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, the process writing samples of 96 first year ELT students are examined to collect any statements reflecting their opinions on gender stereotypes and gender roles. The students are not told that their written work will be examined. The questionnaire about the socio-economic background provides the average profile of the students. That is, most of the students are from middle-size or smaller residential areas that are likely to be more traditional and conservative. The mothers of the majority of the students (about 82%) are homemakers. The insight into the families and environments that the students come from give rise to the expectations that they will have distinguishing gender stereotypes and gender roles for both sexes.

The statements collected from the written works of the students confirm that they have clear-cut roles for genders and some very stereotypical views for both sexes. To put in a nutshell, the average students holds that it is the man who should be the bread-winner in the family, and not surprisingly, the woman should be the one to look after the house and the children as a result of labour division. However, in the cases when the woman is also employed, household chores are still regarded as women's piece of work. Men are said to feel discomfortable with successful career women who earn more money than themselves. Moreover, men are thought to have a tendency to be aggressive and disloyal. Men are also regarded as more dominant in the house and more active outside. Therefore, it is noted that they are less willing to get married and shoulder the responsibilities of a mutual life. When

men do marry, the main motive seems to be leading a comfortable life and it seems to the woman's job to prove him with it. The students also express a great deal of distinguishing opinions about the attitudes of men and women regarding money, marriage, sports and emotions. Although there seems to be a group of students who believe that boys and girls can be best friend and this is an enriching experience, more students think they do not have enough to share and become best friends. Briefly, the findings appear to support the view that people adopt their gender identity and the appropriate gender roles that go with it in the process of socialization as a result of reinforcement, modeling and imitation that comes from many sources.

REFERENCES

Ashmore, R. D. , Del Boca, F. K. (1979). "Sex stereotypes and implicit personality theory: Toward a cognitive—Social psychological conceptualization". **Sex Roles.** Volume 5, Number 2 / April.

Basow, S. A. (1992). "Gender Stereotypes and Roles". California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Broverman, I. K., Vogel, S. R., Broverman, D. M., Clarkson, F. E., & Rosenkrantz, P. S. (1972). Sex role stereotypes: A current appraisal. **Journal of Social Issues**, 28, 59-78.

Deaux, K. Lewis, L. (1984). Structure of Gender stereotypes: Interrelationships among Components and Gender Label. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 46, 991-1004.

Eagly, A. H. (1987). **Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-role Interpretation**. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Eagly, Alice H. and Valerie J. Steffen. (1984). "Gender Stereotypes Stem from the Distribution of Women and Men into Social Roles". **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,** 46: 735-754.

Smith, P. A., & Midlarsky, E. (1985). "Empirically-derived Conceptions of Females and Males". **Sex Roles**, 12, 313–328.

Spence, J. T. & Sawin, L. L. (1985). Images of Maculinity and Femininity: A Reconceptualisation. In V. E. O'Leary, R. K. Unger & B. S. Wallston (Eds.). **Women, Gender and Social Psychology**. (p. 35-66). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dr. Gonca EKŞİ is an instructor at Gazi University, ELT Department and a vice-director at Gazi University YADOM. She got her M.A. at Hacettepe University, ELT Department and her Ph. D. at Gazi University, ELT Department. She is interested in teacher training, materials development and syllabus design and language and culture.