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

**SUBJECT:**

"In combination with neutral adjectives, such as *long, short, small*, diminishers conjure up an interpretation of non-desired excess. The neutral adjectives have no internal end-point. The end-point is inferred by the diminisher, and they get an interpretation of excess by implication, e.g. *That skirt is a bit short (to wear at work)*, meaning 'a bit too short'.

Adjectives which are unambiguously positive are strange with diminishers, e.g. *?a bit good*. This is only natural since it is less likely for positive adjectives like *good* than for neutral adjectives like *long* to express non-desired excess."

Carita Paradis, "It's well weird: degree modifiers of adjectives revisited", *Corpora Galore: Analyses and Techniques in Describing English. Papers from the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference on English Language Research on Computerised Corpora (Icame 1998)*, Ed. John M. Kirk (Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V.), 2000, p. 2.

Discuss.

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

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**Excerpt 1**

The car coat was tight across the shoulders and the sleeves somewhat short, but there was no denying, despite the lemony color of a bad dye lot, that it was a well-made garment.

Annie Proulx, *That Old Ace in the Hole*, 2003

**Excerpt 2**

The rain repeller hat was a little small, but its field was adequate to keep all but the most violent gusts away from him.

Thomas R. Dulski, *To Emily on the Ecliptic*, 2004

**Excerpt 3**

He turned and was mildly surprised to see her pointing a gun at him. His heart did not thump in his chest, nor did his palms coat with sweat, because he knew Tori.

Rodney M. Johnson, *The Million Dollar Deception*, 2008

**Excerpt 4**

Concentrating on her career and remaining single until the biological clock started sounding its chimes, she decided to marry an agreeable man she was mildly fond of.

Alice Camille, *Got a Light?*, 2009

**Excerpt 5**

I wish I had sent a letter soon after it happened but I think it's a bit late now after nearly 3 years.

"Controlling Sister – How to Deal with?", *Daily Mail*, 2003, GloWbe

**Excerpt 6**

It was Judy, the woman who had invited Loretta to dinner the following evening. "Could you arrive a bit later than planned?" she asked. "I've promised to take Elinor and one of her schoolfriends to the zoo, and I'm worried about getting back in time." "Of course," said Loretta.

Joan Smith, *A Masculine Ending*, 1988

**Excerpt 7**

Just turned forty, he had thick, somewhat unruly brown hair, liberally streaked with gray. Large dark brown eyes that expressed humor and intelligence were the best feature in his somewhat long face.

Mary Higgins Clark, *All Around the Town*, 1992

**Excerpt 8**

Beach was nice. Food was good at the dinners. Very friendly staff. The pool and ocean at this time of year was a bit cold for me.

"Second trip as good as the first!", *Trip Advisor Canada*, 2012, Glowbe

**Excerpt 9**

She was whining, shivering in the chill of an early spring evening. We're not that high up, but we get a country cool out here in the Berkshires. Too much fresh air.

Simon Clea, *Dogs Don't Lie*, 2011

**Excerpt 10**

And I'll never forget that in Cape Town a staff member at the National Gallery once told me – and he wasn't half joking – that African art isn't art.

Gary van Wyk, *Fragments*, 2001

**Excerpt 11**

I told him the part was a little small and I asked, "Can I have a little bit more to do?"

"Jackee Hits Jackpot with Two TV Shows and a Comedy Movie", *Jet* 81, Issue 25, 1992

**Excerpt 12**

"May I have another slice of that delicious gingerbread?" "It's a bit overdone. I've only just started to cook in a convection oven," Clare said apologetically. "And it's a bit difficult to manage with no fridge – just that metal meat safe hanging outside the back door. When I get a job, I'll get a fridge."

Shirley Conran, *Crimson*, 1992

**Excerpt 13**

I've been at home all day. I guess it's a bit cold outside, to get out of the van and actually make the contracted delivery.

"More Hard-To-Find Telephone Numbers", *www.ivorysky.com*, 2006

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**Excerpt 14**

Ari broke into his reverie. "I saw him yesterday," she said. "He's... a bit odd, Mr Roirbak. He looked at me so strangely. Doesn't he like girls?"

Constantine Hermetech, *Storm*, 1991

**Excerpt 15**

Down left was a boy with cotton-wool hair and eyes too small for his face.

Barbara Neil, *The Possession of Delhia Sutherland*, 1993

**Excerpt 16**

The next morning, about nine o'clock, there came another knock at the door. It was the taxi-man. "It's all right, my dear," he said. "I'm a bit early. Take your time, don't hurry yourself."

Winifred Beechy, *The Reluctant Samaritan*, 1991

**Excerpt 17**

"Wasn't it snowing that morning?" "Yes, but it wasn't a bit cold."

Magdalen Nabb, *Death in Springtime: A Florentine Mystery*, 1989

**Excerpt 18**

I never could understand what she saw in him – a bit thin and weedy, to my way of thinking. What a waste.

Peter Ling, *Flood Water*, 1993

**Excerpt 19**

"You still see that Sebastian Smith?" Nutty asked her, sitting down to her shepherd's pie, cabbage and chips. "Sometimes. He's a bit young." Gloria was fourteen. "Immature," she added.

Kathleen M. Peyton, *Who, Sir? Me, Sir?*, 1988

**Excerpt 20**

"You could always have married me, Izzie." "You're a bit young for getting sons, Gabriel," she said, but at least she did not laugh.

Geraldine McCaughrean, *A Little Lower than the Angels*, 1987

**Excerpt 21**

Then the front door bell rang and while Rupert went to answer it a somewhat uneasy conversation started up between the two women and Everard Bone about his wife's flu and the likelihood or not of his catching it from her.

Barbara Pym, *An Unsuitable Attachment*, 1993

**Excerpt 22**

Eventually, Seb said, "You'd better go upstairs first, Carrie. I'm a bit slow with this leg of mine." "Well, I'm not a lot faster going upstairs with mine."

Emma V. Thompson, *Wychwood*, 1992

**Excerpt 23**

Swiftly, closing the door behind her, she exited the building, and returned through the study to the hall. She was surprised, and not a little worried, to find Petion missing.

David McIntee, *White Darkness*, 1993

**Excerpt 24**

"You're very quiet. Are you tired?" Luke's voice was soft, in keeping with the peace of the night, and she responded just as softly, not wanting to disturb the magic of the moment. "A bit, but pleasantly so."

Jennifer Taylor, *Destined to Love*, 1992

**Excerpt 25**

"How's the world of Lower Education?" "Might take it up full time, sir" said Bodie with a thin and slightly arrogant smile. "Before I get too old for CI5."

Kenneth Bulmer, *The Professionals*, 1983