

## Designing the Test of the Marital Communication within the Algerian Environment

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### 1- Background\*:

Getting in touch with others is the essence of human existence and the inevitable emergence of existence itself. It is one of the oldest aspects of human activity, the most sophisticated, and one of the main standards of civilisation.

Communication reflects, in the terminology, the complex network of signals both verbal and non-verbal symbols, the intentions and feelings, and meanings that come from the sender in order to effect emotions and information, or modify the trends of the sender, or problem-solving<sup>1</sup>. This meaning can be expressed by the linguistic significance that it carries. The meaning in Arabic and Latin, as defined by Yousri Daabas, strongly suggests the meanings of connectivity and convergence and divergence,

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\* - ملخص: يعتبر الاتصال بين الزوجين من المواضيع المحورية للعلاقة الزوجية التي تجسد الاستقرار الزوجي. ورغم الكم البحثي المتراكم في ميدان العلاقات الزوجية فإن تفعيل هذا التراكم حول موضوع الاتصال الزوجي بقي مغيباً ضمن اختبارات تقيسه، ليعتمد الاستقصاء حوله بالأساس على جمع بياناته عن طريق مقابلات لا أكثر. وعليه فإن هذا العمل يسعى إلى تصميم اختبار للاتصال الزوجي يتماشى مع البيئة الجزائرية، اعتماداً على ما تمّ تجميعه من معارف حول هذا الموضوع ضمن قواعده الست وهي: سمات ومهارات الزوج (ة) المرسل (ة) كطرف ناقل، سمات ومهارات الزوج (ة) المستقبل (ة) كطرف متلقي، الرسالة بما تحمله من مواضيع ومضامين للاتصال الزوجي، بيئة الاتصال لفحص سياقه زماناً ومكاناً، أسلوب الاتصال الزوجي لتحديد شكله وقناته، والهدف من عملية الاتصال الزوجي. يكشف هذا المقياس من خلال كل بعد من أبعاده الستة، عن مدى فعالية الاتصال الزوجي عند تطبيق كل الأبعاد مجتمعة. كما يكشف عن الاتصال الزوجي كما يدركه كل من الزوج والزوجة، ويقف على نقاط القوة والضعف في أبعاد الاتصال بين الزوجين وجوانبه ومواضع المشكلات والمتسبب فيها، بما يسهل عملية التشخيص ويوضح مضامين التدريب ويجلي أساليب الإرشاد والعلاج. كلمات مفتاحية: الاتصال الزوجي، الزوج المرسل، الزوج المستقبل.

<sup>1</sup> - Hijazi Mustafa, 1990

the partnership and Union. These meanings are useful for communication. The word communication comes from Latin (Communis) which means "common", and it means in Arabic link or contact. Yousri adds that communication takes two methods: the verbal, which means the language, is a tool and an effective component with meaningful symbols commonly agreed on. It has many features such as; spoken, written contact, and non-verbal. Such a tool plays an important role in extroverting feelings, thoughts, and trends more accurately and honestly. This communication is made easy, quick, clear, and ready to be repeated. The communication takes several forms; gestures, body language, facial expressions, nodding, eye contact, intonation, and the language of silence<sup>1</sup>.

As well as it takes symbolic forms from the culture to which a person belongs, from personal experience and gives them special meanings. It is subject to transfer as long as the symbols are messages that can be learned<sup>2</sup>.

The communication process is based upon specific elements collected by Musa Al Lozi in : (there is an idea the sender wishes to send in the form of symbols that are selected when sending it. The means of communication is determined, the message is received, studied, and analysed. Then reply is sent by either sending another message, implementing or rejecting it, or feedback<sup>3</sup>.

Modern theories deal with the concept of communication in larger areas. They consider it, according to Albernhe, actions and not words, but they expand its meaning to behaviourism that marries words and meaning side by side with the non-verbal aspect, the movements, the simulations and

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<sup>1</sup> - Daabas Mohamed Yousri, year absent

<sup>2</sup> - Aouda Mahmoud, 1998

<sup>3</sup> - Al Louzi Musa, 2010

situations, and with all what can enrich the news<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the meaning of communication has moved from transferring and exchanging to action and behaviour. This explains the model adopted by (POLO-ALTO), which consider that communication is possible for any situation since behaviour remains always there; standing still and the complete silence are also behaviours considered as a message that replies to other messages and communication. It is also a model that considers the behaviour the core of all the disturbed reactions<sup>2</sup>.

Winter notes that (Satir) has concluded that one of the keys of human relations lies in the flexibility and effective communication. In her evolutionary model, she shows that the contact, which is suffering from a dysfunction in which dysfunctional relationships are functionally, is a contact characterized by closed systems. On the contrary, this functional communication is contributing to the establishment of a functional nature of relations which is characterized by open systems, and emphasizes the individual's ability to open up to new information<sup>3</sup>.

She confirms that once the meanings become distorted, the contact is exposed to a malfunction and remains so unless; the individuals are exposed to situations where they can bring in some explanations. She says that need is expressed in human interactions, as well as expectations that reflect the deep desires to communicate and establish relationships<sup>4</sup>.

Maurice Berger, in the same context, notes that Martin Buber reinforces the idea of the need to connect to his assurance that the contact is a human scale; it is an urgent need to connect to other even feel himself<sup>5</sup>. In the same context, Kafafi points to the importance of the family, which has

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<sup>1</sup> - Albernhe, 2000

<sup>2</sup> - Maurice Berger, 2003

<sup>3</sup> - winter, 1995

<sup>4</sup> - Satir, 1993

<sup>5</sup> - In Maurice Berger, 2003

a significant role in human communication. It is also the most private in terms of its psychological importance for individuals, it provides the community with different types of expressions that allow individuals to use their capacities fluently, within effective and scalable postures for society and its changes.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the absolute inability of man after birth, he becomes immediately relational, therefore emphasizing the importance of communication is not a metaphor, as Spitz works have shown the dangerous reflections of the lack of communication on the evolution and the growth<sup>2</sup>. Where the need to communicate with others increases with getting older, and by then marriage is considered as the main form to express that need in adulthood.

According to El Nabulsi, the process of communication in marriage shows that it needs effort to connect and solve problems<sup>3</sup>. As such, Bayoumi Khalil believes that marital communication refers to the interaction by the symbols and meanings of verbal and non-verbal acts, which work as an alarm behaviour<sup>4</sup>. Like other forms of communication, marital communication is based on its known components: the sender, a spouse (s) who sends the message, the receiver is the spouse (s) who receives it, the message which takes the content of verbal and non-verbal gestures and expressions within an understandable context, with the timing of transferring it. Basically, when partners are in a relationship, it is impossible for them not to communicate, since communication is a social-psychological need for both of them and one of the inevitabilities of a lasting partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> - Kafafil Alaa eddin, 1999

<sup>2</sup> - in Maurice, 2003

<sup>3</sup> - El Nabulsi, Mohammed Ahmed, 1991

<sup>4</sup> - Bayoumi Mohamed Khalil, 1999

Communication is a skill, an art and a pleasure, which guarantees the survival of the relationship and the attainment of satisfaction compatibility and stability. In this matter, Abdul Muti mentions that the study of El shutman about marital communication and its relation with compatibility between couples from the perspective of the workers regards to both genders, in Yarmouk University, has found that the degree of marital communication and marital adjustment were high in the tools for the studied sample, showing that miscommunication and quarrel engender incompatibility especially in the first period of the relationship which is characterized by the fear of the quarrel leading to the appearance of controversial subjects , making the couple resort to inhuman ways to communicate and fight as a consequence of inflexibility.<sup>1</sup>

The results of several studies have confirmed the importance of marital communication to achieve compatibility and stability between couples, including what Jacobson has found about the idea that communication is a skill that most couples practice in a good way without the need for formal training, while for annoyed couples , bad communication is the reason for their disagreement, the devastating debate causes pain , suffering , uncomfortable relations , sensitivity , psychological and physical troubles, whereas most of the problems exacerbate because of the way they communicate on a topic rather than exacerbating because of the topic itself <sup>2</sup>. Kurdeck confirms that one of the most important factors, which make a marriage fail, is communication problems<sup>3</sup>. One of those problems is connected to each of the spouses as a sender and a receptor, and sometimes it is the content of the message or the way of communication.

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<sup>1</sup> - in Mustafa Hassan Abdul Muti, 2004

<sup>2</sup> - Jacobson, SN et.al., 1986

<sup>3</sup> - Kurdeck.1991 shattered

Tannen have talked about the differences between the couple in the communication process and explained the role of environmental factors in determining these differences, and that the traditional environment in which the distribution of roles by sex does not give individual expression opportunities for self, realizes its members decline to communication factors which interpolate in such behaviour by the process of socialization.

Resbelt provides for his part, ways to deal with spouses in the event of dissatisfaction was the abandonment , neglect and divorce any cutting of communication by couples, and the patience and the fear of confrontation and wait passively when wives<sup>1</sup>.

Beck has summed up those differences between the two genders on the process of communication in the fact that the woman considers questions as a way of keeping a conversation going, on the other hand, a man sees it as a way to ask for information, and he doesn't connect between whatever his wife says and what he says afterwards, but the woman actually does that. The man sees aggressiveness as a way of expressing and the woman considers it as a threat. In addition, she likes to talk about personal subjects and to express her feelings but the man likes to discuss less personal thoughts and ideas, the woman does it to find support and safety while her spouse looks for solutions instead<sup>2</sup>. Those differences in the process of communication between married couples might make distance between them and it might be an open door to achieve the fulfilment of their needs, accepting it and make a good use out of it.

Another particularity that communication between couples has to do with what it contains , because contents that couples discuss break the

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<sup>1</sup> - In Gottman J.M, 1989

<sup>2</sup> - Beck, 1988

barriers and touch every single side of their life together and all the fields of their personal activities , starting with the privacy of the individual differences and sexual ones between the couple , and returning to the long term of the subjects that the communication between couples can contain , they pick out their own way and style that they see as best for them , to deliver their messages from honesty , thoughtful and social channels . Besides the marital relation is the only one that uses sexual channel for sending affective messages especially , knowing that the contents of communication between married couples usually takes the verbal or non – verbal aspect , and they might even mix between different and many channels. One of the advantages of marital communication is its way (its environment, constituents, and details, physical and material circumstances) which makes a suitable environment of communication between couples.

In spite of the importance of marital communication however its measurements are limited , which has led people who are interested (academics and researchers and couples) to count on some lists ; they even depended on some interviews with couples to see some signs according to their notes and observations and that made the operation of designing the measurement a scientific necessity . Therefore, the goal of this study is to try to design a test of marital communication according to the Algerian environment, after defining it and the determination of its dimensions.

## **2- Adjusting the variables**

**2.1 marital communication:** behaviours reflect a dynamic process through which the mutual interactions between the couple as the sender spouse(s) sent a set of actions to be able to obtain the desired responses from the receiver spouse (s), through the transmission of information,

ideas, feelings and experiences by verbal methods of meanings, words, symbols, non-verbal signals and gestures in the context of the relationship between the couple, including topics marital interaction.

Marital communication dimensions have been defined as follows:

A) Characteristics and skills of the sender spouse (s): qualities, capabilities, and preparations to facilitate the missionary performance so that it can get the desired responses.

B) Characteristics and skills of the receiver spouse (s): Characteristics, preparations, and capabilities that facilitate the receipt of the letter clearly, what can be analysed and understood, and the issuance of appropriate responses.

C) Marital communication Topics: Contents that couples communicate around both of which related to public life or of each party of them or shared between them.

D) Marital communication goals: the purposes for which couples would like to achieve, including aims to transfer feelings and ideas, share experiences, and modify the trends and problem solving.

E) Marital communication environment: is the context in which the communicative process between the couples are given in terms of the spatial and temporal allowing to know the circumstances in which marital dynamic communication takes place.

F) Marital communication methods: Couples choose exchanged channels using verbal communication techniques and non-verbal ones, and the ways in which they adopt transmission and reception including falls within the marital communication strategy.

## **2-2-Procedural definition of marital communication:**

It is the total score obtained after the application of marital communication test designer in this research.



**2-3- Marital miscommunication:** Behaviours reflect a dynamic process, by which the decline in mutual interactions between spouses levels, a decline in the ability to impart or receive information, ideas, feelings, experiences by verbal methods of meanings, words, symbols, non-verbal signals and gestures in the context of the relationship between the couple.

**3- The stages of designing the test of marital communication:**

**Stage I:** - Reading the theoretical literature on the subject of communication to determine the elements, foundations and general principles. Then reading deeply the topic of communication within the marital relationship, its principles, its importance and the most important themes and particulars of focus in training on methods of effective marital communication process.

- Viewing what available from previous studies on the subject of communication in order to benefit from the results. The first phase led to a list of indicators avoiding the repeat of the mentioned index more than once.

**Stage II:** - a review of a sample of marital adjustment measures, including: the designed scales by: Zahia Messaoudi, Mohammed Khalil Bayoumi, Graham Spanier, Locke et wallaka translated to Arabic by Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, Locke, Sabaght & Thomas.

**Stage III:** Providing an open question for (17) husband and (39) wife. The question was: In your opinion what are the most important factors responsible for the proper and effective communication between spouses? Starting with the answers of husbands and wives, a list of indicators has been added to the previous one, avoiding the repeat of the mentioned index more than once.

**Stage IV:** Based on the outcome of the previous stages, the researchers developed a definition of marital communication.

**Stage V:** Depending on what has been collected from the first three stages, the forms of measurement have been formulated in light of the procedural definition taken in this study.

**Stage VI:** the initial form of the measurement has been presented on (15) experts from the University of Blida, and University of Algiers , sections of psychology and sociology, and a group of psychologists to submit their comments about it . According to that, some statements have been deleted and some have been added with the approval of the referees. Thus, the test has been reduced from 186 to 181 items so that the final statistical treatment may come up with 175 items.

**4-Definition of marital communication test:** the test of marital communication that is designed in the Algerian environment contains 175 items distributed on six dimensions (sub-scales):

- Attributes and skills of the sender spouse (s)
- Attributes and skills of the receiver spouse (s)
- Marital communication topics
- Marital communication goals
- Marital communication methods.
- Marital communication environment (timing and space).

**4-1 - Distribution of test measurements on the sub-scale:**

the sub-scale	N° Item
Attributes and skills of the sender spouse (s)	1-14-20-24-30-33-36-42-45-49-52-54-57-61-64-68-71-83-85-88-91-96-98-102-104-106-110-116-118-121-124-127-130-135-138-141-145-148-160-164-168-170-152-155-157.

Attributes and skills of the Receiver spouse (s)	3-8-12-17-21-23-26-31-37-40-43-47-55-58-60-65-73-79-80-86-90-94-99-101-108-111-114-119-125-132-140-144-151
Marital communication topics	6-13-18-27-38-48-62-74-81-87-95-105-117-133-142-150-158-166-169-171-173-174.
Marital communication goals	4-10-28-35-53-67-76-113-122--129- 137 -147-154-162.
Marital communication environment	7-16-24-32-41-51-59-70-78-93-175.
Marital communication method	2-5-9-11-15-19-22-29-34-39-44-46-50-56-63-66-69-72-75-77-82-84-89-92-97-103-107-109-112-115-120-123-126-128-130-134-135-136-139-143-146-149-153-156-159-161-163-165-167-172.

**The distribution of test items to positive and negative items:**

The Items constituting the test are distributed according to their contents to (119) positive item and (56) negative item as it is showed below:

Positive items	Negative items
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-16-17-18-21-22-23-26-27-28-29-31-35-37-38-39-40-43-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-57-58-61-62-63-64-65-67-70-71-74-76-77-78-79-80-81-84-87-88-	14-15-19-20-24-25-30-32-33-34-36-41-42-44-45-56-59-60-66-68-69-72-73-75-82-83-85-86-89-90-93-94-98-101-104-109-111-114-115-117-120-123-125-132-136-138-141-148-149-151-

91-92-95-96-97-99-100-102- 103-105-106-107-108-110- 112-113-116-118-119-121- 122-124-126-127-128-129- 130-131-133-134-135-137- 139-140-142-143-144-145- 146-147-150-153-154-156- 158-159-160-161-162-163- 164-165-166-167-168-169- 172-173-174.	152-155-157-170-171-175.
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**5 -The standardization of the test:** the test of marital communication has been standardized by calculating its psychometric properties (reliability index, validity index) of the six subscales and the whole test.

**5-1- participants:**

A random sample of (289) couples from Blida, Tipaza and Algiers was recruited (130 husbands, 159 wives), Mage of husbands = 42 years, Mage of wives = 39 years. Concerning their instructional level ( 5% of husbands and 3% of wives have a primary level , 23% of husbands and 58% of wives are of mid-level and secondary level, 27% of husbands and 39% of wives have a university level ). The period of marriage ranged from 1 to 27 years so that the average of that period would be 9 years.

**5-2 -psychometric properties:**

We collected data and analyzed it statistically depending on statics package of social sciences (spss), to examine the reliability and validity index of the six sub-scales of the test, then the whole test.

**First: validity index:**

**A- Content validity:** We first examined content validity of the six sub-scales of the test by calculating the correlation coefficient items,

accordingly items with low correlation coefficient (0.30) or negative correlation with the total score of the test were excluded, while items with the acceptable correlation coefficients at the significance level (0.001) were retained.

**B-Discriminatory validity:** We calculate the discriminatory validity In order to exclude items that lack distinction, that is, they are related to the sub-scale contained in it and at the same time, they are related to the other sub-scales. After having reduced the number of items from (186) to (175).

**Second: reliability index:**

The internal consistency of the scale in this sample was acceptable levels and reliabilities indicated good internal consistency, the overall reliability coefficient was at (0.77), while Alpha Cronbach coefficient to the six dimensions varied between (0.78 and 0.86) as below:

- Attributes and skills of the sender spouse (e):  $\alpha = 0.85$
- Attributes and skills of the receiver spouse (e):  $\alpha = 0.86$
- Marital communication topics :  $\alpha = 0.79$
- Marital communication goals :  $\alpha = 0.78$
- Marital communication environment :  $\alpha = 0.81$
- Marital communication methods:  $\alpha = 0.87$

**6 -The application of the test:** The marital communication test can be applied on spouses individually or within groups according to the instruction related to it.

**6.1The Scoring of the marital communication test:**

The marital communication test is a (175) item in which respondents describe their marital relationship using a 3-point Likert-type scale (yes, to some extent, no). The test is scored by adding up the score on each sub-scale to yield a total score for the instrument. Scores can range from 1 to 03 per item.

The lowest score that can be obtained in this test is (175) while the maximum score is (525). So the nearest obtained score to the maximum score is the most effective in the marital communication

#### 6-2 - Interpretation the results:

The marital communication scores are summed so that a high score may indicate high quality of marital communication.

- If the obtained scores ranged from (175) and (350) the spouse is classified in the category of marital miscommunication.
- If the obtained scores ranged from (351) to (525) the spouse is classified within effective marital communication category.

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