

# 1 Softboiled Speech A Contrastive Analysis of Death Euphemisms 2 in Egyptian Arabic and Chinese

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## 7 **Abstract**

8 This contrastive study is geared towards investigating the euphemistic language of death in  
9 Egyptian Arabic and Chinese. The results indicate that euphemisms are universal since they  
10 exist in every language and no human communication is without euphemisms. Both Egyptian  
11 and Chinese native speakers regard the topic of death as a taboo. Therefore, they handle it  
12 with care. Egyptian Arabic and Chinese employ euphemistic expressions to avoid mentioning  
13 the topic of death. However, Chinese has a large number of death euphemisms as compared  
14 with the Egyptian Arabic ones. The results also show that death euphemisms are structurally  
15 and basically employed in both Egyptian Arabic and Chinese in metonymy as a linguistic  
16 device and a figure of speech. Moreover, they employ conceptual metaphor to substitute the  
17 taboo topic of death.

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19 **Index terms**— Contrastive analysis, taboos, euphemisms, metonymy, conceptual metaphor, death, Egyptian  
20 Arabic, Chinese.

## 21 **1 Introduction**

22 death is a taboo of human beings and inevitable social norm. It signifies completeness of life and the final  
23 destination of its journey. It is "a gate of exit from one life and entry into the other everlasting one. It is a good  
24 example of a mystery, since it is a phenomenon of which none of the living has any direct knowledge" ??Bultinck,  
25 1998, p. 11). In all societies and almost all languages, death is the most sensitive and fearful subject people try to  
26 avoid mentioning. It is also "a fear-based timeless taboo in which psychological, religious and social interdictions  
27 coexist" ??Allan and Burridge, 1991, p. 153). Even in cultures where death is celebrated and embraced, the  
28 family of the deceased applies certain restrictions on clothing or food. Human beings have traditionally felt  
29 reluctant to deal with the topic of death using straightforward expressions. They prefer not to speak freely about  
30 death. This is a "symptomatic of the overall discomfort with the subject of death as a whole" ??Fernández, 2006,  
31 p. 102). However, there are communication situations in which one cannot evade the notion of death. In this  
32 case, 2 language users try to soften the effect of what they wish to communicate . They deliberately avoid the  
33 person has lives in three worlds -the previous existence, this world and the hereafter. Once a person dies, his/her  
34 soul is guided by a ghost messenger to the nether world, where he/she is judged from his/her deeds done in this  
35 world by Yama -the king of the nether world, either to be sent to the hell ??? or to the Elysium ???? or go back  
36 to this worldly life ??.. Therefore, death in China serves as a transition as well.

37 III.

## 38 **2 Definition of Euphemism**

39 Euphemisms are expressions which can be used to avoid those words that are considered to be taboo. That is,  
40 they are used to avoid unpleasant, hateful or sad words and expressions. They serve as a veil, and they substitute  
41 these expressions and words with more pleasant, less shocking ones according to necessity. ??eaman and Silver,  
42 1983, p. 4) state that the word 'euphemism' is first recorded in English in Blount's (1969) *Glossgraphia*, where

### 3 IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF DEATH EUPHEMISM

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43 it is defined as "a food of favorable interpretation of a bad word." They added that the word 'euphemism' comes  
44 from the Greek word "euph?m? (eu: 'good, well' and ph?m?: 'speech' or 'saying'); thus, literally 'euphemism'  
45 means "speaking with 3 good words or in a pleasant manner", and can be defined as "substituting an offensive or  
46 unpleasant term for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using kind words ??Neaman and  
47 Silver, 1983, p. 1). ??any (1960, p. v) believes that a euphemism is "the means by which a disagreeable, offensive  
48 or fearinstilling matter is designated with an indirect or softer term. Euphemisms satisfy a linguistic need. For  
49 his own sake as well as that of his hearers, a speaker constantly resorts to euphemisms in order to disguise an  
50 unpleasant truth, veil an offense, or palliate indecency." ??llmann (1962, p. 231) describes euphemism as an  
51 "inoffensive substitute" introduced to occupy the space left by the prohibited word according to the underlying  
52 psychological motivation (fear, courtesy, decency or decorum). Leech (1985), from the semantic point view,  
53 holds the view that euphemism makes no overt reference to the unpleasant side of the subject, and may even  
54 be a positive misnomer. ??awson (1981, p. 1) believes that euphemisms are powerful linguistic tools that "are  
55 embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever  
56 get through a day without using them." Consequently, euphemisms are functional tools in protecting language  
57 speakers from possible effrontery and offence. As for the touchy and the taboo topic of death, euphemisms allow  
58 discussion of it "without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people and help people to avoid the taboo words  
59 pertaining to death. They provide "a way of speaking about the unspeakable ( . . .). It falls midway between  
60 transparent discourse and total prohibition. It is decorum" ??Asher and Simpson, 1994). ??urchfield (1985, p.  
61 29) argues that euphemisms are important part of every language since "a language without euphemisms would be  
62 a defective instrument of communication." For ??llan and Burridge (1991, p. 14), euphemisms are "alternatives  
63 to dispreferred expressions, and are used in order to avoid possible loss of face." ??akoff (1975, p. 19) writes that  
64 "when a word acquires a bad connotation by association with something unpleasant or embarrassing, people may  
65 search for substitutes that do not have the uncomfortable effect -that is, euphemism." Along with the same line,  
66 Casas ??omez (2009, p. 727) states that "the euphemism consists of the substitution of an unpleasant word by  
67 another, pleasant one when the first is to be avoided for reasons of religious fear, moral scruples or courtesy." As  
68 examples of definitions of the same type, we can include those of ??oward (1986, p. 101), who refers to euphemism  
69 as "the substitution of an offensive expression by another softer, more ambiguous expression, or a periphrastic  
70 one", as well as ??ardhaugh (1986, p. 237) who considers euphemism to be the result of cleaning up certain areas  
71 of life in order to make them more presentable. Also, Wilson (1993) believes that euphemisms are "words with  
72 meaning or sounds thought somehow to be nicer, clearer or more elevated and so used as substitutes for words  
73 deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound or sense. "As for the taboo topic of death, ??arrant (1952, p. 64)  
74 states that "in Plato's usage the most frequent verbal equivalent for 'to die' is 'to depart'. By this substitution he  
75 expresses his fundamental belief and at the same time adopts a Arabic with the Arabic root lu?f and its derivative  
76 la?a:fah "to be kind, friendly, thin, fine, delicate, dainty, graceful, elegant, nice, amiable, etc.; to make mild, soft,  
77 and gentle; and to mitigate, alleviate, ease, soothe, moderate, to treat with kindness, etc." (Wehr and Cowan,  
78 1994). The English term "euphemism" is also translated into Arabic with lu?f atta?bi:r "kind expression" and  
79 ?usun atta?bi:r 'nice expression.' Examples of Arabic euphemisms are: kullo man ?alajaha fa:n 'everyone will  
80 die'. In Chinese, the meanings of euphemism are displayed by two Chinese characters å§?"? euphemistic: å§?"  
81 roundabout, indirect, winding and ? tactful, polite, and gracious.

82 Euphemism, regarded as a rhetoric device in China, has been commonly used from ancient time to the present  
83 day, with a view to avoiding vulgarity, taboo and offence by speaking in a polite, tactful, implicit, mild and  
84 indirect way. Examples of Chinese euphemisms are ??/?? (qu le/zou le) 'went away/departed' and ??(mei le) 'is  
85 gone'. the would be safe area of language, constrained by natural and universal euphemism."

86 Similar meanings for euphemisms are found in euphemism are called for are generally the same, mostly taboos  
87 such as death, sex, body parts, bodily functions, etc. Death is not only a taboo of human beings and an inevitable  
88 social norm, but also it is an irresistible psychological topic. Both Egyptian Arabic (EA, hereafter) and Chinese  
89 have a number of euphemistic expressions to substitute expressions for death. The concepts of death in both the  
90 two cultures are profoundly influenced by their respective religious belief. In EA, for example, there are many  
91 euphemisms for death, including È?"it-tawaffa/t, 'he/she pass away'; È?"intaqala/t iladda:r il-a?irah, 'He/she  
92 moved to the home of eternity' and allah yi-r?am-uh/ha, 'May Allah have mercy upon him/her', etc. Similarly,  
93 there are lots of expressions of this kind in Chinese. For example, there are euphemisms for "Buddhists' death"  
94 such as ?? (yuan ji) 'pass away with all virtues entelechial and all vices exterminated'; ?? (zuo hua) 'die peacefully  
95 hunkering like a living person'; etc. While the final purpose that the Daoism pursues is the life athanasy and to  
96 become celestial beings thus "death" is referred to ?? (xian shi), ?? (xian you), ?? (xian qu), etc.

97 As mentioned earlier, euphemism is used to substitute taboos, profanity or for maintaining one's face and not  
98 hurting others. It is generally the role of euphemism to function in such a way.

### 99 3 IV. The Importance of Death Euphemism

100 Having established the definition of euphemism, the next logical question one might ask is what the importance  
101 of death euphemism is? The answer is not difficult to explain. Taboos, since the dawn of time, have been  
102 used by human societies to regulate behavior and discourse. In all cultures, death is considered a taboo topic  
103 and there is hypersensitivity towards it because of its connections with meanings and ideas that people can not  
104 mention overtly. The conception underlying death, as a taboo topic, implies a topic that may not be touched, or

105 approached as it is scared and therefore forbidden. Therefore, it is a common human nature to avoid mentioning  
106 things that cause pain and unpleasantness as they are exactly the very things people are averse to. Here lies the  
107 importance of death euphemism with which language speakers can easily avoid the embarrassing death words  
108 and expressions and replace them with more moderate ones. That is, death euphemisms foster harmony in the  
109 course of people' social interactions and bridge the hiatus generated from the taboo topic of death.

110 In all societies, death euphemism is a common norm. People use it consciously or subconsciously. It is a  
111 linguistic politeness strategy and conveys a social attitude. In the sense of softboiled speech, death euphemism,  
112 substituting for taboos, impoliteness, profanity or maintaining one's face, goes back to "primitive people and their  
113 5 interpretation of tabooed objects as having demonic power that shouldn't be mentioned or touched" ??llan and  
114 Burridge (2006, p. 11). As Shipley (1977, p. 153) puts it, "Euphemism, the use of a pleasant substitute for a term  
115 with unpleasant or objectionable associations, appears in almost all our talk." The valid reasons for the prevalence  
116 of death euphemism include: (1) avoidance of the taboo topic of death (i.e., ??aville-Troike (1984, p. 199) says  
117 that "attitudes towards language considered taboo in a speech community are extremely strong, and violations  
118 may be sanctioned by imputations of immorality, social ostracism, and even illness or death", (2) avoidance of  
119 embarrassment (i.e., people in general cannot mention or refer to death directly without embarrassment. To  
120 avoid such embarrassment, death euphemism naturally sets in), (3) avoidance of unpleasantness (i.e., death  
121 arouses unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings in all societies, therefore, a wide variety of death euphemisms exist  
122 which represent death words and expressions in some other terms), and (4) providing softening effect (i.e., death  
123 euphemism softens the harsh and sensitive reality of death).

## 124 **4 V. Aim and Significance of the Study**

125 Having reviewed the available literature, the researches found that the work on euphemisms is vast, and the  
126 euphemistic language is pervasive and heavily used in English, both in formal and informal situations. Also,  
127 most studies related to euphemisms have been piloted on Western cultures (e.g., British, French and American),  
128 but very few studies have been done in EA. The analysis of euphemisms in EA is scattered in linguistic and  
129 literary references. Euphemistic expressions in EA, especially these pertaining to the culturally sensitive area of  
130 death, have not received a lot of academic attention. Moreover, despite the fact that many researches on death  
131 euphemism in Chinese, which are abound and more complicated due to the deep cultural connotation, have been  
132 done by scholars in China, no contrastive study has been done on Chinese and EA death euphemisms. So, the  
133 present study aims to highlight death euphemism in EA and contrast it sociolinguistically with Chinese, since  
134 many native EA speakers are in need of learning Chinese. The Arabic language is also required to be learned  
135 as a foreign/second language, being one of the basic and important world languages. Hence, this study entails  
136 death euphemism in both languages and its general linguistic and cultural resemblances and distinctions. It is  
137 hoped that the predicted linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between EA and Chinese can play  
138 a significant role in textbook writing, teaching, learning and translating Chinese and Arabic as foreign/second  
139 languages for their learners.

140 China and Arab world have similar histories and have had cultural exchanges and mutual influence since the  
141 Tang Dynasty. Just as Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing said, in the opening ceremony of the Forum in 2004,  
142 that "the Arab world is an important force in the international arena, and that China and Arab countries enjoy  
143 a time-honored friendship." In addition, global events and trends leave little room for doubt that China and the  
144 Arab world present important opportunities and challenges for tomorrow leaders. As for the Egyptian-Chinese  
145 relationship, increased exchanges in a variety of areas between the two countries have encouraged the Egyptians  
146 to pay more attention to China and the Chinese language. Besides, many universities in Egypt have regarded  
147 the Chinese language as one of the most important languages in the world. For example, the Chinese 6 Language  
148 Department at Ain Shams University has taken the lead in teaching and studying the Chinese language in Egypt.  
149 Al-Azhar University has also set up a Chinese language department. Similarly, Cairo University has established  
150 a similar department. These departments serve to provide the Egyptian community with tour guides for Chinese  
151 tourists, and qualified Egyptians who can work to promote economic and trade cooperation, especially following  
152 China's entry into the World Trade Organization. Therefore, any studies concerning the two sides will be of great  
153 significance to know better of the two great cultures. Besides, learning both to communicate and to understand  
154 the values systems of these two cultures is essential as Arabic and Chinese are two languages with a large global  
155 presence.

156 Based on what we previously stated, death euphemism is selected as an initial study on both cultures.  
157 Differences in hierarchical views, religions, customs and social and economic life may lead to the distinctions  
158 in death euphemism expressions in EA and Chinese. Therefore, the aim of the present study is twofold: (1) an  
159 investigation into the euphemized expressions pertaining to death in both EA and Chinese and (2) a determination  
160 of the differences and similarities, if any, in the use of death euphemism by native speakers of EA and Chinese.  
161 The two languages will be compared to determine if any language specific differences or similarities do exist,  
162 reflecting these two cultures. Moreover, the aim of this study is to look for euphemized death expressions  
163 used as substitutes for dispreferred one. More specifically, this study seeks to address the following issues : 1.  
164 Euphemisms that are used in EA and Chinese to replace the taboo topic of death. 2. Death euphemisms that  
165 are more frequently used and those that are less frequently used in both EA and Chinese. 3. Death euphemisms  
166 that are mostly used by males and those that are mostly used by females.

167 VI.

### 168 5 Literature Review

169 Euphemism has been studied in a wide range of disciplines, including pragmatics and sociolinguistics (Allan and  
170 Burridge, 1991), psychology (Freud, 1952), anthropology (Frazer, 1980) and sociology (Durkheim and Ellis, 1963).  
171 The background of the present study is linguistics. Therefore, the studies reviewed in this section are linguistically  
172 and sociolinguistically oriented. ??llmann (1962, p. 204) argues that euphemism is used to 'substitute a taboo  
173 word, and 'in this way taboo is an important cause of semantic change.' Moreover, he believes that some words  
174 had at a certain passages of time neutral or positive connotations, but by the constant and incessant use of such  
175 words as euphemistic surrogates for tabooed one, they acquire negative implications. Accordingly, he cites the  
176 French word 'fillè' which originally meant 'girl', but it came to be used as a euphemism for a prostitute. And  
177 nowadays it tends to have undesirable abusive significations; in consequence, 'girl' is translated as 'jeune fillè'.

178 Robertson and Cassidy (1954, p. 254) state that euphemism is "the substituting, for the ordinary natural word  
179 that first suggests itself to the mind, of a synonym that is thought to be less solid by the lips of the common hard,  
180 less familiar, less plebian, less vulgar, less improper, less apt to come unhandsomely between the wind and our  
181 nobility." They cite some examples of British euphemisms as 'serviette' for 'napkin', 'paying guest' for 'boarder'  
182 and 'coal-vase' for 'coal-scuttle'. They also cite some examples of American Euphemisms as 'expectorate' for  
183 'spit', 'chiropodist' for 'corn-cutter', 'custodian' for 'janitor' 'realtor' for 'real estate agent, and 'heating engineer'  
184 for 'plumber'. Bernstein (1965) argues that euphemisms are not fig leaves intended to cancel something, but they  
185 are diaphanous veils, intended to soften the grossness. He cites the example of 'toilet' and its transition to 'W.C.',  
186 'wash room', 'lavatory', 'powder room', 'rest room', etc. Moreover, he states that the careful writer resorts to  
187 euphemisms for two major purposes: to avoid vulgarity and to skirt the fringes of emotions. He believes that  
188 when the purpose of euphemism is to avoid vulgarity, the writer has a legitimate place in good writing. He adds  
189 that it may be preferable to write that a man and a woman 'spent the night together' than to set forth in detail  
190 just how they spent it. And, when the purpose of a euphemism is to skirt fringes of emotions, the writer will  
191 usually be well-advised to veto euphemism. Jesperen (1956) reports that many absurd names are used to avoid  
192 the authentic ones. So, instead of such indecent words, people use some innocent ones. For example, 'privy' is the  
193 regular English development of French 'privè', but when it came to be used as a noun for a 'privy place' and in  
194 the phrase 'in the privy parts', it had to be supplanted in the original and 'privy purse' where its official dignity  
195 kept it alive. Anderson and Stageberg (1966) believe that euphemism may arise to avoid given pain (i.e., 'he is  
196 gone' for 'he is dead'), to avoid hypersensitivity or excess of delicacy (i.e., 'white meat' for 'breast', and 'black  
197 meat' for 'leg' or 'thigh'), and to enhance prestige (i.e., 'cosmetologist' for 'hair dress', 'pre-owned car' for 'second  
198 hand car'). They emphasize that euphemism is at worst "a necessary evil", and at best "a handy verbal tool"  
199 to avoid make adversaries or shocking friends. They add that without certain kinds of everyday euphemisms  
200 life will be intolerable. For them euphemisms are psychological necessities. Heatherington (1980) comments on  
201 several issues pertaining to euphemism. Discussing women's dialects, he says that women use more euphemisms  
202 than men do. He believes that anatomy of women is much more subject euphemizing than that of men. He  
203 also focuses on euphemistic language as used by politicians to manipulate public opinion. Commenting on the  
204 relationship between taboos and euphemisms, he defines taboos as "any action that is frightening ?. merely those  
205 literally forbidden" ??Heatherington, 1980, p. 185). He also argues that since dreadful actions or topics are of  
206 different degrees, various levels of them are discerned: (1) mild taboos (e.g., money and mutilation), (2) middle  
207 level taboos (e.g., death and anatomy), and (3) never-never taboos (e.g., excretion and sex). He adds that the  
208 number of euphemisms in sex is greater than that in the subject of death. Brook (1981) reports that euphemism  
209 is provoked by references to parts of the body, giving 'tummy' for 'stomach' and 'anatomy' for 'body'; or to  
210 bodily functions, giving 'perspire' and 'expectorate' for 'sweat' and 'spit', respectively. He adds that euphemism  
211 covers the avoidance of unpleasant and the pretentious search for imposing words to express commonplace ideas  
212 (e.g., a barber may describe himself as a 'hair stylist' or a 'hair specialist'). He also believes that euphemism  
213 takes many different types. One type is the use of an entirely different word (e.g., 'shift' which originally meant  
214 a 'change of clothes' for 'smock', or 'drawers' for 'underpants' or 'trousers'. Another type or method is the use  
215 of a French-loan word (e.g., 'lingerie' for 'underwear' or 'underclothes'. Also, another way is the replacement of  
216 a word by the negative of its opposite (e.g., 'insane' for 'mad', 'unclean' for 'dirty' and 'untruth' for 'lie'). He  
217 also observes that sometimes initials are used for the same purpose (e.g., g.b.h. for 'grievous bodily harm' and  
218 's.o.b.' for 'son of a bitch' Rawson (1981) divides euphemism into two general types: positive and negative and  
219 calls our attention to another way of classification: conscious and unconscious euphemisms. He gives a thorough  
220 description of the meaning, etymology of each Willis and Klammer (1981) argue that euphemisms are used to  
221 avoid shocking the sensitive or to soften the blow for those who have suffered a loss. They list a number of  
222 euphemistic expressions (e.g. 'rely on the work of others' for 'cheat', 'somewhat assertive in social situations'  
223 for 'bully', 'discharge' for 'snot', 'halitosis' for 'bad smelling breath', 'emotionally disturbed' for 'crazy person',  
224 'planned withdrawal' for 'retreat', 'educationally handicapped' for 'very dull student', 'senior citizen' for 'old  
225 people', 'the disadvantaged' or 'the unprivileged' for 'the poor', and 'inoperative statements' for 'lies'. They add  
226 that it might be amusing to know that the Victorian Great Grandparents used the word 'limbs' instead of 'leg'  
227 and 'arms' because of the sexual suggestibility of these two words. Chen (1983) investigates the deep historical  
228 and socio-psychological background of the generation of euphemism in China and reveals the social nature of it.

229 He takes death for example. He argues that death is not only an irresistible physiological phenomenon but also  
230 an inevitable social phenomenon, for all members of the society will die. Moreover, he points out that in ancient  
231 time, controlled by supernatural power, people thought of death as a disaster and mystery. They were afraid of  
232 mentioning this word, which became a social habit. They used ???? (ta guo qu le) 'He passed away', ??? (ta  
233 guo qu le) 'He was gone', ???? (ta bu zai le) 'He was away, etc.' to express their sorrow, respect or praise for  
234 the dead. He concludes that the death of people in different social classes or social status and of different ages  
235 had corresponding euphemisms, such as ?? (jia beng) 'demise of the crown' for emperors, ? (hong) 'pass away'  
236 for vassals, and ? (si), 'die' for civilians.

237 In their dictionary, Neaman and Silver (1983), offered a diachronic view on euphemism and culture: "what  
238 subjects and what portions of them were acceptable or forbidden have varied both from culture to culture and  
239 from one historical period to another within a single culture." Robinson (1983) reports that euphemism is such  
240 a phenomenon associated with some middle-class groups. These groups are frightened of "calling a spade a  
241 spade" ??Robinson, 1983, p. 23). She lists a number of euphemistic expressions that are used by these groups  
242 (e.g., 'under the influence of alcohol' or 'a little merry' for 'drunk', 'educationally sub-normal' or 'educationally  
243 deprived' for 'stupid', 'domestic assistant', 'home helper' or 'helper' for 'servant', 'transport facilities' for 'car or  
244 bus coach', 'I have a cash-flow problem' for 'I have no money', 'the smallest room in the house' for 'lavatory',  
245 and 'senior' for 'old person'. Enright (1985) presents a comprehensive study on the use of English euphemisms  
246 in different fields, April euphemism and its relation to other terms in his dictionary. moving from the largely  
247 private realms of sex, bowel death to the public sphere in different cultures (Greece, Rome, France, and the  
248 United States) and the use of euphemisms with respect to the factors of sex, age and educational background.  
249 Wardhaugh (1986) argues that euphemisms are employed as to avoid mentioning certain matters directly. He  
250 claimed that euphemistic expressions allow us to us to give labels to unpleasant tasks and jobs in an attempt  
251 to make them sound more attractive. They also allow us to talk about unpleasant things and neutralize their  
252 unpleasantness (e.g., the subject of death and dying, unemployment, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters  
253 and criminality). Gorrell et al. (1988) reflect on the role played by euphemisms and doublespeak in distorting  
254 our moral values. For example, a plethora of euphemism is produced to create a favorable attitude towards war  
255 (e.g., 'air support' for 'bombing', 'strategic withdrawal' or 'mobile maneuvering' for 'retreat', 'pacification' for  
256 'destroying a village', 'protective reaction strike' or 'incursion' for 'any military activity ranging from a raid to  
257 an invasion', etc.

258 Allan and Burridge (1991) describe euphemism and dysphemism as sides of the same coin. They provide a  
259 linguistic analysis covering naming, connotation, conversational maxims, metaphors, and speech acts, to name  
260 a few. They also expose and explain the indefinite kinds of euphemisms and dysphemisms that people use.  
261 They believe that context, motivation and intention are so important to understand how and why people  
262 use euphemisms. They argue that people use euphemisms not merely as a response to taboo rather; they  
263 deliberately decide to use or avoid using them. They add that dispreferred expressions can be avoided by the use  
264 of circumlocutions, abbreviations, or acronyms. They conclude that euphemisms can be accomplished either by  
265 the use of technical expressions, or by the use of colloquial terms. Warren (1992) investigates how euphemisms are  
266 formed. She gives four devices for euphemism formation: (1) word formation devices (i.e., compounding: 'hand  
267 job' for 'masturbation'; derivation: 'fellatio' for 'oral sex'; blends; acronyms: 'SNAFU', 'Situation Normal All  
268 Fucked Up', a military euphemism for a catastrophic event; and onomatopoeia: 'bonk' for 'sexual intercourse',  
269 where the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer to the act itself), (2)  
270 phonemic modification by which the form of an offensive word is modified or altered (i.e., back slang where the  
271 words are reversed to avoid explicit mention: 'enob' for 'bone/erect penis' and 'epar' for 'rape'; rhyming slang:  
272 'bristols' for 'breasts'; phonemic replacement: 'shoot' for 'shit'; and abbreviation: 'eff' as in 'eff off' for 'fuck  
273 off'), (3) loan words: the French words semantic innovation where a novel sense for some established word or  
274 word combination is created (i.e., particularization: 'satisfaction' for 'orgasm'; implication: 'loose', which implies  
275 'unattached', for 'sexually easy/available'; metaphor: 'globes', 'brown eyes' and 'melons' for 'breasts'; metonym:  
276 'it' for 'sex' 'thing' for 'male/female sexual organs'; reversal or irony: 'blessed' for 'damned' and enviable disease'  
277 for 'syphilis, understatement or litotes: 'sleep' for 'die' and 'deed' for 'act of murder/rape'; overstatement or  
278 hyperbole: 'fight to glory' for 'death' and 'visual engineer' for 'window cleaner'). Warren (1992) claims that  
279 these four devices are account for most euphemism formation.

280 Furthermore, Warren (1992, p. 129) states that "we have a euphemism if the interpreter perceives the use of  
281 some words or expressions as evidence of a wish on the part of the speaker to denote some sensitive phenomenon  
282 in a tactful or valid manner." She elucidates this view of euphemism as follows: (1) the referent (e.g., death,  
283 crime, sex, etc.) is considered a sensitive phenomenon, (2) the referring expression (euphemism) is thought of  
284 as less harsh and/or less direct than some alternatives, and ( ??) what determines whether an expression is a  
285 euphemism or not in the interpreter's perception that the speaker's choice of a word is based on considerations of  
286 tact embarrassment with the referent. Grand this point, she concludes that euphemism is in the eye/ear of the  
287 beholder despite the fact that there is consensus among language users as to what words are euphemistic. Ayto  
288 (1993) investigates the various ingenious lexical formulas that speakers of English have come up with the tiptoe  
289 around conversational danger areas. He points out that a euphemism is more than just words. He maintains  
290 that body language is more often used to refer to what someone is too embarrassed to talk about. It might  
291 be a sign, an unarticulated sound, a cough and even a glance. It can be expressed via silence, syntax and

## 5 LITERATURE REVIEW

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grammar, and even pronunciation. Also, he argues that a euphemism does not have to be a single word: it can be a phrase, or a whole stretch of discourse. He also offers *prima facie* examples, as in 'It seems to me that what you are saying does not altogether accord with the truth.' This euphemistic discourse means 'I think you are lying.' Farghal (1995) investigates the nature of euphemism in Arabic. He points out that speaker of Arabic employ four major devices for euphemizing: figurative expressions, circumlocutions, remodelings, and antonyms. He argues that there is close interaction between Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle and Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle's maxims of conversation. Most importantly, he states that Arabic euphemisms flout one or more of the maxims of conversation, thus giving rise to Particularized Conversational Implicatures. Consequently, floutings are shown to play an important roles in structural and discursal choices. Shu and Xu (1995) analyze the existing problems in theoretical research on euphemism. They argue that although different languages may use the same generating devices of euphemism like phonetics, grammar, words and characters, they do have their unique ways to create euphemism. Also, they believe that euphemisms in Chinese are generated by deconstruction of Chinese characters, two-part allegorical sayings, symbolic substitution, elimination method and etc. Li (2000) conducts a comparative study of euphemisms in English and Chinese from the angle of religion. He points out that language taboo is characteristic of religion as well as class differences. However, English displays more the former while Chinese more the later. Also, he argues that different influence on the growth and change of euphemisms all derives from the religion system which is monistic for the Englishspeaking people but pluralistic for the Chinese people. The monism religion -Christianity has generated numerous English euphemisms concerning death as well as in other domains. For example, "To get sb' goat" means "to irritate somebody" and "holy communion" is the euphemistic expression for "hard drinks". On the other hand, China is a multi-deityworship country. The main two influential religions are Taoism and Buddhism. To a great extent, China has no common religious belief for the whole nation and each religion has its own followers. Chinese euphemisms coming from religions are far less than that of English. Many of them are more used in the religious groups instead of people's daily communication. Gao and Wei (2004) analyze death euphemism in both English and Chinese from the angle of cultural anthropology based on the five orientations of Kluckhohn et al. (1961): (1) human nature, (2) relation between human and nature, (3) time orientation, (4) human activities and (5) human social relation. In the case of activities, they argue that the Chinese focus on members' identity, that is, "who are you". Identity is represented by behavior and utterance, especially in ancient China. Therefore, there are different death euphemisms for people at different levels of social status. On the other hand, the western society focuses on "what do you do". Achievement is prior to identity, for every one is endowed with innate rights with no inferiority or superiority among families or colleagues. Moto (2004) examines the type of language and linguistic expressions which are employed in discussions matters of sex, sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS in the Malawian society. He gives examples of euphemistic words and phrases which refer to body actions such as urination, defecation and sexual intercourse. He argues that the conservative nature of the Malawian society is reflected in a kind of self-euphemism to refer to sexual organs and parts of the human anatomy that are used to extricate human waste. He demonstrates that the Malawian society, which is a generally conservative and male dominated society, finds it difficult to directly express itself lives (i.e. in newspapers) on matters pertaining to sex and HIV/AIDS and often resort to using euphemisms and idiomatic expressions in their discourse on this dreaded disease. More importantly, he points out that the Malawian society's perception of illness and death also surface through the many expressions that have become part of the Malawians' linguistic repertoire.

Linfoot-Ham (2005) argues that the function of euphemism is to protect the speaker/writer, hearer/reader from possible effrontery and offence which may occur in the broaching of a taboo topic (e.g., religion or death) or by mentioning subject matter to which one party involved may be sensitive (e.g., politics or social issues). He examines how very personal linguistic choices are actually products of societal mores and pressures. He believes that how people use euphemism to talk about sex is a direct reflection of these social concerns. In order to examine this sentiment in a diachronic methodology, he uses Over 250 examples of sexual euphemism from three British novels that span 180 years: Emma, by Jane Austen, Lady Chatterley's Lover, by D. H. Lawrence, and Well Groomed, by Fiona Walker. Moreover, he examines Warren's (1992) model and testes the categories suggested by this model against euphemisms from the three novels. He concludes that improvements are required of the model in order for it to account for all examples. Therefore, he proposes a modified version of Warren's (1992) model to encompass all of these euphemisms, as well as other examples from notable sources. Gu (2006) argues that euphemism can be thoroughly examined in its sociocultural and communication context to explore the interaction between linguistic variables and social variables to reveal the nature of linguistic communication. She reports that in the use of euphemism is not only restricted by national traditions, social structure and collective awareness but also is closely related to the communication context. She believes that the three elements of communication context, subject and participants as well as social status, gender and age may affect the conversation participants' use of euphemism. She also explains that women use more euphemism than men, so do people with lower social status or less education with the aim of not being looked down upon. Hughes (2006) investigates euphemism in relation to taboo language and emphasizes that April censored nature of linguistic use through the employment of euphemistic expressions. Malawians use euphemisms are responses to taboos. He argues that the stronger the taboo, the greater the number of euphemisms. He states that certain euphemistic items are far more developed in the united states than in Britain, and this development could be regarded as "a reflection of the optimistic, positive and progressive ideology of America" ??ughes (2006, p. 14). Moreover,

355 he traces the social history of certain euphemisms (e.g., the euphemisms used for 'Jesus" are 'Gis/Jis, 1528',  
356 'Gemini, 1960', 'Jimini, 1830', 'Jimini Crickets, 1848', 'Gee Whillins, 1857', 'Gee Whiz, 1895', 'Jeez, 1900', 'Gee,  
357 1905', 'Jeepers, 1920', 'Jesus Wept, 1922', 'Judas Priest, 1923', 'Judas H. Christ, 1924', and 'Jeepers Creepers,  
358 1934').

359 Shi and Sheng (2011) point out that many English and Chinese euphemisms are generated in the framework  
360 of conceptual metonymy in daily life. They explore the role metonymy plays in the formation of euphemism in  
361 English and Chinese. In the case of metonymy the whole for the part, generally, people tend to use euphemism  
362 to avoid embarrassment. When referring to body organs, they prefer to broaden the conception of organs, for  
363 example, "the chest", "the bosom" are often used for "breast". Concerning sex, people may feel uncomfortable,  
364 in this sense, "having sexual relationship with someone" can be replaced by "going to bed with someone". In  
365 Chinese, ?????? (ta zai wai mian you nv ren) 'he has a woman outside', which really means 'he has a mistress'.  
366

Here the conception of "woman" is broadened, replacing the sensitive word "mistress".

## 367 6 VII.

### 368 7 Methodology a) The Egyptian Arabic Data i. Participants

369 The EA participants of the present study are native speakers of EA of both genders. They are Egyptian university  
370 teachers working at different colleges in Northern Boarder University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A sample  
371 comprising 20 males and 20 females was randomly selected. They were made aware that involvement in the study  
372 was completely voluntary. If consent to participate was given, they were asked to complete a questionnaire.  
373 To encourage honest responses and avoid self-censorship, participants were assured that their answers to the  
374 questionnaire would remain anonymous and confidential.

### 375 8 ii. Data Collection

376 The EA data of this study include euphemistic expressions used by EA speakers replacing tabooed matters  
377 pertaining to death. To harvest the required data, the researchers adopted an interviewing method and a  
378 questionnaire to gather sufficient and relevant data in a relatively short period of time. Prior to the formal  
379 construction of the questionnaire, the researchers euphemistic expressions they usually and frequently use to  
380 substitute the taboo topic of death. It is worth noting here that the interviewees also act as advisors in the  
381 process of looking at death euphemism that are used in EA. Their responses served as a basis for constructing  
382 the questionnaire.

383 The questionnaire was divided into two parts. In the first part, informants were asked to provide some  
384 demographic information relating to gender (i.e., either male or female) and their educational level. The second  
385 part listed the euphemized expressions of death. Upon receiving the questionnaire, the informants were asked to  
386 identify the euphemized expressions they use to refer to the taboo topic of death by putting a tick opposite to  
387 it/ them. The questionnaire was given to forty adults, twenty males and twenty females.

#### 388 b) The Chinese Data i. Participants

389 The Chinese participants of this study are native speakers of Chinese of both genders. They are Chinese  
390 university teachers and students working or studying in Zhejiang Ocean University in China. A sample comprising  
391 20 males and 20 females was randomly selected. The conduct of the questionnaire followed the same process used  
392 in collecting the EA data.

### 393 9 ii. Data Collection

394 The Chinese data include euphemistic expressions used by Chinese speakers replacing tabooed matters pertaining  
395 to death. To harvest the required data, the researchers have adopted an interviewing method together with a  
396 questionnaire to gather sufficient and relevant data in a relatively short period of time. The questionnaire  
397 is constructed after most frequently used death euphemisms have been collected both from interviews and a  
398 dictionary of Chinese euphemisms.

399 The questionnaire was divided into two sections. In the first section, informants are asked whether they use  
400 ?, 'died' directly. In the second section, they were asked to tick out the euphemistic expressions they frequently  
401 use to avoid the word 'died'. Both sections required the informants to provide some demographic information  
402 relating to gender (i.e., either male or female). The questionnaire was given to forty adults, twenty males and  
403 twenty females.

## 404 10 VIII.

### 405 11 Findings

406 a) The EA Data It was presumed that death euphemistic expressions are shared by all EA participants. It was  
407 also stated that these expressions used to euphemize the topic of death may vary in terms of frequency and

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409 interviewed some Egyptians of different social and economic backgrounds, ages, genders, and use due to differences  
410 in gender. In this section, the collected data will be analyzed and the findings will be presented. educational  
411 levels to discuss with them the death As we mentioned earlier, death is a universal norm. In all societies and  
412 cultures, death is seen as painful and it is usually fear that makes it unnamable in many infelicitous situations.  
413 Many people not only shy away from the stark yet dignified word of the norm of death, saying more softboiled  
414 words instead but also they say that someone has 'passed away', 'departed his life' among others instead of saying  
415 directly 'he has died'. Referring to this point, Allan and Burridge (1991) report that death taboos are motivated  
416 by a spectrum of types of fear: fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of corruption and disintegration of the body,  
417 fear of what follows death and fear of mischievous and harmful souls of the dead.

418 It is a universal phenomenon that any violation of the taboos relating to death seems to be undesirable in many  
419 societies and cultures. Therefore, people impose taboo bans on the direct reference to death (cf. ??loomfield,  
420 1933; ??ayakawa, 1972; ??kmajian et. al.;1984 and ??errick, 1984). In English, for example, instead of saying  
421 'died' many people tend to it by other flippant expressions that can function as euphemisms, depending on the  
422 context, such as 'perished', 'departed this life', 'passed away/on', or 'succumbed'. Sometimes, people resort to  
423 certain phrases and collocations like 'kicked the bucket', 'pushed up the daisies', 'proped off' and 'passed in  
424 one's checks' (cf. ??ernstein, 1977). Also, in English, a 'dead' person is referred to in indirect way as the 'lost',  
425 the 'deceased', the 'departed', and 'defunct'. Likewise, 'death' itself is more obscurely referred to by generalized  
426 terms and title like 'end', 'decease', 'passing', 'departure' and 'dissolution' (cf. Robertson and Cassidy, 1954;  
427 ??ernstein 1977 and ??orrel et al., 1988). Such softboiled expressions and phrases are used to downgrade and  
428 belittle the fear which is aroused by the event of death.

429 Similarly and along the same line, the results of the present study make it crystal clear that the emotionally  
430 neutral verb *ma:t* 'died' is frequently avoided by most EA speakers when making reference to death. Instead,  
431 they speak of it euphemistically. In Egypt, death is considered one of the most euphemized topics. The interview  
432 revealed that most of the participants of this study were unwilling to name death directly because they fear  
433 it as it is unknown, inexperienced and undesirable. They find themselves reluctant to utter the word *ma:t/it*,  
434 'died'. Therefore, they resort consciously and deliberately to replacing this excruciating and agonizing word by  
435 less harmful and more felicitous softboiled expressions. However, the first section of Table (1) shows that the  
436 taboo term of death itself, i.e. *ma:t* 'died' is employed directly by some males (3.3%) and females (1.7%). The  
437 researchers believe that they Table (1) also sheds light on the euphemized softboiled expressions which are used  
438 by EA speakers instead of the vehement and violent word *ma:t* 'died'. It also shows the frequency and distribution  
439 of each expression according to the gender of the participants. As Table (1) indicates, the euphemized expression  
440 *tawaffa/t* 'He/she passed away' is the most common expression with a frequency of 43 out of 180 and a percentage  
441 of 18.9 followed by *albaÈ?"yyah fi ?ayatak/ik* 'May the reminder (presumably of the life the deceased might have  
442 lived) be added to your life' with a frequency of 31 out of 180 and a percentage of 17.2. Next come expressions  
443 4, 5 and 6 with a frequency of 29, 26 and 23 and a percentage of 16.1, 14.4 and 12.8 respectively. Also, the  
444 results indicate that expressions 7, 8 and 9 are the least frequent expressions employed by the participants in  
445 euphemizing the taboo topic of death with a frequency of 16, 8, and 4 and a percentage of 8.9, 4.5 and 2.2  
446 respectively.

447 Moreover, Table (1) shows that speaking of death euphemistically varies in terms of use according to gender of  
448 the participants. For example, the euphemized expression È?"it *tawaffa/t* 'He/she passed away' is omnipresent  
449 among males and females. However, it is quite clear that it is more frequent among females (10%) than  
450 males (8.7%). In addition, despite the fact that the expression *albaÈ?"yyah fi ?ayatak/ik* 'May the reminder  
451 (presumably of the life the deceased might have lived) be added to your life' recurs more frequently among females  
452 and males, it is employed with a frequency of 9% by females, while males use it with a frequency of 8%.

453 Also, certain expressions are only employed by females but are almost absent among males (e.g., the euphemized  
454 expression *fa:at ru: ?uh/a it ?a:hirah* 'His/her purified soul has flown out'). Egyptians believe that after death  
455 the corpse, which is material, decays and becomes *tura:b* 'dust'. It is completely decomposed, except for the  
456 skull and big bones, after one year. Therefore, the EA name for a tomb is *turbah*, which refers to dust or soil.  
457 Death is sacred as it is associated with the soul 'ru:?' that belongs to *?a:lam al?aib* 'the invisible world' which  
458 is known only to Allah. As opposed to the body, which is visible, material, mortal, earthly and profane, the  
459 soul is invisible, immaterial, immortal, heavenly and sacred. After being buried in the grave, the dead person, as  
460 Egyptians believe, has his/her soul restored for a short time. The deceased is believed to sit up in the grave and  
461 to be visited and examined by the tomb's two angels called *Nakir* and *Nakir*. They ask him/her about his/her  
462 religion, God, prophet, and faith. If the deceased passes the religious exam, the two angels April may not see it  
463 as socially prohibited in the spirit it is used in formal and written language. Also, they may not believe in the  
464 superstitions that surround the direct reference to death. congratulate him/her saying "sleep in peace till the  
465 final judgment of Allah." Then the soul departs the body and ascends to heaven where it is received by good  
466 souls, mostly of friends and relatives, and angels. If the deceased fails the examination, the two angels threaten  
467 him/her with punishment. The soul departs the body but it is not allowed to ascend the heaven. Egyptians  
468 believe that heavens' gates are closed and armed with powerful angels that keep bad souls away.

469 Furthermore, females resort sometimes to euphemize the term *ma:t/it* through in/direct reference to religion  
470 by using *rabina a?ad wad?tuh* 'Allah took his trust (soul). Also, they euphemize death through describing it as a

471 movement to a specified destination and through in/direct reference to religion by using È?"intaqala/t ila:d-da:r  
472 il a?irah 'He/she moved to the home of eternity' more than males do. It worth mentioning briefly here to what  
473 is meant by the word da:r in È?"intaqala/t ila:d-da:r il a?irah. The basic meaning of the word dar is simply a  
474 'house/home,' both in the sense of a physical structure and of the people who live there. It is utilized by Egyptians  
475 to mean a place (visible or invisible) in which people (alive or dead) and other beings (visible and invisible or  
476 unseen) exist. For example, the life of this world is called dar ad-dunya, which means a low or inferior abode,  
477 residence or house. Also, this worldly life is called da:r a-fanaÈ?" or "the house of evanescence." As opposed to  
478 this life, there are two da:rs: dar al-maut which means the house or world of the tomb in which dead people wait  
479 until the day of resurrection and dar al axira or the otherworldly dar which is also described as da:r al-baqÈ?"  
480 or the everlasting abode or house. Accordingly, EA speakers' use of euphemisms for death is metaphorically  
481 conceptualized. That is, the use of death euphemism in EA is structurally and basically employed in conceptual  
482 metaphors which refer to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another.

483 Based on the previously stated findings, it is clear that death euphemism is structurally and basically employed  
484 in EA in metonymy as a linguistic device and a figure of speech. Metonymy is a word or a phrase that is substituted  
485 for another depending on some actual relation between the things signified (Lexicon Website Dictionary, 1981,  
486 p. 601). It links two things that are somehow connected, physically or factually, or contiguous. Sapir (1977,  
487 p. 20) argues that metonym is "the relationship of two terms that occupy a common domain but do not share  
488 common features". Generally speaking, euphemistic metonymies contain common subjects in languages and they  
489 may vary from culture to culture, and accordingly from language to language. This includes taboos since they  
490 are of major importance in euphemistic metonymies.

491 of the verb ma:t/it 'died' is È?"it-tawaffa/t 'He/she passed away'. It is almost shared by all the participants.  
492 Besides, these nine expressions are neither equally dominant among males and females, nor are they equal in  
493 terms of frequency. That is, when examining the euphemisms of death as they occur and recur in the collected  
494 data, these seems to be unequal in terms of frequency, rather, some of them are more or less frequent than others.  
495 Moreover, the findings show that there is some sort of correspondence between the use of certain euphemized  
496 expressions and gender of the participants in the sense that certain expressions are used more frequently by females  
497 (e.g., 8 and 9). Besides, the findings indicate that death euphemism is structurally and basically employed in  
498 Egyptian Arabic in metonymy as a linguistic device and a figure of speech. Furthermore, the findings indicate  
499 that the term of death itself, i.e. ma:t 'he/she died' is violated and is spoken directly. The researchers believes  
500 that the informants who use this word persistently are over informative because they mention death directly  
501 and do not pretend that death is uncertain despite the fact that it is the only thing certain in life. The only  
502 uncertainty is when death makes a death.

## 503 13 b) The Chinese Data

504 In China, since death is also regarded as the biggest misfortune of human being, people are afraid of being  
505 dead, and try to avoid mentioning the word ? 'died', which implies sort of mystery and horror. Therefore, it  
506 was presumed that in the real language communications, when people have to refer to 'death', more often than  
507 not, they turn to euphemisms; and women tend to be more euphemistic when they talk about tabooed topics.  
508 However, the first section of Table (2) shows that this presumption is challenged. Concerning death, women  
509 (9.2%) more directly mentioned 'died' than men (8.5%).

510 The second section of Table ??2) displays the frequency and distribution of each expression according to the  
511 gender of the participants. The euphemized expression ??/??(zou le/qu le) 'went away/departed' is the most  
512 common expression with a frequency of 32 out of 141 and a percentage of 22.7 followed by another three similar  
513 expressions (3,4,5)???(qu shi le) 'left the world/passed away' ??(mei le) 'disappeared' and ??? (bu zai le) 'is no  
514 more' with a frequency of 24, 22, 20 and a percentage of 16.9, 15.6 and 14 respectively. Next comes expression 6  
515 with a frequency of 9 and a percentage of 6.3. Also, the results indicate that expressions ??7, 8, 9, and 10) are  
516 the least frequent expressions employed by the participants in

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518 To sum up, in the light of the findings of this study, EA speakers used nine euphemized softboiled expressions to  
519 substitute the taboo topic of death. The common euphemistic expression which is used instead euphemizing the  
520 taboo topic of death with a frequency of 3, 2, and 4 and a percentage of 2.1, 1.4 and 2.8.

521 Moreover, this section of Table (2) shows that the use of death euphemism varies with gender of the participants.  
522 For example, the most frequently used euphemized expression ??/?? (zou le/qu le) 'went away/departed' is  
523 prevailing among males and females. However, it is quite clear that it is more frequent among females (13.5%)  
524 than males (9.2%). The use of euphemistic expression ??? (qu shi le) 'left the world/passed away' has a large  
525 percentage gap between females (12%) than males (4.9%), for this expression in China shows one's respect for  
526 the deceased who are of high social status or of senior age. This percentage gap displays that males do not care  
527 much about the identity or age of the deceased, while females are more cautious about it when they are talking  
528 about the death of a person. In addition, expressions (4 and 5) share the same percentage in both females (7.8%)  
529 and males (7.8%). They are used alternatively with expression (2). Expressions (7 and 8) are barely used. The

530 reason lies in the fact that the two have religious connotations. Also, the euphemized expressions (9 and 10) are  
531 only employed by males but are almost absent among females.

532 The previously mentioned findings prove that Chinese euphemisms for death are metaphorically conceptualized  
 533 (e.g., 'He/She was gone', 'He/She passed away/is away/disappeared/departed/is no more'). Death is viewed as  
 534 departure. In this conceptual metaphor, the source domain 'departure' is mapped to the target domain 'death'.  
 535 When one leaves or departs, he/she can never be seen again. There is a great number of such expressions in  
 536 Chinese besides the above mentioned indicating that death is a kind of departure from which one can never  
 537 return, such as ?? (ci shi) 'say goodbye to the world', ?? (li shi) 'leave the world' and ?? (yong bie) 'part forever'.

538 Another basic conceptual metaphor can be found is ????????????????? (si wang shi yi ci you zhe bu tong zhong  
 539 dian zhan de liu xing) 'death is a journey with various destinations', since one generally departs for a certain  
 540 destination. As the journey varies, the final destination of this journey also varies. Thus, people have different  
 541 names concerning different destinations. It might be up in the heaven, or the west, or the hell in the underground.  
 542 'Home' is a common and universal destination. So death is regarded as returning or going home. For example,  
 543 ?????/?????? (shang tian tang le/shang ji le shi jie le), 'went to the heaven/the Elysium', ?????(jian ma ke si  
 544 qu le) 'went to see Marx', ??? 'went up to the hill, ??? (hui lao jia le) 'return to one's last home', ?????/?????  
 545 (ming gui huang quan/ ming fu yin ?????/?? (si wang shi shui jiao/an xi) 'death is sleep/rest', the source domain  
 546 is 'sleep' or 'rest', the target domain is 'death'. The cognitive domain 'sleep' is systematically mapped into the  
 547 cognitive domain 'death'. The inactiveness and inattentiveness of sleep just correspond to the inactiveness of  
 548 death. However, death is a very special kind of sleep for one never wakes up, and it is always considered to be  
 549 a good rest. Thus, in Chinese, there are death euphemisms such as ??(an xi) 'to be at rest/rest in peace' and  
 550 ??????? (chang mian, chang mei, chang qin) 'sleep forever'.

Moreover, the findings indicate that death euphemism is structurally and basically employed in Chinese in conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphor refers to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another. They shape not just our communication, but also shape the way we think and act. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) illustrate how everyday language is filled with metaphors we may not always notice. An example of one of the commonly used conceptual metaphors is 'Argument is War'.

Based on Liu and Chen's (2001) Dictionary of Chinese Euphemisms, it is apparent that Chinese death euphemisms are also generated metonymically. For example, when one dies, he/she will breathe no more, which is regarded as a symbol of death. Thus it is not surprising that people use ??/??/??/??/?? (duan qi/qi jue /qi jin) 'to breathe one's last or last breath' to refer to death. Other expressions like ??/?? (bi mu/ming mu) 'close one's eyes', ?? (sa shou) 'let go one's hold', ?? (shen tui) 'stretch one's legs', are also chosen to denote death according to the physical symbol of death. Eyes, hands and legs are all part of body, so the above expressions are euphemized in metonymic way.

563 Other remarkable findings are based on interviews the researchers conducted before administering the  
564 questionnaire. This was really a significant process of finding out what people of different age group with  
565 different educational and social background felt and thought about the taboo topic of death. Firstly, almost  
566 all of them unanimously mentioned that they would take conversational context into consideration when asked  
567 whether they used death euphemisms or spoke of the word ? 'died' directly.

When they talked about a person's death with the living family members or relatives of the deceased, in this context, they would use euphemistic expressions to soothe the concerned people. And they would use ? 'died' directly with the absence of relatives. Secondly, In Chinese there are many other conceptual metaphors concerning death. One typical example is the use of death euphemisms also varies with different age groups. Young people of both genders do not think of ? 'died' as a kind of taboo. As shown in the first section of Table (2), 9.2% of female informants use it directly due to the fact that more than half of them are of 21-30 age group. On the contrary, middle-aged, especially elder people, regard ? 'died' as a taboo.

Thirdly, most of the interviewees were non-religious, so they seldom used euphemized expressions with religious connotation. Such death euphemisms are abundant in Chinese, which largely results from the pluralism of Chinese religions with Taoism and Buddhism most prevailing. Taoism is a native Chinese religion. Taoists expect to gain longevity or even immortality, so they create such euphemisms for death as ??/?? (xian qu/ xian shi) 'passed away', ?? (hua he) 'became a crane', ?? (kua he) 'rode away on the crane to Elysium'. In Buddhism, there also exists a great number of death euphemisms indicating the death of monks like ?? (gui xi) 'went to Western Paradise', ?? (gui zhen) 'passed into the real world' and ?? (yuan ji) 'passed away (of monks or nuns)'. However, these religious death euphemisms never achieve the popularity. They are more often used within the religious groups.

To sum up, in the light of the findings of this study, Chinese speakers used nine euphemized expressions to substitute the taboo topic of death in daily life. The first four expressions in Table (2), in the metaphorical concept Death is Departure, are most frequently and alternatively used by both genders. The use of Expression (3), that includes certain respect, is more frequent among women than men. This reflects the gender difference in preference of death euphemisms. The last four expressions are less frequently employed, structured in conceptual metaphor ?????????????? (si wang shi yi ci you zhe bu tong zhong dian zhan de lü xing) 'death is a journey with various destinations'. Besides, whether Chinese speakers choose to use euphemism to avoid the tabooed topic or not depends on the conversational context. Moreover, Chinese people of elder age group are more likely to use

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592 euphemism for fear of approaching death. Finally, Chinese people with religious faith have exclusive euphemisms  
593 for death, but confined to their own religious groups.

## 594 **15 c) Contrasting the uses of EA and Chinese death euphemism**

595 The results of the present study indicate that euphemisms are universal since they exist in every language and  
596 no human communication is without euphemisms. Also, the results reveal that death is an extremely tabooed  
597 word in the Egyptian and Chinese societies. It is a sensitive and fearful topic EA and Chinese speakers try to  
598 avoid mentioning it because translators to discover how the influences of EA and Chinesecultures are portrayed  
599 in euphemisms.

## 600 **16 i. Similarities in the use of EA and Chinese death eu- 601 phemism**

602 The findings of this study prove that both EA and Chinese handle the taboo topic of death with care. EA and  
603 Chinese speakers are very careful in approaching it since the majority of them do not show any direct reference  
604 to death. EA and Chinese death euphemisms are similar in that both regard death as a taboo. They also  
605 employ many euphemistic expressions to avoid mentioning it. This indicates that the two cultures share the  
606 same common values about the topic of death. Furthermore, death euphemism is structurally and basically  
607 employed in EA and Chinese in metonymy as a linguistic device and a figure of speech. Also, Both EA and  
608 Chinese employ conceptual metaphor to substitute the taboo topic of death. Besides, death euphemisms in EA  
609 and Chinese are formed consciously. Although there are various expressions of death, both people share identical  
610 views of death and the bodily experience of death are essentially the same. When this is reflected in people's  
611 thinking and languages, it can be easily found out that metaphors in different cultures share a common root.  
612 In this sense, it can be safely assumed that the conceptual metaphors of death between EA and Chinese can be  
613 identical because different peoples' understanding of death may be rooted in the same physiological experience.

### 614 ii. Differences in the use of EA and Chinese death euphemism

615 Chinese has a large number of death euphemisms as compared with EA ones. This is due to the fact that  
616 Chinese has a number of specific dictionaries for euphemisms, but EA does not. Consequently, learning Chinese  
617 death euphemisms may be easier for Arab learners, but learning EA death euphemisms may cause difficulty  
618 for Chinese learners. Besides, EA native speakers tended to euphemize death through in/direct reference to  
619 religion, whereas Chinese native speakers seldom used euphemized expressions with religious connotation. The  
620 reason is that China is a multi-deity-worship country. Taoism and Buddhism and other religions created some  
621 euphemisms for death, but different religions explained this natural phenomenon differently. Consequently, the  
622 religious euphemized expressions are largely confined to their own religious groups.

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624 they can not feel ease about its gravity and dreadfulness. This section presents the similarities and differences  
625 between the use of euphemisms in EA and Chinese to gain a better understanding of its use in EA and Chinese,  
626 and to motivate learners, teachers, and IX.

## 627 **18 Conclusion**

628 Through the contrastive analysis of EA and Chinese death euphemisms, it is obvious that euphemism is a  
629 linguistic and a cultural phenomenon. EA and Chinese death euphemisms have more resemblances and fewer  
630 distinctions. This shows that euphemism is a universal phenomenon in natural languages and it is expected  
631 that most of similarities and differences between EA and Chinese may possibly be found among other languages.  
632 Therefore, the researchers believe that further research in cultures other than the Egyptian and the Chinese is  
633 required. Linguists need to thoroughly investigate the contrastive scope in the area of death euphemisms. It  
634 would be useful to know how far mentioning death is avoided in different cultures and what euphemisms are  
635 adopted. In short, a good mastery of the linguistic features of euphemism in the target language and awareness  
636 of the differences between the target culture and the native culture would help interpret and use euphemism  
637 properly in accordance with social context.

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639 No.

640 Section <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>

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Figure 1:

41.

		M	F	T
1. ma:t/it	'He/she died'	6	3	9
No.	Section 2: Death Euphemism	M	F	T
2. È?"it-tawaffa/t	'He/she passed away'	16	18	34
3. albaÈ?"yyah fi ?ayatak/ik	'May the reminder (presumably of the life the deceased might have lived) be added to your life'.	14	17	31
4. allah yi-r?am-uh/ha	'May Allah have mercy upon him'	14	15	29
5. t?i? È?"inta/i	'May you live'	10	16	26
6. ?alayh/a ra?mat È?"il-la:h	'May Allah mercy be on him/her'	9	14	23
7. rabina a?ad wad?tuh	'Allah took his trust (soul)'	7	9	16
8. È?"intaqala/t ilad-da:r È?"il-a?irah	'He/she moved to the home of eternity'	3	5	8
9. fa?at ru: ?uh/a i?-?ahirah	'His/her purified soul has flown out'	1	3	4
Total		80	100	180
		45%	55%	100%

Figure 2: 1: Use of the taboo term of death

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## 2

No.	Section 1: Use of the taboo term of death	M	F	T
1. ?? (si le)		12	13	25
	died	8.5%	9.2%	17.7%
No.	Section 2: Death Euphemism	M	F	T
1. ??/??( qu le / zou le)		13	19	32
	went away/departed	9.2%	13.5%	22.7%
2. ??? (qu shi le)		7	17	24
	left the world /passed away	4.9%	12%	16.9%
3. ?? (mei le)		11	11	22
	was gone	7.8%	7.8%	15.6%
4. ??? (bu zai le)		10	10	20
	was no more	7%	7%	14%
5. ??(lao le)		6	3	9
	was old	4.2%	2.1%	6.3%
6. ?????/??????(shang tian tang le/shang ji le shi jie le)		2	1.4%	1 0.7%
went to the heaven/ the Elysium				3 2.1% .
7. ????? (jian ma ke si le)		1	1	2
	went to see Marx	0.7%	0.7	1.4
8. ??? (shang shan le) went up to the hill		2	1.4%	0 0%
9.???? (hui lao jia le)		2	2	4
	return to one's old home	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%
	Total	46.8%	53.2%	100%
		66	75	141

Figure 3: Table 2 :



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