

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel**  
**Department of English**



**Investigating EFL Students' Speech Accuracy and Precision with  
Specific Reference to Adjectives  
The Case of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students of English, University of Jijel**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Master Degree in  
Didactics of English

**Submitted by:**

Asma BENNIA

Bochra MEKHNACHE

**Supervised by:**

Dr. Slimane BOUKHENTACHE

**Board of Examiners**

**Supervisor:** Dr. Slimane BOUKHENTACHE

Jijel University

**Chairperson:** Ms. Ilham MELIT

Jijel University

**Examiner:** Dr. Samia AZIEB

Jijel University

**Academic Year: 2019-2020**

## **Dedication**

To those whom we love,

To those who love us,

We dedicate this work.

## Acknowledgments

“In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful”

We owe a debt of an immeasurable gratitude to our supervisor **Dr. Slimane BOUKHENTACHE** for his continuous help and valuable feedback throughout the accomplishment of this modest work.

We would like to express our gratitude to the board of examiners: **Dr. Samia AZIEB** and **Ms. Ilham MELIT** for devoting their time to evaluate this humble work.

Our acknowledgements go also to all those students who devoted time and energy to respond to the tasks.

Lastly, we address our thankfulness to our teachers in the department of English who gave us a hand of assistance at the university of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, and helped us reach this level with their fruitful instructions and valuable advice.

## **Abstract**

English occupies an important place and it is established as a language of international communication. Therefore, speaking English is undoubtedly vital nowadays since it is universally used in almost all fields of life. This study aims at investigating English as Foreign Language (EFL) students' speech accuracy and precision with a particular reference to adjectives; specifically, it seeks to describe how the students use adjectives in their speech taking into consideration the grammar and semantics aspects. It is hypothesized that third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, will show to a great extent grammatically incorrect use of different types of adjectives. Moreover, the study presupposes that they will manifest mostly imprecise use of adjectives in their speech. Three oral production tasks were designed and completed by the participants to examine the grammaticality and preciseness of students' use of adjectives in spontaneous speech. After analyzing grammatically and semantically the students' oral productions, it was found that the participants have an excellent performance in their grammatical use of adjectives. They only showed occasional incorrect use of a small number of proper and descriptive adjectives. Furthermore, the respondents showed an acceptable precision level in their use of adjectives, and their precision errors were mainly related to comparative degree of adjectives and gradable adjectives.

**Key Terms:** Accuracy, Adjectives, Grammar, Precision, Semantics, Speaking Skill.

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AS:</b>	Analysis of Speech
<b>CBA:</b>	Competency Based Approach
<b>CF:</b>	Corrective Feedback
<b>CLT:</b>	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>DM:</b>	Direct Method
<b>EFL:</b>	English as Foreign Language
<b>GTM:</b>	Grammar Translation Method
<b>IVL:</b>	Incidental Vocabulary Learning
<b>SM:</b>	Silent Method
<b>TPR:</b>	Total Physical Response

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1:</b>	Order of Adjectives in English -----	32
<b>Table 2:</b>	Students' Grammatical Use of Adjectives -----	54
<b>Table 3:</b>	Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types -----	56
<b>Table 4:</b>	Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types -----	57
<b>Table 5:</b>	Students' Superficial and Precise Use of Adjectives -----	61
<b>Table 6:</b>	Students' Degrees of Adjectives' Precision Errors -----	64
<b>Table 7:</b>	Students' Degree Adjectives' Precision Errors -----	67

## Table of Contents

Dedication-----	I
Acknowledgments -----	II
Abstract-----	III
List of Abbreviations -----	IV
List of Tables -----	V
Table of Contents -----	VI
<b>General Introduction -----</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction -----	1
1. Theoretical Background-----	2
2. Research Hypotheses -----	4
3. Statement of the Problem -----	5
4. Research Questions -----	5
5. Aim of the Study -----	5
6. Research Methodology -----	6
7. Structure of the Study -----	6
<b>Chapter One: Speaking Skill, Accuracy, Precision, and Adjectives -----</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Section One: Speaking Skill, Accuracy, and Precision -----</b>	<b>8</b>
Introduction -----	8
1.1. Definition of Speaking Skill-----	8
1.2. The Status of the Speaking Skill in Different Language Teaching Methods-----	9
1.3. Teaching the Speaking Skill in Algerian Schools -----	12
1.3.1. Speaking Skill in Middle Schools -----	13
1.3.2. Speaking Skill in Secondary Schools -----	13
1.4. Classroom Speaking Activities -----	14

1.4.1. Discussions	14
1.4.2. Dialogues	15
1.4.3. Role-Plays and Simulations	15
1.4.4. Communication Games	16
1.4.5. Information Gap Activities	16
1.5. EFL Learners' Speaking Difficulties	16
1.5.1. Linguistic Problems	17
1.6. Characteristics of Oral Proficiency	18
1.6.1. Accuracy	18
1.6.2. Precision	18
1.7. Measuring Accuracy	19
1.7.1. Specific Measures of Accuracy	20
1.7.2. General Measures of Accuracy	20
1.8. Developing Accuracy	21
1.9. The Importance of Accuracy and Precision in Spoken English	23
Conclusion	23
<b>2. Section Two: Adjectives</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
2.1. Definition of Adjectives	25
2.2. Grammatical Features of Adjectives	26
2.2.1. Morphological Features of Adjectives	27
2.2.2. Syntactic Role of Adjectives	28
2.2.3. Semantic Sub-Classification of Adjectives	29
2.2.3.1. Stative/Dynamic Adjectives	29
2.2.3.2. Gradable/Non-Gradable Adjectives	30

2.2.3.3. Inherent/Non-Inherent Adjectives	31
2.3. Order of Adjectives	31
2.4. Types of Adjectives	33
2.5. Degrees of Adjectives	35
2.6. Native Language Interference in English Adjectives' Use	36
2.7. Common Errors in Adjectives' Acquisition	36
2.7.1. Transfer Errors	37
2.7.2. Developmental Errors	37
2.7.2.1. Overgeneralization	37
2.7.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions	37
2.7.2.3. Incomplete Application of Rules	38
2.7.2.4. Hypothesizing False Concepts	38
2.8. Role of Adjectives in Natural Communication	39
2.9. Strategies to Teaching Adjectives	40
Conclusion	42
<b>Chapter Two: Methods, Results, and Discussions</b>	<b>44</b>
Introduction	44
<b>1. Section One: Methodology</b>	<b>44</b>
Introduction	44
1.1. Research Paradigm	44
1.2. Research Design	45
1.2.1. Population and Sampling	46
1.2.1.1. Population	46
1.2.1.2. Sample of the Study	46
1.2.2. Data Gathering Instrument	46

1.2.2.1. Elicitation Procedures -----	46
1.2.3. Data Collection Procedure-----	48
1.2.4. Data Analysis Procedure-----	49
1.2.5. Limitations of the Study -----	51
Conclusion -----	52
<b>2. Section Two: Results -----</b>	<b>53</b>
Introduction -----	53
2.1. Students' Grammatical Use of Adjectives -----	53
2.2. Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types -----	55
2.3. Students' Superficial and Precise Use of Adjectives -----	60
2.4. Students' Degrees of Adjectives' Precision Errors -----	63
2.5. Students' Degree Adjectives' Precision Errors -----	66
Conclusion -----	69
<b>3. Section Three: Discussions -----</b>	<b>70</b>
Introduction -----	70
3.1. Research Question One ( <i>To what extent do EFL students make grammatically incorrect use of adjectives in their oral performance?</i> )-----	70
3.2. Research Question Two ( <i>What are the types of adjectives in which EFL students show more grammatically incorrect use in speech?</i> )-----	71
3.3. Research Question Three ( <i>Do EFL students show mostly superficial or precise use of adjectives in their speech?</i> )-----	72
3.4. Research Question Four ( <i>Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to positive, comparative, or superlative degrees of adjectives?</i> )-----	73
3.5. Research Question Five ( <i>Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to gradable adjectives or non-gradable ones?</i> )-----	74

3.6. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations for Future Research -----	74
Conclusion -----	75
<b>General Conclusion -----</b>	<b>78</b>
References	
Appendices	
Résumé	
ملخص	

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

### Introduction

Throughout the process of language teaching and learning, teachers' main role is to help learners develop the four language skills. Speaking has been given more interest by linguists since the focus of English language teaching has shifted from the mere acquisition of language rules and patterns, which was emphasized in the traditional methods of language teaching, to the practical use of language in communication and interaction in naturalistic situations.

Developing the speaking skill has, therefore, become a prerequisite for EFL students to use the language effectively in different communicative contexts. In order to speak effectively, students need, among many other skills, to focus on two main aspects of speech, which are *accuracy* and *precision*. Accuracy refers to how correct students' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar (such as verb forms, tenses, and adjectives), pronunciation (including strong and weak forms, stress, and intonation), and vocabulary. It demonstrates students' appropriate use of the different parts of speech and the grammar rules governing them. In other words, it has to do with the students' ability to produce error-free units of speech to communicate in the foreign language. On the other hand, precision refers to students' ability to express their ideas, thoughts and opinions using exact words and expressions. A precise language user is able to express more directly what he/she wants to say using precise words and expressions and exact vocabulary including precise nouns, adjectives, and vivid verbs.

One of the challenging issues that EFL students encounter throughout their foreign language learning process is to acquire accurate and precise use of adjectives in their speech. Adjectives are words that are used to describe or modify a noun, pronoun, object or a person. Zerkina et al. (2016) claimed that "the use of adjectives in speech makes it more accurate,

special and expressive" (p. 5146). This emphasizes the viewpoint that students' effective use of adjectives helps them to express themselves correctly and get their ideas across clearly. Hence, the study at hand attempts to describe EFL students' speech accuracy and precision with regard to the use of adjectives.

## **1. Theoretical Background**

In modern times, English has become the language that is often taught as a second language in different regions throughout the world. Harmer (2001) stated that "although English is not the language with the largest number of native 'First' language speakers, it has become a lingua franca" (p. 1). English has been used as a means of communication by people from different linguistic backgrounds. In EFL classrooms, students face several difficulties to acquire a good language proficiency level. One of the major challenges lies in using English language in communication and interaction. Therefore, the speaking skill has been regarded by learners as the hardest skill to master among the four language skills since it necessitates high levels of mastery of language *accuracy* and *precision*.

In communication, English speakers employ language differently. Some of them have access to a limited glossary and use simple, short, and ill-formed sentences, while others have access to an expanded glossary and produce complex, long, and well-structured utterances. This was explained in Bernstein's theory of sociolinguistics which claims that speakers of a language use different codes.

In this regard, Bernstein (1971) assumed that there are two different varieties of language. He used the term "elaborated code" to refer to the originally formal code of speaking that is used as a medium of instruction in schooling. It makes use of correct grammatical and syntactic structures and makes discriminative use of a wide range of adjectives and adverbs (Burns & Dobson, 1984). On the other hand, he used the term 'restricted code' to refer to the public code of speaking (Wardhaugh, 2006). Restricted code speakers employ short

grammatically simple and often unfinished sentences of rigid syntactic forms (Burns & Dobson, 1984). Restricted code is also distinguished by the rigidity of syntax, limited vocabulary, repetition of conjunctions, and is regarded as a language of implicit meaning.

According to Stubbs (2012), speakers using elaborated code are said to use both codes, but some restricted code speakers can have access only to it, and “this is said to affect the way such speakers can express themselves and form concepts” (p. 49). This is very important in education because “schools are predicated upon elaborated code” (CCC1, as cited in Stubbs, 2012, p. 49). It thus can be said that speaking accuracy differs among speakers of both codes. Elaborated code speakers demonstrate accurate and complex use of grammatical structures and precise use of adjectives and adverbs. In contrast, restricted code speakers use inaccurate, simple, and short grammatical structures and limited and imprecise use of adjectives and adverbs. Bernstein’s theory supports the conduct of the current study since EFL students can be said to use a restricted code whose speakers demonstrate limited, inaccurate, and imprecise use of adjectives in their speech.

Considering language accuracy in oral performance, Wang (2014) conducted a study on developing accuracy and fluency in spoken English of Chinese EFL learners. He assumed that students’ speaking competence mainly covers speaking accuracy and fluency and suggested a four-step pedagogical method in Chinese EFL oral lessons including an *after speaking* stage. In this stage, learners should be offered chances to notice the correct use of language so as to improve their speaking accuracy.

With regard to the development of English language speaking ability in EFL classrooms, Beheshti, Derakhshan, and Khalili (2016) argued that it is the responsibility of EFL teachers to exactly investigate the factors, conditions, and components that form the basis of effective communication. Therefore, EFL teachers should provide sufficient language input and speech-promotion activities for students to speak English appropriately (Beheshti,

Derakhshan, & Khalili, 2016). This enriches students' glossary and helps them to say more precisely and accurately what they want to express leading them to communicate effectively.

On the other hand, studies on English adjectives include Amer's (2013) investigation of the differences between English and Arabic position and order of adjectives. He claimed that the linguistic differences between the position of adjectives and their order in both languages (English and Arabic) are one of the most prominent causes of committing errors. He concluded that English adjectives are problematic for Islamic University of Gaza's students due to the difference in structure in both languages. This causes students to commit serious errors resulting from negative mother tongue interference, which consequently affects their oral performance.

Furthermore, El Shaban (2017) held a cross-sectional investigation about the difficulties encountered by Arabic students in using English adjectives across four levels of English proficiency at Benghazi University in Libya. She used tests that covered most of the semantic and structural characteristics of English adjectives. The results of the study showed that the participants' responses to the test items used were approximately similar and that the majority of learners' errors were overgeneralization errors rather than interference ones.

To our knowledge, no research has been conducted to investigate speech accuracy and precision with specific reference to adjectives. Therefore, our study aims at filling in this gap in the literature. Specifically, it seeks to describe EFL students' speech accuracy and precision with reference to their use of adjectives.

## **2. Research Hypotheses**

The current research work puts forward the following hypotheses:

- ✓ H1: EFL students show to a great extent grammatically incorrect use of adjectives in their oral performance.
- ✓ H2: EFL students manifest mostly superficial use of adjectives in their speech.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

During the process of communication and interaction in English, EFL students face different problems that negatively affect their productivity and obstruct their communication. One of them lies in the correct use of language forms and structures; specifically, EFL students encounter difficulties in the appropriate use of adjectives to express themselves or even to describe things accurately and precisely. Some research works (Pajunen, 1998, EL Shaban, 2017, & Amer, 2013) have examined the use of adjectives in language discourse. However, EFL students' speech accuracy and precision regarding their use of adjectives was not given much consideration in second language research. Therefore, we attempt in this study to examine students' speech accuracy and precision with specific reference to adjectives.

### **4. Research Questions**

The current research aims at investigating the following research questions:

- ✓ To what extent do EFL students make grammatically incorrect use of adjectives in their oral performance?
- ✓ What are the types of adjectives in which EFL students show more grammatically incorrect use in speech?
- ✓ Do EFL students show mostly superficial or precise use of adjectives in their speech?
- ✓ Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to positive, comparative, or superlative degrees of adjectives?
- ✓ Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to gradable adjectives or non-gradable ones?

### **5. Aim of the Study**

The study under investigation seeks to examine EFL students' speech accuracy and precision with specific reference to adjectives. Specifically, it aims at analysing students' speech to explore EFL students' grammaticality and preciseness of adjectives' use.

## **6. Research Methodology**

In order to investigate students' speech accuracy and precision regarding their use of adjectives and to test the stated hypotheses, the current study will adopt a descriptive research design which will be conducted using a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. The researchers will use a qualitative method for gathering data and a quantitative method for analysing it. Three oral production tasks will be employed to elicit samples of students' spoken language. Students' answers will be recorded and transcribed. Regarding the analysis, all adjectives used by the participants will be marked and presented in terms of frequency counts.

The population of the study will consist of third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, during the academic year 2019/2020. Basically, the sample for this study consists of 19 third year students.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

The present study is organized in two chapters. The first chapter presents the theoretical background of the research and introduces the literature review. On the other hand, the second chapter is devoted to the methodology, results, and discussion of the findings.

The first chapter is subdivided into two sections. The first one provides a review of literature related to speaking skill and speech accuracy and precision while section two explores the concept of adjectives in English language. The second chapter is sub-divided into three sections. The first one includes a description of the research methodology along with the limitations of the study. The second section is devoted to the analysis of the data gathered. The third section discusses the results obtained, outlines the major findings, and suggests recommendations for future research.

**Chapter One: Speaking Skill, Accuracy, Precision,  
and Adjectives**

## **Chapter One: Speaking Skill, Accuracy, Precision, and Adjectives**

### **1. Section One: Speaking Skill, Accuracy, and Precision**

#### **Introduction**

Mastering a language is often compared to being able to speak it well. Lado (1961) wrote “the ability to speak a foreign language is, without doubt, the most highly prized language skill” (as cited in Fulcher, 2014, p.18). Furthermore, speech is the means through which people communicate with each other. The following section tackles the concept of speaking skill. It starts with the definition of the speaking skill proposed by different scholars along with its status in different language teaching methods, moving to talk about teaching the speaking skill in the Algerian educational context. This section also aims at presenting some speaking activities and difficulties that EFL learners meet. More importantly, it tackles two major characteristics of the speaking skill, namely *accuracy* and *precision*. It presents measures of accuracy, importance of accuracy and precision in spoken English, and how to develop accuracy.

#### **1.1. Definition of Speaking Skill**

The speaking skill has been investigated by many researchers in the field of second language acquisition and learning. Learning the speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language (Nunan, 1991). Broadly defined, speaking refers to the verbal use of language to communicate with others to meet certain purposes (Fulcher, 2014). It is often unprompted, open-ended, and evolving.

By the same token, Bygate (1987) added that speaking involves the cooperation of different types of knowledge with a good control of certain skills. He explained that to be able to speak in a foreign language, it is necessary to own some knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. However, this knowledge in itself is not enough; the skill of using it is also needed. In other words, speaking is not just about having a certain amount of knowledge of

the language, but rather the ability to act on that knowledge which refers to the skill of using it and adjusting this use to suit different circumstances.

Underwood (1989) also claimed that "speaking is a creative process; an active interaction between speaker and listener that involves thought and emotion" (p. 11). On the other hand, Baker and Westrup (2003) attempted to give a precise definition of speaking by describing it in the classroom. According to them, it is crucial that learners practise the language they are learning in situations that are similar to life outside the classroom. For example, learners should talk about their lives, express their ideas, and discuss different issues. Simply put, speaking in the classroom should be meaningful. It means that learners practice language to accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals that need to be related to their life outside the classroom to be socially effective.

## **1.2. The Status of the Speaking Skill in Different Language Teaching Methods**

Distinct methods of language teaching viewed language from different perspectives. Accordingly, each method accounted for the language skills in its own way; speaking is one of the skills that has been approached in various ways. The very first of these approaches and methods has long focused on the written form of language at the expense of its spoken form. In other words, teaching the speaking skill had been undervalued; an example of these approaches is the Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

GTM totally disregarded the speaking skill. Richards and Rodgers (1986) confirmed this idea. They claimed that "reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening" (p. 3). In the same context, Abdullah (2013) stated that "the method by definition has a very limited scope. Speaking or any kind of spontaneous creative output was missing from the curriculum, students would often fail at speaking or even letter writing in the target language" (p. 125). This means that GTM does not focus on

learners' productive skills and this resulted in learners' inability to communicate in the target language either in speaking or writing.

Nevertheless, researchers and teachers confessed that even though some active learners succeed in writing correct utterances and short passages, they are incapable to interact in English inside the classroom, utter a very simple question or even answer questions appropriately.

As communication opportunities increased for Europeans in the mid-nineteenth century, researchers recognized the importance of speaking proficiency in foreign languages leading to the emergence of a new approach to language teaching which is the Direct Method (DM). Accordingly, they set 'speaking proficiency' as a goal for language programs instead of reading and translation. Teachers within this approach teach the language items indirectly and exclusively in the target language while emphasizing the speaking skill. Abdullah (2013) stated that "all teaching is done in the target language, grammar is taught inductively, there is a focus on speaking and listening, and only useful 'everyday' language is taught" (p. 128). The DM is built upon learners' complete involvement when speaking in the target language. It results in extensive oral interaction and creative use of language with no reference to translation. Nevertheless, it requires competent native-like teachers, and since not all teachers were adept enough to adhere to this principle, the DM had been criticized.

After that, the entry of the US into the war resulted in an increasing need for proficient speakers of different languages. Language programs were created to provide the army with fluent speakers. The procedures used in these courses significantly influenced foreign language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This led to the appearance of the Army Method (also called the Audio-Lingual Method). Audiolingualism considers the oral medium as the primary medium of language. In sum, this approach states that speech is language, and language is speech.

The main focus of the method is to promote oral skills. Richards and Rodgers (1986) confirmed this point; “the teaching of listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary is related to development of oral fluency. Reading and writing skills may be taught, but they are dependent upon prior oral skills. Language is primarily speech in audiolingual theory” (p. 52).

A new method to language teaching and learning has also been devised by Caleb Cattegno, called the Silent Method (SM). He believed that the teacher should be silent as much as possible and give the opportunity to the learner to discover the language on his/her own; it forms the basis for independent learning. The main goal of SM is to train learners to enhance the oral aspect of the language and to produce native-like fluent speakers of the target language. Freeman (2000) emphasized this point, she stated that “the teacher works with them (students), striving for pronunciation that would be intelligible to a native speaker of the target language” (p. 65).

A similar method to the SM is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method which also emphasizes learners’ oral proficiency. According to Freeman (2000), in TPR “spoken language should be emphasized over written language” (p. 112). James Asher, the developer of this method, based it on the idea that children learn a language through the speech addressed to them to perform actions. In the same token, Freeman (2000) stated that “the use of commands is the major teaching technique of TPR. The commands are given to get students to perform an action; the action makes the meaning of the command clear” (p. 116). In TPR, teachers perform the actions with their learners to clarify their meaning at first, and then learners perform the commands alone.

Another approach to language teaching and learning is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach which emphasizes that the goal of language teaching and learning is to develop learners’ communicative competence. CLT stresses the teaching of listening and

speaking skills, but lessons can also include reading and writing. It considers language as a means of communication that focuses on the individual communicative skills, rather than mere mastery of language structures and forms (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). According to Harmer (2001), “activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing” (p. 85). This elucidates that speaking has been given an important status in CLT.

To put it in a nutshell, teaching speaking skills should not be regarded as an end in itself, but rather a medium through which EFL learners develop their oral proficiency. Speaking is a crucial skill because the ability to speak skilfully and put words together meaningfully to reflect thoughts, feelings, and opinions equips the learner with several advantages. Accordingly, it necessitates more attention than any other language skill.

### **1.3. Teaching the Speaking Skill in Algerian Schools**

Historically, the speaking skill has not been emphasized in the teaching or learning of foreign languages in Algerian schools; however, it has become one of the main objectives in current approaches. In an attempt to emphasize the status of the speaking skill and improve the speaking ability of Algerian learners, the Algerian Ministry of Education implemented the communicative approach in the 1980s. Consequently, the speaking skill has become central in EFL teaching and learning. However, the Algerian classrooms were not prepared enough to adopt this approach due to the lack of teaching aids (such as language laboratories, computers, and data projectors) and to the classroom density.

As a result, CLT has been substituted by the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) since 2003 in in which learners are the center of the teaching and learning process. It has aimed at developing learners’ communicative competence and making learning useful. Specifically, learners were expected to be able to practice using English and interact orally in

pair or group activities effectively and efficiently in different contexts (Omari, 2015). Within CBA, learners take full responsibility over their learning and work hard to enhance their problem-solving skills as well as their ability to act on a variety of skills and knowledge in various new situations.

### **1.3.1. Speaking Skill in Middle Schools**

In Algerian middle schools, textbooks are designed following the principles of CBA. The syllabus then, emphasizes meaningful communication in addition to language form and cooperation between teachers and learners. The latter are the center of the learning process, whereas the former stand as facilitators of the input presented in the textbook which is divided into projects, dealing with the four language skills.

Concerning the speaking skill, learners in middle schools are taught to develop oral interaction, as well as interpretation of oral materials. According to Mirza (2016), “since their first year, the learners are trained on listening and speaking, including pronouncing the different English sounds” (p. 34). Sometimes, learners are required to listen to short dialogues and to perform them by employing the correct pronunciation. In other cases, they are asked to listen, understand short passages, and answer related oral and written tasks. They are also expected to identify the English phonological system and use correct grammar and lexis. For example, within the rubric ‘I pronounce’ in the first sequence of project one in third year book “*My Book of English*”, students are asked to select the correct phonetic transcription for the modals ‘can’ and ‘can’t’. In the following tasks within the same rubric, they are asked to listen and repeat some questions and also to collaborate with their partners and work out the dialogue they have already listened to while correcting each other’s pronunciation.

### **1.3.2. Speaking Skill in Secondary Schools**

In Algerian secondary schools, textbooks are also designed following the basics of CBA. The syllabus tackles themes that are related to authentic communication such as family,

lifestyles, disasters, solidarity, education, arts, and technology. Learners are taught with the aim of making them able to express themselves accurately and fluently in English and are also expected to acquire good control of the main language functions and structures in their oral interactions. Language functions and structures are to be studied and then consolidated through a variety of language tasks. “These tasks are aimed to provide opportunities to interact in classroom and negotiate meaning using more complex utterances, more fluently and accurately than in previous years of education” (Ladjali, 2011, p. 29). In simpler words, the tasks used help learners participate in oral discussions and interactions more fluently and accurately. More importantly, the speaking skill at this level has to be integrated with the other language skills in a way that guarantees suitable language fluency and accuracy.

#### **1.4. Classroom Speaking Activities**

In the course of language teaching and learning, teachers design and assign activities to learners to help them learn, develop, and master specific language skills. They have access to a variety of speaking activities that can be used to reinforce learners’ speaking proficiency in authentic interactions.

##### **1.4.1. Discussions**

Discussions are known to be the most used speaking activities in language classrooms. According to Byrne (1986), a discussion refers to “an exchange of opinions and ideas rather than the formal exploration of a topic (which is only possible at the advanced level of language learning)” (p. 92). For this type of tasks, teachers act as guides and motivators; their role is to organize and plan discussions on different topics of common interests among learners and encourage them all to take part.

Ur (1981) added that “a discussion that works is primarily one in which as many students as possible say as much as possible” (p. 3). This certifies that successful discussions are those that engage the largest number of students. Discussion activities include pictures

description, pictures differences, things in common, shopping lists, and problem-solving tasks (as cited in Zemmouri, 2010, p. 44).

#### **1.4.2. Dialogues**

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more people about a specific theme for the sake of exchanging ideas, thoughts, and opinions. According to Dobson (1981), a dialogue is “a short conversation between two people presented as a language model” (p. 35). They are one form of speaking activities that teachers can use to help students communicate their ideas about different topics in pairs or groups. Teachers help their students at the beginning to start the dialogues, and then they let them take the wheel and proceed freely. In dialogues, students can exchange roles; this helps their teachers to evaluate their speaking proficiency.

#### **1.4.3. Role-Plays and Simulations**

Roleplay is an exemplary interactive speaking activity. Thornbury (2005) assumed that role plays broaden learners’ skyline and stretch their imagination beyond the classroom walls, thus allowing them to experience real-life language. In a role-play, learners are given particular roles to perform in front of an audience. They need to prepare and rehearse their ideas and language beforehand.

On the other hand, according to Bygate (1987), a simulation is “an activity in which the main focus is to reproduce a problem situation typical of the real world which participants should resolve through language” (p. 116). In other words, it is a speaking activity where the learner replicates a real-life experience and solves the problems inherent in it. The teacher’s task is to design adapted simulations to the students’ needs, the necessary skills to be developed, and the confinement of the classroom (Chilcott, 1996). Simulations are of great importance; they motivate students, allow them to express themselves freely, and give them the chance to use a wider range of language from outside the classroom (Harmer, 2001).

#### **1.4.4. Communication Games**

Another type of speaking tasks is communication games activities. Harmer (2001) defined it as games that are designed to provoke communication between students. In communication games, the same author explains that “one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture (describe and draw), put things in the right order (describe and arrange), or find similarities and differences between pictures” (p. 272). Thus, communication games frequently depend on an information gap.

#### **1.4.5. Information Gap Activities**

An information gap activity is one where each learner has some, but not all, of the information needed to complete a task and learners need to work in pairs or groups, talk to each other and ask questions to find all of the information required. It relies upon pre-prepared information cards that need to be carefully distributed. In this kind of controlled communicative tasks, a lot of authentic language is used.

In short, speaking activities are important for learners to acquire EFL speaking skills that permit them to converse spontaneously and naturally with others. Moreover, “if the right speaking activities are taught in the classroom, speaking can raise general learners' motivation and make the English language classroom a fun and dynamic place to be” (Nunan, 1999, & Celce-Murcia, 2001, as cited in Torkey, 2006, p. 14).

### **1.5. EFL Learners' Speaking Difficulties**

Throughout their learning process, EFL learners meet several speaking difficulties that notably affect their speaking proficiency. Many of them are linguistic problems. They are the result of a number of factors; some are connected to the learners themselves, while others may be related to the teaching techniques, the curriculum, or the environment around them.

### 1.5.1. Linguistic Problems

Linguistic factors are a strong feature that influences students' spoken performance. Thornbury (2005) claimed that "being *skillful* assumes having some kind of knowledge base.... Knowledge that is relevant to speaking can be categorized either as knowledge of features of language (linguistic knowledge) or knowledge that is independent of language (extra linguistic knowledge)" (p. 11). This certifies that linguistic knowledge is essential in speaking. The lack of this type of knowledge can cause speaking deficiencies for learners concerning vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation.

Mastering a foreign language requires the accumulation of a large number of vocabulary items, yet learners find themselves with a very limited vocabulary storage and often find it difficult to use exact words to articulate their thoughts precisely and accurately. This affects negatively their oral contributions in classrooms. Furthermore, students are often afraid of making mistakes in their speech or mispronouncing some words in the foreign language which stops them from participating in oral classes.

UR (1996) listed four main factors that cause difficulties in speaking (p. 121).

- ✓ **Inhibition:** Some learners feel worried about committing mistakes when they try to communicate their ideas in the classroom; they become afraid of taking risks and consequently being criticized by their teachers.
- ✓ **Nothing to Say:** Learners are sometimes uninterested about their learning and have no motive to express themselves or speak in the classroom, this causes major speaking difficulties in the future.
- ✓ **Low or Uneven Participation:** In crowded classrooms where only one speaker can speak at a time, some learners have the tendency to dominate talking; this causes others to speak too little for short periods of time or not talk at all.

- ✓ **Mother-Tongue Use:** Since it is less exposing and easier for them to communicate with others using their mother tongue, some learners resort to using their native language to express themselves in the classroom.

Basically, it is necessary for teachers to offer a supportive atmosphere to help learners overcome these difficulties. If opportunities to express ones' self freely are offered, learners will be able to enhance their communicative abilities.

## **1.6. Characteristics of Oral Proficiency**

Speakers who are considered proficient are often termed as good, fluent, knowledgeable and competent. However, it is not always clear what oral proficiency entails; there are many features that are taken into account when considering learners' speech in classrooms; yet, emphasis is put on two of them to develop learners' oral proficiency, namely *accuracy* and *precision*.

### **1.6.1. Accuracy**

The term 'accuracy' refers to how well a language is produced in relation to its rules' system. It is the capability to produce meaningful utterances using correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. According to Brown (n.d.), "accuracy is achieved to some extent by allowing students to focus on the elements of phonology, grammar, and discourse in their spoken output" (p. 268). EFL learners may be misunderstood and their interlocutors may lose track if they produce incorrect and vague utterances each time. Therefore, constructing accurate speech and paying attention to correctness and completeness of language form is of great importance for oral proficiency.

### **1.6.2. Precision**

Precision entails the use of precise vocabulary words. In other words, it refers to the ability to express one's thoughts, opinions and ideas using the most appropriate and exact words and expressions. Precise language users make correct and accurate use of vocabulary

words in their spoken mode of expression. According to Andrews (2006), “precision describes the quality of exactness. The precise language user demonstrates the ability to utilize a more expanded repertoire of words in order to say more directly and more cogently what the speaker is trying to accomplish” (p. 63). Making specific and precise word choice and using accurate vocabulary with precise nouns, adjectives, and vivid verbs helps the interlocuters get clear and strong mental pictures given in individuals’ speech; for example, instead of saying “Andrew is a *good* guitar player”, the speaker can be more precise by saying “Andrew is a skillful guitar player”. Therefore, using precise language in speech facilitates effective communication and helps speakers avoid being ambiguous and vague.

On the whole, *accuracy* and *precision* are regarded as complementary principles and requisites for oral proficiency. Therefore, learners should focus on and develop them through practice.

### **1.7. Measuring Accuracy**

For all types of learners, speaking accuracy helps indicate the degree of control each of them has over the knowledge he/she has acquired. Thus, measuring accuracy is crucial for both learners and teachers; as a result, different measures have been proposed by researchers among which there are both general and specific measures of accuracy.

Foster, Tonkyn and Wigglesworth (2000) affirmed that analyzing learners’ speech requires an initial method of dividing the data obtained after transcribing it into units called the AS-Units (i.e., Analysis of Speech Units) that are more convenient according to the same authors. They defined AS-Units as “a single speaker’s utterance consisting of an independent clause, or sub-clausal unit, together with any subordinate clause(s) associated with either” (as cited in Ellis, 2005, pp. 256-257).

### **1.7.1. Specific Measures of Accuracy**

Accuracy can be measured specifically by measuring the learners' provision of a particular form in a specific context such as verb forms, noun and verb agreement, or adjectives' use. These measurements capture differences in learners' performance related to a specific task type and are better suited for focused tasks (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, as cited in Vercellotti, 2012). The teacher decides the form and context to be measured based on the task's conditions or the proficiency level of students.

However, the results obtained for this type of measurements may not be reliable in representing learners' general accuracy, especially for learners with mixed language backgrounds since some language features might be easier or more difficult depending on learners' language background. Therefore, specific measurements should act as a supplement to general measurements in classrooms where there are students with mixed language backgrounds (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, as cited in Vercellotti, 2012).

### **1.7.2. General Measures of Accuracy**

General measures of accuracy are useful in tasks where learners have more flexibility when answering because they may opt for simple forms and structures rather than complex ones. For research on non-specified structures, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) recommended general measures of accuracy; one of them is the number of learners' self-repairs. According to Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000), it represents the total number of errors identified by the speaker either during or immediately following production where he/she stops and reformulates his/her speech. Another general measure of accuracy is "the number of error-free clauses divided by the total number of clauses" (Foster & Skehan, 1996, Skehan & Foster, 1999, as cited in Ellis, 2005, p. 256), in addition to the number of errors per 100 words, that is, the number of errors divided by the total number of words produced divided by 100 (Mehnert, 1998).

In a nutshell, specific measures of accuracy are usually applied in research on a particular structure, but they are less convenient to capture overall accuracy performance. On the other hand, general measures of accuracy can be utilized for non-specified structures and are more suited when dealing with students from different language backgrounds.

### **1.8. Developing Accuracy**

In most L2 learning theories, corrective feedback (CF) is seen as contributing to language learning and acquisition; however, for structural and communicative approaches to language teaching, it is a tool to ensure linguistic accuracy. In cases where learners fail to identify the error on their own, CF helps them notice the gap and gives an opportunity to revise their interlanguage and compare it to the given input via recasts (Ellis, 1994); recasts refer to the repetition of the falsely produced utterances minus the error. Moreover, CF is necessary for learners to avoid instilling wrong forms and structures and to develop accurate knowledge by restructuring their already existing knowledge.

Harmer (2007) explains that “when students are involved in accuracy work, it is part of the teacher’s function to point out and correct the mistakes the students are making” (p. 143). According to him, CF during accuracy work is made up of the following two different stages:

- ✓ **Stage One: Showing Incorrectness**

At this stage, the teacher shows the learner that an error has been made. According to Harmer (2007), this can be done in different ways (pp. 144-145):

- ✓ **Repetition:** It is about asking, with the right intonation, the student to repeat his/her utterance to show that it was incorrect in some way and that a repetition or reformulation is needed. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), they “indicate to students either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the

utterance is incorrect in some way and that a repetition or a reformulation is required” (p. 126).

- ✓ **Echoing:** According to Lyster and Ranta (1967), it refers to “the teachers’ repetition, in isolation, of the students’ erroneous utterance” (p. 48). The teacher repeats the ill-formed part of the utterance and adjust his intonation to highlight the error and make students aware of it.
- ✓ **Statement and Question:** In this case, the teacher provides related metalinguistic clues, comments, or questions without pointing out the error or providing the correction. For example, the teacher can say: “Do we say it like that?”, or “can you identify your error?”.
- ✓ **Expression:** It involves using facial expressions or gestures to indicate that an error has been committed.
- ✓ **Hinting:** It is about giving hints to students about their errors, such as using the word ‘tense’ to indicate that their use of the past simple tense is incorrect in a specific context.
- ✓ **Reformulation:** (also called recasts) Lyster and Ranta (1997) explained that recasts “involve the teacher's reformulation of all or a part of a student's utterance, minus the error” (p. 49). Here, the teacher reformulates the student’s answer correctly without mentioning that an error has been made.
- ✓ **Stage Two: Getting it Right**

If learners fail to correct themselves after the teacher’s indication of an error, the teacher should provide an explicit correction of the incorrect form. In this case, he/she should point out that an error has been committed, identifies it, and provides the correction. Moreover, peer-correction can be of great benefit for learners once they are well-exploited by their teachers.

Basically, teachers can develop learners' speaking accuracy and precision using corrective feedback through two phases. In the first phase, the teacher can make use of repetitions, echoing, statements and questions, reformulations, expressions, or hinting to indicate incorrectness of the learner's utterance. However, if the learner still cannot identify or repair the error, the teacher should move to the second phase and provide the correction of the erroneous utterance.

### **1.9. The Importance of Accuracy and Precision in Spoken English**

Accuracy and Precision are two main components of L2 acquisition. According to Toni, Hassaskhah, and Birjandi (2017), "emphasis on accuracy accounts for the production of correct instances of language. On the contrary, inaccuracy is an indication of erroneousness and results in structurally wrong sentences" (p. 186). Being accurate in speech means producing a language that is appropriate to a specific situation and free from grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation mistakes. Conversely, for a learner to be called a proficient speaker, he/she has to be able to communicate his/her thoughts, ideas, and opinions accurately, precisely and fluently in an autonomous way.

Without structuring accurate and precise speech, EFL learners will not be understood when interacting with others and their interlocutors will eventually withdraw from communication. However, being accurate and precise in speech helps learners communicate in a way that enables the interlocutors to understand everything with no need for re-explanation or going back to points that were touched upon before. Therefore, paying attention to the correctness and completeness of a language form, (i.e., language accuracy) and using words and expressions accurately and precisely is prominent for oral proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this section has addressed the concepts of the speaking skill and speaking accuracy and precision. It has discussed in brief their definitions and has emphasized the status

of the speaking skill in different language teaching methods and its teaching in the Algerian educational context. This section has also presented different classroom speaking activities and difficulties encountered by EFL learners. Most importantly, it has highlighted two main characteristics of oral proficiency and presented different measures of speaking accuracy. Furthermore, this section has shed light on the importance of accuracy and precision in spoken language and ended with ways to develop it.

## **2. Section Two: Adjectives**

### **Introduction**

Teaching adjectives to EFL learners is an embedded part in the efficient teaching of the language. If students learn about adjectives, the chances of understanding the target language are higher and more effective. Their understanding of speech or writing would logically become more successful and probably one day they would reach proficiency in the target language (Yogcioglu, 2019). Adjectives can be described as the vivid soul of the language; without them, imagination is limited and meaning is incomplete. Adjectives are like the wheels of the car, they keep the car ongoing. Descriptive language assists people to make concise and precise images, helps writers to make their stories tangible, and definitely helps speakers of the language to convey more complex meanings than without adjectives (Sener, 2012).

This section deals with a short depiction of English adjectives. First, it presents definitions of adjectives and their grammatical background. Second, it deals with their syntactic and semantic characteristics moving to a descriptive analysis of their different types and their order in the sentence. Furthermore, it aims at exposing the common errors committed by EFL learners in the use of adjectives because of the mother tongue interference. The section also covers the role of adjectives in natural communication. Eventually, a part is devoted to denote the role English adjectives play in natural communication and the different strategies used to teach them.

### **2.1. Definition of Adjectives**

Adjectives belong to one of the main parts of speech in the English language. They typically serve as modifiers of nouns to denote their qualities, indicate their extents, or quantities, or determine things as distinct from others (“Merriam-Webster dictionary”, n. d.).

This definition typically denotes that adjectives help in pointing out a specific object, person, or thing among many.

Generally, adjectives are words that describe the referent they modify and give information about it from different sides. In this respect, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) gave a technical definition stating that “adjectives are defined as a syntactically distinct class of words whose most characteristic function is to modify nouns. They typically denote properties- most centrally in the domains of size, shape, color, worth, and age” (p. 527). This elucidates that adjectives are different from nouns and verbs in the role they play in a sentence. Their main function is to give certain information about the referent they characterize. Similarly, Eastwood (1994) gave a simpler definition claiming that adjectives “are words like short, old, cheap, happy, nice, electric. Most adjectives express quality; they tell us what something is like” (p. 257).

## **2.2. Grammatical Features of Adjectives**

In English grammar, adjectives are parts of speech that must be acquired by EFL learners. They have the same grammatical properties and show the same syntactic behavior. Traditional grammars and dictionaries represent them as complementary types of modifiers. This word class is studied by investigating the position of other constituents in the higher-order syntactic configurations (Payne, Huddleston, & Pullum, 2010). In this regard, Pustet (2006) stated that “adjectives can be defined at various of the organization of language, in particular, at the levels of morphosyntax, semantics, syntactic usage” (as cited in Jitpranee, 2017, p. 59). By way of explanation, they are commonly used with some particular characteristics. Adjectives have special meanings that indicate their semantic properties. They also occur in different forms which typically show their morphological properties. Moreover, adjectives’ syntactic properties refer to the various functions they perform in different

contexts. Thus, their morphology, syntax, and semantics have to be taken into account when identifying their role in learning the target language.

### **2.2.1. Morphological Features of Adjectives**

In linguistics, morphology refers to the study of words' structures, formation, and the ways in which they are related to other words of the same language (Booij, 2010). In this regard, Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) defined morphology as “the mental system involved in word formation or ... the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed” (pp.1-2). Interestingly, the structure of English adjectives differs from that of other parts of speech; they are not marked inflectionally for number or gender and do not have any suffix which indicates such information (Newson, Hordós, Pap, Szécsényi, Tóth, & Vincze, 2006). They have four morphological forms: base (or simple), derivational, inflectional, and compound.

First, a word cannot stand by itself in isolation to function as an adjective as the form does not always indicate its status, such as new, fresh, and old. Simple adjectives are distinguished formally by the fact that they serve as stems from which nouns and adverbs are formed by adding derivational suffixes like -ness and -ly. They are mostly of one syllable and none have more than two syllables except a few that begin with a derivational prefix -un or -in-, e.g., uncommon, inhuman. They have no derivational suffixes and usually form their comparative and superlative degrees using of the inflectional suffixes -er and -est.

Second, compound adjectives consist of at least two stems. They may be of several patterns: consisting of a noun + an adjective (color-blind), consisting of an adjective + an adjective (deaf-mute), consisting of an adverb + a participle (newly-repaired), consisting of a noun/pronoun + a verbal (all-seeing, heart-breaking), and consisting of an adjective/adverb + a noun + the suffix -ed (blue-eyed, down-hearted).

Third, derived adjectives are recognizable morphologically; they are formed by the addition of derivational suffixes to free or bound stems. They consist of suffixes or prefixes of which the most important are: -ful (hopeful), -less (flawless), -ish (bluish), -ous (famous), -ive (decorative), -ic (basic); un- (unprecedented), in- (inaccurate), pre- (premature). Hence, derivation is simply the process by which a new word is created from an existing word, sometimes by simply changing the grammatical category (Bauer, Lieber, & Plag, 2013).

So far, the primary distinction between inflection and derivation is a functional one, since derivation creates new lexemes and inflection forms new forms of the same lexemes (Booij, 2000). Inflected adjectives are in the comparative or superlative form. In the comparative form, they are formed by adding ‘er + than’ to short adjectives while ‘est + than’ is added in the superlative form. On the other hand, less/the least, more/most are added to long adjectives in the comparative and superlative forms.

### **2.2.2. Syntactic Role of Adjectives**

Syntax is defined as the branch of linguistics which deals with the combination of words to form phrases, clauses, or sentences. In this regard, Jespersen (1954) defined syntax as a discipline that “looks at grammatical facts from within, that is to say from the side of their meaning or signification” (p. 1). Syntactically, adjectives can be placed in two positions: attributive or predicative. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) claimed that “adjectives are attributive when they pre-modify the head of a noun phrase; likewise, they are predicative when they function as a subject complement or object complement” (p. 417). In other words, their position can be before or after the noun they modify. They can also be postpositive, which means they have the ability to function in three positions as shown in the following examples provided by Quirk et al.,

- Predicative: This information is *useful*.
- Attributive: *Useful* information.

- Postpositive: Something *useful*.

(Quirk et al., 1985, p. 418)

Emphatically, adjectives can be either in an attributive position (*nice* weather) or in a predicative position (the weather is *nice*). However, a few go in one position but not in the other (Eastwood, 1994, pp. 402-403). On the other hand, some adjectives are often used in the predicative position with the prefix “a”, such as asleep, awake, alive, afraid, ashamed, alone, and alike; in addition to adjectives expressing feelings and health, e.g., pleased, glad, content, well, fine, ill, and unwell (Eastwood, 1994, p. 257).

### 2.2.3. Semantic Sub-Classification of Adjectives

Semantics is referred to as the branch of linguistics which studies meanings of words and sentences. It is about how language is used figuratively and literally to produce meaning. It plays a large part in daily communication. Semantically, adjectives can be divided into three main categories: stative/dynamic adjectives, gradable/non-gradable, and inherent/non-inherent adjectives (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 434).

#### 2.2.3.1. Stative/Dynamic Adjectives

In English language, adjectives can be classified into stative and dynamic according to the meaning they express in the sentence. They are explained in what follows:

##### ✓ Stative Adjectives

Stative adjectives are adjectives that tell us about a state or condition which may generally be considered permanent, such as big, red, and small. One important fact about this type of adjectives is that they can neither be used in the imperative nor in the progressive (i.e., it is wrong to say \*my sister is being *tall* today).

### ✓ **Dynamic Adjectives**

Dynamic adjectives express attributes which can be controlled by a person or animal. For instance, I can choose to be nice or rude, I can choose to be honest or dishonest as I can choose to be courageous or coward (Williamson, 2014).

### 2.2.3.2. **Gradable/Non-Gradable Adjectives**

Semantically, adjectives can be classified into gradable and non-gradable ones. Some adjectives can be given different degrees of ‘strength’, such as *hot* and *cold* while others cannot be graded, such as *boiling* and *freezing*.

#### ✓ **Gradable Adjectives**

Gradable adjectives mean that there are different degrees of a certain quality of the noun being described. For example, someone can be tired, very tired, or extremely tired. These adjectives can be made weaker or stronger with modifiers as shown in the following examples:

- She was quite *happy* when she met her friend.
- The book I read last night was really *interesting*!
- It is extremely *cold* in Russia in the winter.

Moreover, Aarts (2001) provided some examples to show some gradable adjectives and grading adverbs that can be used with them. The examples include, “very *helpful*”, “extremely *nasty*”, or “less *interesting*”.

#### ✓ **Non-Gradable Adjectives**

Some adjectives are non-gradable which means that they describe qualities that are completely present or completely absent. These qualities cannot vary in intensity or grade; they are extreme such as *freezing*, absolute such as *dead*, or classifying such as *nuclear*. In other words, they cannot be accompanied by grade adverbs because they already express the idea of “very” in their meaning. Explicitly, something cannot be referred to as being a bit *dead* or very *dead*. To make these adjectives describe strong and absolute qualities, they can be

intensified by using some modifiers such as, absolutely, completely, or totally. The following are examples of some cases in which non-gradable adjectives are used with modifiers, “the cat is totally *dead*”, “this picture is completely *perfect*”, and “this is absolutely *impossible*” (Aarts, 2001).

### **2.2.3.3. Inherent/Non-Inherent Adjectives**

Semantically, adjectives can be inherent or non-inherent according to whether they denote a quality related to the noun they modify or not. They are discussed in what follows:

#### ✓ **Inherent Adjectives**

Inherent adjectives denote an attribute or a quality related to the noun as shown in the following example: “an *old* man”. In this sentence, the adjective “old” refers to the man who is actually old in age. Another example to show the case of inherent adjectives is: “a *small* person”. In this one, the adjective “small” refers to a person who is actually small in size.

#### ✓ **Non-Inherent Adjectives**

Non-inherent adjectives do not necessarily denote a quality of the noun. The following example takes the case into account: “a *small* businessman”. Here the adjective “small” does not give the literal meaning of the size “small”, but it denotes other bigger meanings; it shows someone whose business is not really spread or lucrative. Similarly, when taking the example “an old friend”, it does not mean that he is old in age, but it means he is an old acquaintance (“Inherent and Non-inherent Adjectives”, n. d.).

### **2.3. Order of Adjectives**

There is usually a fairly fixed order (e.g., beautiful golden sands, a nice new blue coat). The order depends mainly on the meaning; opinion + size + quality + age + shape + color + participle forms + origin + material + type + purpose. Eastwood (1994) explained the particular order of attributive adjectives as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Order of Adjectives in English*

<b>Order</b>	<b>Relating to</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>1</b>	Opinion	<i>excellent, lovely, terrible, awful, etc</i>
<b>2</b>	Size	<i>small, long, short, tall, etc</i>
<b>3</b>	Quality	<i>busy, famous, important, quiet, etc</i>
<b>4</b>	Age	Old, new
<b>5</b>	Shape	<i>fat, thin, wide, narrow, etc</i>
<b>6</b>	Color	<i>red, white, blue, green, etc</i>
<b>7</b>	Participle forms	<i>furnished, broken, running, missing, etc</i>
<b>8</b>	Origin	<i>British, Italian, American, etc</i>
<b>9</b>	Material	<i>brick, paper, plastic, wooden, etc</i>
<b>10</b>	Type	<i>domestic, electronic, money (problems), etc</i>
<b>11</b>	Purpose	<i>alarm (clock), tennis (court), walking (boots), etc</i>

*Note: borrowed from Eastwood, 1994, p. 256*

The table above shows the order of English adjectives with given examples. Adjectives have to be arranged according to a certain order when there are many before a noun that is being modified starting with adjectives relating to opinion which explain what someone thinks about a topic, a person, or something else. Moving to adjectives relating to size which denote how big or small something is. Third, quality adjectives are used to characterize whether something is good or bad. Fourth, adjectives relating to age which tell how old or young something or someone is. They are followed by those relating to shape which show the form or dimension of something. Next, color adjectives simply describe the color of something. The seventh in the order are origin adjectives which refer the belonging or nationality of something or someone as shown in the following example, “*Canadian boy*”. Following that,

material adjectives are the ones that refer to the substance of which something is made such as, gold, leather, silk, diamond, and plastic. Second to last, come type adjectives which are those that show the being of the noun modified, such as “human body”, and “an *electronic* device”. One might confuse between the meaning of material adjectives and type ones, but the difference is obvious in that the former refers to what something is made of and the latter refers to the original being of something; for example, people cannot refer to “human” as a material adjective. Lastly, purpose adjectives are those which describe what an object is used for as shown in the following examples, “*sleeping* bag”, “*running* shoes”.

Eastwood (1994) noted that the order of attributive adjectives is not absolute because sometimes we prefer to insert a short adjective before a long one, for example, when we say “a *small wonderful* building”. He also referred to the use of the conjunction “and” between two attributive adjectives, such as “*soft and comfortable* chairs”. At this point, there is a case where the conjunction “and” is used when the adjectives refer to different parts of something, for example, “a *black and white* sweater” (partly black and partly white). On the other hand, “but” is used when the adjectives refer to two qualities in contrast, for instance, “a *cheap but effective* solution”.

Also, Eastwood (1994) mentioned that the order of predicative adjectives is less fixed than the order of attributive ones. Sometimes in a literary style, “and” is used before the last adjective; for example, “the chair was *soft and comfortable*”. Besides, adjectives expressing opinions often come last; for instance, “the city is *old and beautiful*”. At last, the conjunction “but” is used when two qualities are in contrast like when saying, “the solution is *cheap but effective*” (Eastwood, 1994, p. 257).

## **2.4. Types of Adjectives**

Some parts of speech are integral. The crucial role of adjectives is to complete the meaning of a sentence. They can add information to the sentence by modifying or describing

other words. They answer questions, such as “which one?”, “What kind?”, and “How many?”. There are different types of adjectives in English which are sub-divided into eleven types. The following paragraphs illustrate their specific types, functions, and examples.

- ✓ **Descriptive Adjectives:** They attribute or qualify people, animals, things, or places in order to describe their features, for example, “the *rich* man lives in the *big* house” This type of adjectives is used to express the size, color, or shape of a person, a thing, an animal, or a place. It is used to provide more information to a noun by describing or modifying it.
- ✓ **Proper Adjectives:** They are formed from proper nouns by shifting their function to fill the role of an adjective. They modify nouns and pronouns in terms of the nationality as shown in the following example, “he employed a *Chinese* man”.
- ✓ **Quantitative Adjectives:** They are used to modify a noun for particular details in quantifying as shown in the following example, “he ate *much* rice at the restaurant yesterday”.
- ✓ **Numeral Adjectives:** They modify a noun for particular details in exact quantifying which is divided into three perspectives: cardinal, ordinal, and multiplicative number. First, cardinal numeral adjectives show exact quantity; such as “my hand has *five* fingers”. Second, there are ordinal numeral adjectives which refer to hierarchical number; for example, “I am the *seventh* son of my family”. Third, multiplicative numeral adjectives represent double number; for example, “some roses are *double*”.
- ✓ **Demonstrative Adjectives:** These are the type of adjectives which shows whether the noun they modify is singular or plural and whether its position is near or far from the person who is speaking. For example, “I invited *that* woman to come in”.
- ✓ **Interrogative Adjectives:** They modify a noun as a questioning form; for example, “*what* story is he reading in the room?”.

- ✓ **Possessive Adjectives:** They are used are words used to modify a noun to show a form of possession and ownership to a specific person, animal, or thing as shown in the following example, “this is *my* book”, “his car is the *blue* one”.
- ✓ **Distributive Adjectives:** They are used with singular nouns to refer to members of a group as individuals. They include “each”, “every”, “either”, and “neither” as shown in the following example, “every soldier is punctually in his place”.
- ✓ **Emphasizing Adjectives:** They lay stress on the noun being modified by emphasizing it, for example, “Lara is my *own* girl-friend”.
- ✓ **Exclamatory Adjectives:** They modify nouns by using interjection words as shown in the following example, “*what* a man he is!”.
- ✓ **Relative Adjectives:** They modify a noun and combine sentences which are related, for example, “give me *what* candies you have”.

(Khamying, 2007, as cited in Jitpranee, 2017, pp. 60-61)

## 2.5. Degrees of Adjectives

In addition to the aforementioned types, adjectives can also express degrees of modification or comparison, they exist in several degrees (e.g., good, better, and best). First, positive adjectives are those that are used to describe or modify nouns in general such as, tall, big, and smart. Second, the comparatives are those used for comparing two things (e.g., taller, bigger, and smarter). Third, superlative adjectives are those used for comparing three or more things (e.g. tallest, biggest, and smartest). This means that comparative adjectives are used for equal comparisons while superlative adjectives are used for unequal comparisons. These three degrees work only for descriptive adjectives.

Using the right degree of adjectives makes comparisons more descriptive and more precise. To form comparative and superlative degree of adjectives, it is necessary to know how many syllables are there in the adjective. Usually, adjectives with only one syllable form

their comparative degrees by adding 'er' and make their superlative degrees by adding 'est' as shown in the following examples, young, younger, youngest. Also, few adjectives with only one syllable have to be accompanied by 'more' or 'most'. The rule, in this case, is not to add 'er' or 'est', such as fun, \*funner, \*funnest, but to “*be more fun*” for the comparative form and “*most fun*” for the superlative. This rule also functions with adjectives with two syllables as shown in the following example, peaceful/more peaceful/most peaceful. Furthermore, adjectives with more than two syllables can only make their comparatives by using 'more' and their superlatives by using 'most'. Some irregular adjectives simply change their form to serve their degrees of comparison, such as good/ better/best.

## **2.6. Native Language Interference in English Adjectives' Use**

The interference of the native language in learning English as a second language is generally a lifelong experience. EFL learners face difficulties in learning and accepting the rules that govern a second language since they are different from those of their mother tongue which is acquired through imitation. Therefore, the interference of their native language is felt in language learning and communication. Interference can be defined as deviations in a learners' use of a foreign language due to their first language earlier acquisition. However, interference includes those errors that occur in the learning of a second language (Radhika & Kala, 2013).

## **2.7. Common Errors in Adjectives' Acquisition**

Introducing a new language to EFL students is not as easy as teaching their own language. The acquisition of a new language can expose learners to many learning difficulties which are stemmed from a number of sources. Basically, the state of the learner's knowledge and how the target language is learned indicates the types of errors committed by EFL learners. Corder (1974) gave a general idea of the two types of errors.

### 2.7.1. Transfer Errors

The major cause of this type of errors is the interference of the mother tongue. They occur when the person is producing the target language using his/her mother tongue. For instance, in Arabic, adjectives come after the noun they modify, but in English, they have attributive and predicative positions such as “the boy is smart” or “the smart boy”. Also in Arabic, adjectives refer to gender and number when post modifying the noun whereas in English they do not. EFL learners apply this aspect in English and instead of saying “*great buildings*”, they say “\*the *greats buildings*”.

### 2.7.2. Developmental Errors

This type of errors takes place when EFL learners are not exposed to English on a regular basis. The following are some common developmental errors:

#### 2.7.2.1. Overgeneralization

Touchie (1986) defined overgeneralization as “the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply” (p. 78). This means that learners overgeneralize the use of one grammar rules in different structures in the target language based on their knowledge of other structures. This could be caused by certain types of teaching techniques that increase the frequency of overgeneralization. For example, “\*this house is *more bigger* than the other one”.

#### 2.7.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

This type of errors occurs when learners apply some rules to structures that are already learned in a new situation where they are irrelevant (Richard, 1970. p. 9). For example, if it is possible to use the “est” superlative form with adjectives that do not have more than two syllables, such as happy, happiest, then why not say “\*this actress is the *famousest* one”, instead of “this actress is the *most famous* one”. These errors are related to the generalization of deviant structures and the rote learning of rules by learners.

### 2.7.2.3. Incomplete Application of Rules

This is the type of errors in which the learner fails to use grammar rules of the target language, but he/she is convinced that he/she can communicate adequately using deviant forms. According to Richard (1970), the teacher uses questions as a means of eliciting sentences from learners where they may produce unacceptable language structures and are encouraged to repeat the question or the part of it in the answer, such as “Teacher: which coat is *warmer*, the red one or the blue one?”, “Student: the red coat is *warmer* the blue one”.

### 2.7.2.4. Hypothesizing False Concepts

Learners’ false comprehension of distinctions in the target language and poor gradation and simplification of teaching items results in false concepts hypothesized. In the following example, “\*the blue bike is *more bigger* than the white one”, the error occurred due to the belief that the periphrastic “more” is a marker of the comparative form and it can also be used with an adjective of one syllable (Richard, 1970. p. 14).

Other common errors which are committed by EFL learners lie in their inability to mark the difference between adjectives which end in “ing” and adjectives which end in “ed”. Many adjectives have two forms in which one ends in -ed and the other ends in -ing. Those ending in -ing are usually used to describe characteristics of a person, a thing, or a situation. They express what something is like and the effect it has on us; for example, “this movie is *boring*”, “it is *interesting*”, and “a show can be *amusing*”. On the other hand, adjectives ending in -ed are used to describe a feeling or a temporary thing. They express how we feel about something; for example, “this story made me feel *bored*”, and “the audience can feel *amused*” (Eastwood, 1994, p. 258).

Adjectives can be both attributive and predicative. Therefore, EFL learners may use either “the *big* house” or “the house is *big*”. However, there are some exceptions where adjectives beginning with the letter ‘a’ cannot be used attributively; for instance, it is incorrect

to say “the *asleep* baby” instead of “the baby is *asleep*” and “the *alive* bird” instead of “the bird is *alive*”.

Also, the adjective “poor” in “the man is *poor*” or “the *poor* man” has two different meanings. When it means unfortunate, it can only be used attributively because it is precise to say “the *poor* girl”, but not “the girl is *poor*” since it means insufficient pay to stay financially afloat. These examples highlight some of the very common mistakes that EFL learners commit when using attributive and predicative adjectives.

Adjectives’ position and order in English and Arabic doubtlessly don’t follow the same rules and usually EFL learners face confusion in the order of more than one attributive adjective. Take for instance the sentences “the *first three* lines of the page” and “the *three first* lines of the page”. A further problem is forming the comparative and the superlative form of adjectives of two-syllables. Sometimes, it is ambiguous whether to follow the one-syllable rule of adding “er” or to use the modifier more (or most in the case of superlative form) as three-syllable adjectives do (Blokh, 2004). To illustrate this point, an EFL learner may find ambiguity about whether to say “Mary is *politer* than Jane” or “Mary is *more polite* than Jane”.

## **2.8. Role of Adjectives in Natural Communication**

Natural communication is the way through which most people exchange information using their mouths to speak spontaneously without any technological equipment, aids, or tools. In their spoken mode of expression, EFL learners incorporate different parts of speech including adjectives. In this regard, adjectives as fully lexical parts of speech are essential for different reasons. Zerkina et al. (2016) explained eloquently in the following quote.

The adjective refers to features the total amount of which allows a man to cognize the essence of objective reality, form an image of the world in the mind and incorporate the later into linguistic signs with specific connotations...Adjectives help to reconstruct the naive worldview, to depict

the existence of realities in humans' consciousness and to arrange the realities in the objective world. (pp. 5146-5147)

In simpler terms, objective reality is opposite to subjective reality. Interestingly enough, the former means that something is actual and independent of the mind. Its true independence from individual subjectivity caused by perception, emotions, or imagination, helps EFL learners make valid use of adjectives in their oral performance of the target language. Adjectives help characterize the existing objects that surround the individual in real life and evaluate their quintessence. They also help identify their different perspectives.

To recap, using adjectives in English correctly is an important skill in language education. For example, if journalists do not use the appropriate attributes to describe news in their speech, they cannot reveal how much important the event they talk about is. Furthermore, adjectives can make a customer decide whether to buy a product or not; likewise, they can show to what extent citizens know about their country heritage. Adjectives also have a crucial role in the accuracy of EFL learners' speech and communication. They make individuals' utterances meaningful and clear (Zerkina et al., 2016). Their appropriate use makes one's speech more visual and distinctive when searching for descriptive words that draw close to the meaning.

## **2.9. Strategies to Teaching Adjectives**

Teaching adjectives for EFL learners can be done through different kinds of activities. The very first step that EFL teachers use to teach adjectives is to give general knowledge about adjectives' use, types, and order in a sentence. For this, activities using cards can be utilized. In this activity, the teacher asks learners to work in groups and displays pictures that they have to describe using as many adjectives as possible. Besides, another effective strategy for learning adjectives is synonyms/opposites' activities which are based on finding the relationship between pairs of words having the same or different meanings in English. They

are done through linking already acquired adjectives to new ones (Higa, 1963). In this regard, Zipoli, Coyne, and McCoach (2010) accentuated that the terms that are semantically related can be used to “promote high levels of word learning” (p. 131).

Additionally, adjectives can be taught through Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition (IVA) technique, which is a vocabulary learning strategy that is defined as the learning of new words as a by-product of a meaning-focused communicative activity (Huckin & Coady, 1999). In this respect, using short stories in EFL classrooms enhances learners’ language skills in general. Tasneen (2010) claimed that learners “are exposed to real, authentic usage of language in literary texts; these texts show them a variety of styles, registers and language learning materials at several stages of difficulty.” (p. 2). For instance, a story includes descriptions of events, characters, and places. Not only-but also adjectives are highly employed to serve its descriptive and narrative category. Consequently, reading stories helps EFL learners deal with as many examples as they need regarding the use of adjectives. The latter helps them to produce accurate utterances.

Moreover, Bruntt (2012) stressed the importance of literary genres in teaching adjectives. They assumed that “adjectives are important for creating atmosphere, or for making us like or dislike a certain character in a story, or for appealing to our senses in poetry” (p. 304). In simpler words, stories pave the way for readers to give their opinion about a character in a story, express the different emotions towards a literary text, or draw certain impressions about a poem.

Also, learners need not just to acquire the superficial meaning of the adjectives they learn but also to understand the different meanings they express when used in various contexts. In English, for instance, the adjective ‘purple’ as a color, has a special connotative meaning only in the English language and culture where it is considered to be “royal”. According to Zerkina et al. (2016), “semantic description of adjectives as lexical units is impossible without

referring to the framework of their lexical meaning which primarily relates to different mental sequences: characterization, evaluation, and classification” (p. 5151). This implies the need to understand the background of adjectives used in speech and the need to utilize them appropriately for others to understand.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is important to note that adjectives are what make a language interesting; the more there are, the wider the meanings one can express. This is why teaching EFL learners the variety of English adjectives is doing justice to them. This section has discussed what adjectives are, their grammatical features, types and order. Moreover, it has discussed the common errors caused by the interference of the mother tongue. Then, it has referred to the role of adjectives in natural communication. The section has concluded with the most useful strategies applied to teach adjectives.

## **Chapter Two: Methods, Results, and Discussions**

## **Chapter Two: Methods, Results, and Discussions**

### **Introduction**

While the first chapter has dealt with the literature of the research topic, this chapter is devoted to the practical framework of the overall study. It includes three sections; the first section discusses the design of the fieldwork, the second section analyses the data collected from the administration of the research tool, and the third section interprets the results obtained from the analyzed data.

### **1. Section One: Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The research methodology section sets forth the overall steps followed in the fieldwork starting with the research paradigm. The latter is accompanied by the research design which accounts for population, sampling, instrument along with procedures of data collection and analysis. Lastly, the section ends up with the limitations of the study.

#### **1.1. Research Paradigm**

In an attempt to investigate students' speech accuracy and precision with specific reference to adjectives, the current study has firmly adhered to descriptive study research design which is used when the researcher wants to describe the characteristics of a population or a phenomenon that is being studied. This research design is useful when not much is known about the topic which is the case of the topic at hand. It can answer questions like, "what is happening?", and "how is something happening?". Descriptive study design is used "to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena and to describe 'what exists' with respect to variables or conditions in a situation" (Kabir, 2016, p. 124). Therefore, instead of investigating why EFL students make or do not make accurate and precise use of adjectives in their speech, it is necessary to know how they make use of them. This can be done by

analyzing students' speech through administering oral production tasks to elicit language samples from them. This study does not aim to draw a link between the two variables "speech accuracy and precision" and "adjectives", but merely to depict EFL students' use of adjectives in their speech. In this respect, Atmowardoyo (2018) claimed that descriptive research design is used to "describe the existing phenomena as accurately as possible" (p. 198).

Moreover, a mixed methods approach, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, was considered appropriate for this study. Specifically, it was conducted using a qualitative research design for gathering data and quantitative method for analyzing it. In other words, the fieldwork relied on both text and statistical data gathering and analysis. In this regard, Creswell (2012) claimed that this research design is the process through which a researcher collects, analyzes, and mixes both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the research problem.

More importantly, data analysis forms a major part of the research process. The data gathered are transcriptions of students' speech, thus, text analysis is the method used in which students' use of adjectives is analyzed with regard to grammar and semantics. Therefore, it took into account the different grammar rules and semantic properties of adjectives. The researchers quantified qualitative data into easily interpretable data by highlighting all adjectives used and enumerating and presenting them statistically in different tables. Therefore, the research method for analyzing data in this piece of work is quantitative.

## **1.2. Research Design**

This section presents the research design of the current study. It includes the following sub-sections: population and sampling, data gathering instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure.

### **1.2.1. Population and Sampling**

This part is devoted to the population and sampling of the current research. It describes the population and the sample chosen to participate in this study.

#### **1.2.1.1. Population**

The study under investigation is carried out with third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, during the academic year 2019-2020. The reason behind choosing third year students is that they are supposed to have a good speaking proficiency level since they have been enrolled in oral classes for three years.

#### **1.2.1.2. Sample of the Study**

In this study, the participants were randomly selected based on students' availability to represent the population to reach reliable results. Basically, the chosen sample for this study consisted of 19 subjects with different proficiency levels in English and among whom there were six boys and 13 girls aged between 20 and 28.

### **1.2.2. Data Gathering Instrument**

To test the hypotheses of the study, the researchers analyzed learners' use of different types of adjectives in different contexts. Therefore, the study was conducted through the use of elicitation procedures. Specifically, the researchers used oral production tasks as elicitation procedures to get samples of learners' speech in naturalistic situations. They are described in what follows.

#### **1.2.2.1. Elicitation Procedures**

The term 'elicitation procedures' refers to a number of techniques that are designed to elicit or get samples of learners' language directly from informants either in speech or writing. Nunan and Bailey (2009) defined the term 'elicitation' as "all of the ways in which the researcher tries to obtain data directly from informants (rather than, for example, simply by observing them)' (p. 312). By the same token, Chaudron (2003) claimed that elicitation

procedures “are designed to elicit learners’ productive language performance in a more concentrated and focused fashion, by providing some initial verbal or physical context selected by the researcher” (p. 772). In other words, the researcher sets the context to help learners provide the needed data with more focus. These research techniques are widely common in second language acquisition research; they include interviews, questionnaires, tests, role plays, and production tasks. Elicitation procedures can be used to target specific points of second language that constitute the focus of the research. Basically, specific communication tasks such as pictures descriptions can be used to get specific productions that the researcher is opting for (Chaudron, 2003).

The current study relied on production tasks as elicitation procedures. In these tasks, the researchers pushed the students to make use of adjectives by setting up and designing adequate situations. These production tasks include, pictures description tasks and discourse completion tasks.

✓ **Pictures Description Tasks:** The current study employed two pictures description tasks; students were given different pictures and were required to provide their descriptions orally. According to Nunan and Bailey (2009), “one common way of simulating production was to ask the informants questions about a series of pictures.” (p. 325). Similarly, the participants were asked questions that were designed to elicit the language items being investigated (i.e., adjectives).

The first task required students to describe one of two well-known characters (Oprah Winfrey and Donald Trump), taking into consideration their physical appearance and personality. This task was meant to push students to employ different types of adjectives in describing the two celebrities.

The second task, however, was meant to lead students to make use of the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives since they were asked to describe and

compare different countries. It included two parts; in the first part, the students were asked to describe and compare Algeria and Singapore in terms of education, technology, architecture and environment based on a series of pictures that were provided whereas the second part required the students to describe Singapore's architecture compared to that of the other countries (Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya).

✓ **Discourse Completion Tasks:** This type of tasks helps the researcher to generate large amounts of varied speech data; the researcher sets a context or starts a discourse, and then the learner is required to imagine that context and react to it properly or to complete the discourse given. In this respect, Nunan and Bailey (2009) explained that

One way that researchers try to elicit language samples from learners is through a procedure called *discourse completion*. In this situation, the researcher sets up a context and provides part of the discourse. The learner must then complete the interaction by expressing what he or she would say if he or she were actually in such a context. (p. 321)

Following this, the researchers of the current study set a context related to the participants' success in the Baccalaureate exam which all of them have experienced in order to allow them to be more expressive. This task was designed to make the students use more degree adjectives when expressing their feelings and emotions.

### **1.2.3. Data Collection Procedure**

The process of collecting data was carried out in 21 days instead of two days as it was planned. This was mainly due to the students' absences on the dates agreed upon with them. It was conducted through adopting production tasks as elicitation procedures and gathering participants' recordings. Three oral production tasks were designed to address the research questions. The first two tasks were pictures description tasks and the third was a discourse completion one. After sending the tasks to participants' emails, they were given enough time

to react properly to them; each participant was given five minutes to answer the first task, eight minutes to answer the second task, and five minutes to answer the third one. The students' answers were recorded to be transcribed later. In an organized manner, participants' records were transcribed and analyzed based on the grammar and semantics of adjectives.

#### **1.2.4. Data Analysis Procedure**

The present study employed a quantitative method of data analysis. The overall data gathered was analyzed on the basis of specific criteria that were deduced from the current research questions.

Transcriptions of students' answers were analyzed both grammatically and semantically. Concerning grammatical features, the researchers took into consideration the different grammar rules that govern the use of different types of adjectives including, descriptive, proper, quantitative, numeral, demonstrative, interrogative, possessive, distributive, emphasizing, exclamatory, and relative adjectives. With regard to semantics, the researchers accounted for students' precise and superficial use of adjectives in addition to the different precision errors that are related to specific types of adjectives by applying a semantic analysis of students' speech.

As it was reviewed in the first chapter, accuracy embraces grammatically correct use of adjectives. By this token, the first research question seeks to examine EFL students' grammatical use of adjectives taking into consideration the different rules and patterns that govern their use. On the other hand, the second research question aims at identifying the types of adjectives in which EFL students manifest more grammatically incorrect use.

In addition to that, using precise language and vocabulary words helps EFL students to say more directly and cogently what they are trying to convey. Therefore, using adjectives with exact meanings in their speech contributes in making it precise. On this account, the third research question attempts to highlight EFL students' precise and superficial use of adjectives.

Additionally, the fourth research question is designed to point out which degree of adjectives EFL students' precision errors are mostly related to. Similarly, the last research question seeks to check whether precision errors committed by EFL students lie mainly in the use of gradable adjectives or non-gradable ones.

Concerning data analysis, the obtained data was analyzed by means of quantitative measures. The researchers counted all the adjectives used in each participant's responses and designed separate tables for each research question.

For the first research question, applying general or specific measures of accuracy to analyze students' grammatically correct and incorrect use of adjectives in speech was not possible since there was not enough data about how to apply the Analysis of Speech Units (AS Units) in case students' spoken utterances contain fragments or one single clause contains both grammatically correct and incorrect use of adjectives. Therefore, the researchers designed a table that contains six columns wherein the first column includes participants' numbers, and the second one contains the total number of adjectives used in each participant's speech. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth columns are for the number of grammatically correct adjectives used and their percentages, and the number of grammatically incorrect adjectives that were employed by each participant along with their percentages.

Concerning the second research question, the table consists of 26 columns in which the first two ones are for participants' numbers and the total number of adjectives they used. As for the remaining ones, there are 12 main columns that present all types of adjectives; each main column is divided into two sub-columns that show the number of grammatically correct and incorrect use of adjectives' types.

Moreover, the researchers designed an additional table for the second research question to make the analysis simpler. The second table contains six columns wherein the first two columns include adjectives' types and the total number of grammatically correct and

incorrect use of adjectives. The remaining columns present the number of grammatically correct use and incorrect use of adjectives along with their percentages.

As concerns the third research question, the table contains six columns in which the first two columns include participants' numbers and the total number of adjectives used by each participant. For the remaining columns, there are two main ones which present superficially and precisely used adjectives. Each main column is divided into two sub-columns which display their total number along with their percentages.

Concerning the fourth research question, the table consists of 11 columns wherein the first two ones are for participants' numbers and the total number of degrees of adjectives used. In the remaining columns, there are three main columns for the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of adjectives. Each one of them is further divided into three sub-columns which include the total number of adjectives, the number of precisely used adjectives, and the number of superficially used ones.

As for the last research question, the table consists of eight columns in which the first two ones are for participants' numbers and the total number of degree adjectives used by each one. For the remaining ones, there are two main columns that present gradable adjectives and non-gradable ones; each main column is divided into three sub-columns which show the total number of adjectives (i.e., the number of precisely used adjectives and the superficially used ones).

#### **1.2.5. Limitations of the Study**

A well-established research has to be done in perfect circumstances. This research, however, is subject to several obstacles and the findings of the current study have to be seen in light of some limitations which include the lack of primary resources, Covid-19 pandemic, and unavailability of participants.

Since the topic of this inquiry is new and original, the limitations of the current research include the lack of previous studies which could have included theoretical and empirical investigations about adjectives' use, accuracy, and precision in speech. On the other hand, Covid-19 pandemic made it difficult for the researchers to meet and consult the supervisor to discuss the given feedback. Lastly, finding enough participants for the study at once and meeting them to collect the necessary data for the investigation was a stumbling block for the research. Although some limitations are presented, the findings of this study are still useful in terms of depicting a clear image on how third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, make use of adjectives in their speech with regard to accuracy and precision.

### **Conclusion**

To put it in a nutshell, this section has presented the research methodology. It has tackled the research paradigm in addition to the research design that includes population and sampling, data gathering instrument, data gathering procedure, and data analysis procedure. Moreover, it presented the limitations of the current research work. Evidently, this section has served as an overview about the guidelines underlying the organization and conduct of the current study. The subsequent section will be devoted for the analysis of the gathered data.

## **2. Section Two: Results**

### **Introduction**

This section is devoted to the analysis of the data. It adopted a quantitative method of data analysis. The data gathered through the administration of production tasks will be analyzed and presented in terms of frequency counts. Production tasks were meant to obtain data on EFL students' speaking accuracy and precision with regard to their use of adjectives. The analysis of the data gathered from the production tasks is presented in accordance to the research questions.

#### **2.1. Students' Grammatical Use of Adjectives**

Table 2 presents EFL students' correct and incorrect use of adjectives in their speech. The students' accurate use of adjectives is analyzed based on their grammatical correctness when answering the oral production tasks. The analysis of the data was done by counting the total number of adjectives employed by each student along with the number of grammatically correct and incorrect adjectives used. The table in question also shows percentages of grammatically correct and incorrect use of adjectives of each student.

Table 2

*Students' Grammatical Use of Adjectives*

<b>Participant N°</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Correct Use</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Incorrect Use</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	43	93,48	3	6,52
<b>2</b>	<b>50</b>	50	100	0	0
<b>3</b>	<b>55</b>	52	94,55	3	5,45
<b>4</b>	<b>98</b>	91	92,86	7	7,14
<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>	48	100	0	0
<b>6</b>	<b>128</b>	121	94,53	7	5,47
<b>7</b>	<b>52</b>	49	94,23	3	5,77
<b>8</b>	<b>70</b>	68	97,14	2	2,86
<b>9</b>	<b>84</b>	81	96,43	3	3,57
<b>10</b>	<b>95</b>	94	98,95	1	1,05
<b>11</b>	<b>42</b>	42	100	0	0
<b>12</b>	<b>114</b>	104	91,23	10	8,77
<b>13</b>	<b>80</b>	80	100	0	0
<b>14</b>	<b>71</b>	69	97,18	2	2,82
<b>15</b>	<b>190</b>	184	96,84	6	3,16
<b>16</b>	<b>96</b>	91	94,79	5	5,21
<b>17</b>	<b>85</b>	79	92,94	6	7,05
<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>	82	100	0	0
<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>	57	100	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1543</b>	1485	96,24	58	3,76

Table 2 shows that the sample of the current study made use of 1543 adjectives in their speech in which 96,24 % of the adjectives used were grammatically correct and 3,76 % were grammatically incorrect. This finding shows that all participants have an excellent grammar proficiency level in using adjectives in speech. A close examination of the table reveals that six students have an excellent grammar level as they scored 100 % grammatically correct use of adjectives. On the other hand, 13 students showed a very good grammar level since they made correct use of adjectives in the rate between 91,23 % and 98,95 % compared to their incorrect use of adjectives which ranges between 1,05 % and 8,77 %.

## **2.2. Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types**

Table 3 and Table 4 present EFL students' grammatical use of different adjectives' types in their speech. EFL students' accurate use of the different types of adjectives when answering the oral production tasks is grammatically analyzed. The analysis of the data was done by counting the number of grammatically correct and incorrect adjectives of each type used by each participant, which is shown in Table 3. Also, the total number of both correct and incorrect use of each type of adjectives along with their percentages is presented in Table 4.

Table 3

*Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types*

Participant N°	Total	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)		(6)		(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)		(11)	
		C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I	C	I
1	46	34	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	50	28	0	2	0	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	55	40	1	6	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	98	62	5	4	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	16	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
5	48	32	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	128	74	7	3	0	0	0	3	0	6	0	0	0	34	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	52	31	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	16	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	70	52	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
9	84	66	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	95	71	1	3	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
11	42	24	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	114	70	6	0	3	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	24	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	80	71	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	71	51	1	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	190	98	5	5	0	0	0	11	0	21	1	0	0	44	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	96	67	5	4	0	0	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
17	85	54	6	9	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	82	61	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	57	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1543</b>	1030	44	42	9	0	0	64	0	53	1	0	0	271	4	21	0	4	0	0	0	0	0

- Note:* (1)→Descriptive Adjectives; (8)→Distributive Adjectives;  
 (2)→ Proper Adjectives; (9)→ Emphasizing Adjectives;  
 (3)→ Quantitative Adjectives; (10)→ Exclamatory Adjectives;  
 (4)→ Numeral Adjectives; (11)→ Relative Adjectives;  
 (5)→ Demonstrative Adjectives; C→ Correct Use;  
 (6)→ Interrogative Adjectives; I→ Incorrect Use.  
 (7)→ Possessive Adjectives;

Table 4

*Students' Grammatical Use of Different Adjectives' Types*

<b>Types of Adjectives</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Correct Use</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Incorrect Use</b>	<b>%</b>
Descriptive (1)	<b>1074</b>	1030	95,90	44	4,10
Proper (2)	<b>51</b>	42	82,35	9	17,65
Quantitative (3)	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Numeral (4)	<b>64</b>	64	100	0	0
Demonstrative (5)	<b>54</b>	53	98,15	1	1,85
Interrogative (6)	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Possessive (7)	<b>275</b>	271	98,55	4	1,45
Distributive (8)	<b>21</b>	21	100	0	0
Emphasizing (9)	<b>4</b>	4	100	0	0
Exclamatory (10)	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Relative (11)	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1543</b>	1485	96,24	58	3,76

Table 3 shows that the participants in this study used only seven types of adjectives in their speech in which the most frequently used type is descriptive adjectives and the least frequently used one is emphasizing adjectives. As it is also shown in the same table, four types of adjectives were not used by participants when answering the oral production tasks which are: quantitative, interrogative, exclamatory, and relative adjectives.

As for Table 4, it shows that numeral, distributive, and emphasizing adjectives were 100 % correctly used by all the participants. Concerning the other types, the informants scored the lowest rates of errors with regard to possessive adjective use. These possessive adjectives present 1,45 % of all errors, followed by demonstrative and descriptive adjectives that correspond to 1,85 % and 4,10 % respectively. On the other hand, the highest rate of grammatical errors committed by the students is related to proper adjectives, presenting 17,65 % of all errors.

The grammatical errors committed by the students were mainly related to the use of proper adjectives. Two participants made use of proper adjectives alone in structures such as “I don’t see in either *Algerian* or *Tunisian*.” and “We have *French, Roman, Byzantine*.”. On the other hand, three participants made wrong derivation of the proper adjective “*Maghrebin*” in structures like, “...*Maghreb* countries...” and “...the *Maghreb* architectural design...”.

As concerns the incorrect use of descriptive adjectives, the students’ errors were related to the order, formation of degrees of adjectives, and the use of adjectives alone. Concerning errors of order, adjectives are always ranked accordingly: opinion, size, quality, age, shape, color, participle form, origin, material, type, and purpose. Four students produced structures which denote an incorrect order of descriptive adjectives like, “...*casual comfortable* clothes.” instead of “...*comfortable casual* clothes.”, “...*brown curly* hair.”

instead of “...*curly brown* hair.”, “...*male best* friend.” Instead of “...*best male* friend.”, and “...*tall, beautiful, black, strong* woman.” instead of “...*beautiful strong tall black* woman.”.

Concerning errors related to the formation of degrees of adjectives, three participants used wrong forms of the positive degree of adjectives; they produced utterances such as “...one of the best days that are *sculpture*...” instead of “...one of the best days that are *sculptured*” and “...*develop* tools...” instead of “...*developed* tools...” Additionally, five participants employed incorrect forms of the comparative degree of adjectives, for example: “...*more simpler than* ...” instead of “...*simpler than*...”, “...*more greener*...” instead of “...*greener*...”, and “The architecture in Singapore is *creative* much *more than* the other...” instead of “...is much *more creative than*...”. Furthermore, one participant used incorrect form of the superlative degree of adjectives by saying “the *most worst* feelings...” instead of “the *worst* feelings...”.

Additionally, six students made use of adjectives alone without nouns to modify in structures like, “...her remarkable leap from several to *excellent*.”, “Architecture in Singapore is a melding of *old* and *new* where ...”, “We have green lands and *paradisiac*.”, “I like the way she dresses too, *Simple, beautiful*.”

Lastly, the participants marked the lowest rates of errors in the use of demonstrative and possessive adjectives. With regard to the erroneous use of demonstrative adjectives, only one student made wrong use of the demonstrative adjective “*that*”, so instead of saying “...and *those* looks you see in...”, the participant said “...and *that* looks you see in...”. With reference to the incorrect use of possessive adjectives, three participants made incorrect use of the possessive adjectives “*their*” and “*her*” as shown in the following examples: “Singapore is a gorgeous country, ...*their* citizens...”, “Algeria is really beautiful...*her* cities...”, and “Singapore’s transformation...*her* remarkable leap...” instead of “...*its* citizens...”, “...*its* cities...”, and “...*its* remarkable leap...”.

### **2.3. Students' Superficial and Precise Use of Adjectives**

Table 5 demonstrates EFL students' superficial and precise use of adjectives in their speech when answering the oral production tasks. The students' superficial and precise use of adjectives was checked out applying semantic analysis for each adjective. The analysis of the data was done by counting the total number of precise adjectives employed by each participant along with their percentages, in addition to the number of superficial adjectives used and their percentage. The researchers took into account descriptive adjectives only.

Table 5

*Students' Superficial and Precise Use of Adjectives*

<b>Participant N°</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Precise Use</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Superficial Use</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>	17	48,57	18	51,43
<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	22	78,57	6	21,43
<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>	26	63,41	15	36,59
<b>4</b>	<b>67</b>	51	76,12	16	23,88
<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	19	59,38	13	40,63
<b>6</b>	<b>81</b>	51	62,96	30	37,04
<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	21	65,62	11	34,38
<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	47	87,04	7	12,96
<b>9</b>	<b>69</b>	53	76,81	16	23,19
<b>10</b>	<b>72</b>	46	63,89	26	36,11
<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	18	75	6	25
<b>12</b>	<b>76</b>	53	69,74	23	30,26
<b>13</b>	<b>71</b>	53	74,65	18	25,35
<b>14</b>	<b>52</b>	37	71,15	15	28,85
<b>15</b>	<b>103</b>	78	75,73	25	24,27
<b>16</b>	<b>72</b>	38	52,78	34	47,22
<b>17</b>	<b>60</b>	38	63,34	22	36,66
<b>18</b>	<b>61</b>	49	80,33	12	19,67
<b>19</b>	<b>44</b>	35	79,55	9	20,45
<b>Total</b>	<b>1074</b>	752	70,02	322	29,98

Table 5 shows that the current study's participants made both superficial and precise use of adjectives with a total of 1074 adjectives. Specifically, 70,02 % of all adjectives were precisely used by the participants while 29,98 % were superficially used. Notably, one participant got a below average use of precise adjectives with a rate of 48,57 % while eight participants scored an average use of precise adjectives, with a rate ranging from 52,78 % to 69,74 %. Additionally, the remaining 10 participants indicated a good level in using precise adjectives ranging from 71,15 % to 80,33 %.

With respect to the precise use of adjectives, the students formed utterances like, “she has got a curly, *shoulder-length*, *dark-brown* hair.”, “I was *grateful*.”, “I was *overwhelmed*.”, “Algeria has the *most charming* environment.”, “The designs look pretty *futuristic*.”, “...people feel *ecstatic*...”, “I wanted to have an *excellent* average.”, “Oprah is a *gorgeous* women.”, “They have the *most sophisticated* architecture”, “..very *infectious* smile.”, “The state system of education is *more effective*...”, “The Algerian environment is *more diversified*.”, and “They invented robots... make their lives *easier*” . In these utterances, the participants were able to convey exact descriptions of the characters, countries, and feelings which made their speech clear and more precise.

On the other hand, the students showed superficial use of adjectives in utterances such as “...*little* brother...” instead of “...*younger* brother”, “...what make them *normal*” instead of “...make them *ordinary*”, “...*modern* countries” instead of “...*developed* countries”, “...*huge* buildings” instead of “...*gigantic* buildings”, “They have...*bigger* space” instead of “...*larger* space”, and “...and *different* in their own ways” instead of “...*unique* in their own ways”. This resulted in the vagueness of their oral descriptions which leads to confusion when trying to interpret the meanings they wanted to convey.

#### **2.4. Students' Degrees of Adjectives' Precision Errors**

Table 6 displays errors related to the use of degrees of adjectives which were semantically analyzed and presented in numerical data. The analysis was done by counting the number of positive, comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives used by each participant along with the number of precisely and superficially used adjectives and their percentages.

Table 6

*Students' Degrees of Adjectives' Precision Errors*

Participant N°	Total	Positive Degree			Comparative Degree			Superlative Degree		
		T	P	S	T	P	S	T	P	S
1	35	33	16	17	0	0	0	2	1	1
2	28	26	20	6	1	1	0	1	1	0
3	41	29	17	12	12	9	3	0	0	0
4	67	63	47	16	2	2	0	2	2	0
5	32	30	18	12	1	0	1	1	1	0
6	81	61	32	29	11	10	1	9	9	0
7	32	32	21	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	54	51	44	7	2	2	0	1	1	0
9	69	68	52	16	0	0	0	1	1	0
10	72	59	40	19	12	5	7	1	1	0
11	24	20	14	6	2	2	0	2	2	0
12	76	69	47	22	5	4	1	2	2	0
13	71	68	50	18	1	1	0	2	2	0
14	52	51	36	15	1	1	0	0	0	0
15	103	96	74	22	3	2	1	4	2	2
16	72	63	33	30	5	1	4	4	4	0
17	60	40	28	12	16	7	9	4	3	1
18	61	51	39	12	10	10	0	0	0	0
19	44	41	33	8	2	1	1	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	1074	<b>951</b>	661	290	<b>86</b>	58	28	<b>37</b>	33	4
<b>%</b>	_____	<b>100</b>	69,51	30,49	<b>100</b>	67,44	32,56	<b>100</b>	89,19	10,81

**Note:** T → Total; P → Precise Use; S → Superficial Use

Table 6 shows that the participants made use of 951 positive degrees of adjectives in which 69,51 % of them were precisely used while 30,49 % were superficially used. On the other hand, they made use of 86 comparative degree of adjectives displaying 67,44 % precise use and 32,56 % superficial use. Additionally, participants utilized 37 superlative degree of adjectives among which 89,19 % were precisely used while 10,81 % were superficially used. It thus can be noted that students' precision errors are mainly related to the use of comparative degree of adjectives with a rate of 32,56 % followed by positive degree of adjectives where the participants scored 30,49 %. Conversely, the lowest rate of precision errors can be marked in the use of the superlative degree of adjectives with a rate of 10,81 %.

Concerning precision errors related to positive degree of adjectives, the students produced structures such as "...he has *fair* hair..." instead of "...he has a *flaxen* hair, "he has *nice* posture" instead of "he has an *upright* posture", "...the *good* reason why ..." instead of "...*logical* reason why...", "they are similar buildings, *messy* ones..." instead of "...*chaotic* ones...", "...*old* buildings..." instead of "...*ancient* buildings...", and "...buildings...beautifully *arranged*..." instead of "...beautifully *lined-up*...". These structures denote basic and ambiguous meanings that make the listener build incomplete and even wrong mental images in his/her brain.

As far as comparative degree precision errors are considered, participants produced imprecise expressions like, "Architecture is *older*..." instead of "...is *more ancient*...", "In Algeria, although they have *bigger* space..." instead of "...*larger* space...", "the designs are *better*..." instead of "...*more beautiful/more captivating*...", and "...the devices...they are *better*..." instead of "...they are *more sophisticated* ...". In the light of these examples, it is

evident that the students were not precise in making use of the comparatives in their oral descriptions as they did not employ exact adjectives which denote strong meanings.

With regard to precision errors related to the use of superlative degrees of adjectives, the students produced structures like, “they will be the *best* places ...” instead of “...the *most beautiful* places...”, “...I say ugly is the *best* adjective...” instead of “...the *most appropriate* ...”, and “...it has the *biggest* buildings...” instead of “...the *tallest* buildings...”. In these examples, the informants used adjectives which denote superficial and general meanings which do not express their real intentions.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the students resort to the use of negation when employing positive degree of adjectives instead of using precise ones directly. For example, some students said “I think she’s...*not tall* but then *not short* either...” instead of saying directly “...*pretty tall*...”, “...just *not bad*.” instead of “...*acceptable*.”, “She is *not overweight*.” instead of “She is *fit*”, “It was *not a special* day.” instead of “it was an *ordinary* day.”. This maybe a result of students’ limited glossary of English language.

## **2.5. Students’ Degree Adjectives’ Precision Errors**

Table 7 displays EFL students’ precise and superficial use of degree adjectives. Gradable and non-gradable adjectives were semantically analyzed and presented statistically. The analysis was done by counting the number of gradable and non-gradable adjectives used by each participant along with the number of precisely and superficially used adjectives and their percentages.

Table 7

*Students' Degree Adjectives' Precision Errors*

Participant N°	Total	Gradable			Non-Gradable		
		Total	Precise	Superficial	Total	Precise	Superficial
1	35	24	10	14	11	7	4
2	28	15	10	5	13	12	1
3	41	27	16	11	14	10	4
4	67	38	28	10	29	23	6
5	32	20	8	12	12	11	1
6	81	41	19	22	40	32	8
7	32	19	13	6	13	8	5
8	54	31	26	5	23	21	2
9	69	45	31	14	24	22	2
10	72	36	17	19	36	29	7
11	24	7	6	1	17	12	5
12	76	46	17	29	30	26	4
13	71	37	24	13	34	29	5
14	52	25	15	10	27	22	5
15	103	56	40	16	47	38	9
16	72	51	26	25	21	12	9
17	60	46	27	19	14	11	3
18	61	39	30	9	22	19	3
19	44	22	16	6	22	19	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>625</b>	379	246	<b>449</b>	363	86
<b>%</b>	—	<b>100</b>	60,64	39,36	<b>100</b>	80,85	19,15

Table 7 demonstrates that 625 of adjectives used by the students when answering the oral production tasks were gradable adjectives whereas 449 of them were non-gradable ones. Concerning gradable adjectives, 60,64 % of them were precisely used whereas 39,36% were superficially employed. With regard to non-gradable adjectives, 80,85 % of them were precisely used while 19,15 % were superficially utilized. This shows that the students have good precision level in the use of degree adjectives in their oral performance.

Concerning precision errors related to the use of gradable adjectives, participants formed structures such as "...that's the field where we are *late*" instead of "...*lagging behind*", "The Maghreb architecture is...*beautiful*" instead of "...*fascinating*", "He has a very *relative* posture" instead of "He has an *upright* posture", "I was *so sad*..." instead of "I was *sorrowful*...", and "It was a *normal* day." instead of saying "It was an *ordinary / usual* day.". These expressions show that the students often tend to use gradable adjectives which denote weak, imprecise, and inappropriate meanings.

With regard to students' precision errors related to the use of non-gradable adjectives, the participants formed structures like, "She has big *black* eyes..." instead of "She has big *dark-brown* eyes...", "The *right* description for it is normal." instead of saying "The *exact* description...", "It is a *real* shame." instead of "It is a *big/true* shame.", "The hair looks *fake*..." instead of saying "The hair looks *artificial*...", and "Singapore is a *new* country." instead of "Singapore is an *emerging* country.". In these cases, although non-gradable adjectives generally denote extreme and absolute meanings, they indicated vagueness and impreciseness as they were used inappropriately by the participants.

It was noticeable after the analysis of the participants' answers that they tend to substitute non-gradable adjectives with gradable ones with modifiers. For example, the informants said, "I was *very happy*...", "I was *very sad* and helpless.", "...*very beautiful* pictures", "...that day was *so important* for me" and "It was *really good*.". This was noticed

in their answers as they did not give much attention to the selection of adjectives that may have contributed to the exactness of their oral descriptions.

### **Conclusion**

This section has been devoted to the analysis of the data gathered from the descriptive study. It provided an analysis of the students' answers to the oral production tasks and presented them in the form of statistical data. The following section will be devoted to the discussion of the overall results.

### **3. Section Three: Discussions**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this study is to investigate students' accurate and precise use of adjectives in their spoken mode of expression. The current section is devoted to the interpretation of the results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered. More importantly, this section answers the research questions. The discussions of the findings are organized around the research questions of the study which are answered based on the results obtained.

#### **3.1. Research Question One (*To what extent do EFL students make grammatically incorrect use of adjectives in their oral performance?*)**

The results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered indicate that all participants have excellent grammar level in using adjectives in their oral performance since almost all adjectives (96,24 %) were used correctly in their speech. This may be justified by the fact that the students had learned about the different grammar rules that govern adjectives' use for many years as well as the nature of the tasks used in the collection of data.

The sample of the current study were third year license students who had been exposed to the different grammar rules that govern the use of adjectives throughout their learning course. Basically, the students studied English grammar for four years in middle school and three years in high school. After that, they had been enrolled in grammar courses for two years in university where they learned in detail about the different grammar rules and patterns of the target language. Consequently, they developed a good proficiency level which was apparent in their use of adjectives when answering the tasks. Likewise, Mart (2013) claimed that "knowing more about grammar will enable learners to build better sentences in speaking and writing performances." (p. 124).

Another factor that may have resulted in students' good grammar proficiency in speaking with regard to adjectives is the nature of tasks which are production tasks wherein

the researchers did not restrict the participants with certain conditions or structures to be produced but rather allowed them to answer freely using the language they see appropriate. This was a requisite for the research since it aimed at investigating the participants' accurate and precise use of adjectives in natural communication.

### **3.2. Research Question Two (*What are the types of adjectives in which EFL students show more grammatically incorrect use in speech?*)**

Throughout the data analysis of the second research question, it was found that the students made use of certain types of adjectives while quantitative, interrogative, exclamatory, and relative adjectives were absent in their speech. Consequently, the students' grammatical use of these types could not be analyzed.

The results of this study show that the students did not commit grammatical errors concerning numeral, emphasizing, and distributive adjectives. Nevertheless, they showed grammatically incorrect use of descriptive, proper, possessive, and demonstrative adjectives. Specifically, the participants scored the highest rates of grammatically incorrect use of proper adjectives (17,65 %) followed by descriptive adjectives (4,10 %).

Throughout the analysis of the students' speech, it was noticed that they found it difficult to apply grammar rules that govern the use of proper adjectives, mainly rules of adjectives' formation. The results obtained support the claim of Setyani (2016) who found in his study on students' problems in making derivational words that "the most frequent errors were misformation" (p. vii). However, it is worth noting that his study analyzed students' formation errors of all words while our study is concerned with adjectives.

These errors can be a result of the students' lack of knowledge about proper adjectives' formation. Similarly, Ramadan (2015) assumed that misformation errors are a result of the absence of morphology courses, he claimed that "some students do not take this course at all. As a result of this, these students have poor competencies in the word-formation

processes” (p.30). Another factor that may have caused EFL students to commit such errors is the negative transfer from the mother tongue to the target language. Likewise, the same author explained that another important cause of morphological errors in word-formation is negative transfer wherein students translate literally from Arabic to English.

On the other hand, the students’ difficulties with regard to descriptive adjectives lay in applying rules of adjectives’ order, which may be due to the interference of their mother tongue. This supports the claim of Amer (2013) who assumed that “the position and order of English adjectives are problematic...due to the difference in this structure in both languages. This causes students to commit serious errors resulting from negative interference” (p. 43). Another factor that may have resulted in these difficulties is overgeneralization of previously learned structures and strategies in new situations. This goes hand in hand with what El Shaban (2017) deduced from her study on difficulties Arabic students encounter when using English adjectives in which she found that “the majority of learners’ errors are overgeneralization errors” (p. 38).

### **3.3. Research Question Three (*Do EFL students show mostly superficial or precise use of adjectives in their speech?*)**

The third research question sought to see whether the students mostly make superficial or precise use of adjectives in their speech. The results obtained revealed that most adjectives (70,02 %) were precisely used by the students. This may be due to their semantic knowledge of the English language they constructed throughout their learning course (i.e., middle school, secondary school, and university). It is worth mentioning that the participants were engaged throughout their learning course in vocabulary activities wherein they were required to search for synonyms or antonyms and discuss meanings of different words including adjectives. Likewise, Nation (2001) explained that,

True mastery of a word implies more than just knowing its meaning, it also entails knowing a variety of word knowledge aspects, namely spelling...other meanings the word might have.... The more aspects of word knowledge we teach our students about a word, the more likely they will be able to use it in the right contexts in an appropriate manner. (as cited in Blasco, 2014, p. 744)

In other words, the more students acquire knowledge about the different meanings that a word (i.e., adjective, adverb, noun, and verb) may express in different contexts, the more they will be able to use it precisely and accurately in their language.

#### **3.4. Research Question Four (*Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to positive, comparative, or superlative degrees of adjectives?*)**

The fourth research question aimed at pointing out which degree of adjectives EFL students' precision errors are mostly related to. The results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered revealed that the students' precision errors were mainly related to the use of the comparative degree of adjectives (32,56 %).

It is worth mentioning that the informants considerably made grammatically incorrect use of comparative degree of adjectives which, in return, affected their meanings. Consequently, it resulted in imprecision of their utterances. In the same token, Ur (1996) emphasized this point, he asserted that "grammar does not only affect how units of language are combined in order to look right; it also affects their meaning." (as cited in Doghonadze, 2017, p. 48). This may be due to the students' lack of practice on the use of comparative degree of adjectives throughout their leaning course. Unfortunately, no previous studies have inspected the effect of language practice on the EFL students' speaking proficiency with regard to degrees of adjectives.

### **3.5. Research Question Five (*Are EFL students' speech precision errors more related to gradable adjectives or non-gradable ones?*)**

The last research question sought to check whether precision errors committed by EFL students lie mainly in the use of gradable adjectives or non-gradable ones. The findings show that the students made more precision errors in the use of gradable adjectives (39,36 %). This can be justified by the fact that non-gradable adjectives mainly denote absolute and extreme meanings; they include absolute, extreme and classifying adjectives which mostly convey precise meanings as opposed to gradable adjectives. In this regard, Sassoon (2011) claimed that "some adjectives, however, are not as vague as others are. They are often called absolute adjectives" (p. 163).

To put it in a nutshell, the findings obtained from the analysis of the data gathered show that the respondents have an excellent grammar and a good precision level in their use of adjectives in speech. Therefore, we end up rejecting the current research hypotheses.

### **3.6. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

In light of the results of the current study, we suggest further research about EFL students' use of adjectives in speech. Owing to the fact that our research topic is new and have never been tackled before in language research, we suggest that future researchers carry out this topic from different perspectives.

Other researchers are recommended to address EFL students' use of adjectives in speech from different angles. On this account, they can, for example, consider the impact of EFL students' accurate and precise use of adjectives on their oral communication. It is also possible to investigate EFL students' appropriate use of adjectives in speaking. Furthermore, they can explore the types of adjectives' errors EFL students commit in speech, or narrow it down and investigate the types of transfer errors committed by EFL students in English adjectives' use.

Furthermore, since using adjectives makes speech accurate, special, and more expressive, the following guidelines are suggested for EFL teachers to be followed in their classrooms:

- ✓ EFL teachers should give more attention to the difficulties their students face in using adjectives in conversational speech and expose them with more English input in order to improve their use of adjectives.
- ✓ EFL teachers should focus on the grammatical differences between their students' first and second language in the use of adjectives in order to avoid making errors.
- ✓ EFL teachers have to assign speaking activities which cover the semantic aspects of adjectives and should engage students in negotiation of meaning activities.
- ✓ EFL students should be trained on applying semantic analysis so as to develop their choice of adjectives in making precise descriptions.

## **Conclusion**

This section has been devoted to the discussion of the findings of the descriptive study. This study aimed at investigating EFL students' accurate and precise use of adjectives in speech. In light of the results obtained, it is indicated that all third year EFL students have an excellent grammar proficiency level in the use of adjectives which may be a result of their exposure to the target language grammar throughout their learning course which has developed their speaking accuracy. Moreover, most of them did not face grammatical difficulties in using adjectives. However, those who did committed errors with respect to proper and descriptive adjectives mainly. This appears to be due to the interference of their mother tongue when communicating in English. Also, the study aimed at exploring students' precise and superficial use of adjectives in speech. The findings indicated that almost all the students' use of adjectives was mostly precise. This may be a result of students' practice of speaking skill in oral courses for three years in university. Moreover, this study examined

precision errors with regard to the use of degrees of adjectives (i.e., positive, comparative, and superlative) and degree adjectives (i.e., gradable and non-gradable adjectives); hence, the results revealed that the highest rates of precision errors were reported in the use of the comparative degree of adjectives. This can be justified by the fact that the students committed grammatical errors in the use of the comparative degree of adjectives which affected their meaning making it imprecise. In addition, the findings also revealed that the students' precision errors were mostly related to the use of gradable adjectives. This may be a result of the nature of non-gradable adjectives which generally denote precise meanings as opposed to gradable ones. Ultimately, this section ended up with suggesting some pedagogical recommendations and implications for future researchers.

## **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

Accuracy and precision as sub-components of language performance have been of increased interest in second language development. The current investigation examined EFL students' speech accuracy and precision with reference to adjectives. Practically, it analyzed the grammaticality and preciseness of adjectives in EFL students' speech. The study hypothesizes that third year EFL students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, will show to a great extent grammatically incorrect use of different types of adjectives in their oral performance. Additionally, it presupposes that they will manifest mostly imprecise use of adjectives in their speech. In order to investigate the research hypotheses, three oral production tasks were designed to get samples of the students' speech, which were grammatically and semantically analyzed.

The overall work was organized in two main chapters: the first one introduced the literature review related to the research topic while the second chapter covered the fieldwork of the investigation. As concerns the first chapter, it was divided into two sections. The first section presented the notions of speaking skill and speech accuracy and precision. It discussed the concept of the speaking skill in different language teaching methods and accounted for the importance of speaking accuracy and precision in oral proficiency. In addition to that, the section presented different teaching activities and strategies to develop oral proficiency. On the other hand, the second section explored the concept of adjectives in English language and shed light on their grammatical and semantic aspects. Additionally, it highlighted the mother tongue interference in adjectives' use.

Regarding the second chapter, it reported the practical part of this inquiry and was arranged in three sections. The first section described the methodology followed as it presented the current research paradigm and design along with the limitations. The second section presented a thorough analysis of the gathered data. Eventually, the last section

discussed the results with reference to other studies which tackled related issues. The results obtained indicate that the participants have an excellent grammar level in using adjectives; they showed infrequent incorrect use of some proper and descriptive adjectives mainly. Moreover, it was shown that they have a good precision level in their use of adjectives and most of their precision errors were related to comparative degree of adjectives and gradable adjectives. On the whole, based on the results obtained, the research hypotheses are rejected.

Owing to the fact that this study is original in nature as it has never been tackled in previous research, the outlined findings are significant and add to the field of language teaching and learning. More importantly, they contribute to the body of academic research on the use of English adjectives in EFL students' speech. However, this research topic can be reviewed from different angles in further research. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to consider other aspects and explore more about adjectives in EFL students' speech.

## **References**

## References

- Aarts, B. (2001). *English syntax and argumentation (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Abdulah, S. (2013). A contrastive study of the grammar translation and the direct methods of teaching. *3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Business, Economics, Management, and Behavioral Sciences*, 124-128.
- Amer, W. M. (2013). An investigation into the differences between English and Arabic position and order of adjectives. *Red Sea University Journal, Refereed scientific biannual Journal*, 3, 21-48.
- Andrews, L. (2006). *Language exploration and awareness: A resource book for teachers (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Routledge.
- Aronoff, M., & Fudeman, K. (2005). *What is morphology? (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Atmowardoyo, H. (2018). Research methods in TEFL studies: Descriptive research, case study, error analysis, and R & D. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(1), 197-204.
- Baker, J., & Westrup, H. (2003). *Essential speaking skills: A handbook for English language teachers*. London: Continuum.
- Bauer, L., Lieber, R., & Plag, I. (2013). *The Oxford reference guide to English morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Beheshti, F., Derakhshan, A., & Khalili, A. N. (2016). Developing EFL learners speaking ability. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 6(2), 177-186.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, codes and control: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Blasco, M. E. (2014). Applying semantic frames to effective vocabulary teaching in the EFL classroom. doi : [10.6035/ForumRecerca.2014.19.48](https://doi.org/10.6035/ForumRecerca.2014.19.48)
- Blokh, M. Y. (2004). *Theoretical grammar: English language*. USSR Ministry of Education: Moscow.
- Booij, G. (2010). Construction morphology. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 4(7), 543-555.
- Booij, G. (2000). Inflection and derivation. In G. Booij, C. Lehman, and M. Mugdan (Eds.), *Morphology: An international handbook on inflection and word-formation*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 360-369.
- Brown, H. D. (n.d.). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Longman.
- Bruntt, K. L. (2012). *Handbook for language detectives: Learning and teaching English grammar*. Samfundslitteratur.
- Burns, R. B., & Dobson, C. B. (1984). *Introductory Psychology*. England: MTP Press Limited.
- Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Byrne, D. (1986). *Teaching oral English*. Harlow: Longman.
- Chaudron, G. (2003). Data collection in SLA research. In C. J. Doughty, M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 762-828.
- Chilcott, J. D. (1996). Effective use of simulations in the classroom. *Creative Learning Exchange*, 1-36.

- Corder, S. P. (1974). Error analysis. *The Edinburgh course in applied linguistics*, 3, 122-131.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Dobson, M. J. (1981). *Effective techniques for English conversational groups*. ELPD, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C. 20547.
- Doghonadze, N. (Ed.) (2017). *Teaching EFL reading and writing in Georgia*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Eastwood, J. (1994). *Oxford guide to English grammar*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- El Shaban, A. R. (2017). A cross-sectional investigation of the difficulties encounter Arabic students in using English adjectives. *World Journal of English Language*, 7(3), 29-39.
- Ellis, R. (1994). A theory of instructed second language acquisition. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 79-114.
- Ellis, R. (Ed.) (2005). *Planning and task performance in a second language*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing Learner Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Foster, P., Tonkyn, A., & Wigglesworth, G. (2000). Measuring spoken language: A unit for all reasons. *Applied Linguistics*, 21, 354-375.

- Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fulcher, G. (2014). *Testing second language speaking*. New York: Routledge.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Essex, England: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Longman.
- Higa, M. (1963). Interference effects of intralist word relationships in verbal learning. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 2(2), 170-175.
- Huckin, T., & Coady, J. (1999). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: A review. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21(2), 181-193.
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jespersen, O. (1954). *A modern English grammar on historical principles: Volume 2, Syntax (first volume)*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Jitpranee, J. (2017). A Study of adjective types and functions in popular science articles. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 9(2), 57-69.
- Kabir, S. M. S. (2016). *Basic guidelines for research: An introductory approach for all disciplines*. Book Zone Publication.
- Ladjali, D. (2011). *Improving the quality of interaction in the Algerian foreign language classes*. (Magister Dissertation, University of Sétif).
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20, 37-66.
- Mart, C. T. (2013). Teaching grammar in context: Why and how? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(1), 124-129.
- Mehnert, U. (1998). The effects of different lengths of time for planning on second language performance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20(01), 83-108.
- Mirza, S. (2017). The implementation of competency approach in Algerian foreign language classroom: The impact of social interactions on knowledge construction process and the development of learning competences. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine, Sétif)
- Newson, M., Hordós, M., Pap, D., Szécsényi, K., Tóth, G., & Vincze, V. (2006). *Basic English syntax with exercises*. Budapest: Bölcsész Consortium.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. New York: Prentice Hall Intermediate (UK) LTD.
- Nunan, D., & Bailey, K. M. (2009). *Exploring second language classroom research: A comprehensive guide*. HEINLE CENGAGE Learning.
- Omari, F. Z. (2015). Teaching the speaking skill: Speaking activities to develop learners' communicative competence. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tlemcen).
- Pajunen, A. (1998). Adjectives in spoken language discourse. *WORD*, 49(3), 341-368.
- Payne, J., Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2010). The distribution and category status of adjectives and adverbs. *Word Structure*, 3(1), 31-81.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive grammar of the English language*. New York, NY: Longman.

- Radhika V., & Kala, M.S. (2013). Interference of mother tongue in learning a foreign tongue. *International Electronic Journal for the Teachers of English*, 3(2), 96-101.
- Ramadan, S. (2015). Morphological errors made by Jordanian university students. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 14, 25-32.
- Richard, J. C. (1970). A non-contrastive approach to error analysis. Paper presented at the TESOL Convention, San Francisco.
- Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A description and analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sassoon, G. W. (2012). A slightly modified economy principle: Stable properties have non-stable standards. In E. Cohen (Ed.), *Proceedings of IATL* (pp. 163-182). Cambridge: MITWPL.
- Setyani, D. P. (2016). Students' problems in making derivational words. (Doctoral Dissertation, State University of Semarang).
- Stubbs, M. (2012). *Language, schools, and classroom*. New York: Routledge.
- Tasneen, W. (2010). Literary texts in the language classroom: A study of teachers' and students' views at international schools in Bangkok. *Asian EFL Journal*, 12(4), 173-187.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Essex: Pearson.
- Toni, A., Hassaskhah, J., & Birjandi, P. (2017). The impressibility of speaking accuracy/fluency among EFL undergraduates: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, 10(21), 184-225.

- Torky, S. A. (2006). The effectiveness of a task-based instruction program in developing the English language speaking skills of secondary stage students. (Doctoral Dissertation, Ain Shams University).
- Touchie, H. (1986). Second language learning errors: Their types, causes, and treatment. *JALT Journal*, 8(1), 75-80.
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching Listening*. New York: Longman Inc.
- Ur, P. (1981). *Discussions that work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vercellotti, L., M. (2012). Complexity, accuracy and fluency as properties of language performance: The development of the multiple subsystems over time and in relation to each other. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).
- Wang, Z. (2014). Developing accuracy and fluency in spoken English of Chinese EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 110-118.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An introduction to sociolinguistics (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Yogcioglu, D. E. (2019). Teaching adjectives and adverbs in ESL classes. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 272-278.
- Zemmouri, L. (2010). Enhancing students' speaking skill through role play techniques. (Magister Dissertation, Mohammed Kheider University).

- Zerkinaa, N. N., Kostina, N. N., Urazayevaa, N.R., Lomakinaa, Y. A., Emetsa, T. V., Gallyamovaa, M. S., Melnikovaa, E. P., Trutneva, A. Yu., & Lukinaa, O. A. (2016). Axiological role of English adjectives in English language teaching. *International Journal of Environmental & Science Education*, 11(12), 5146-5154.
- Zipoli, R. P. J., Coyne, D. M., & McCoach, D. B. (2010). Enhancing vocabulary intervention for kindergarten students: Strategic integration of semantically related and embedded word review. *Remedial and Special Education*, 32(2), 131-141.

### **Web Pages**

- Adjectives. (n.d.). In *Merriam Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adjective>
- Inherent and Non-inherent Adjectives. (n.d.). Internet Grammar of English. Retrieved from <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/adjectiv/stative.htm>
- Sener, I. (2012, November 12). Importance of Adjectives in Sentences (Discussion part). [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://isener21.blogspot.com/2012/11/importance-of-adjectives-in-sentences.html>
- Williamson, G. (2014, February 20). Adjectives. [Blog post] Retrieved from <https://www.sltinfo.com/adjectives/>

# **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Elicitation Tasks

Dear student,

We kindly invite you to answer the following tasks with the aim of investigating EFL students' speech accuracy and precision with specific reference to adjectives. Your responses will be recorded and used only for the purposes of this research work. They will be treated anonymously and remain completely confidential. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated. Thank you in advance for the time you will devote to answer these tasks.

**Task One:** Look at the following pictures and then choose one character to describe, taking into consideration his/her physical appearance (age and skin, hair, height and weight, posture, clothes) and personality.



**Task Two:**

**Part One:** Look at the following pictures that represent education, technology, architecture and environment in both Singapore and Algeria and do what follows.

**SINGAPORE**



**EDUCATION**



**ALGERIA**



**EDUCATION**



**TECHNOLOGY**



**TECHNOLOGY**



**ARCHITECTURE**



**ARCHITECTURE**





- Describe and compare Singapore with Algeria.

**Part Two:** Look at the following pictures that show architecture in Singapore and in other countries and do what follows.



- Describe Singapore's architecture compared to that of the other countries.

**Task Three:** Your friend describes to you the amount of emotions that he felt when he succeeded in his Baccalaureate exam; he says to you “the day I knew I passed my BAC exam with success was unforgettable and the amount of emotions that I felt on that day was unbelievable. I was very excited and overjoyed to share the good news with my parents to whom I am so grateful. I felt euphoric and so proud when I saw them pleased as punch”. His

words remind you of the day you succeeded in your BAC exam. Describe to him your feelings on that special day.

Thank you for your cooperation

## **Appendix B**

### **Participant (2)**

#### **Task One**

I choose the American President Donald Trump. By looking at his picture, I can say that he is six feet one or maybe six feet two. He looks in his late 60s. He seems healthy just by looking at his posture and how his clothes fit him. Maybe he has around 30 to 40 pounds. He looks clean. Moving on to the personality, in my humble opinion, I like him because you're looking at the person that likes or loves his country and he is ready to do anything in his power to make it great again, even though many people think the opposite of it.

#### **Task Two**

##### **Part One**

Comparison between Algeria and Singapore. The first thing that comes to mind is that they are ages ahead of us. We are still using chalkboards and computers and many other activities to facilitate the learning process. The second thing is technology and that's the field where we are late. Our problem is why do we still have slow internet connection while they are worrying about how to make that robot tiny and a bit faster. Moving on to us, architecture and structure of our cities looks old and a bit antique somehow. On the other hand, you have Singapore with the innovative designs and flashy things, but you don't know until you experience living there. Last but not least the environment and this is where I am hundred percent sure that my country Algeria can't be beaten. It is one of the most beautiful countries in the world because of the diversity that our land provides from north to south and I'm not taking credits from Singapore that is really really beautiful.

##### **Part Two**

We have here Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, three North African countries that have the same structure in architecture. On the other hand, we have Singapore which looks futuristic

and almost as if it's out of a comic book or something. The buildings are built in different designs.

### **Task Three**

Well, I can't forget that day. It was so so long from morning to evening. I kept counting minutes and waiting for the time for the results to go live. I was stressed the whole day. I was reacting differently to different things, some with anger and some kind of love that they can't replicate even a normal day. I don't know why, but then comes the hour of the announcement. I was sitting still in front of my PC and here are the results goes live. I checked in, and yes, I got it. I screamed like a fool and I had the tears of joy and finally I slept like a baby.

## **Appendix C**

### **Participant (8)**

#### **Task One**

Donald Trump is a well-known person. He is the president of USA. He has 74 years old. He is a blond man who has fair hair that he didn't change it though since his youth. He has a white skin. He is tall and middle-sized and he has a very relative poster. He wears always full classical clothes. He is a strict and strong man, impressive, stubborn, liberal, and obscure but he is a joyful person.

#### **Task Two**

##### **Part One**

Singapore is one of the richest countries. It is a developed country. Taking education as an example, it tries to create intelligent and original generations by teaching its students using develop tools like computers and selectors and by giving them the chance to express themselves while in other countries like Algeria, they are using primal tools like the board without applying in the reality. Technology also in Singapore is progressing. They invented robots which replace humans and make their lives easier in addition to developed means of communication like phones and so on while Algeria replaces industrial resources by natural ones like the solar energy. Architecture in Singapore is a creative painting in which buildings are amazing. They built multiple and wonderful buildings by different shapes and forms. However, in Algeria, the buildings are built next to each other keeping the same form.

##### **Part Two**

The architecture in Singapore is creative much more than the other countries. The builders there use new creative forms that cannot be found anywhere else and if you search in Google or any other site about Singapore's buildings, you will be surprised because of the high and the large houses companies and institutions. However, in the other countries,

buildings are the same and they are built with the same form. What makes them normal even if they are high and big is that they are built next to each other.

### **Task Three**

The day I passed my Baccalaureate exam, or the great day as I call it, was an amazing day in which I was very happy and I made all whom around me happy too. I thought I did a great achievement. I was very proud of myself for getting a good average and I was grateful for my God first and for my family for their support. Getting my Bac was like opening my doors to fulfill my dream, to spread my brightness, and to be the star of my own story. Really, it was an unforgettable day.

## **Appendix D**

### **Participant (13)**

#### **Task One**

I am choosing Oprah Winfrey because the other guy is a little bit controversial. She looks in her 50s maybe. She has got a curly wavyish dark-brown hair, her skin is dark and I think she is fairly tall, not tall but not short either. For the weight, I will go and say she looks a little bit overweight, even though in this picture she looks great. She has a poster that radiates confidence and grace. She looks very well put together. She is wearing a long red dress, long sleeves with a v neck-line and just looks beautiful. For her personality, she seems a very thoughtful person, a person that promotes understanding. She looks calm, wise, and one that learned from the past events which makes her wise basically.

#### **Task Two**

##### **Part One**

Comparing Singapore and Algeria in regards of education. So, for Singapore, it seems like they are using and incorporating technology and electronic tools into the educational system and their teaching system and learning. For the education in Algeria, it seems that they are still using basic and traditional tools for teaching. You can see a plain board and chalk. So yeah. Now for technology for Singapore, you can see robots, drones, and digital screens. It seems that they are a source of the latest and most novel technologies and electronics while for Algeria, they seem basic, I would say the first technologies that the world have known like phone, computers, but then we have the solar pallets for use for the solar system, solar energy sorry which can be considered as recent technology. Just not bad. Now for the architecture for Singapore, it seems that you can see a lot of skyscrapers, tall buildings that are modern and diverse in shape, size, and it pretty much seems very advanced and up-to-date. whilst for the architecture in Algeria, it seems average and vintage sort of

coming from past years architecture style, a third world architecture. Now for the environment, it seems that Algeria has fine types of environments and seems diverse. We can see the sand and sea, lakes and forests. It seems very diverse. whilst for Singapore compared to Algeria, it seems like it has less green, even though we can see some green spaces, a lake in the picture, but then it absolutely seems like there are more buildings than green spaces and it seems less diverse than Algeria.

### **Part Two**

Comparing Singapore with Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. So, the architecture, well as I said before, Singapore's architecture definitely looks more than diverse and gives a sense of grandeur of advancement and development. It is kind of a glimpse from the future, but then for Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, it seemed to have this sort of same type of architecture and buildings. They give you the same sense. I wouldn't say primitive. It's not as primitive, but then it gives you the sense of poor development and they seem as if they are stuck in the past century.

### **Task Three**

The day I succeeded in my Bac exam. Well, the success itself was not a surprise, but I felt not quite happy to be honest, I was not quite happy. I was grateful. I think I was grateful, but I was not happy because it was not the grade that I truly wanted, but then you get what you work for. I was grateful, unsatisfied and accepting. Also, I was being really sick because again you get what you work for. So, I was not expecting much more even though I expected a little bit more than that, but then I was, the moment I saw the results, you know, getting my exam was not a surprise. So, that was ok. But then, the minute I saw the grade, I was grateful that I passed which is a blessing in itself. I was as I said unsatisfied, but I was accepting and realistic. That was it. It was not a very special day.

## **Appendix E**

### **Participant (18)**

#### **Task One**

Donald Trump is a tall man, with white skin and white hair. Also, he seems to be neither thin nor fat. Twisting his arms and marking his confidence from a far. He wears dark blue suit. Yeah, so Trump is known for his confidence and strictness with whomever.

#### **Task Two**

##### **Part One**

Algerian education seems to be primitive still using manual tools, like chalkboards, copybooks, and textbooks whereas in Singapore, they use more modern tools as in grouping. They rely on technological tools. Yeah, like screens, data shows, and computers. And for technology, we see that in Singapore, they are more developed than Algeria and that is noticed in robots. They have modern robots and also screens, digital screens. For Algeria, it is still trying to make sunscreens, solar panels and solar energy. Algerian technology is a bit on its way to be on the scale with the modern countries. For Architecture, it is mostly noticed that Singapore is way too developed and that is for its skyscrapers and larger lakes and parks as well. However, for Algeria, its parks are smaller than Singapore's and also for the buildings, they are still on their way to be like big countries. Singapore is more organized and that is for the laws. They do respect the laws. However, in Algeria, it is not that organized. It is not for the laws, but it is related to people's culture. Ok. For the environment, Algeria is very rich with natural resources. However, they are not taking care of them and they are not making something new of it, but it is mostly richer than Singapore. There are three natural zones. The Mediterranean, the Sahara, and the one between. For Singapore, it is hard for them to maintain the same natural cover. Well, they are trying to make the environment nicer. Because it is known for its rainy seasons throughout the whole year

which makes work very hard for them. Looking at the sky of Singapore and Algeria, the color of the sky is different. It is obvious that Singapore's sky is polluted and it is for the factories. Yeah, but for Algeria, it is cleaner because there are no factories and it's just cleaner.

### **Part Two**

Singapore in comparison to Algeria Tunisia and Libya. For Sky scrapers, we can notice that they are massive and huge and well-built and framed in urban States; however, for the lakes, they are super large, clean, pure, and nit. For the shops, they are colorful and well-organized as well. For the houses in Singapore, they seem to be built in a europic style, beautifully arranged with plants and flowers on the sides.

### **Task Three**

For my bachelor, the day I was told that I have succeeded, I was so happy. I felt special as well. I felt as if I was in heavenly heaven. All of my insecurities just fell down and my future became brighter. Yeah. Also, I had a sudden urge to work passionately for my future. I was so happy and euphoric. I felt in Utopia. I could say that my goal and purpose in life, my ultimate goal and purpose in life was to make my parents and my sisters proud as well, and in that day, I have done it. Everyone in my family was proud of me and me of myself as well.

## Résumé

L'Anglais occupe une place importante et il est fermement établi en tant que langue mondiale dominante (Rao, 2019). Par conséquent, parler Anglais est sans aucun doute vital de nos jours car il est universellement utilisé dans presque tous les domaines de la vie. Cette étude vise à étudier la grammaticalité et la précision de la parole des étudiants en Anglais comme Langue Etrangère (ALE) avec une référence particulière aux adjectifs ; plus précisément, elle cherche à décrire comment les élèves utilisent des adjectifs dans leur discours en tenant compte des aspects grammaticaux et sémantiques. On a émis l'hypothèse que les étudiants de troisième année ALE de l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, montreront une utilisation grammaticalement incorrecte et imprécise de différents types d'adjectifs. Trois tâches de production orale ont été conçues et exécutées par les participants pour examiner la grammaticalité et la précision de l'utilisation des adjectifs par les élèves dans leur élocution spontanée. Après avoir analysé grammaticalement et sémantiquement les productions orales des étudiants, il a été constaté que les étudiant-participants ont une excellente performance dans leur utilisation grammaticale des adjectifs. Ils ne montraient qu'une utilisation incorrecte et occasionnelle d'un petit nombre d'adjectifs propres et descriptifs. De plus, les participants ont montré un niveau de précision acceptable dans leur utilisation des adjectifs, et leurs erreurs de précision étaient principalement liées au degré comparatif des adjectifs et des adjectifs gradables.

**Mots Clés:** Adjectifs, Grammaire, Grammaticalité, Précision, Sémantique, Compétence Orale.

## ملخص

تحتل اللغة الإنجليزية مكانة مهمة وقد تم ترسيخها كلغة عالمية مهيمنة ( Rao، 2019). لذلك، يعد التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية أمرًا حيويًا بلا شك في الوقت الحاضر حيث يتم استخدامها عالميًا في جميع مجالات الحياة تقريبًا. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من دقة كلام طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) ودقتها مع إشارة خاصة إلى الصفات؛ على وجه التحديد، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى وصف كيفية استخدام الطلاب للصفات في حديثهم مع مراعاة الجوانب النحوية والدلالات. يُفترض أن طلاب السنة الثالثة في كلية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى، جيجل، سيظهرون استخدامًا خاطئًا نحويًا وغير دقيق لأنواع مختلفة من الصفات. تم تصميم ثلاث تمارين إنتاج شفوية وإكمالها من قبل المشاركين لفحص القواعد النحوية ودقة استخدام الطلاب للصفات في الكلام التلقائي. بعد تحليل الإنتاج الشفهي للطلاب نحويًا ودلاليًا، وجد أن الطلاب المشاركين لديهم أداء ممتاز في استخدامهم النحوي للصفات. حيث أظهروا فقط استخدامًا غير صحيح من حين لآخر لعدد صغير من الصفات الصحيحة والوصفية. علاوة على ذلك، أظهر المشاركون مستوى دقة مقبول في استخدامهم للصفات، وكانت أخطاءهم في الدقة مرتبطة بشكل أساسي بالدرجة المقارنة للصفات والصفات القابلة للتدرج.

**المصطلحات الأساسية:** الدقة، الصفات، القواعد، الدقة، الدلالات، مهارة التحدث.