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La leçon se déroule en anglais. Elle est suivie d'un entretien en français.

SUBJECT:

"Absolute adjectives such as *full* (vi) (or *exhausted* (iv)), for example, can be subject to a certain amount of intensification, which does not contradict their claim to be absolute. The intensification merely has the effect of stretching the absolute values they possess."

Axel Hübler, *Understatements and Hedges in English*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1983, p. 41.

Discuss.

Candidates will use relevant excerpts from the following corpus to address the above topic.

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Excerpt 1

The least non-standard variant is scored zero, an intermediate variant as 100 and the most non-standard as 200. Scores approaching 200 therefore represent a high proportion of very non-standard realizations. Since very full accounts are available both in Labov's reports of his early work (Labov 1972b) and in many more recent sociolinguistics text books (see particularly Hudson 1980; Wardhaugh 1986), the original notion of the linguistic variable has been outlined only sketchily here.

L. Milroy, *Observing and Analysing Natural Language*, 1987

Excerpt 2

Babe Brother and Junior help Suzie out of the car. She has her left hand bandaged. They are extremely exhausted.

To Sleep with Anger [movie script], dir. Charles Burnett, 1990, COCA

Excerpt 3

In every direction was water, but unlike the islands that sat out in the ocean like the backs of whales, Ballyroan had a freshwater river running through it. Not a stream, mind you, but a river. Fast, deep, full to the brim with fish if you knew the right places to look.

Mary Beth Keane, *The Walking People*, 2009, COCA

Excerpt 4

Final acceptance was given at Balmoral Castle in October, when Bill Naysmith in private audience with the Queen received approval. At this meeting there was a further request for two additional carpets for the dais, where the two thrones are situated. The presentation was an excellent example of design expertise using the C.A.D. and the latest computerised sample machine. Four square yards of coloured design printouts were supported by six carpet samples each 18 inches square, giving a very clear impression of the finished project, which will be woven on 27 inch wide Wilton, using the Chlidema process.

Glenpatrick News, ca. 1990, BNC

Excerpt 5

"Satellite aerial?" Kenneth said. "No," Hamish said, though a hint of a smile crossed his dour face. "No, this is a substrate for an astronomical telescope mirror." "Like the one Fergus has in the castle?" Rory asked. "That's right. All the substrates and optics for Mr Urvill's telescope were made here. Though of course they were on a smaller scale than this piece." Hamish lowered the edge of the bowl and flicked a bit of dust off one edge. "This is made from the same type of material as the nose cone there. It resists distortion under thermal shock."

Iain Banks, *The Crow Road*, 1993, BNC

Excerpt 6

The western part of the cathedral was erected in the thirteenth century and culminated in one of the most beautiful facades anywhere in Europe. On traditional French pattern, it has a triple portal, a wonderful rose window and two towers. A lop-sided appearance is given by the fact that the north-west tower received its spire in 1399, but the south-west one was never built. The existing spire clearly shows the German origins of the building, with its openwork tracery designed by Ulrich d'Ensingen. The sculpture on the portals and the interior is magnificent, very French in treatment but German in expression; the wise and foolish virgins, for example. Damage to the sculptures during the Revolution was considerable, but the restoration has been excellently done (PLATE 62). Beauvais Cathedral in northern France was an ambitious project of the High Gothic period. Begun in 1247, it was designed on a tremendous scale. The choir, completed 1272, has the highest Gothic vault in Europe (of 157 feet), with accordingly strong flying buttress reinforcement.

Doreen Yarwood, *The Architecture of Europe*, 1992, BNC

Excerpt 7

No ring on his hand, but that was nothing to go by. Very few married men wore rings these days. Can't blame them. Better chance to play the field. He was breathing less heavily now. Perhaps he was asleep. She dabbed his forehead. "Are you asleep?" she whispered. "No," he whispered back. He wanted to say: "With a girl like you in the room?" but was too exhausted to make the effort. She kissed him lightly on the lips and rose from the bed to get dressed.

M. Lewes Kilby, *Man at the Sharp End*, 1991, BNC

Excerpt 8

He added, "The pure water of our French rivers is unsurpassed in the entire world!" "You almost make me wish I had enrolled on your course," said Melissa, with a certain lack of sincerity. Patriotism was all very well, but she felt this was going over the top. When mounted on his hobby-horse, Philippe Bonard had the makings of a thundering bore. "It would have been a privilege to have you as a student... ah, but your French is already of so excellent a quality... and you are occupied with your researches. Have you had a profitable day?" "Very, thank you," she said, wondering what his reaction would be if he knew how she had spent the past hour.

Betty Rowlands, *Over the Edge*, 1993, BNC

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Excerpt 9

Naturally, this didn't affect her competence to teach at the University of Oxford, because until quite recently the place preferred to treat modern languages as if they were dead: this made them more respectable, more like the distant perfections of Latin and Greek. Even so, it did strike me as peculiar that someone who lived by French literature should be so calamitously inadequate at making the basic words of the language sound as they did when her subjects, her heroes (her paymasters, too, you could say) first pronounced them. You might think this a cheap revenge on a dead lady critic simply for pointing out that Flaubert didn't have a very reliable notion of Emma Bovary's eyes.

Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*, 1985, BNC

Excerpt 10

Midnight wandered to the open door, wondering how long Captain Meredith would stay in this place. Across the courtyard the barn door pulled back, letting out light and people, but he noticed them only vaguely, his mind absorbed with a vivid picture of the fog-bound deck. He saw the moving mouth of the man so nearly dead; the stain on the waistcoat, and felt a strengthening of the foreboding that had never left him. Had anyone else been witness? His friend Mr Lambert perhaps? The thought was scarcely born before James Lambert himself appeared, hardly more than a shadow in the dusk, but unmistakable as he walked past the pile of kegs.

Marjorie Darke, *The First of Midnight*, 1989, BNC

Excerpt 11

Sure enough, a tragedy of supernatural strangeness followed. The couple vanished, only to be found weeks later in Ghar Hasan. "Dead?" "Very dead." "So if you curse the moon, the spirit of Hasan reappears and bumps you off!" That's the gist of it. Or Mathilde's version, at least. "Talk about tall stories! That's the most unlikely tale I've ever heard!" Isn't it just? Mathilde was a very moral lady. I suspect it was a cautionary tale.

Rosalie Ash, *Calypso's Island*, 1993, BNC

Excerpt 12

I saw his feet. He was quite dead. There was no question of it. The refrigerator door was wide open, and he was lying just behind it, slumped face downwards.

Stella Shepherd, *Black Justice*, 1988, BNC

Excerpt 13

Artisans and farmers are often on-site to demonstrate their crafts and to offer free food tastings. The shop is open 10 A.M. to 6 P.M., May to December, except Tuesdays.

"Buy Local Now", *Country Living*, Sept. 2008, COCA

Excerpt 14

As she paced, unaware of the picture she presented of extreme agitation, she looked only at the ground, and so did not know that she was observed.

Elizabeth Bailey, *Hidden Flame*, 1993, BNC

Excerpt 15

She had bought a pretty pine desk, and had scoured the antique shops until she found the perfect eighteenth-century light-mahogany chair to go with it.

Lynne Pemberton, *Platinum Coast*, 1993, BNC

Excerpt 16

Penelope glanced over Ianthe's shoulder through the open door of the dining room. Just a vase of red tulips on the table, she thought. Nothing very remarkable about that. "The spring flowers are so lovely now," Ianthe went on. "In the shops, I mean." "And in the South of France and the Scilly Isles – or so one imagines," said Penelope. "Yes, of course," said Ianthe with rather excessive enthusiasm! "Rupert is with Dr Bone in the drawing room."

Barbara Pym, *An Unsuitable Attachment*, 1993, BNC

Excerpt 17

Businessmen like Mr. Tanaka, a slim 37-year-old who works as a forester in Omiya because his factory went under last year, operate in an environment that is more social than economic.

"Shrugging off Doom", *New York Times*, 21/04/1998, COCA