AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER REPRESENTATION IN A DIGITAL CULTURAL COMMODITY — ACHIEVE3000 — AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGLISH PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS AT HALIÇ UNIVERSITY OF TURKEY

UN EXAMEN DE LAS PERSPECTIVAS DEL PROFESORADO SOBRE LA REPRESENTACIÓN DE GÉNERO EN UN PRODUCTO CULTURAL DIGITAL —ACHIEVE3000— Y SU IMPACTO EN EL ESTUDIANTADO DE LA ESCUELA PREPARATORIA DE INGLÉS EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE HALIÇ DE TURQUÍA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of digital cultural commodities on English language learners in the preparatory program of Haliç University from a gender perspective. The point of view of English language teachers of preparatory program on the function of gender in digital English learning commodity, Achieve3000, is examined in this paper. The usage of digital commodities in the classroom is a way to improve student engagement and language learning. The study investigates how digital learning resources are effective for language learning and how they represent gender norms and stereotypes. English teachers perceive Achieve3000 positively for language learning, though reservations exist about its effectiveness in reading skill development and identifying student needs.

Keywords: Achieve3000, English teachers, gender depiction, cultural commodity

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RESUMEN

Este estudio investiga el efecto de los productos culturales digitales en el estudiantado de inglés del programa preparatorio de la Universidad de Haliç desde una perspectiva de género. Se examina el punto de vista del profesorado de inglés del programa preparatorio sobre la función del género en el producto digital de aprendizaje de inglés, Achieve3000. El uso de productos digitales en el aula es una forma de mejorar la participación estudiantil y el aprendizaje del idioma. El trabajo investiga la efectividad de los recursos digitales de aprendizaje para el estudio del idioma y la manera en que representan normas y estereotipos de género. El profesorado de inglés percibe Achieve3000 de manera positiva para el aprendizaje del idioma, aunque existen reservas sobre su efectividad en el desarrollo de habilidades de lectura y en la identificación de necesidades de las y los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Achieve3000, profesorado de inglés, representación de género, producto cultural

1. Introduction

While the claim "we live in a digital world" seems self-evident given the widespread use of digital technologies, the data show that around 65.7 percent of the global population, totalling 5.35 billion people, were using the internet at the beginning of 2024 (Statista, 2024). Furthermore, approximately 70 percent of the world's population, amounting to 5.6 billion people, used mobile phones, which emphasizes the pervasive influence of digital connectivity (DataReportal, 2024).

A significant number of these internet users, of different genders, utilize diverse digital applications on their mobile devices to fulfil their everyday requirements. These apps and software facilitate social interaction, enable the sharing of thoughts, and make it easier to purchase products through virtual platforms or mobile applications. These transactions can be categorized as either digital purchases that are consumed within a virtual environment or purchases of physical products for use in the non-digital world.

One of the consumption activities that users carry out in the digital space is the consumption of language education products. Language learners use such products or software either as a result of an institution's compulsion or of a personal desire to complete a language training course. A software that is designed for different languages and has found a wide variety in recent years. Educational institutions also use this language learning software to enhance education by increasing student engagement with the language. Sometimes, institutions purchase this

software, while, at other times, they recommend it to students. Additionally, teachers and student assistants may incorporate this software into classroom activities.

In language learning classrooms where both male and female students are available, digital products are considered to effectively address various classroom challenges, including student engagement, motivation, creativity, and learner participation, in addition to gender-related challenges. Additionally, they have the potential to captivate learners and offer distinctive benefits. Numerous studies have shown that using digital tools to learn is interesting because of their appealing features.

> Offering incentives to users while encouraging them to earn rewards throughout their entire journey can stimulate increased interest in a product or service if the consumers interact with a product or service through the app, the higher its lifetime value to the business. (Doğan-Südaş, Kara, & Karaca, 2023, p. 2)

To address gender-challenges in digital English learning commodities, the way that they portray various roles for genders and gender stereotypes in educational material is of importance. Accordingly, researchers have helped teachers and administrators understand how gender stereotypes and biases can impact students. The harmful impact on learners highlights the need for inclusion and diversity in education courses and materials. "In the field of education, researchers have provided evidence that gender stereotyping is present in various forms of educational media, such as textbooks, preschool picture books, award-winning children's literature, and educational television" (Sheldon, 2004, p. 434).

Digital commodities not only enhance the learner's engagement with the language in teacher-led contexts but also improve the competencies of teachers. These software programs enable teachers to efficiently oversee the instruction of all language components, encompassing speaking, listening, writing, and reading. There are various studies that emphasize the importance of using educational technologies and commodities to improve English language learning. "Effective use of technology, especially educational software, has become a necessity to make initial reading and writing skills that will affect children's entire lives and academic lives more efficient" (Şahini & Özenç, 2021, p. 375).

All of these items depend on what the digital product used in education is designed for and how its users will employ it. Given this range of options, it can be stated that there are digital commodities that are self-contained in terms of education and do not require a teacher, or the teacher's presence is not necessarily required. Like products that are prepared in advance, users

can utilize them for free or pay a fee to learn languages without having to communicate with a teacher and only through the so-called software. Some commodities, whether they need payment or are free, require the teacher's presence or are used by the instructor as educational tools. This category encompasses more than just a single product; it can actually encompass a compilation of software, videos, and audio products that serve as instructional tools in language education. Along with that, the role of gender and the representation of it in these commodities is also an important part of the instructional tools which is valuable.

> However, some researchers argue that gender considerations in language teaching have been largely overlooked, with instruction often being conducted without addressing the distinct needs of different genders: gender differences is an important aspect of ESL learners' identity which is frequently overlooked because English curriculums and teaching methods are usually carried out in classrooms with a one-size-fits-all concept, and do not cater to the different needs and learning styles of their students. (Nagasundram, Swanto, Soekarno, & Akmam Din, 2021, p. 235)

In universities where teaching takes place collectively and the teacher faces different genders and a variety of needs, the use of cultural commodities can be a suitable tool for both the student and the teacher to improve the quality of education. Using cultural commodities is part of active learning and is engaging.

> The reliance on active rather than passive learning, an emphasis on deep learning and understanding, increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student, an increased sense of autonomy in the learner, an interdependence between teacher and learner, mutual respect within the learner teacher relationship, and a reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both teacher and learner. (Filatova, 2015, p. 20)

After considering the importance of engaging students with English tools and commodities, some universities offer specialized software for this objective, while others grant teachers the freedom to select their own. Additionally, some individuals choose a mixed approach that combines both techniques.

All three methods can be observed in Turkish universities that have preparatory schools. Haliç University, one of Istanbul's private educational institutions, has opted for the third method. As a middle-ranked university in Istanbul, Haliç University stands out among the 62 universities in the city, boasting an above-average student population among private institutions. In this research, I will try to find out the opinions of the teachers of this university on the software that they have made mandatory for students and teachers. Also, I will pay attention to

their interpretation of the gender representation in this software and to how male and female students face it. On the one hand, this review will show the teachers' approach to using a specific software designed to teach reading and vocabulary in the classroom. On the other hand, it will bring to light the efficiency of this cultural commodity.

2. Digital Cultural Commodity

Cultural commodities serve as portals to comprehend the complex fabric of a society's principles, symbols, and methods of communication. They serve as intermediaries, connecting individuals with the cultural environment they wish to investigate. In the field of language instruction, these resources are crucial as they provide students with a detailed understanding of the social context in which a language thrives. Ronald Carter's notion of linguistic awareness highlights the importance of being highly conscious and sensitive while interacting with cultural artefacts (Carter, 2003, p. 64).

Within the digital domain, cultural commodities assume a fluid and ever-changing structure, providing users with not just a glimpse into a particular culture but also avenues for engagement and input. This level of interactivity enhances the learning process, since users actively influence their interaction with the content, promoting more profound connections and comprehension. Schlosser (2006) highlights that the interactive aspect of this learning method fosters the development of vivid mental imagery, which goes beyond the fixed and unchanging nature of standard learning materials (p. 377).

Customized educational digital assets, frequently produced through collaborative endeavors, are designed to fulfil specific learning requirements. They provide services to a wide spectrum of individuals, offering solutions that vary from independent discovery to supervised teaching. Digital production's scalability guarantees widespread availability to a large customer demographic, effectively meeting the requirements of learners across the globe.

In the field of teaching English as a second language, digital tools have various functions, with the primary one being to foster student interest and involvement. Through the utilization of multimedia and interactive components, educators have the ability to construct immersive learning experiences that deeply connect with learners across all age groups. Alkhudiry (2022) emphasizes the significant and beneficial effects of this involvement, particularly in terms of enhancing cognitive development and language competency. "L2 learners' interaction with

various language activities seems to have instructional implications on their cognitive progress and consequently, this can reflect positively on their L2 language performance, leading to meaningful and constructivist L2 learning experience" (p. 2117).

Essentially, digital cultural commodities are not only instruments for learning a language. They encompass a combination of culture, technology, and teaching methods, enabling significant and transformative learning experiences. Through dynamic interaction, students embark on a voyage of exploration and discovery, forming relationships that go beyond linguistic barriers.

3. Literature review

One of the common hypotheses about digital goods and language is their positive effects on language learning. In a study focusing on university foreign language learners, particularly in mechatronics and robotics at MIREA — Russian Technological University, the efficacy of digital educational technologies was explored. The research analyzed foreign language competencies, comparing traditional and digital techniques. Findings suggested that digital educational resources enhance language learning, improve communication skills, and increase student motivation (Rybakova, 2021).

The discussion surrounding digital cultural commodities frequently revolves around their influence on language learning proficiency. In the study titled *Digital Tools in Foreign Language Education* the spotlight is on the constructive impact of digital tools in education, not only enriching the learning experience but also fostering heightened student engagement and overall effectiveness (Saraeva, 2022). This research underscores the pivotal role that digital tools play in transforming language education, positively shaping the dynamics of interaction and effectiveness within the educational landscape.

The integration of digital tools in language learning has become increasingly prevalent, with applications such as Achieve3000 providing interactive platforms for English language reading and comprehension practice. Such digital tools are noted for their ability to associate characteristics with functions more effectively than traditional hard-copy storybooks. The literature on object interactivity suggests a consensus that while it enhances memory for associations, it may not uniformly improve all types of memory, such as individual item recall. Recognition tests assessing language components like vocabulary, grammar, and reading

comprehension highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the impact of digital tools on language learning. The matter of being effective but not sufficient in all its forms possible has to be considered when it comes to seeking feedback from teachers on using such a digital commodity — Achieve3000 —. It is worth mentioning that a variety of studies on the effectiveness of using a digital tool for English language learning show positive outcomes. As in the following studies, which believe that digital storytelling (DST) emerges as a vital aspect of modern technology in education. In the study *Digital Storytelling in Language Education* a systematic review of 37 works underscores the importance of societal constructivism and technology-integrated learning for effective technology use in education (Moradi & Chen, 2019). The study argues for a shift towards student-centred learning environments, emphasizing the challenges posed by the simultaneous roles of culture as a tradable commodity, an identity tool, and a strategic resource (Drache & Froese, 2006).

One study that has specifically been done on the effect of Achieve3000 on English language learning is under the title of *The District-Wide Effectiveness of the Achieve3000 Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study*. The study utilized propensity score matching techniques to match 1,761 Achieve3000 students with 945 similar learners, allowing for the effectiveness of Achieve3000, a personalized, technology-adaptive program aimed at enhancing literacy skills in K-12 students. The analysis is based on state reading achievement data from a school district in California. The research employs propensity score matching, doubly-robust regression, and two-stage least squares regression approaches to assess the influence of the Achieve3000 technology on student learning outcomes. In summary, the study suggests that Achieve3000 has the capacity to enhance literacy skills and address learning setbacks, offering K-12 children broader prospects to develop crucial abilities in English language, arts, science, and social studies. "Despite some implementation challenges, the quasi-experimental evidence indicates that Achieve3000 could be a promising approach to address learning losses, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, through computer-based, one-on-one tutoring at scale" (Borman, Yang, Audrain, & Park, 2023).

Based on the above-mentioned research and their consistent findings supporting the usefulness of digital storytelling commodities, we can identify a shared characteristic among young English language learners, referred to as "techno sensibility." Luthar and Kropivnik (2011) delve into "techno sensibility," a universal generational trait among youth defined by heightened tech familiarity. Yet, he astutely notes its nuanced differentiation along lines of class

and cultural capital. This differentiation underscores that technology's impact is not uniform across society, with socio-economic backgrounds influencing access and interpretation. Cultural capital further amplifies these variations, intertwining technology with distinct cultural values. Luthar and Kropivnik's insight prompts a nuanced understanding, which urges researchers and policymakers to move beyond generalizations about the "digital native" generation, recognizing the socio-cultural intricacies that shape techno sensibility and influence broader inequalities among the youth.

After that, there is a study that looked at 34 publications from 2011 to 2022 as part of a literature review on technology-supported language learning and 21st-century skills, which is based on social constructivism theory. Facebook, Google Docs, and Moodle were prominent technologies used to enhance language proficiency and develop 21st-century abilities, with the conclusion that these activities contribute to learners' motivation, engagement, and confidence (Shadiev & Wang, 2022).

While there are variety of studies to explore the effectiveness of different digital cultural commodities on language learners' learning and proficiency, evidently there is a lack of study to examine this factor from gender perspectives. Analyzing the effectiveness of digital commodities in language education for students based on gender allows for investigating whether male and female learners utilize digital tools equally, as well as the existence of gender stereotypes in the digital products. In order to provide equitable opportunities for all students to participate, it is necessary to address these challenges. Significant is the matter of gender representation in educational materials in a manner that avoids connoting superiority or inferiority. An analysis of how this ideology is executed in the English language of a digital application is enlightening. It is important to recognize that, "society already distinguishes between men and women, but academics must consider the related linguistic implications in depth, not only the power of language to distinguish between different genders but also to emphasize that men and women are treated differently in society" (Canals-Botines, 2022, p. 121).

The dissemination of stereotypical portrayals of characters in a reading comprehension text may indicate that the specific topic is predominantly reserved for males. "Even in the communities where gender fairness has been enforced in their learning materials, one might still find that the 'traditional' concept of gender is still a dominant culture […]" (Mustapha, 2012, p. 249). Furthermore, such images may negatively impact the self-perception of female students,

thereby diminishing their enthusiasm for improving their reading skills and vocabulary practice by means of that digital commodity. Moreover, the performance of male and female students may be directly impacted by gender-stereotypical depictions of the commodities of English contents.

> […] For example, Spencer, Steele and Quinn (1998) showed that girls' performance in a maths test was negatively influenced by simply telling them that boys do better on mathematics tests. In other words, due to gender stereotypes, girls can become less confident in their abilities regarding STEM subjects, resulting in fewer girls choosing STEM courses and careers. (Kerkhoven, Russo, Land-Zandstra, Saxena, & Rodenburg, 2016, p. 1)

4. Gender Representation in Turkish Education and Digital Platforms

As components of gender representation we can examine the portrayal and perception of various genders in a variety of contexts, including media, politics, education and literature. In all categories there is the examination of how, for example, movies or videos portray men, women and non-binary people. The other gender representation that you can find in literature and art is the way that characters are developed and gender norms are challenged and established in a context. Following the gender representation in educational materials in English materials and in our case of study, a digital platform, we can study the biases and stereotypes that exist in such materials and have effects on learners' perception and English language learning.

To study the gender representation in Turkish education there are variety of them. There is one study under the title of *Gender Roles and the Education Gender Gap in Turkey* that studied the gender gap in educational achievement in Turkey specially after the educational reformation in Turkey dated 1997. Believing that, to study the influence of society and gender roles, Turkey presents a distinctive environment due to its combination of traditionalism and modernism. Turkey distinguishes itself as one of the few developing countries that can provide a wide spectrum of viewpoints on gender roles where there are continued gender disparities with negative feedbacks on females in educational attainment. The study believes that there are some cultural bases targeting the education of girls and the reason behind it is the society being conservative. This study mostly aims the effect of reform on traditional views of Turkish families in allowing their girls to attain education and confirms that the reform was a helpful factor. The study comes to the conclusion that

> […] we establish that having a traditional view on gender roles adversely affects the educational attainment of daughters. We find that for the birth cohorts that were not subject to the 1997 reform, the daughters of women who think that educating sons is more important than educating daughters are more likely to drop out during and after primary school compared to the sons of women with the same view. (Caner, Guven, Okten, & Sakalli, 2016, p. 1251)

There is a recent study on gender equality in Turkish education that has done a comprehensive analysis on the total number of 121 of articles and theses related to gender education in Turkey from the year 2002 to 2019. The study aimed to examine the patterns in gender studies within the field of education by focusing on their subject matters and key findings. The study results showed that the problem areas related to gender in education can be categorized in four main titles. "[…] These are (I)gender representations reflecting inequality in educational materials, (II) traditional gender perception and attitude in educational environments, (III) the need for gender education and (IV) teacher attitude and behaviours reflecting gender inequality" (Aydemir, Öz, & Erdamar, 2022, p. 242).

As a result of the literature regarding the role of representation of gender in Turkey, we can understand that it extends beyond teaching application and manifests itself in multiple social and cultural contexts. While as in our study the focus is on the gender representation in education and learning focusing on a specific educational digital platform, there are efforts on understanding and promoting gender equalities, for instance, in revising curricula or promoting gender studies programs in academic setting. To highlight the importance of spreading awareness in gender equality and university student's points of view, there is a study that investigates the effectiveness of the Gender Equality course in a university setting. This is a study that has been done at the Faculty of Education on students and that has examined their viewpoints regarding gender equality before and after the course.

> The results of the present study show that the students of the faculty of education have a moderate level of the opinion that women are dependent on men, that the gender equality course did not decrease the number of students who were of this opinion before the course as expected. The male students in the study are more likely to be of the opinion that women are dependent on men. (Toraman & Özen, 2019, p. 21)

As a result, this shows that gender perception in the Turkish education context has specific issues which are in need of some comprehensive changes. The matter of observing persisting stereotypes from male students even after taking the Gender Equality course highlights the need

to go beyond education in Turkey to cause a manifestation and a change of gender representation; such as revising the female role in traditional gender roles in popular culture and media, which can lead to public awareness and targets the wide population of people regardless of educational level, age or many other factors. The most important aspect to emphasize here, on the gender equality promotion, is to challenge it in a broader societal context rather than just an educational one. Yet the most effective place to start the gender equality among the vast number of members of the population can be considered to be the educational settings and materials along with courses.

As a widespread way of learning in nowadays education, using educational online platforms is a very common phenomenon among both learners and educational institutes. The topic of gender equality, as in our study can be examined, is present in an educational platform such as Achieve3000. Regarding the literature about Achieve3000, most studies evaluate the general effectiveness of this educational platform among different student demographic instead of focusing on results depending on gender variations. The other factors that most studies focused on are related to enhancement of literacy and student involvement along with learning results. In other words, the empirical studies rarely address gender-specific impacts.

On official Achieve3000 websites there is a part under the title of *Research and Accountability, Analysing Data, Measuring Performance — Evaluation Report* (Torres, 2015) that gathered and briefed the various forms of empirical research regarding the impact of Achieve3000 on students' literacy, math skills, biology, Lexile Growth, reading skills and many other English language proficiency skills in different strict of United States of America such as New jerky and Florida. It is of value to mention that the studies did not focus on the gender representations of the materials in Achieve3000 platforms.

There is other research outside the Achieve3000 websites that also has not examined the portrayal and perception of various genders in a variety of the represented contexts and seeks to tackle literacy challenges by employing the Achieve3000 platform. One of them is under the title of *The Effectiveness of Achieve3000 Integrated Model on English Reading Performance* (Guodong, 2023). The study aims to create an Achieve3000 integrated model by employing the platform to validate the effectiveness of this approach in improving English reading skills of the learners following that the research conducted a quasi-experimental research study with sixty students. The findings

of the study approve the effectiveness of Achieve3000 while being integrated into the students' learning materials and their English reading skills.

5. Methodology and Questions

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effect of a digital cultural commodity — Achieve3000 — on English language learners at the English Preparatory School of Haliç University, in Turkey; and it does so through gender perspectives by gaining insights from teachers. The methodology consists of two main phases: a quantitative phase involving a questionnaire survey and a qualitative phase comprising structured interviews.

The first phase involved administering a questionnaire to twenty-seven English language teachers from the English Preparatory School. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to gauge the teachers' views on the impact of digital cultural commodities on students' language learning. The purpose of this phase was to gather quantitative data on the perceptions of teachers regarding the use of digital cultural commodities in language education.

During the second phase, online face-to-face interviews were conducted with four teachers who applied to participate. These interviews were structured to allow participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives regarding the use of digital cultural commodities (Achieve3000). The structured interview format facilitated in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences with the software, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their viewpoints.

The quantitative phase of the study involved English language instructors who were affiliated with the English Preparatory School of Haliç University in Istanbul. All participants provided informed consent to ensure that they were prepared to participate voluntarily and were aware of the purpose of the study. From the pool of seven teachers, four were chosen to participate in face-to-face interviews for the qualitative phase, on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate.

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Statistical measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation were computed to summarize the teachers' responses regarding the impact of digital cultural commodities on language learning. This quantitative analysis provides numerical insights into the overall trends and variations in teachers' views on the effectiveness of digital cultural commodities in language education.

Moreover, qualitative data gathered from the structured interviews was analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis involved systematically coding the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to teachers' experiences with digital cultural commodities. By categorizing and organizing the qualitative data into themes, this analysis approach enables a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities in teachers' perspectives, thereby complementing the quantitative findings.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data analysis allows for a comprehensive examination of the research questions, facilitating triangulation and enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings. This mixed-methods approach ensures a robust exploration of the impact of digital cultural commodities on English language learners, considering both teacher viewpoints and gender perspectives.

6. Case Study of Haliç University: An Examination of the Integration of Digital Cultural Commodities into English Language Education from a Gender Perspective

This study aims to investigate the teachers' perspective on gender-based consumption patterns of a cultural commodity, Achieve3000, among university students enrolled in English preparatory programs in Turkey. The English Preparatory Program in Turkey comprises four distinct English levels: A1 and A2, which correspond to elementary, B1 and B2, which signify pre-intermediate, and advanced, which designates upper-intermediate. The utmost duration of education and training is two academic years; the preparatory course is typically completed in one academic year. The coordinators of the English Preparatory Department choose the English courses that will be available. Throughout the semester, they consult with instructors and representatives of English educational institutions in order to ascertain the course material and textbooks. Nonetheless, instructors simulate the repercussions of the choices made during the lesson.

The English teachers whose point of view on the effectiveness of the cultural commodity from a gender perspective on English language learners in preparatory school will be included are asked to possess a degree in English or a closely related field. They typically have teaching expertise in abundance. Their expertise lies in structing and executing educational programs and

resources for students preparing for university, with a particular focus on language proficiency in areas such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, and academic English proficiency.

In Haliç University English Preparatory School, the focus is on imparting the English language proficiency necessary for academic success. English teachers assist students in transitioning to higher education. By means of cultural commodities, they assist students in cultivating language proficiency and self-assurance essential for achieving success in an academic environment conducted in English, leveraging their expertise and commitment. In Haliç University Preparatory School of Language, in addition to the software recommended by the university for both teachers and students, instructors possess the autonomy to offer their students the opportunity to engage with additional cultural commodities, therefore enhancing the overall educational experience.

Achieve3000 is a digital product equipped with a comprehensive set of tools across various domains, purportedly expediting learning in reading, maths, science, and social studies (Achieve3000, n.d.). Tailored to individual reading levels, the online platform ensures a personalized learning experience. Teachers can monitor student progress and shape the instruction according to individual needs by differentiating content, process, and product. This adaptive approach aligns with Levy's notion that it accommodates diverse student abilities, learning styles, and personalities (Levy, 2008).

The platform frequently offers informative articles and engaging activities that aim to improve comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking abilities. Achieve3000's literacy program is significantly claimed to boost the rate of improvement in students' Lexile scores across all grade levels. This online digital tool allows teachers the possibility of monitoring students' advancement and customizing their teaching to address individual requirements. All this to highlight the importance of customizing teaching methods to meet the individual needs of each student and the essence of differentiated instruction (Levy, 2008). Research indicates that Achieve3000 enhances literacy skills and addresses learning setbacks, presenting a promising strategy, particularly amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Borman, Yang, Audrain, & Park, 2023). Progress reports and the data concerning student's usage, provided by the online tool, allow teachers to monitor the progress of the entire class as well as that of individual students.

7. Results

The survey was conducted among English teachers at the English Preparatory School of Haliç University and it analyzed their perspectives on gender representation in Achieve3000, a digital educational tool used for English language learning, as well as gathered insights into its impact on English preparatory school students. In this survey, out of twenty-seven teachers, only seven (25,92%) answered the questionnaire. These people included four female teachers and three male teachers. Also, four of these teachers (two male and two female) participated in the interview phase.

Most teachers use Achieve3000 at least sometimes, indicating it is integrated into their teaching practices. Most of them (71,43%) reported that they use Achieve3000 either sometimes or always in their classrooms. The responses show a mixed perception of the software's motivational impact, with some disagreeing and others agreeing. About 42,86% of the teachers agreed that the software effectively motivates students to learn English, while 42,86% of the teachers remained neutral or disagreed with its impact on reading skill development.

Teachers explore this idea more in interviews; they mention that Achieve3000 can be more effective than traditional methods because it caters to individual needs and is engaging. It provides teachers with data for targeted instruction. But they also mention that, for a better understanding of vocabulary, "feedback is needed" and "vocabulary knowledge is not internalized."

When examining the impact of gender on the responses of the interviewed teachers, it became evident that gender did not have a significant effect on the overall usage of the Achieve3000 platform. Both male and female teachers reported integrating the platform into their teaching methodologies to a similar extent. The differences in how they perceived gender representation within the platform appeared to stem more from individual interpretations than from a clear division based on gender.

Both male and female teachers acknowledged that they had not conducted a thorough analysis of gender-related materials in Achieve3000. One female teacher remarked that the platform's materials do not reinforce gender stereotypes, while other female teachers noted that students showed little or no interest in traditional gender roles, exhibiting general apathy towards gender stereotypes. This suggests that female teachers might be more attuned to potential gender-related issues in educational materials, possibly due to increased sensitivity to the topic.

Overall, both male and female teachers reported a significant level of ambiguity (71,43%) when examining gender portrayal in Achieve3000's educational materials. This implies that neither gender had thoroughly examined the platform's gender representation. The data indicate a need for further research into the analysis of gender representation in Achieve3000, exploring how it may impact students' perceptions and whether any biases or stereotypes are embedded in the materials.

Students in the English preparatory classes at Halic University range in age from 18 to 25 years old. In terms of gender representation, there is a slight predominance of female students over male students. However, this slight difference is so small that it does not significantly affect the overall study outcomes, nor does it create a significant shift in the findings, as the precise percentages are not available. Teachers' insights reveal that students, irrespective of their gender, appear unaffected by issues related to gender norms and biases on the Achieve3000 educational platform. The teacher's feedback indicates that students, when considering the portrayal of gender roles in educational materials they consume on this platform, do not express any apprehensions.

This lack of concern for gender norms suggests that students place no or little priority regarding on the matter of educational components of their studies. While there can be a variety of hypotheses or explanations for such a result, students place hardly any emphasis on the traditional gender roles in Achieve3000 material. The idea that students are shifting towards gender neutrality and equality, prioritizing their academic studies over gender expectations, could stand for one explanation. The other explanation could stem from the generational and cultural differences between teachers and students, which could lead to a greater sensitivity to traditional gender norms or a greater acceptance of stereotypes or biases in educational materials.

While teachers expressed uncertainty about gender representation in Achieve3000's educational materials, their belief about students' lack of concern suggests that they may underestimate any possible but not evident issues that students could have about gender portrayal on this platform. Most teachers expressed uncertainty about the portrayal of gender roles within the materials, with 71,43% indicating ambiguity in their responses. Although 14,29% of the teachers believed that the software challenged traditional gender stereotypes and offered diverse portrayals of gender roles, others felt they had not critically examined the materials in this regard. One female teacher noted that the texts appeared neutral and did not

promote gender stereotypes, while another believed that students were largely indifferent to traditional gender values, stating that students "don't care about traditional values that glorify men."

In terms of gender differences in how students benefit from Achieve3000, most teachers did not observe significant disparities. Only 28,57% of the teachers noticed that girls benefited more from using the platform, while 71,43% saw no gender-based differences. During interviews, some teachers mentioned that girls tend to be more engaged and diligent in their use of Achieve3000 compared to boys. This observation, however, requires further exploration with a larger sample size and more detailed qualitative data.

Both male and female teachers agreed that Achieve3000 is beneficial for improving reading skills and vocabulary development, supporting its overall potential. When asked about the software's ability to identify students' vocabulary and reading needs, only 28,57% of the teachers strongly agreed, but a substantial 85,71% approved that Achieve3000 expanded their students' vocabulary knowledge. Also, opinions are divided on whether the software effectively identifies student needs, indicating that further investigation might be needed.

When asked about using cultural commodities alongside Achieve3000, 28,57% used movies, 14,29% used storybooks, 42,86% used both, and 14,29% reported no need to use any of them. Many teachers utilize cultural products alongside Achieve3000, displaying a multi-faceted approach to language learning. When we look at the interviews, all the participants mention that "Achieve3000 shows promise and effectiveness, but fidelity of implementation, teacher training, and conjunction with other practices are crucial." Nonetheless, they also underline that "Limiting resources and spending more time on each could be helpful."

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, while there are positive perceptions among English teachers regarding Achieve3000's potential to enhance language learning, there are also notable reservations, particularly regarding its effectiveness in developing reading skills and identifying students' vocabulary and reading needs. According to the first important findings of this study, most teachers equally male and female ones, claim they use Achieve3000 at least occasionally, implying that it is integrated into their instruction. The other crucial finding that leads us to draw conclusions regarding the commodity's motivational impact on learners is that half of them

believed it is motivational, while the other half disagreed or stayed neutral. To clarify this fact, we may look at the results of the interviews, which show that teachers believe in the potential benefits of this commodity since it has a greater potential for catering to the particular requirements of students than traditional approaches. Teachers further delve into this concept during interviews, highlighting that Achieve3000 surpasses conventional approaches in terms of efficacy due to its ability to satisfy individual needs and its entertaining nature. It provides educators with data to facilitate focused education. However, they also acknowledge that, in order to have a more comprehensive grasp of language, receiving feedback is necessary and vocabulary knowledge must be fully assimilated.

Overall, the majority of responses support Achieve3000's ability to help with vocabulary growth and reading skills. Considering the consensus among teachers, the conclusion is that Achieve3000 is effective in enhancing reading proficiency and fostering vocabulary growth, hence substantiating its prospective advantages. Teachers generally believed in the software's capacity to recognize students' vocabulary and reading requirements, but only a low number of the teachers expressed strong agreement. However, a high significant of both male and female teachers agreed that Achieve3000 enhanced their students' vocabulary comprehension. The idea that requires additional investigation is determining the commodity's effectiveness in identifying learners reading and vocabulary needs and further research would be beneficial. As previously stated, when utilizing a cultural commodity, the relationship that the customer or, in our instance, learner, develops with the commodity is significantly affected by the commodity's user-friendliness, which leads to learnability.

> The software learnability determines whether the software is good enough to satisfy all user needs and requirements, the overall acceptability of social software is defined as a combination of its practical and social acceptability the practical acceptability is again broken down into various categories, including usefulness, reliability, and compatibility with existing systems. (Karume & Masese, 2018, p. 628)

The fact that most teachers believed this product possessed such characteristics may explain why such a large number of students used it. While the majority of teachers in both surveys and interviews stated that Achieve3000 is widely utilized and beneficial to students' reading and vocabulary development, some effective implementation, such as teacher training and integration with other practices, is still expected. Furthermore, the teachers stated that the commodity should be introduced and open to modification based on the needs of the learners

and teachers, something that is missing when representing such a commodity. As per instructors, a notable number of learners indicate discontent with the setting, suggesting that there are possibilities to improve the user experience or engagement with the content. Consequently, most teachers now view individualized qualities, such as varying difficulty levels, as beneficial for educational development. This can be justified by referring to the literature of the use of cultural commodities in language learning classes that have both male and female students, digital commodities are seen as excellent tools for addressing a range of classroom concerns, such as student engagement, motivation, creativity, learner participation, and gender-related issues. Moreover, they possess the capacity to engage learners and provide unique advantages. Multiple sorts of research have demonstrated that the utilization of digital technologies for learning is engaging due to its attractive characteristics. Following that many teachers employ cultural commodities when combined with Achieve3000, showcasing a multifaceted methodology for language acquisition. Upon reviewing the interviews, it is evident that all the participants acknowledge the potential and efficacy of Achieve3000. Accordingly, they emphasize that ensuring fidelity of implementation, providing enough teacher training, and integrating it with other educational practices are essential factors for its success. However, it is also stressed that "restricting resources and dedicating additional time to each task could be advantageous".

When it comes to gender depictions and its benefits, this study aimed to particularly address this issue and examine it from the perspective of teachers, to underline the significance of this subject in creating a healthy learning environment for all students. In terms of fairness and gender equality in gender representation in Achieve3000 commodities' stories and materials, most teachers were unsure about gender portrayal of gender roles, implying the necessity for content analysis on gender stereotypes. Furthermore, language teachers need to become more conscious of the potential existence of gender stereotypes in materials and resources in order to be explicitly aware of the gender perspective of a commodity. Maybe a lack of knowledge about this topic is one of the reasons why most teachers' opinions on the gender representation in Achieve3000 materials were neutral. Following such potential, it is very necessary for teachers to be sensitive and knowledgeable about gender-related topics. In terms of how boys and girls benefited from the commodities, there was no substantial difference; however, a small number of teachers believed girls gained more from it, which could be due to girls being more engaged

with the program. Another explanation could be that female students have a slightly higher number than male students. However, the small discrepancy does not have a wide impact on the general outcomes of the study, nor does it cause a specific change in the conclusion. To gain a deeper knowledge of this topic, more study with a large sample size is required. There is a need for studies that target the presence of unintentional bias in the program which may lead to less engagement and motivation for one gender compared to the other. The results of the study indicate the teachers believed that the program effectively challenged old gender stereotypes and depicted diverse roles for all genders in storybooks and literacy tools. However, a larger percentage of teachers, despite not thoroughly analyzing the materials to establish gender roles, offered supplementary details during the interviews.

Overall, the study provides useful information about teacher perceptions of Achieve3000. While it appears to be integrated into teaching techniques and has potential benefits, some elements require additional examination and development. The findings suggest that further research is needed to explore Achieve3000's impact on gender perceptions and to ascertain whether it can indeed challenge traditional gender stereotypes in educational materials. Such insights could contribute to the more effective integration and use of digital educational tools in language learning contexts.

Furthermore, one of the issues that has not received sufficient attention and can be examined from multiple perspectives is the role of gender in the Achieve3000 program. This study will help identify the program's stance on gender representation, independently of how users interact with this language learning tool. It aims to provide deeper insights into how gender is portrayed within the program and how users engage with these representations.

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