

# The Awareness of Euphemism by Kuwaiti Speakers of Arabic

Abdullah M. Alotaibi

Assistant Prof at PAAET & CBE, Kuwait

Tel: 965-9962-1499 E-mail: [alotaibi917@gmail.com](mailto:alotaibi917@gmail.com) & [otaiby2013@gmail.com](mailto:otaiby2013@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

This study measures the awareness of euphemism by Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic. The study also examines whether the participants' age and educational level play a role in their comprehension of euphemisms used in everyday life conversations. Hence, eight taboo words were chosen from two areas, namely, courtesy and physical appearance and were incorporated into fully contextualised sentences. These sentences used were adapted from different academic websites on Google to suit the participants' own dialect. For the purpose of the study, the participants were asked to rate the suitability of the words in context on a 5-point Likert scale. The results revealed that Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic generally have adequate awareness of euphemism. Also, the two variables, namely, age and educational level, play a crucial role in their use of euphemism. The results showed that the educated participants i.e. holders of a university degree avoid using offensive words and consider them unsuitable. Furthermore, the participants whose ages were between (50-65) performed better than those whose ages ranged between (25-40) in terms of rating the suitability of taboo words, expressing that taboo words should not be used. The study concluded with pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

**Keywords:** Euphemism, Euphemistic expressions, Taboo words, Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic, Arabic

## 1. Introduction

As a universal phenomenon, euphemism refers to substituting a word or a phrase, indirectly, for one considered to be too insulting. Specifically, it is a polite way by which a harsh, offensive or inappropriate word can be used instead of another. Thus, the use of euphemistic expressions is always regarded as a prominent part of every language. Therefore, people usually exert more effort to sound more polite and courteous in their day-to-day speech as opposed to rude.

More attention has been directed to the use of euphemisms in recent years. This may be attributed to the increasing awareness of euphemistic expressions in different languages. In addition, speakers belonging to different language and cultural backgrounds face enormous obstacles in learning euphemistic expressions and the situations in which they are used. Many researchers conducted several studies to investigate the extent to which different speakers are aware of euphemistic expressions in their own languages and whether they would use these expressions in their daily speech. However, Arabic speakers were not given due attention with respect to the use of euphemisms, particularly, whether their age and educational background may affect their awareness of these expressions. Hence, this study endeavours to examine the extent to which Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic are aware of euphemistic expressions in their own language. Ultimately, it investigates: (1) whether the age of Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic plays a role in their use of euphemisms; and (2) whether their educational level influences their comprehension of euphemisms.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview

The word ‘euphemism’ can be traced back to the Greek work *euphemos*, which means ‘fortunate speech’ (Enright, 1984: 32). With respect to etymology, McArthur (1992: 387) indicated that euphemism is derived from the word *euphemisomos* whose root is *phemi*, meaning ‘speaking’; this root is attached to the prefix *eu*, meaning ‘good’. Together they mean ‘good speaking’.

According to Rawson (1981: 1), euphemisms are influential instruments that are entrenched in our language and the way we speak to the extent that even plain-speaking people cannot live without them. The vital importance of euphemisms stems from their considerable influence on people’s social life since they allow speakers to talk about taboo or sensitive topics, such as religion and sex without causing any resentment among the other interlocutors. On the contrary, they facilitate the discussion on these topics while simultaneously preserving civility. Moreover, euphemisms are subject to variation based on the culture. Hence, we may find words or expressions that are viewed as taboos in some cultures as opposed to others. Substituting insulting words for their non-insulting counterparts is viewed as an integral part of any culture (Allan and Burrige, 1991: 12). The next section reviews some literature on the use of euphemisms and their correlation with different socio-cultural factors.

## *2.2 Euphemism and Socio-Cultural Factors*

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the use of euphemism in various languages. For instance, Enright (1985) reported on a study which explored the use of euphemisms in various fields including money, sex, sickness and death taking into consideration cultural differences found in many countries including France, Rome, Greece and the United States on the one hand and factors like age, sex and education on the other. Storr (1985) also gave instances of different uses of euphemism based on her experience through various generations. For examples, instead of using the expression ‘do you want to urinate?’, her grandmother, born in 1853, used the euphemism “don’t you want to make yourself comfortable?”. However, another grandmother who was born 10 years later, used the euphemism “have you taken your precaution?” to ask about the same thing. Thus, Storr (1985) noticed that age played a crucial role in the use of euphemisms across generations. In another study, Farghal (1995) examined the use of euphemisms in Arabic, explaining that speakers of Arabic tend to produce euphemisms using four important methods, namely, antonyms, circumlocution, figurative expressions and remodelling. These methods may not be found in other cultures. Hence, every society develops certain methods to produce euphemisms.

More extensive research on the use of euphemisms was that of Al-Shamali (1997), who examined the euphemisms which pertained to body parts, sickness, cancer, death and mental illness in the Jordanian dialect. Al-Shamali’s (1997) endeavoured to identify the most occurring euphemisms used by the participants on the previously-mentioned subjects and whether certain social factors such as gender may affect their use. The study revealed that the majority of the participants opted for the taboos as opposed to the euphemisms with the exception of excretory function. This may demonstrate that the participants had little awareness of euphemisms in general. The study concluded that different social variables may have an impact on the choice of euphemism used by the participants with respect to certain topics.

Peccei (2004) explained that age or generation is one of the ways by which people usually describe themselves i.e. a twenty-year-old. Additionally, the age of a person’s interlocutor is also regarded as one of the factors that may influence that person’s speech in a particular situation. Peccei (2004) also indicated that experience provides many instances of terms and vocabulary used by young adults or teenagers which require translation for elderly people who may not be familiar with their meaning.

In an attempt to uncover the nature of linguistic communication in different societies, Gu (2006) argued that euphemisms can be explored efficiently in their socio-cultural contexts in order to examine the synergy between social variables on the one hand and linguistic variables on the other. She concluded that euphemisms are not only limited to the social culture and traditions, but also to the context in which the conversation takes place. Gu (2006) indicated that the topic, participants and communication context together with social variables such as age and social status may influence the use of euphemisms. She posited that participants who belong to low social class and who are less educated tend to use more euphemisms with the intention of not being ridiculed in front of others. In other words, they

tend to protect their negative face.

Brown and Levinson (2007) indicated that politeness can be seen as an important factor that contributes considerably to the use of euphemisms by speakers as it saves the face of speakers and hearers alike. Hence, Brown and Levinson (2007: 71) posited that the use of any politeness strategy is related to many social variables including the social distance between the speaker and hearer. They explained that this distance relies on other socio-cultural factors such as gender, education, age, ethnicity, class, etc. all these factors work together to establish familiarity between the speaker and hearer.

Van Oudenhoven et al. (2008) explored abusive words used in 11 cultures by 3000 participants from Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Poland, Croatia, Great Britain, Norway, USA and The Netherlands. The participants were required to write abusive terms which they would use in a particular situation. They were also asked to rate those words in terms of their degree of offensiveness. Twelve thousand expressions were elicited. The findings revealed that some terms used by the participants were related to some taboos in the realms of intelligence and sex. However, cross-cultural variation was found. This variation was explained in terms of different dimensions in which the 11 cultures vary.

On the basis of the above-mentioned literature, it seems that little attention has been given to the use of euphemisms in Arabic, particularly, Kuwaiti Arabic. Taking into consideration that culture varies even among countries which have the same first language, it can be argued that exploring the awareness of euphemisms by Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic is an area which requires further investigation. Hence, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the age of Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic influence their awareness of euphemisms?
2. Does the educational level of Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic play a role in their comprehension of euphemisms?

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Sample*

Sixty participants, randomly chosen, were involved in the study. Mackey and Gass (2005: 124) reported that one hundred participants are enough for descriptive studies, fifty participants for correlational studies, and from fifteen to thirty participants for experimental studies. Since the current the study is experimental in nature, that data obtained from sixty participants is probably enough to elicit conclusions that may represent Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic in general. The participants were divided into four groups as follows:

Table 1. the number and distribution of the participants in terms of age and education level

	Age (25-40)	Age (50 -65)
Educated Participants (EPs)	15	15
Uneducated Participants (UPs)	15	15

The participants were from Kuwait and they are native speakers of Kuwaiti Spoken Arabic (henceforward KSA). Their ages were between 25 to 65 years old. At the time of data collection, those who were considered educated have obtained a university degree, at least a bachelor degree. However, those who were regarded as uneducated have not been enrolled at universities and they have only obtained a secondary school certificate. Moreover, none of the participants are a native speaker of any language other than Arabic. Their backgrounds were checked to ensure the credibility of the test. For instance, subtractive bilingualism was not an intervening factor since none of the participants had enough knowledge of another language that may influence their performance on the test.

Being aware of ethical issues is absolutely necessary, particularly, participants' confidentiality. Protecting the participants' personal information such as their identity, or any other detail they reveal during the test is a priority. The participants were asked not to write their names on the paper and they have been assured that the data will be handled carefully since some of the participants are known to the researcher. The participants were given the choice to withdraw anytime during the test if they felt tired, stressed or unwilling to do the test.

### 3.2 The test

The test<sup>1</sup> included eight taboos, *zabbaal* 'garbage man', *ʔaʕmaa* 'blind', *ʔaʕmax* 'deaf', *muʕaagiin* 'handicaps', *fanqaf* 'died', *battah* 'fat', *gassaasa* 'short', *guutiit*<sup>2</sup> 'stupid'. The eight words were used in fully contextualised sentences where the participants were asked to rate the appropriateness of the eight offensive words in each sentence using a 5-point Likert scale, in which:

1. means suitable and the participant would use the word
2. means maybe suitable and the participant would probably use the word
3. means the participant was not sure
4. means may be unsuitable and the participant would not probably use the word
5. means unsuitable and the participant would not use the word.

To ensure the reliability of the test, two native speakers of KSA checked the clarity of the sentences and stated that they are clear, comprehensible and common. The first one is a PhD candidate in linguistics at Newcastle University, and the second is an Arabic schoolteacher in Kuwait. A questionnaire was chosen to elicit the data in the current study due to the nature of the participants who are mainly from the mainstream. It was easier and more convenient for the participants to answer the test in a form of a questionnaire rather than gathering them in a room to do a multiple-choice or a completion test.

In general, the eight words were chosen due to being used in daily life conversations. Thus, they are regarded as important and effective. For example, the taboo word *fanqaf* 'died' can

<sup>1</sup> For the readers' convenience, the test is translated into English (See Appendix 2B).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 3 for full description of Arabic sounds.

be frequently used since it is important in the Arab culture to offer condolences and to attend funerals. According to Arabs, the word *fangaf* ‘died’ should be replaced by its euphemistic counterpart *twaffaa* ‘passed away’. It has been recently noticed that the euphemistic expression in question should be always used rather than the taboo word *fanqaf* ‘since the latter is extremely rude. Another example is the offensive word *muṣaagiin* ‘handicaps’ and its euphemistic counterpart *ḍawii l-ṭiḥtiajaat l-xaassah* ‘disabled’ which can also be commonly used by different participants especially, considering the large number of current movements interested in the rights of people with special needs. For the readers’ convenience, the taboo words are listed below with their euphemistic counterparts respectively (see Appendix 1):

1. *zabbaal* ‘garbage man’ instead of *ṣaamil na-ḍaafa* ‘cleaner’
2. *ḷaṣmaa* ‘blind’ instead of *ḍariir* ‘virtually challenged’
3. *ḷaṣmax* ‘deaf’ instead of *ḷaṣamm* ‘hearing impaired’
4. *muṣaagiin* ‘handicaps’ instead of *ḍawii l-ṭiḥtiajaat l-xaassah* ‘disabled’
5. *fangaf* ‘died’ instead of *twaffaa* ‘passed away’
6. *battah* ‘fat’ instead of *malyaan* ‘chubby’
7. *gassaasa* ‘short’ instead of *marbuuf* ‘vertically challenged’
8. *guutji* ‘stupid’ instead of *galiil l-fihim* ‘intellectually challenged’

### 3.3 Research Hypotheses

The study aims to confirm the following hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1: there are statistically significant differences between the educated and the uneducated participants in terms of their awareness of euphemism.
2. Hypothesis 2: there are statistically significant differences between the old and young participants with respect to their awareness of euphemism.

### 3.4 Statistical Analysis

The study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the obtained data from the test. The following statistical procedures were applied to analyse the data:

1. Percentages and frequencies were used to represent the distribution of the participants in terms of age and educational level. In this study, the participants are divided equally; 50% are educated while 50% are uneducated, and 50% are old while 50% are young.
2. Means and standard deviations of the answers were calculated in order to analyse the responses of each group concerning the words on the test.
3. T-tests were conducted to confirm the two hypotheses and to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the groups (educated vs. uneducated and old vs. young).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The results showed that the education level affected the participants' answers with respect to offensive words used in the test. It has been noticed that those participants with high level of education use euphemisms and avoid taboo words more than those who are uneducated. Table 2 below shows the means and standard deviations of the answers of the two groups on each word on the test.

Table 2. means and standard deviations of each word by (EPs) and (UPs)

word	Educated Participants (EPs)		Uneducated Participants (UPs)	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>zabbaal</i> 'garbage man'	2.80	1.75	1.90	0.99
<i>ʔaʕmaa</i> 'blind'	2.90	1.82	2.60	1.50
<i>battah</i> 'fat'	3.10	1.44	1.90	1.28
<i>guutii</i> 'stupid'	3.60	1.83	2.60	1.57
<i>fangaf</i> 'died'	4.60	0.51	3.50	1.95
<i>muʕaagiin</i> 'handicaps'	4.20	1.22	3.30	1.33
<i>gassaasa</i> 'short'	3.30	1.25	2.60	1.42
<i>ʔaʕmax</i> 'deaf'	2.70	1.58	1.80	1.11
Total average	3.40	1.22	2.52	1.47

As shown in table 2, the mean 3.40 (68%) of group1 EPs indicates that they avoided using the taboo words in comparison with the UPs with the mean 2.52 (approximately 50%). In other words, 68% of EPs considered these words to be unsuitable, whereas 50% of the UPs considered them as appropriate. Also, having an insightful look at the words in table 2 shows that the participants had different attitudes towards the words used in the test. For instance, the words *guutii* 'stupid', *fangaf* 'died' and *muʕaagiin* 'handicaps' were rated as unsuitable or maybe unsuitable by roughly 70%, 95%, and 85% of the participants with the means 3.60, 4.60 and 4.20 respectively in comparison with the rest of the words. The EPs considered the word *fangaf* 'died' to be unsuitable in the context of the test; they explained that it is impolite to use *fangaf* 'died' to talk about the death of a human being. It is more appropriate to use *twaffaa* 'passed away' which denotes a sense of God's blessings on him/her. Also, it is worth noting that the taboo word *fangaf* 'died' can be used with animals, while *twaffaa* is closely linked with humans. Put straightforwardly, it is so rude to use the taboo word *fangaf* 'died' in a context where the deceased is a human rather than an animal. Additionally, the euphemism *twaffaa* is commonly used in comparison with other words. The high frequency of a word can play a central role in its use by the mainstream. Furthermore, with regard to the word *muʕaagiin* 'handicaps', both EPs, with 85%, and UPs, with 66%, rated it as inappropriate on the test. This is due to the increasing number of movements demanding more rights and better treatments for the disabled in the Middle East in general and Kuwait in particular. As a result, the taboo word should be avoided; people should be made aware of the harmful impact of this word. Lastly, 70% of the EPs rated the taboo word *guutii* 'stupid' as unsuitable. Here, it is worth noting that some EPs explained that the taboo word is so offensive and its euphemistic counterpart should be used instead. Interestingly, they also indicated that the use of such a word depends on the interlocutors' relationship, namely, whether their relationship is formal or informal (cf. Brown and Levinson, 2007).

To test the first hypothesis using SPSS, a t-test was applied. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences among Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic with respect to their educational level. Table 3 shows the results of EPs and UPs.

Table 3. Results of t-test of differences between EPs and UPs

T. Value	N	d.f	Sig
25.90	30	29	0.000

An examination of table 3 shows that the P value/Sig (0.000) is lower than (0.05), which leads to the conclusion that there were statistically significant differences between the results of the two groups. A look at table 3 shows that EPs awareness of euphemism is better than that of UPs. This is due to the formers' exposure to many academic texts and dealing with academic materials who always think that it is inappropriate to use taboo words. However, the UPs results demonstrated that they have some degree of awareness of some words such as *fangaf* 'died' and *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' due to their high frequency and high degree of offensiveness. It seems that EPs repertoire of different language expressions in Kuwaiti Arabic is broader than that of the UPs. Education enables the speaker to have a wider range of euphemisms and procedures to avoid using offensive words. Hence, EPs had a bigger advantage on the test compared to the UP.

Concerning the age of the participants, the results demonstrated that the age factor played a crucial role in revealing the linguistic diversity of the participants in this study. The effect of age can be observed clearly in the way adults talk to their children about excretory functions. Table 4 below shows the means and standard deviations of the two age groups on each word on the test.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of each word by the two age groups

word	Age (25-40)		Age (50-65)	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>zabbaal</i> 'garbage man'	2.20	1.54	3.80	1.75
<i>ʔaṣmaa</i> 'blind'	2.70	1.39	2.80	1.22
<i>battah</i> 'fat'	3.00	1.32	3.10	1.44
<i>guutii</i> 'stupid'	3.00	1.49	3.60	1.83
<i>fangaf</i> 'died'	3.10	1.52	4.70	0.51
<i>muṣaagiin</i> 'handicaps'	4.00	1.41	4.20	1.22
<i>gassaasa</i> 'short'	2.90	0.73	2.60	1.42
<i>ʔaṣmax</i> 'deaf'	2.60	1.11	2.80	1.22
Total average	2.93	1.15	3.47	1.63

A glance at table 4 demonstrates that there was a significant difference between the results of the two age groups based on their means. The results of the two groups in table 4 indicate that the old participants are more aware of euphemism in comparison the young participants. Almost 70% (mean=3.47) of the old participants rated the taboo words as unsuitable in comparison with 59% of the young participants (mean=2.93). However, to confirm this result, it is important to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two age groups. Thus, a t-test was applied as can be seen in table 5 below.



Table 5. Results of t-test of the differences between the two age groups

T. Value	N	d.f	Sig
25.725	30	29	0.002

Table 5 explicitly demonstrates that there were statistically significant differences between the results of the two age groups since the P value/ Sig (0.002) is less than (0.05). Put differently, the old participants' perception of euphemism differs considerably from that of the young ones. Via examining table 4, it is clear that both groups again rated *fangaf* 'died' and *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' as being inappropriate. It can be seen that 96% and 84% of the old participants rated *fangaf* 'died' and *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' as unsuitable respectively, whereas 62% and 80% of the young participants rated *fangaf* 'died' and *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' as unsuitable. Currently, many campaigns have been launched in Kuwait to support people with special needs. The vast majority of participants are young students from different universities in Kuwait. This could be one of the most important reasons to rate the taboo word *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' as unsuitable, especially when it is compared with other words such as *ḥasmax* 'deaf' (52%) and *zabbaal* 'garbage man' (44%). Additionally, table 4 also shows that the young participants outperformed the old ones on the word *gassaasa* 'short' with the means 2.90 and 2.60 respectively. This could be due to the fact that young people are usually more sensitive about their physical appearance compared to the older generation. Hence, they would be more careful about using words related to physical appearance that may hurt other people's feelings. Finally, the researcher asked some of the young participants about their acceptance of using taboo words more than others. The researcher concluded that young people usually use taboo words while making a joke with their peers. Young people explained to the researcher that taboo words give a nice flavor to jokes. The last point worth mentioning is the taboo word *zabbaal* 'garbage man', 76% of the old participants rated the word as unsuitable in comparison with 58% of the young participants, who rated the same word as inappropriate. This might lead us to one conclusion which is; old people would appreciate the titles of professions more than others since they are more likely to have had a job in their lifetime.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the four groups provide clear evidence that the two variables, namely, age and educational level play a crucial role in the awareness of euphemism by the participants. With respect to the educational background, educated participants EPs have adequate understanding of euphemism, whereas uneducated participants UPs show little awareness of this phenomenon which means that the first hypothesis is confirmed. In few cases, UPs showed adequate awareness with the taboo words such as *muṣaagiin* 'handicaps' and *fangaf* 'died'. This could be due to the high frequency of the euphemistic counterparts, *ḥawii l-ḥiṭtijaat l-xaassah* 'the disabled' and *twaffaa* 'passed away, of these taboos as well as the increasing number of movements concerned with the rights of the disabled. With regard to the participants' age, the old participants performed better than young ones, which means that the second hypothesis is also confirmed. It seems that old people transfer their knowledge and experience into their language whether in speaking or writing. Therefore, it is very

important for young people to be made more aware of the different uses of words that could be regarded as harsh and unpleasant. This awareness may help them accomplish a better understanding of other language speakers, and thus improve their communication and speaking skills. This could be achieved by having more lessons and exercises targeting this issue during their school education. Additionally, curriculum designers need to incorporate and highlight the importance of euphemistic expressions through well-structured activities, exercises and tasks. Finally, it is recommended that more studies need to be conducted about raising Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic awareness of euphemistic expressions, especially uneducated and young people. Moreover, the methods and strategies that help the speakers to be acquainted with these words should be highlighted and used at schools. A study about the acquisition of euphemistic expressions by Kuwaiti EFL learners is worth investigating.

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**Appendix 1. Taboos and their euphemistic counterparts**

- zabbaal* ‘garbage man’ instead of *ʕaamil na-ḏaafa* ‘cleaner’  
*ʔaʕmaa* ‘blind’ instead of *dariir* ‘virtually challenged’  
*ʔaʕmax* ‘deaf’ instead of *ʔaʕamm* ‘hearing impaired’  
*muʕaagiin* ‘handicaps’ instead of *ḏawii l-ʔihtiijaat l-xaassah* ‘the disabled’  
*fangaf* ‘died’ instead of *twaffaa* ‘passed away’  
*battah* ‘fat’ instead of *malyaan* ‘chubby’  
*gassaasa* ‘short’ instead of *marbuuf* ‘vertically challenged’  
*guutii* ‘stupid’ instead of *galiil l-fihim* ‘intellectually challenged’

**Appendix 2A. The test (Arabic version)**

المؤهل العلمي:

العمر:

السؤال: أقرأ الجمل التالية، وبين إذا كانت الكلمة التي تحتها خط في كل جملة مناسبة اجتماعيا في هذه السياقات ثم اختر إحدى المربعات التي تلي كل جملة.

1 : أوافق بشدة

2: أوافق

3: لا أعارض ولا أوافق

4: أعارض

5 أعارض بشدة:

1. تنوعت المهن والحرف التي عمل بها رؤساء الولايات المتحدة السابقون قبل وصولهم إلى البيت الأبيض، فمنهم من عمل زبالا أو خياطا أو غاسل صحون أو عامل بناء أو حتى عارض أزياء.

1 2 3 4 5

2. طفل مصري أعمي حافظ للقرآن يدعوا ألا يرجع إليه بصره لتكون له حجة عند الحساب.

1 2 3 4 5

3. توجيهات وتوصيات في دولة الكويت لرعاية الطفل الأصمخ في عمر ما قبل المدرسة.

1 2 3 4 5

4. الكويت نبراس في التعامل مع كبار السن و المعاقين.

1 2 3 4 5

5. وصل إلى قرية البضائع بمطار القاهرة الدولي جثمان مواطن مصري فنقش بالكويت إثر إصابته بفيروس أنفلونزا الخنازير أثناء إقامته هناك.

1 2 3 4 5

6. اخرجته أصدقائه لأنه بطه ففقد 94 كغم واصبح رشيقا.

1 2 3 4 5

7. عادة ما يشعر الشخص القصاصه بأنه مختلف جسدياً عن الآخرين. كيف يؤثر هذا الإحساس على نفسيته وعلى علاقته بمحيطه؟

1 2 3 4 5

8. أكره النقاش مع القواطع لأنهم يتسببون بارتفاع ضغط الدم.

1 2 3 4 5

## Appendix 2B. The test (English version)

Age:

Educational level:

Q1: Read the following sentences and indicate if the underlined word in each sentence is socially suitable in these contexts by choosing one of the following numbers:

1=suitable and I would use the word

2= maybe suitable and I would probably use the word

3=Not sure

4=maybe unsuitable and I would not probably use the word

5=unsuitable and I would not use the word

- 1- The former presidents of the United States of America occupied different positions before being elected. Some of them were garbage men, tailors, streamers, dishwashers, construction workers or even models.
- 2- A Blind Egyptian child who knows the Holy Qur'an by heart does not want to have his eyesight back since he thinks this will help him go to heaven on judgment day.
- 3- Guidance and recommendations in Kuwait to take care of deaf children at nursery schools.
- 4- Kuwait is one of the best countries in dealing with the elderly and handicaps.
- 5- In the cargo village at Cairo International Airport, the body of an Egyptian citizen who died in Kuwait after a long struggle with flu virus h1n1 arrived.
- 6- After being ridiculed by his friends for being fat, he lost 94 kg and became fit.
- 7- Usually a short person feels physically different from others. How does this affect his psychology and his relationship with his surroundings?
- 8- I hate to discuss things with stupid people because they make me angry.

## Appendix 3. Arabic sounds

Arabic consonants/vowels	Symbols	Description
ء	ʔ	voiceless glottal stop
ب	b	voiced bilabial stop
ت	t	voiceless dento-alveolar stop

ث	θ	voiceless inter-dental fricative
ج	j	voiced post-alveolar affricate
ح	ħ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	x	voiceless uvular fricative
د	d	voiced dento-alveolar stop
ذ	ð	voiced alveolar fricative
ر	r	voiced alveo-palatal trill
ز	z	voiced alveolar fricative
س	s	voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	voiceless alveo-palatal fricative
ص	s̰	voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative
ض	d̰	voiced alveolar emphatic stop
ط	t̰	voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop
ظ	ð̰	voiced alveolar emphatic fricative
ع	ʕ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	ɣ	voiced uvular fricative
ف	f	voiceless labio-dental fricative
ق	q/g <sup>3</sup>	voiceless/voiced uvular stop
ك	k	voiceless velar stop
ل	l	voiced alveolar lateral
م	m	voiced bilabial nasal
ن	n	voiced alveolar nasal
ه	h	voiceless glottal fricative
و	w	voiced labio-velar glide
ي	y	voiced palatal glide
اَ	a	low short central unrounded
اُ	u	high short back rounded
اِ	i	high short front unrounded
آ	aa	low long central unrounded
وو	uu	high long back rounded
يي	ii	high long front unrounded
و	o:	mid long back rounded
او	aw	low short front unrounded + labio-velar glide
اي	ay	low short front unrounded + palatal glide
يي	ee	mid long front unrounded

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<sup>3</sup> These symbols represent the voiceless and voiced uvular stop.