فهم الطلبة الليبيين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية للتعابير الملطفة واستخدامهم لها في آدائهم باللغة الإنجليزية

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Libyan EFL Students' Understanding and Use of Euphemism in Their Performance

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الملخص

التعبير الملطف في اللغة هو استخدام لكلمة أو عبارة أكثر قبولا اجتماعيا بدلا من كلمة أو عبارة تعتبر غير مناسبة أو محرجة في سياقات معينة. يسعى هذا البحث إلى اختبار مدى معرفة الطلاب الليبيين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب جامعة مصراتة بالتعابير الملطفة واهميتها في اللغة الإنجليزية التي يدرسونها كلغة اجنبية. كما تهدف الى اختبار نسب استخدام هذه العبارات الملطفة من قبل هؤلاء الطلبة في آدائهم باللغة الانجليزية. بالإضافة الى ذلك، يحاول هذا البحث تحديد كيفية فهم طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية الليبيين للسياقات التي تستوجب استخدام هذه العبارات الملطفة وتوظيفها في كلامهم أو تعابيرهم المكتوبة، مما يدل على المام كافي بجوانب متعددة متعلقة بثقافة المجتمعات المتحدثة باللغة الإنجليزية.

تفترض الدراسة أن طلاب تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة مصراتة الذين هم على وشك التخرج يفتقرون إلى المعرفة الكافية بأهمية استخدام هذه العبارات في اللغة الإنجليزية وبدواعي استخدامها لأن مناهج قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الآداب، لا تغطي المعرفة   بهذا النوع من العبارات الملطفة ولا بالعبارات التي يجب تلطيفها وفقا للثقافة السائدة في المجتمعات المتحدة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ام. أجريت هذه الدراسة باستخدام وسيلتين هما اختبار مفردات ومقابلة. تمت الإجابة على اسئلة الاختبار من قبل خمسة وخمسين طالبا يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية في عامهم الأخير.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم استخدام مقابلة شبه منظمة مع إجمالي عدد عشرة مشاركين، كانوا أيضا على وشك التخرج. تم تصميم هذه المقابلة لاستكشاف مدى إدراك الطلاب لضرورة استخدام تعبيرات ملطفة في سياقات معينة.

أظهرت نتائج التجربة أن أكثر من نصف طلاب السنة النهائية في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الآداب بجامعة مصراتة لا يزالون يفتقرون إلى المعرفة الكافية بأهمية استخدام التعابير اللغوية الملطفة في أدائهم. وبالتالي، فإن المناهج المستخدمة حاليا لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية تحتاج الى تعديلات بحيث تشمل تدريس هذه التعابير وتدريس أهمية استخدامها من قبل المتحدثين باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات الدالة: الآداء، التعبير الملطف، الطلبة الليبيون، الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية، المعرفة بالتعابير الملطفة.

Abstract

Using euphemism is using a more socially acceptable word or phrase instead of a word or phrase that is considered inappropriate in certain contexts. This research seeks to examine English major students' perception and use of English euphemisms in their performance. The main goal of this research is to determine how Libyan English major students at Misurata University, Faculty of Arts, comprehend and employ euphemisms in their performance. The study hypothesizes that English Major students of Misurata University who are about to graduate lack the appropriate euphemistic knowledge because the curriculum of the Department of English in the Faculty of Arts, does not cover euphemistic knowledge. This study was conducted using quantitative data collected through a multiple-choice vocabulary test and an interview. The test was answered by fifty-five students who were studying English Language in their final year. In addition, a semi-structured interview was used with a total number of ten participants, who were also about to graduate. This interview was designed to explore how many students are aware of using euphemistic expressions in certain contexts. The results of the experiment show that over half of the final year English major students at Misurata University, Faculty of Arts, still lack euphemistic language in their performance. Consequently, one of the most advantageous methods teachers may assist English language learners is to develop successful ESL euphemism classes.

Keywords: EFL Libyan learners, English, euphemism, euphemistic knowledge, performance.

Introduction

Every culture has its own collection of attitudes, acts, utterances, or subjects that are considered unacceptable to bring up or discuss directly. These topics were thought to be forbidden to come into contact with or discuss due to their unpleasant side effects. Gabriel and Charlotte (2021) state that the language of people reflects their culture. Concerning this cultural effect, Wardhaugh (2010) explains that when a society believes that certain things are harmful to its individuals, it thus decides to prohibit and avoid speaking about such matters or utter certain words that would cause anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. These are called "taboos" or unwilling

mentioned words. People modify their speech in order to avoid using taboo words, which are thought to be offensive or irritating to the speaker or the listeners.

Platt, Weber, and Ho (1984) state that English has risen to prominence as the world's most important international language, as well as the most often taught second or foreign language. According to that, nowadays, English communication skills are essential for most people in many different fields. One communication skill strategy used by English speakers is called "Euphemisms". Jačková (2010: 10) states that Euphemisms are "Indirect expressions that are used instead of harsher ones to avoid unpleasant moments, embarrassment, or offense".

1.1 Research Questions

The current study is conducted with the aim to investigate the following questions:

1. To what extent do English major students in Misurata University, Faculty of Arts understand euphemism?

2. To what extent do English major students in Misurata University, Faculty of Arts use English euphemisms appropriately in their spoken performance?

3. Why is it important to insert English euphemisms as a part of the curriculum in the Department of English at Misurata University?

As answers to the previous inquiries, it is hypothesized that:

1. The target group of undergraduate students in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts at Misurata University will not be aware enough of the importance of using euphemisms in their spoken or written performance.

2. This lack of euphemistic knowledge among English major students in the Department of English at Misurata University is due to the lack of teaching euphemistic knowledge in their curriculum system.

1.2 Literature Review:

1.2.1 Euphemism in the English Language

Almost all of the world's languages have concepts that are deemed too objectionable to discuss directly; as a result, speakers of such languages must find subtle and socially appropriate ways to discuss the concept (Miller, 1999). As offensive and embarrassing words do exist in the language, this has led to forming other types of expressions that replace such words in an indirect and courteous way, such expressions are called euphemisms.

The word 'euphemism' was taken from the Greek word 'euphemismos'. The word 'eu' means 'well' or 'good' and the word 'pheme' means 'speaking'. Thus, all these words mean 'speaking well' or speaking in a logical way (McArthur, 2005). Euphemism is mostly used to be said or written instead of taboo words and expressions. According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2010), the existence of taboos has motivated and boosted the creation of euphemism, and also defines a euphemism as a word or a term that is used to replace a taboo word or to avoid referencing to such actions or topics that cause anxiety, embarrassment, and public shame.

Moreover, McArthur (2005) describes euphemism as a gentle and inoffensive language or gesture used to replace a phrase that appears to be taboo, too harsh, or unacceptable for a conversational encounter. Originally, the euphemism was only used to replace or substitute taboos. For instance, "shoot" is an alternative term for "shit". Consequently, it began to be applied to indicate some derogatory terms, as demonstrated in the following text "You have an interesting point of view" in exchange for "You are an idiot". The first taboo subject that prompted people to use euphemisms is faith and death, both of which are associated with terror and reverence (Jačková, 2010).

1.2.2 When and How to Employ Euphemisms

Euphemisms are frequently employed to avoid stating something contentious or insensitive and to ease the sting that harsh words cause. In addition, the civilized discourse would be impossible without recourse to indirection. Euphemisms give us tools to discuss touchy subjects without having to spell out what it is we are discussing (Keyes, 2010). In the bargain, euphemisms are efficacious devices applied to minimize threats to self−esteem to build and sustain interpersonal relationships, and to demonstrate care for the feelings and desires of one's interlocutors. For instance, while referring to someone who cannot see, it is much better and more appropriate to say someone is optically challenged instead of saying he is blind. Likewise, it is more suitable to say that someone passed away instead of saying that he died or disappeared…etc. Thus, taking advantage of euphemistic language is highly required in daily socialization and different fields in order to be politer, desirable, and perhaps more successful (Keyes, 2010).

Thereupon, in formal situations as in diplomatic or governmental speeches, euphemisms should be considered; indicating that the officials should soften their language and use it appropriately, to make it more effective, convenient, and above all convincing. Along with that, Arif (2015) asserts that the use of euphemisms, which mainly presuppose good intentions so as

not to hurt the listener's feelings, has been given an entirely different purpose in modern life. Today, people use euphemisms to sound more convincing rather than just sounding polite.

Correspondingly, Arif (2015) also says that politics and government discourses which are regarded as a powerful language; must be contained and satiated with euphemism in order to achieve specific goals. As a matter of fact, governments should be cautious in the way they present their speech on all platforms to increase the prestige and power of the society and mask the true essence of the signified. As a case in point, when the government is publicly informing students who cannot afford their books, do not have their own transportation, and cannot afford public transportation there will be scholarship programs for low-income students instead of saying poor or broke students. However, it is easy to comprehend why euphemisms have such a prominent place in politics.

1.2.3 The Significance of Euphemism in the Native Culture of the Target Group of EFL Learners in Libya

It goes without saying that good manners and behaviors are seen through a particular perspective of the universe, thoughts, and mindset. Therefore, these are automatically revealed by their presented speech. Causality, a language transforms a major aspect of what the interlocutor truly is, dealing with aspects beyond the given words themselves: intentions, level of education, age, gender, culture, and perhaps nationality. Besides, Wang (2013) points out that:

"Language and culture are closely related to each other. Sometimes, what is appropriate in one culture may not be appropriate in another culture. Therefore, when we study a language, we should consider the culture. In the study of euphemism, we should pay attention to the cultural aspect".

On top of that, religion plays a critical role in every society, it dominates each culture and departs them from each other. Accordingly, religion influences an entire community, nation, individuals' beliefs, and insight into the world in varied and infinite ways: It must be taken into consideration likewise. Subsequently, as our target group of participants are Muslims, Islam attaches great magnitude to the participation of the entire Muslim society in its Adab. Thus, religion plays a critical role in every society, it dominates each culture and departs them from each other. Accordingly, religion influences an entire community, nation, individuals' beliefs and insight into the world in different and infinite ways: It must be taken into consideration likewise.

According to Al-Kaysi (2015), Adab is an Arabic word that means "custom," and refers to a habit, etiquette, or style of behaviour inherited from the Quran and Sunnah. Besides, Al-Kaysi (ibid) states that Adab al-Islam is a comprehensive code that covers all aspects of social behavior

and is a part of Islam's full way of life. Adab al-Islam are precisely formed in order to prevent triggering negative emotions in all aspects and encourage creating harmony and rhythm among human beings. In this situation, Muslims will automatically yearn to enforce Islamic principles. Consequently, Adab al-Islam and euphemisms are substantially associated with each other.

1.3 Related studies

Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) study the use of euphemism techniques in Saudi Arabic and British English. There were 150 Saudi college students representing only one educational level. It consisted of 75 male and 75 female students who were chosen from the Faculty of Arts at King Saud University. There were 150 college students from the United Kingdom who also represented only one educational level. It consisted of 74 male and 76 female students who were chosen from the Faculty of Arts at Hull University.

The purpose of that study is to investigate euphemism methods utilized in Saudi Arabic and British English. It reveals certain similarities and differences, which can be explained by cultural and religious attitudes and beliefs. The euphemism tactics used in Saudi answers are "part-for-whole," "overstatement," "understatement," "deletion," "metaphor," "general-for-specific," and "learned vocabulary and jargon.". The British respondents used words like 'understatement,' and 'omission.' 'Learned vocabulary and jargon,' 'metaphors,' and 'general-for-specific' are all examples of this.

Moreover, another interesting discovery is that the Saudis and the British use taboos when dealing with death and deception. On the other hand, they only use euphemisms when dealing with parts of the body. Thence, euphemistic language like every language, is influenced by the cultural and religious beliefs, attitudes, and standards of those who use it. According to the findings of this study, spreading euphemism knowledge among second/foreign language learners is vital for intercultural contact, which hence, supports the idea of this study.

This study supports the norms of the current study and what it is aiming to accomplish. In that related study, researchers attempt to ensure that learners are aware of the concept of euphemism and should have a clear idea in order to increase their lexical awareness, which allows them to use English language appropriately.

Thence, as there are many studies that support this present study, some, however, argue about the vitality of being aware of euphemism. As Epoge (2013) studies the different impacts of using euphemisms. The information for this study comes from responses to a questionnaire administered to 205 English speakers in Cameroon. The words in the questionnaire covered a

wide range of themes and semantic domains. Epoge (ibid) states that although Euphemisms are used positively to avoid stating something contentious or insensitive, using euphemistic language can also be a deceptive circuitous manner of utilizing words, phrases, or idioms to make the offensive words appear to be nice or at least tolerable. In addition, it is a technique for hiding obvious facts by employing evasive words or terms to make immorality appear respectable. This clarifies that this study is against the current study because it shows that euphemisms do not always appear to have a positive effect.

Furthermore, Altakhaineh and Rahrouh (2015) study the effect of cultural diversity on euphemisms in English and Chinese. The study included forty participants, all of whom were Al Ain University of Science and Technology students. Their ages ranged from 18 to 26, with a mean of 22. The participants were divided into groups at random. Based on two criteria, namely gender and English proficiency level, they were separated into four groups. Concerning gender, the participants were divided into two groups: group 1 (20 male learners) and group 2 (20 female learners). With respect to their English proficiency level, the same groups were also divided into two groups; 20 advanced learners and 20 intermediate learners. Altakhaineh and Rahrouh (ibid), state that euphemisms in English and Chinese are essentially different due to cultural varieties. To illustrate, euphemistic terms in English have been found to be more closely linked to religious taboos than those in Chinese. This is a consequence of the fact that English-speaking countries are predominantly Christian. Whereas, one of the most commonly used euphemistic terms in China has nothing to do with religion and everything to do with class differentiation. To sum up the findings of this study, the researchers indicate that euphemistic terms fluctuate depending on culture and society. As a result, understanding euphemisms improves intercultural communication.

Thus, there is a resemblance between the current study and the above-mentioned study as they both examine the phenomenon called euphemism. The only difference between the two studies is that the current study inspects euphemism as a concept that is considered by students, whereas the above-mentioned study clearly investigates the differences in using euphemisms across cultures, and supports the idea that the use and understanding of some euphemistic terms is highly dependent on distinct cultures. This study is somewhat against the current study because it shows that euphemisms do not always appear to have a positive effect and, as a consequence, are more likely to have a negative effect based on cultural differences.

2. Research Methodology

In this study, the researchers used a multiple-choice vocabulary test as a quantitative data collection technique which is mainly used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data that can be transformed into useable statistics. In addition to this vocabulary test, a semi-structured interview with some of the participants was also used. The participants who participated in this study were Libyan adult students studying in their final year (basically seventh and eighth semesters) in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. This particular group of students was about to graduate and was expected to reflect the highest level of euphemistic knowledge that studying in the department should cover. This group was targeted in order to assert the study's hypothesis, claiming that the English Major students of this University lack euphemistic knowledge because of this kind of knowledge is not included in the curriculum system. The overall number of participants was fifty-five, all of them answered the test, and only ten out of the overall number were considered to discuss the interview topics.

3. Results and discussion:

The multiple-choice test used in this study contained twenty questions, whereas the interview transcript included four topics which aimed to investigate different four euphemistic terms. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to analyze the participants' responses to the multiple-choice test and the results are shown in Table (1).

Table No. (1) Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the stability of the resolution.

No. Item	Item	Cronbach's alpha
20	The extent to which English major students understand euphemisms	969

As appears in table (1) above, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient amounted to (969) for the axis as a whole for the resolution. This means that the stability is high and statistically significant. To determine the range adopted in the study, the length of the cells was determined in the five-point Likert scale by calculating the range between the degrees of the scale $(2-1 = 2)$ and it was divided by the largest value in the scale to get the length of the cell (i.e. $(2/1 = .5)$ and its axis. This value is added to the lowest value in the scale, the beginning of the scale (the right one) in order to determine the upper limit of this cell according to the following table:

Table No. (2) The approved range of the study

Cell length	Approval level
From $1-1.5$	Do not Understand
Greater than $1.5-2$	Understand

In order to interpret the results and judge the level of response, it relied on the mean arrangement which was applied at the level of the axis of the multiple-choice test and the level of items in an axis. This aimed to measure to what extent the English major students understand euphemism and whether they use it in their performance in English language. The participants' responses to the twenty items from which the multiple-choice test consists are presented and analyzed one by one in this section.

Distribution of When my grandmother…, my grandfather has not been the same

Table No. (3) Distribution of the study sample: When my grandmother…, my grandfather has not been the same

	Frequency	Percent
Died	10	18.2
Disappeared	16	29.1
Passed away	29	52.7
Total	55	100.0

Table (3) displays the results of the statement: *When my grandmother…, my grandfather has not been the same.* According to the table, about (52.7%) of the students answered it correctly by picking the phrase *Passed away.* Whereas only (18.2%) of them selected the term *Died*, and the rest of them approximately (29.1%) chose the word *Disappeared*. These results clearly show that the majority of the students managed to guess the euphemistic phrase *Passed away* and this result was expected due to its common use in the curriculum. As shown in figure (1).
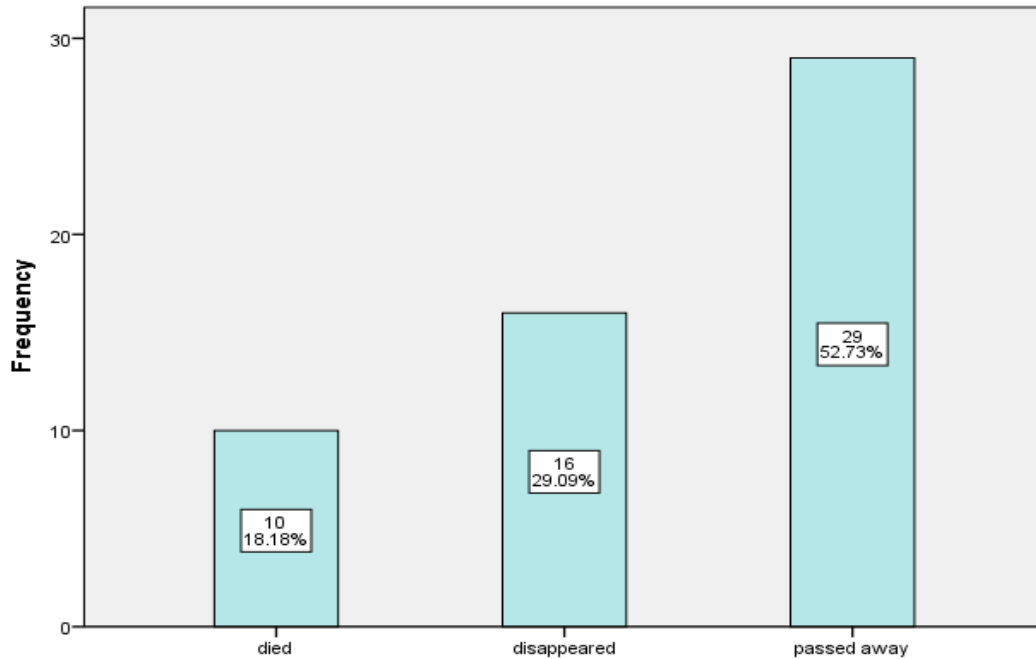
Figure (1) When my grandmother…, my grandfather has not been the same.

1‒ Distribution of: The popular singer 'Michael Jackson' tried to…, and he did it

1.

Table No. (4) Distribution of the study sample: The popular singer 'Michael Jackson' tried to…, and he did it

	Frequency	Percent
Take his own life	26	47.3
Kill himself	15	27.3
Suicide	14	25.5
Total	55	100.0

It is obvious from Table (4) which clarifies the distribution of the test question: *The popular singer 'Michael Jackson' tried to…, and he did it*, that the percentage of choosing the euphemistic term *Take his own life* reached (47.3%). While the proportion of the phrase *Kill himself* is calculated around (27.3%). Followed by the term *Suicide*, where the percentage is (25.5%). Consequently, the outcome of the table clarifies that the majority of students correctly identified the euphemistic expression. As shown in figure (2).
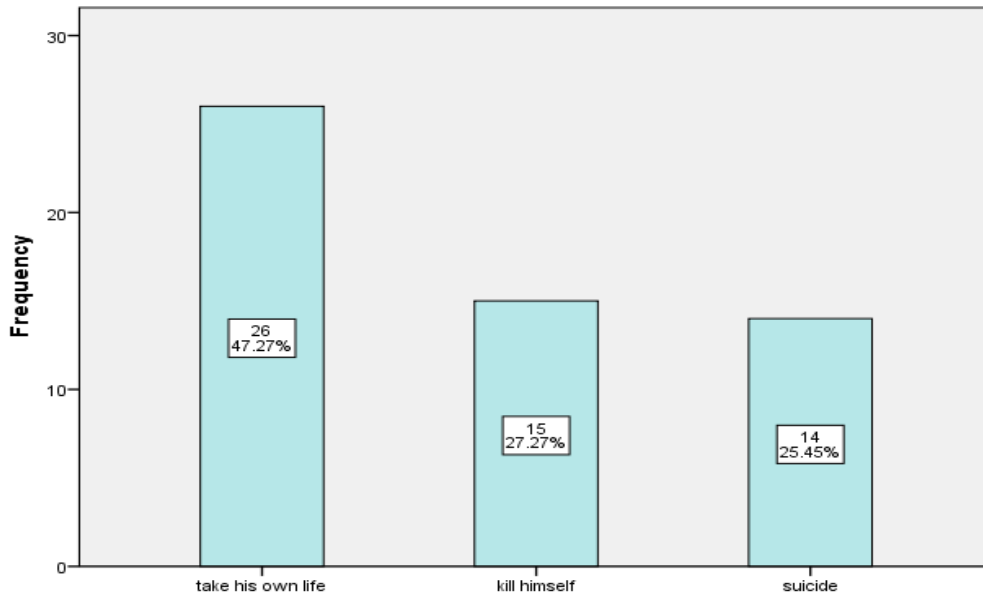
Figure (2) The popular singer 'Michael Jackson' tried to…, and he did it.

2‒ **Distribution of:** Ella said to her friend, you shocked me because of your…, hairstyle

Table No. (5) Distribution of the study sample: Ella said to her friend, you shocked me because of your…, hairstyle

	Frequency	Percent
Weird	32	58.2
Unique	13	23.6
Odd	10	18.2
Total	55	100.0

Table (5) illustrates the findings in relation to the study sample distribution: *Ella said to her friend, you shocked me because of your…, hairstyle*. The results show that the term *Weird* was chosen by (58.2%) of the participants. While the euphemistic word *Unique* was chosen by (23.6%). Then there is the "*Odd*" expression, where the percentage only gets to a certain point (18.2%). As a result, the findings of the table elaborate that the participants lack euphemistic knowledge in this case as seen in Figure (3)
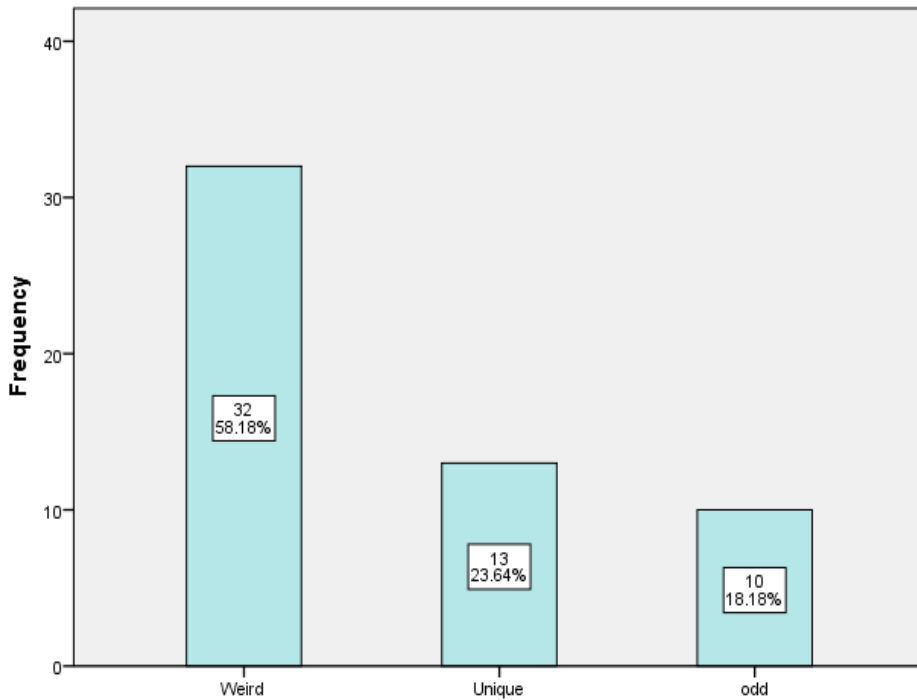
Figure (3) Ella said to her friend, you shocked me because of your…, hairstyle.

3- **Distribution of the test sentence:** My cousins eat fast food and desserts all the time, but they do not appear to be…

Table No. (6) Distribution of the study sample: My cousins eat fast food and desserts all the time, but they do not appear to be…

	Frequency	Percent
Fat	21	38.2
Beefy	15	27.3
Overweight	19	34.6
Total	55	100.0

The findings of the distribution of this multiple-choice test item are shown in table (6) above, which was introduced earlier as *My cousins eat fast food and desserts all the time, but they do not look…* The proportion of the term *Fat* reached (38.2%), which is the highest percentage. In

contrast, the word *Beefy* was chosen by only a small number of participants falling into this category, which reached (27.3%), whereas the euphemistic term *Overweight* hooked up to (34.6%). Thus, these findings reveal that a proper number of students could identify the euphemistic term. As shown in Figure (4).
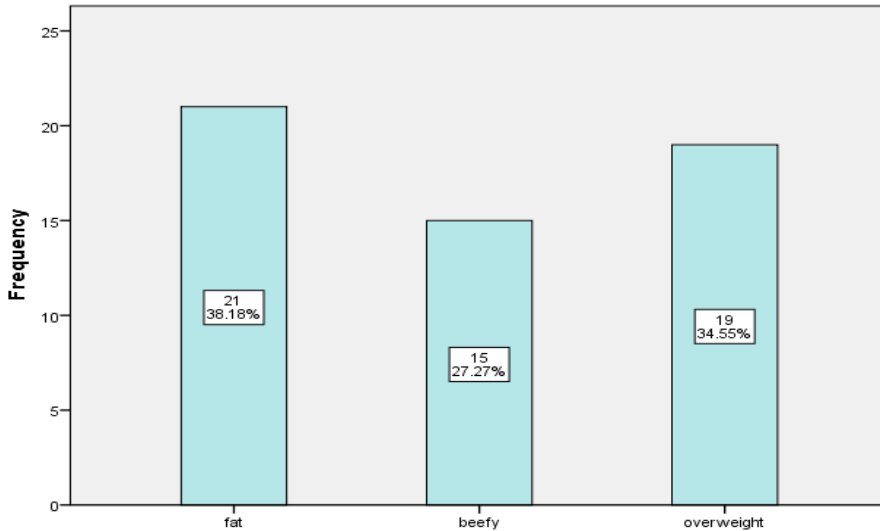

Figure (4) My cousins eat fast food and desserts all the time, but they do not appear to be…

4– **Distribution of** the government has announced: "Scholarship programs for… students will be raised".

Table No. (7) Distribution of the study sample: The government has announced: "Scholarship programs for … students will be raised".

	Frequency	Percent
Low– income	32	58.2
Poor	20	36.4
Broke	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

Table (7) indicates the results of the statement: *The government has announced: "scholarship programs for…, students will be raised".* The results show that (58.2%) of the students succeeded in selecting the euphemistic expression which is *Low–income*. In comparison, only (5.5%), of them chose *Broke*. On the other hand, (36.4%) of them managed to pick *Poor*. As shown in figure (5).
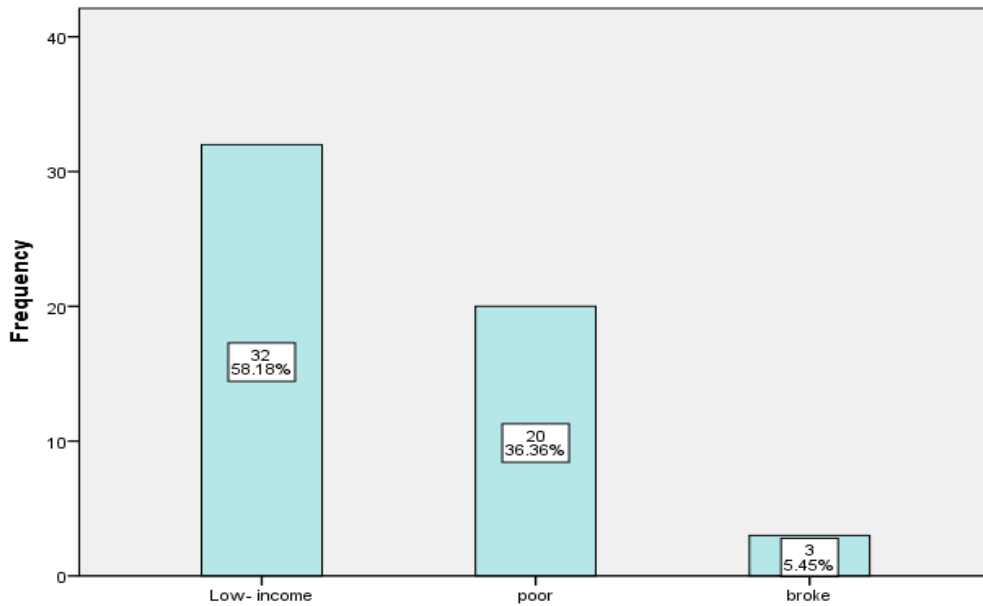
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Figure (5) The government has announced: "Scholarship programs for... students will be raised".

5- **Distribution of:** we were living downtown next to.... shelter

2.

Table No. (8) Distribution of the study sample: We were living downtown next to... shelter

	Frequency	Percent
Bum	9	16.4
On the street	13	23.6
Homeless	33	60.0
Total	55	100.0

As can be noticed in Table (8), the study sample: *We were living downtown next to... shelter*. The table explores the perception of students' awareness of the euphemism locution, which is *On the street*, which presented approximately (23.6%). Thus, more than half of the students failed to nominate the right euphemistic expression. Whereas, (60 %) of the students

selected the expression *Homeless*. Followed by the term *Bum* where the percentage of its selection is (16.4%). As shown in the figure (6) below.
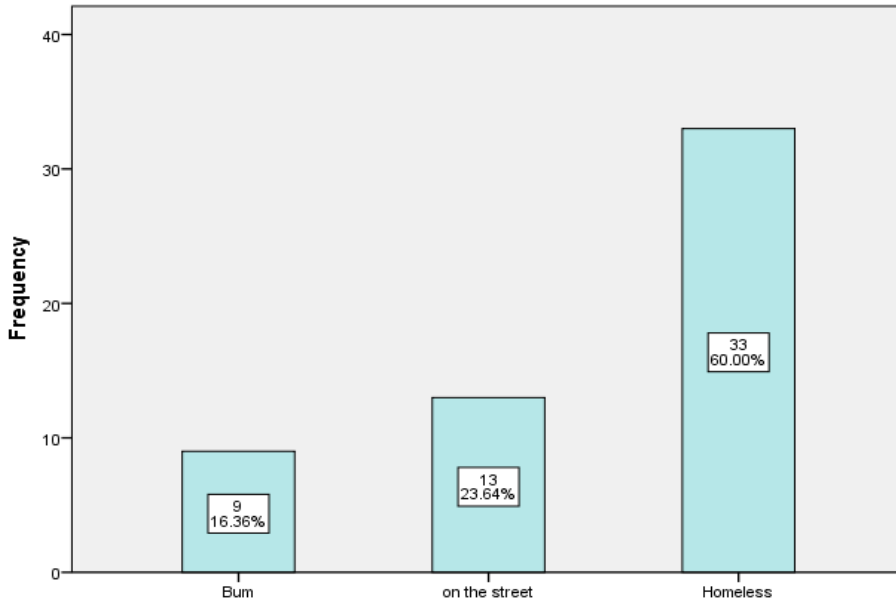

Figure (6) We were living downtown next to… shelter

6– **Distribution of** Usually people are considered…. when they become grandparents 3.

Table No. (9) Distribution of the study sample: Usually people are considered… when they become grandparents

	Frequency	Percent
Old	31	56.4
Senior	16	29.1
Ancient	8	14.5
Total	55	100.0

Table (9) demonstrates the results of the seventh statement: *Usually people are considered… when they become grandparents*. However, the euphemistic term is *Senior* with a selection percentage of (29.1%), which is regarded as low when compared to the overall percentage. As a result, the findings of the table elaborate that the target group of ESL in Misurata University lacks euphemistic knowledge in this case as shown in Figure (7) below.
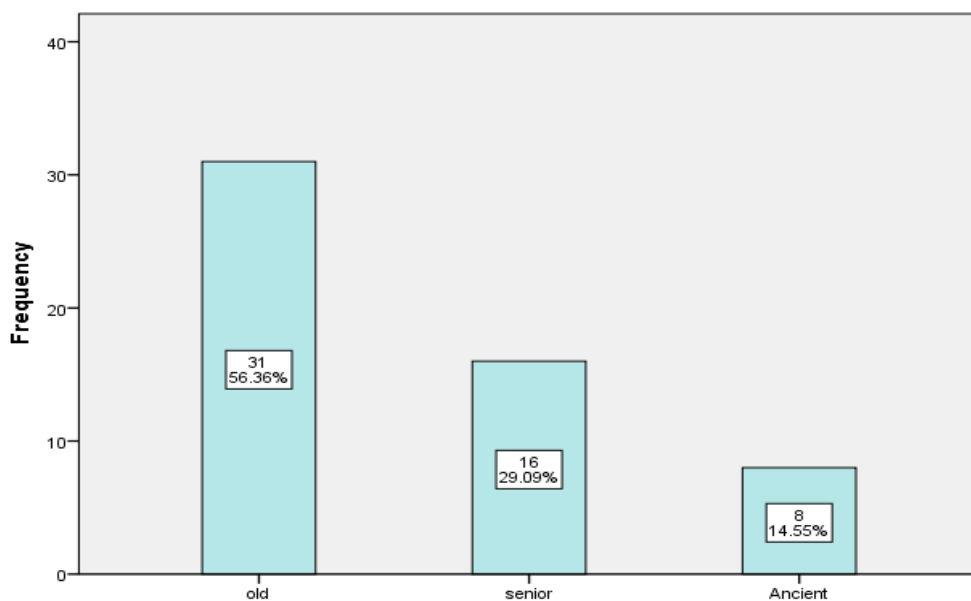
Figure (7) Usually people are considered … when they become grandparents

7- **Distribution of** Do I appear to be…

Table No. (10) Distribution of the study sample: Do I appear to be…

	Frequency	Percent
In a family way	2	3.6
Gravid	7	12.7
Pregnant	46	83.6
Total	55	100.0

The findings of the statement: *Do I appear to be…* exposed that only the minority of the students are aware of euphemistic expression *in a family way* where the percentage is only (3.6 %). As shown figure (8).
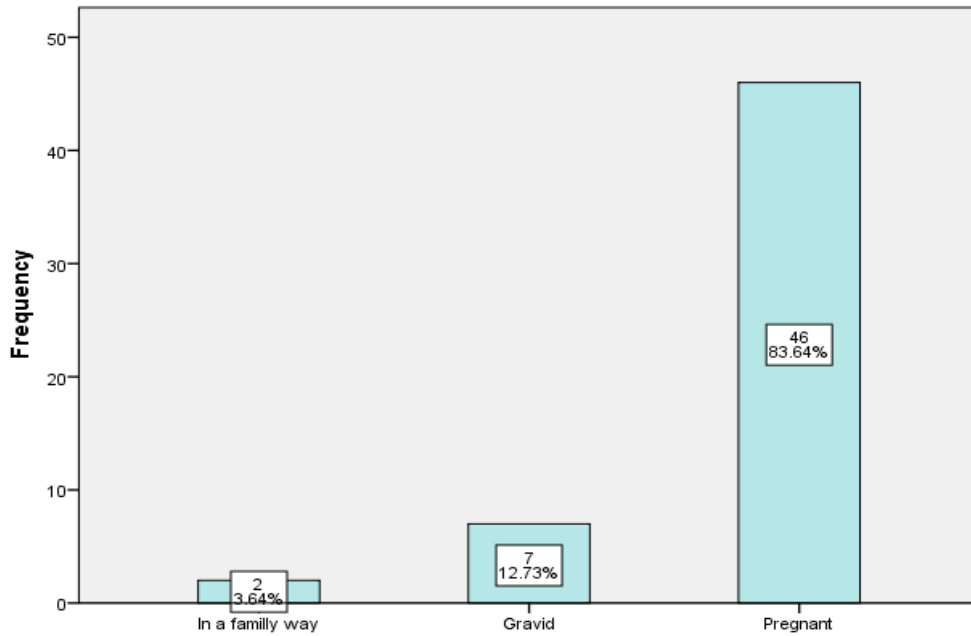
Figure (8) Do I appear to be…

9– **Distribution of**: Jack is searching for a job because his manager…

Table No. (11) Distribution of the study sample: Jack is searching for a job because his manager….

	Frequency	Percent
Fired him	34	61.8
Let him go	10	18.2
Dismissed him	11	20.0
Total	55	100.0

The consequences of the statement: *Jack is searching for a job because his manager…* are indicated in table (11) above. The outcomes show that (61.8%) of the students recognized the phrase *Fired him*, while (20%) of them chose the term *Dismissed him* as their proper answer. On the other side, only (18.2%) of them were able to select the euphemistic term *Let him* go. As seen in the figure (9).
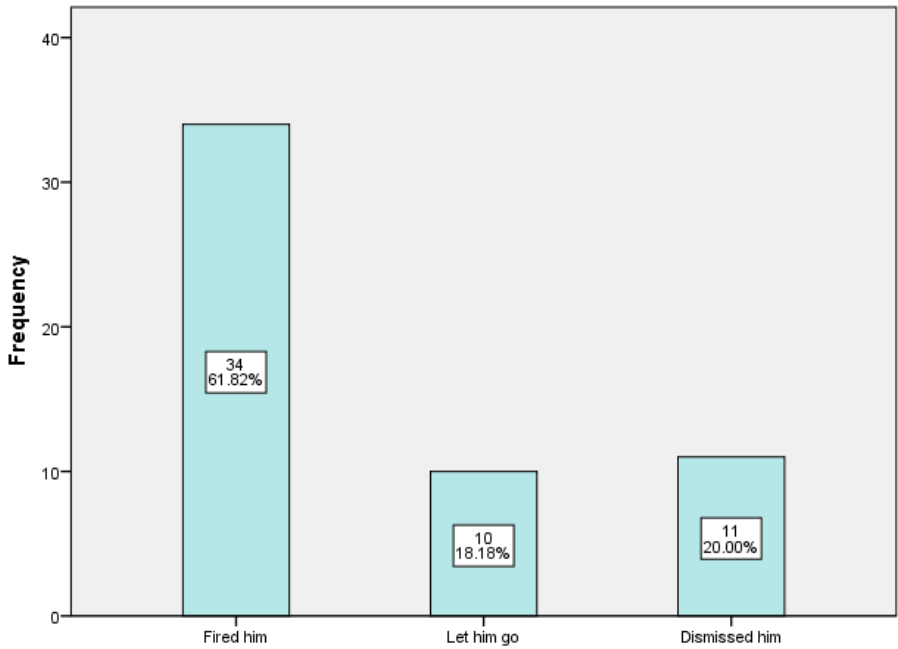
Figure (9) Jack is searching for a job because his manager…

10‐ Distribution of: Your jumper looks so…

4.

Table No. (12) The Distribution of your jumper looks so…

	Frequency	Percent
Inexpensive	21	38.2
Cheap	21	38.2
Frugal	13	23.6
Total	55	100.0

It is clear from Table (10) is related to the distribution of the study sample: *Your jumper looks so…* that the percentage of both terms *Inexpensive* and *Cheap* is equal (38.2%). Followed by the euphemistic term *Frugal* where the percentage is only (23.6%). Thus, the table's statistics reveal that the participants lack euphemism knowledge yet again as shown in figure (10) below
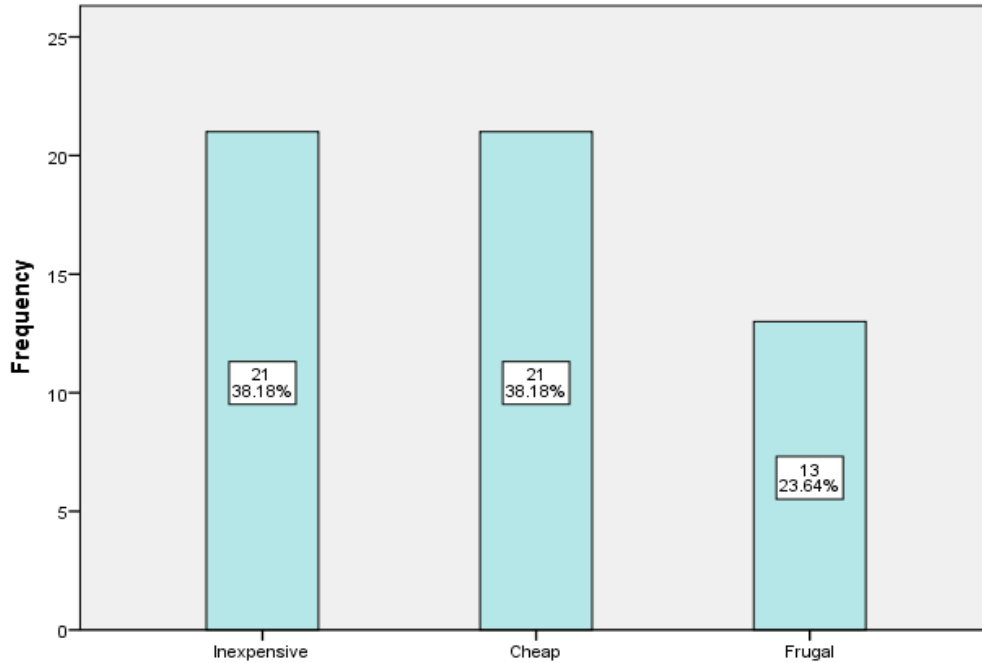
Figure (10) Your jumper looks so…

11–   Distribution of: Hodge was found not guilty by reason of…

5.

Table No. (13) Distribution of the study sample: Hodge was found not guilty by reason of…

	Frequency	Percent
Insanity	19	34.5
Madness	23	41.8
Craziness	13	23.6
Total	55	100.0

The findings of the distribution of the study sample are shown in table (11), which was introduced earlier as *Hodge was found not guilty by reason of…* The proportion of the term *Madness* reached (41.8%), which is the highest percentage. On the contrary, the word *Craziness* was chosen by only a small number of participants to reach 23.6%. Whereas the right euphemistic term *Insanity* hooked up to 34.5%. Nonetheless, more than half of the ESL learners in Misurata University failed to perceive the euphemistic term. As shown in figure (11) below.
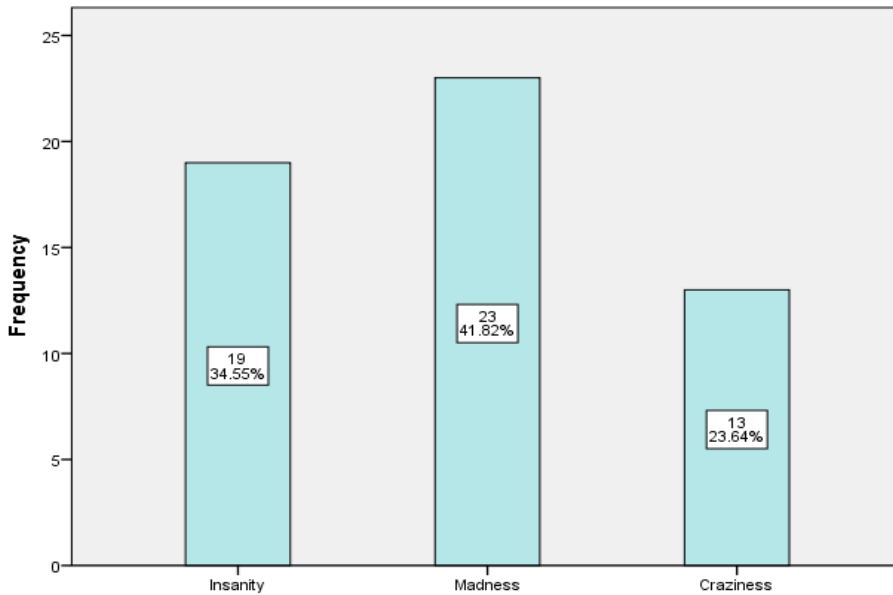
Figure (11) Hodge was found not guilty by reason of…

12– **Distribution of:** Jasmine is a …. daughter of a famous man

6.

Table No. (14) Distribution of the study sample: Jasmine is a …. daughter of a famous man

	Frequency	Percent
Spoiled	47	85.5
Pampered	3	5.5
Financially Fortunate	5	9.1
Total	55	100.0

The analysis of the statement: *Jasmine is a …. daughter of a famous man* is presented in table (14). It is clear from the table above that, the majority of subjects failed in selecting the euphemism expression *Financially Fortunate* as they have chosen the word *Spoiled* with almost the overall percentage (85.5 %). As shown in figure (12) which clarifies how much students lack euphemistic knowledge in this case.
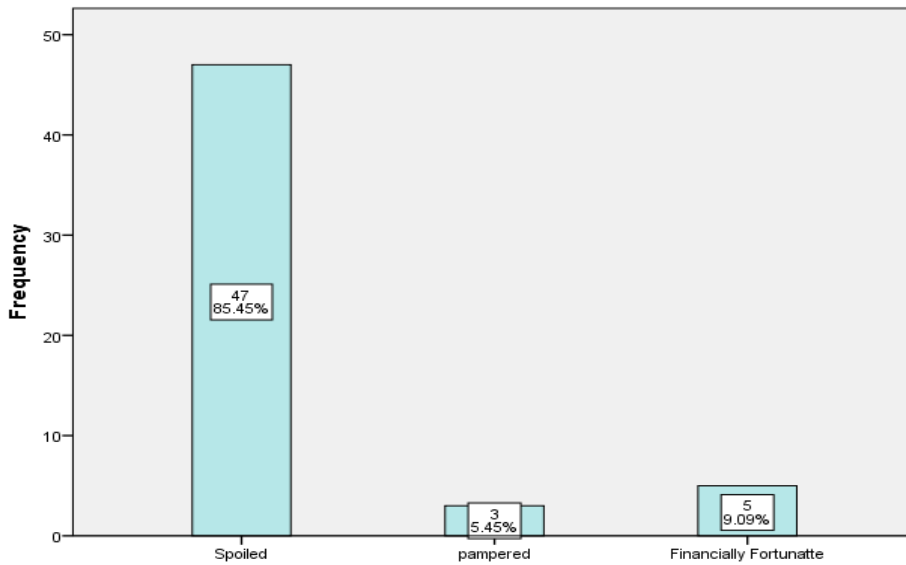
Figure (12) Jasmine is a …. daughter of a famous man

13–   **Distribution of**: Because I am ……., I am spending more time with my parents

7.

Table No. (15) Distribution of the study sample: Because I am …, I am spending more time with my parents

	Frequency	Percent
Jobless	10	18.2
Between jobs	6	10.9
Unemployed	39	70.9
Total	55	100.0

The findings of the statement: *Because I am …, I am spending more time with my parents* exposed that only the minority of the students are aware of euphemistic expressions *Between jobs* where the percentage is only (10.9%). As shown in Figure (13)
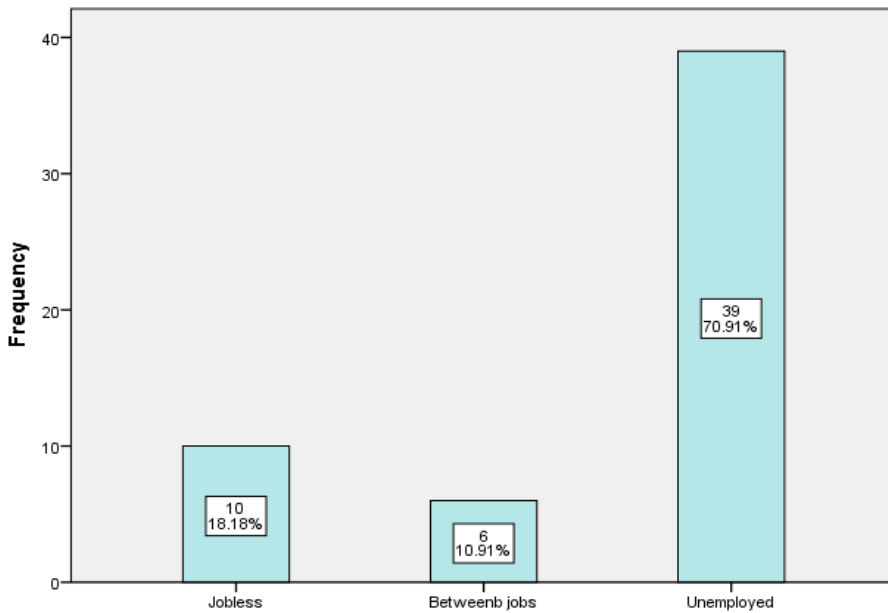
Figure (13) Because I am …, I am spending more time with my parents

14– **Distribution of** Be careful, the person in front of you is…

8.

Table No. (16) Distribution of the study sample: Be careful, the person in front of you is…

	Frequency	Percent
Blind	38	69.1
Optically Challenged	15	27.3
With poor eyesight	2	3.6
Total	55	100.0

The outcomes of the distribution of this study paradigm are exhibited in Table (16), which was introduced earlier as *Be careful, the person in front of you is…* The proportion of the term *Blind* reached (69.1%), which is the highest percentage. On the contrary, the word *Optically Challenged* which is the euphemistic term has reached (27.3%). Whereas the term *with poor eyesight* has got only (3.6%) selections. This indicates, that more than half of the target group of Libyan EFL learners failed to perceive the euphemistic term. As demonstrated in Figure (16).
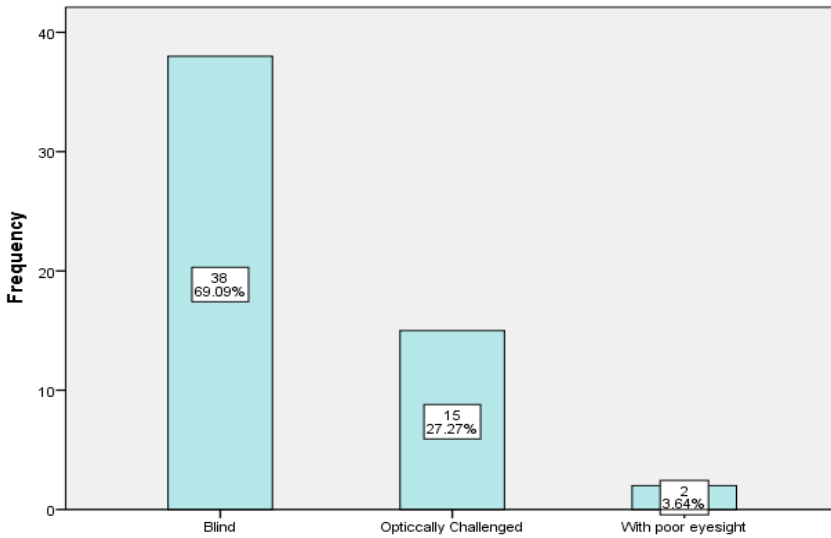
Figure (14): Be careful, the person in front of you is …

15– **Distribution of:** He must be her grandfather not her father because his face is covered with…

9.

Table No. (17) Distribution of the study sample: He must be her grandfather not her father because his face is covered with ….

	Frequency	Percent
Wrinkles	55	100.0
Laugh lines	0	0.0
Total	55	100.0

The table above indicates the outcomes of the statement: *He must be her grandfather, not her father because his face is covered with….* The results distinctly display that the aggregate participants lack euphemistic knowledge as they all managed to elect the normal locution *Wrinkles* with (100 %) percentage. As stated in figure (15) below.
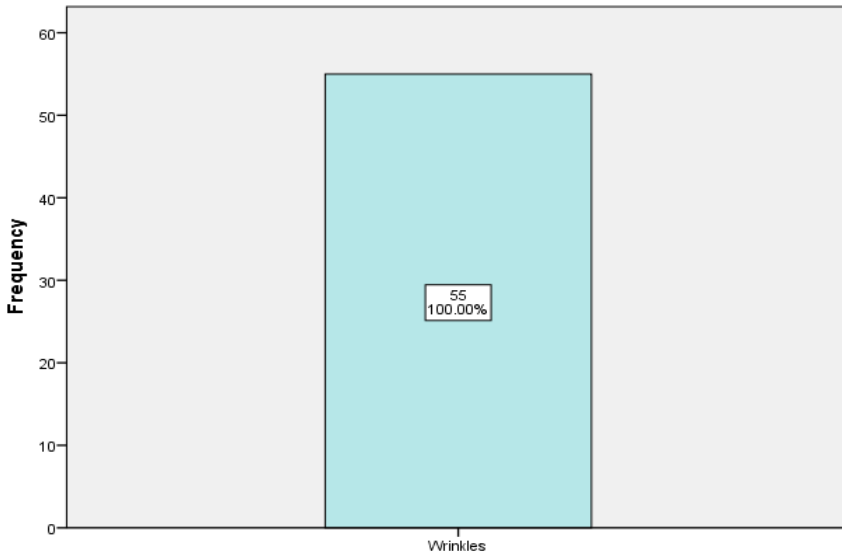
Figure (15) He must be her grandfather, not her father because his face is covered with …

16－ **Distribution of:** Alice is so full of herself and …

Table No. (18) Distribution of the study sample: Alice is so full of herself and…

	Frequency	Percent
Bossy	34	61.8
Dominating	14	25.5
Outspoken	7	12.7
Total	55	100.0

The findings of the statement *Alice is so full of herself and …* exposed that only a minority of the participants are aware of euphemistic expression *Outspoken* where the percentage is only (12.7%). As shown in figure (16).
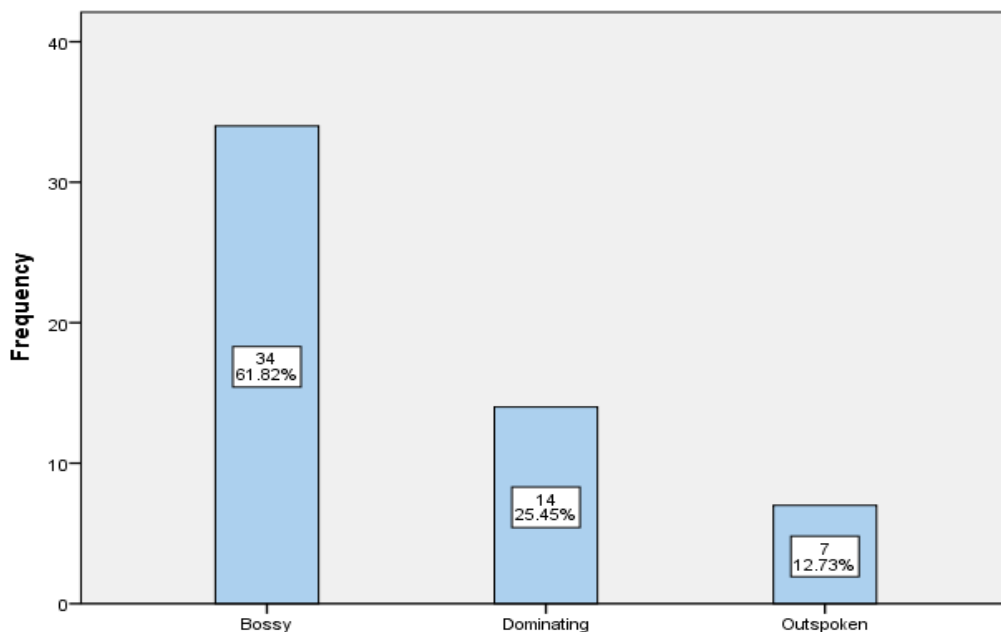
453

Figure (16) Alice is so full of herself and …

17–   **Distribution of**: Sarah is engaged to her …… colleague

  10.

Table No. (19) Distribution of the study sample: Sarah is engaged to her …… colleague

	Frequency	Percent
Offshore	4	7.3
Foreign	51	92.7
Total	55	100.0

Table (19) elucidates the results of the following pattern *Sarah is engaged to her……* However, the euphemistic term presented here is *Offshore*. Nevertheless, the table illustrated that approximately (92.7 %) of the students lack euphemistic knowledge by nominating *foreign* as their suitable option as demonstrated in Figure (17).
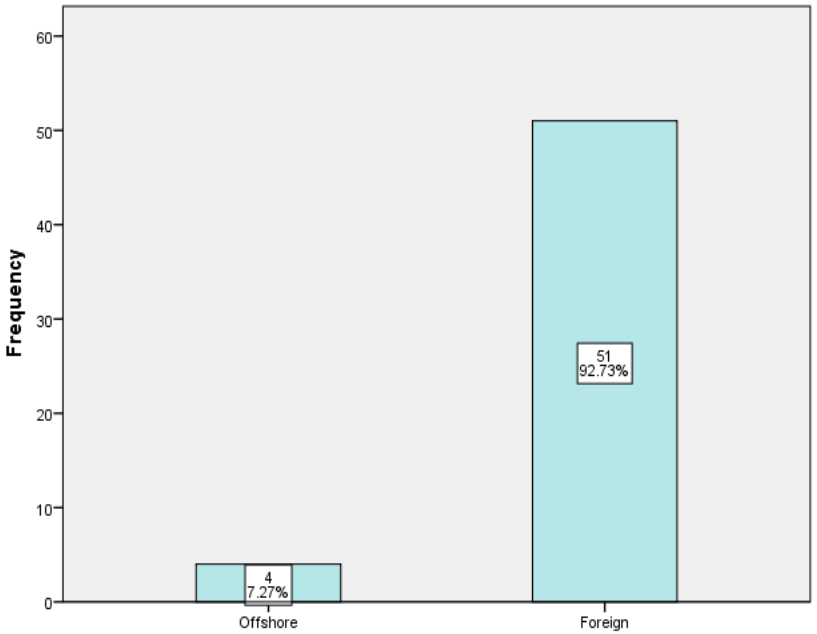
Figure (17) Sarah is engaged to her …… colleague

18− **Distribution of:** My children go to the hospital every day to visit their …. grandfather **11**.

Table No. (20) Distribution of the study sample: My children go to the hospital every day to visit their …. grandfather

	Frequency	Percent
Sick	28	50.9
Unwell	22	40.0
Under the Weather	5	9.1
Total	55	100.0

Table (20) indicates the results of the sample *My children go to the hospital every day to visit their …. grandfather.* However, the proportion of the euphemistic expression *Under the Weather* has clarified that the majority of the participants were deficient in euphemistic awareness. As illustrated in figure (18).
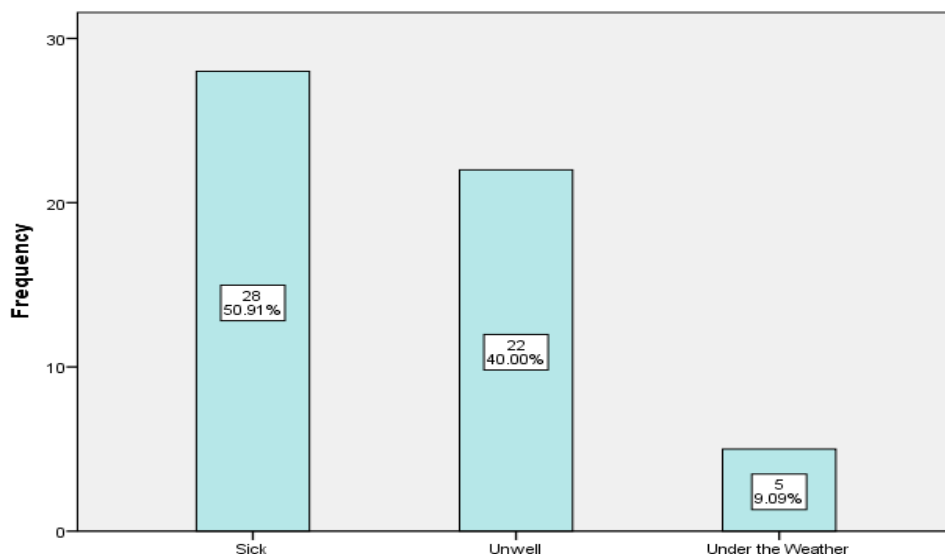
Figure (18) My children go to the hospital every day to visit their …. grandfather

19− **Distribution of:** My friend served three months at the ….

12.

Table No. (21) Distribution of the study sample: My friend served three months at the ….

	Frequency	Percent
Correctional Facility	4	7.3
Prison	29	52.7
Jail	22	40.0
Total	55	100.0

The previously mentioned table shows that the amount of Libyan EFL learners who selected the normal expressions *Prison* and *Jail* outdistanced the students who succeeded in choosing the right option *Correctional facility*. Figure (19) clearly shows this result.
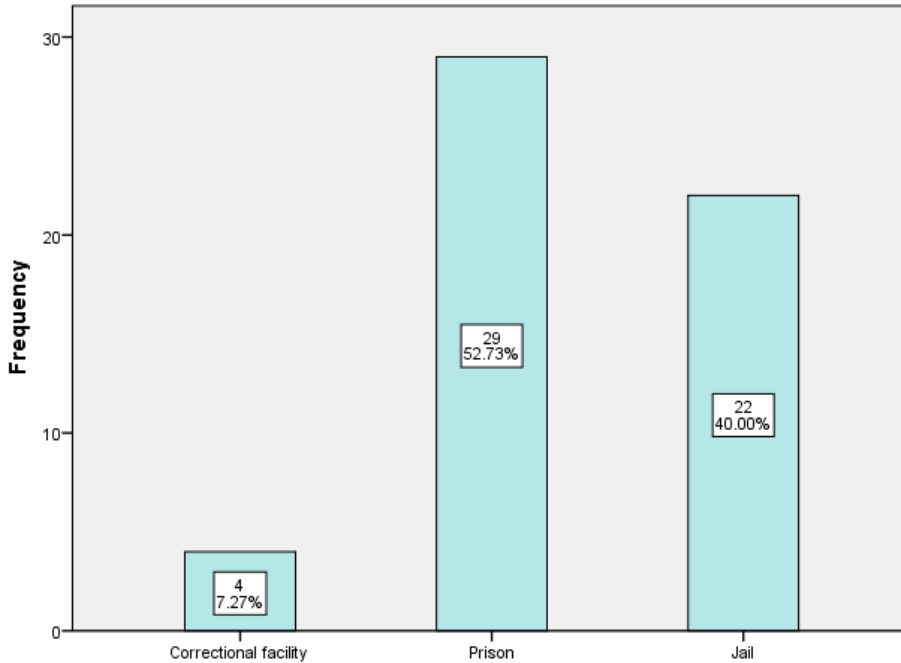
Figure (19) My friend served three months at the …

20‒ **Distribution of: ….** created the world in six days
13.

Table No. (22) Distribution of the study sample: …. created the world in six days

	Frequency	Percent
Master	2	3.6
Lord	21	38.2
God	32	58.2
Total	55	100.0

Table (22) elaborates on the distribution of the study model *…. Created the world in six days* Thus, the results of the statement display that the majority of English language students failed in choosing the euphemistic expression *Master,* which only got *(3.6%)* percent as presented in the figure below.
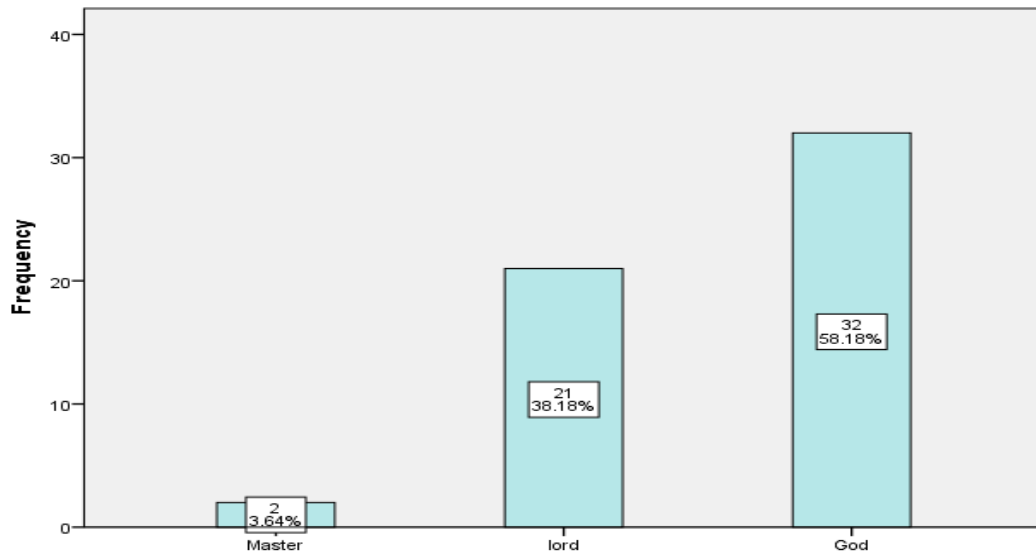
Figure (20)

…. created the world in six days

Interview Analysis

According to Brinkmann (2014), interviews are essential sources of primary data analysis utilized by several scholars in order to collect data and information conducted from the selected respondents for undertaking research. In this interview, there were four topics that were discussed with a total number of ten participants who are about to graduate. The interview was held in the Faculty of Arts and each interview lasted for about 15 minutes. The responses to the interview questions were analyzed using a t-test

Q1. To what extent do English major students at Misurata University understand euphemisms?

Table No. (23) The Mean and the t-test and extent do English major students understand euphemism

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Test	P-value	Decision H1	Approval Level
	extent do the English major students understand euphemism	1.2287	.14859	11.415	.000	Acceptance	Do not Understand

It is noted in Table No. (23) which shows the interviewees' responses to this question which aims to find out to what extent Libyan English major students understand euphemism, the mean of the sample opinions is equal to 1.2287 and the level of significance p−value is equal to (0.000), which is less than (0.05), which indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis H0 (that the target group of participants have the appropriate knowledge) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis H1(that the target participants do not have euphemistic knowledge), which means that the extent do the English major students do not understand euphemism Agree. This is based on the average and with reference to Table (2).

Q2− Statistical description of to which extent English major students in Misurata University use English euphemisms appropriately in their spoken performance.

The following is a presentation of to which extent English major students at Misurata University use English euphemisms appropriately in their spoken performance. The interviewees were asked a number of questions in an attempt to measure to what extent they use euphemistic expressions in their spoken performance. The different topics and questions which were used by the interviewer to test their knowledge and use of euphemisms are presented one by one:

Feelings about people who live on the streets

21− **Description of** Do you feel sorry for people who live on the streets? And how would you describe them?

14.

Table No. (24) Distribution of the study sample: Do you feel sorry for people who live on the streets? And how would you describe them?

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	8	80.0
Broke	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0

In the first question, students were asked to express their opinions and feelings about people who live on the streets: if they feel sorry for them, and how would they describe them. However, two out of ten interviewees have referred to those people as *Broke*. As **Participant 1** has stated, "Broke people has been increasing recently, especially in Misurata in front of our

college". Additionally, **participant 2** stated, "I really feel sorry and disappointed whenever I see broke people on the street". Whereas the other eight participants have described those people as *Poor*. Thus, no one has used the euphemism phrase, which is *Low–income*. Since this question aims to investigate whether the students of English department are cognizant of the euphemistic term, which is *Low income*, it is clear that students lack euphemistic expressions. Figure (21) shows this.
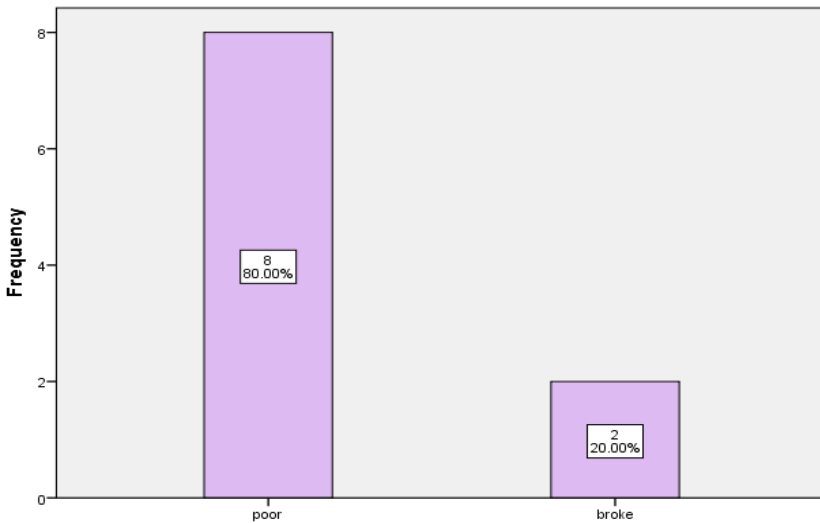

Figure (21)

22– **Distribution of:** What would the governments do to overcome the issue of people who live on the streets?

15.

Table No. (25) Distribution of the study sample: What would the governments do to overcome the issue of people who live on the streets?

	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed	10	100.0
Total	10	100.0

Therefore, in the second question and based on the previous one, students were asked about their point of view in order to know what would the government do to overcome the issue of people who live on the streets, and what is the best solution and why. Therefore, all of the ten interviewees used the *Unemployed* term. Thus, no one has used the euphemism phrase, which is *Between jobs*. As **Participant 2** has expressed her neighbor, "Our neighbor is a widow who relies on her husband's salary and unfortunately she is unemployed". Subsequently, since this question aims to investigate whether the students of the English Department are aware of the

euphemistic term *Between jobs* or not, it is clear again and again that students lack euphemistic expressions. Figure (22) shows this.
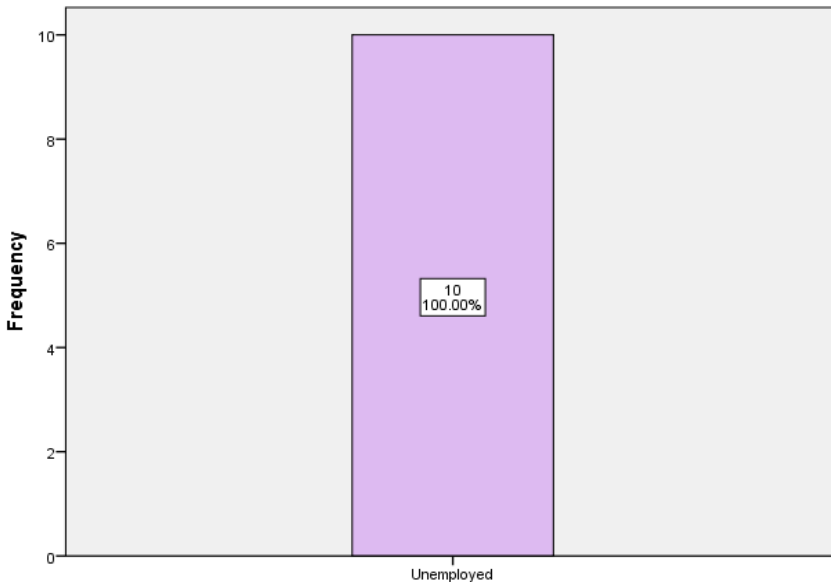

Figure (22) The Suitable Punishment for People who Commit Crimes

23–   **Distribution of:** What would be the appropriate punishment for someone who has committed an illegal act?

Table No. (26) Distribution of the study sample: What would be the appropriate punishment for someone who has committed an illegal act?

	Frequency	Percent
Prison	6	60.0
Jail	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

In the third question, the researchers and participants discussed another topic. Interviewees were asked about the appropriate punishment for someone who has committed a crime or any illegal acts. Four out of ten students used the euphemistic term *Jail*. As **Participant 1** said, "People who commit crimes should be trapped in jail by the government". Whereas, six students used the term *Prison*. As **Participant 2** expressed her opinion about those people, "prison is the best solution for criminals". Since this question aims to investigate whether the students of the English department are cognizant of the euphemistic term, *Correctional facility* or not, it is clear again that students lack euphemistic knowledge. Figure (23) shows this.
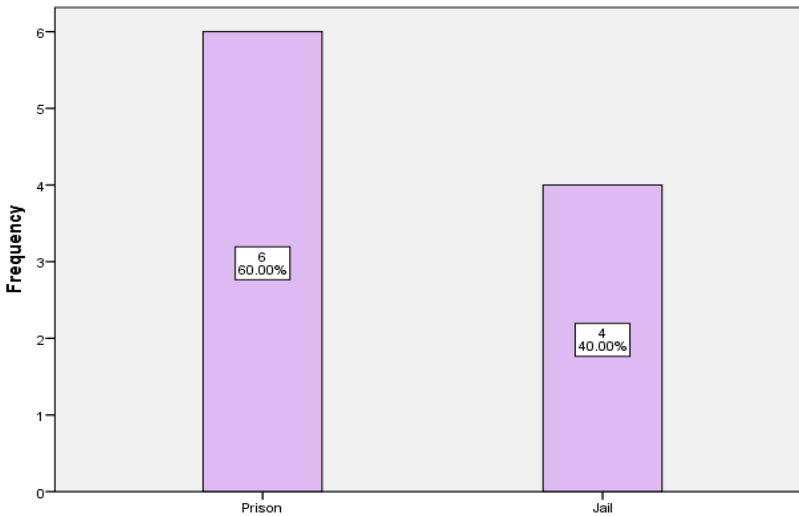
Figure (23) Following a Healthy Lifestyle

24– **Distribution of:** Have you ever followed a healthy lifestyle? If so, what is the main purpose? If not, then why? And do you think that people who are obsessed nowadays with the idea of following a healthy lifestyle is because they want to be in perfect shape?

Table No. (27) Distribution of the study sample: Have you ever followed a healthy lifestyle? If so, what is the main purpose? If not, then why? And do you think that people who are obsessed nowadays with the idea of following a healthy lifestyle is because they want to be in perfect shape?

	Frequency	Percent
Fat	3	30.0
Overweight	7	70.0
Total	10	100.0

In the fourth question, researchers and participants discussed a very common topic nowadays which is following a healthy lifestyle. Participants, however, were asked if they have ever followed a healthy life system and if so, what their main was. Three out of ten students have used the term *Fat*. As **Participant 1** said, "I always follow a healthy style because I have fears of being fat". Also, **Participant 2** said, "For me being fat means being uncomfortable". On the other hand, seven students used the euphemistic term *Overweight*. Since this question aims to investigate whether the students of the English Department are aware of the euphemistic term *Overweight* or not, it is clear that the majority of the participants managed to guess the euphemistic phrase *Overweight* as it was expected due to its common use in the curriculum which is against the current study. Figure (24) shows this.
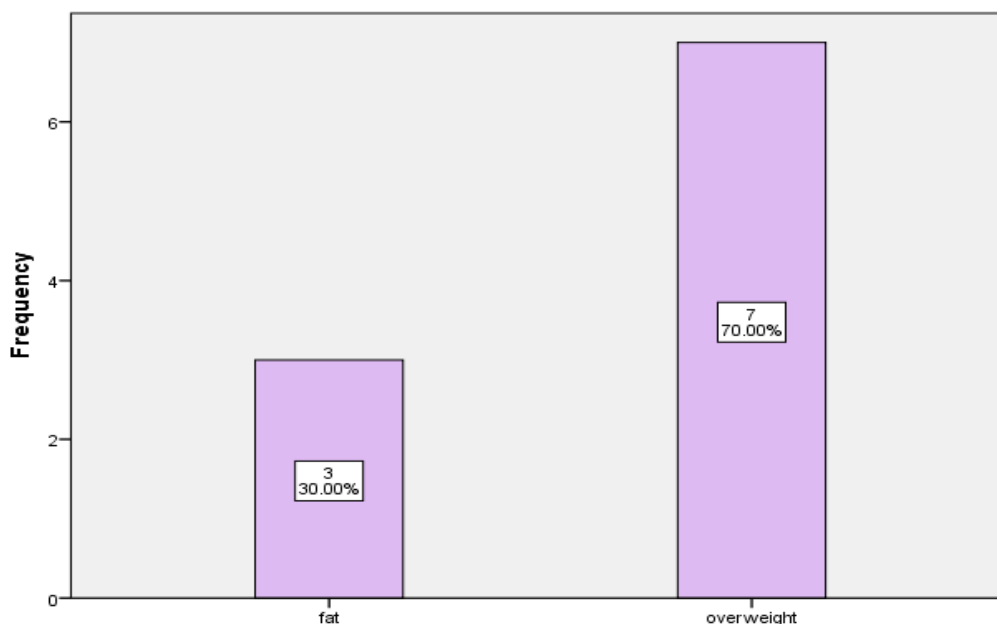
Figure (24) Q2– To what extent do English major students at Misurata University use English euphemisms appropriately in their spoken performance?

 To find out the appropriate test to answer the questions of the study, we use the test of the sign, Table (28) shows that.

Table No. (28) The mean and the test of the sign – and the order for each of the items of the "Set a personal example with your behavior"

NO Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	P– value	Decision H1	approval level
To what extent do English major students at Misurata University use English euphemisms appropriately in their spoken performance	1.1750	.12076	.002	Acceptance	**Do not Understand**

It is noted from Table No. (28) that the As for **To what extent do English major students in Misurata University use English euphemism appropriately in their spoken performance**., the mean of the sample opinions is equal to 1.175 and the level of significance p–value is equal to (0.002), which is less than (0.05), which indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1), which means that the English language students

at Misurata University do not use English euphemism appropriately in English in their spoken performance. This is based on the average and with reference to Table (2).

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study which was conducted with the aim of testing EFL Libyan students' awareness of using euphemisms in the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University, show that over than half of the English Department students who are about to graduate are still unable to employ euphemistic language, due to the fact that these students lack the source of euphemistic language exposure in their curriculum. It was found that only two items out of the entire intended responses were demonstrated to be understood and comprehended by the department's students, which was taken into consideration and predicted from the beginning since the department covers them in its curriculum. However, the majority of the responses, unfortunately, show that the participants do not possess euphemistic knowledge, as some of the results of the current study reached 0% of the students' perception of euphemism which again, was previously predicated due to the students' lack of exposure to the euphemistic expressions in the provided previous topics.

These findings are similar to the findings of the previously mentioned studies by Rabab'ah, & Al-Qarni (2012) and Altakhaineh & Rahrouh (2015) who come to the conclusion that it is important to spread euphemistic knowledge among second language learners in order to increase their lexical capacity and to improve their cultural awareness of the target language. Unlike the outcomes of Epoge's study (2013) which comes to the conclusion that using euphemistic expressions can be deceptive and can lead to making offensive words nicer, the results of this current study insist on the importance and the positive effects of using euphemisms by second language learners.

This study recommends including teaching euphemistic expressions and when and how to use them in the taught modules such as in teaching Translation and in teaching receptive skills; speaking and writing to the students in the Department of English. For this purpose, the study recommends the use of authentic material in teaching receptive skills as this kind of material can reflect the cultural characteristics of English language and the ways in which English native speakers use euphemistic expressions to make their words sound more appropriate.

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