# **Examiner's commentary**

The strength of this essay lies in its narrow scope, which enables the candidate to pursue a purposeful, detailed investigation of the topic. The research question is placed firmly in the context of post-colonial literature in a clear introductory chapter, and the main body of the essay then focuses on an analysis of different aspects of accent and identity in both the Nigerian and American settings of the novel. The candidate's ownership of their topic is evident throughout the discussion, which is illustrated by apposite quotations from the primary text, analysed with both insight and sensitivity. The layout and presentation are excellent; the structure of the essay is supportive and coherent with chapter titles which guide the reader through the paper. A strong concluding paragraph offers both a summary of the key points of the analysis and a sound overview of Adichie's achievement. The RPPF ("Reflections on Planning and Progress Form" at the bottom of each essay) charts the candidate's Extended Essay journey in some detail, demonstrating their strong personal engagement with the topic and task.

The IB believe that content owners have the right to protect their property from theft. We are working to make digital content widely available while protecting it through strategies that meet our community expectations. Piracy is best addressed through consumer education, the enforcement of current copyright laws and new technologies and business models that make legal access to digital content easy, convenient and affordable. Any violation of IB's copyright will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

# Title: An exploration of the role of accents as a literary technique in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

Research Question: What is the role and significance of the accents used by characters in *Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie?

Subject: English A

Category 1

Word Count: 4,000

November 2018

# **Table of Contents**

Introduction	3
Main Body	
Vocalising heritage and allowing for establishment of communities	4
Masking identity	5
Asserting connection to former identity	8
Becoming a burden to assimilation	9
Playing a role in identity reclamation	13
Conclusion	15
References	16

# An exploration of the role of accents as a literary technique in Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah

Literature allows authors to create stories set in culturally-specific times and places. In order to do so, authors may use characterisation through speech to indicate the time period, setting, and culture within a narrative. Accents are an aspect of reality often absent in literature, but in an increasingly globalised society - and the resulting migratory literature - this is changing. Therefore, this new technique of employing accents as a characterisation tool in literature is worth examining.

Though limited, the use of accents in African literature is not entirely new. Chinua Achebe was a much-lauded Nigerian writer who influenced younger generations of African writers such as Adiche. In Achebe's work "the use of the English language with a different accent may locate its user at a different power position" (H. Pitia and A. Mugaddan, 2015, p. 3232-3234). This literary technique is used to establish characters that can be used to comment on the existing social hierarchies. Adiche uses this technique to a significantly greater extent in *Americanah*, encompassing the lives Nigerian migrants in America and Britain.

In Americanah, Adiche uses distinctive speech patterns and varieties of English, including the diversity of dialects found in America and Britain. She explores not only the different social hierarchies, as Achebe did, but the role of accents as an integral part of migrant identity. Her use of accents has not been examined in the existing literature, despite being an essential element of the narrative and portrayal of characters in Americanah.

As explained by political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson, "the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities" (Anderson, 2006). The ability to connect and disconnect communities of English speakers is central to the role of accents and dialects which Adichie focuses upon. This essay explores how, through her use of accents as a literary technique, Adichie demonstrates that they may convey heritage, status, and belonging to communities. She further demonstrates how accents are utilised, by her characters, in an attempt to assimilate and belong, at the cost of losing one's former identity.

#### Vocalising heritage and allowing for establishment of communities

Accents create a sense of connection through shared origins and heritage for immigrants in Western societies. This is initially explored at the beginning of *Americanah* when the protagonist, Ifemelu, worries that her taxi driver would, "once he heard her accent", identify her as a "fellow Nigerian" (Adichie, 2013, p. 8) and engage her in conversation. She is unsure whether her driver is, like herself, a Nigerian immigrant because skin colour and name alone do not convey his heritage, "you could never be too sure. Nigerians took all sorts of names here" (Adichie, 2013, p. 8). However, the taxi driver's accent conveys his heritage, "she could tell right away ... that his accent was Caribbean" (Adichie, 2013, p. 9). Thus, within the first pages of the book, Adichie begins her exploration of the significant role of accents as a form of identification between immigrants, one that is harder to conceal and more deeply rooted than even their names.

Accents can be used to establish connection and Ifemelu's experience at the hair salon is firmly grounded in this fact. The hair salon is staffed by "Francophone, West African women braiders" who share not only their background but are also united by the "broken, curious"

(Adichie, 2013, p. 9) English spoken to their customers. They create a "shared space of their Africanness" (Adichie, 2013, p. 103) which provides a sanctuary away from the white centre of Princeton. Once again, Adichie illustrates how accents – the sharing of broken English and words in foreign tongues - can create a safe space and sense of community for immigrants.

Ifemelu herself relies upon this new sense of community when she first arrives and begins university in America. She is asked to attend the next African Students Association meeting by a girl in her class with "a firm, female voice...with a non-American accent" (Adichie, 2013, p. 137). There she finds "their different accents formed meshes of solacing sounds." Ifemelu feels a "sense of renewal", "here, she did not have to explain herself" (Adichie, 2013, p. 139). Consequently, Adichie explores the comfort that Ifemelu feels upon hearing foreign accents. They act as a signal that someone is a fellow immigrant and therefore they create a sense of connection. This is because there exists a sense of belonging and a lack of self-consciousness when surrounded by others who speak with "tongues burred with foreign accents" (Adichie, 2013, p. 407).

#### Masking identity

As accents form an instrumental part of a person's identity, Adichie explores the changing of accent in an attempt to alter one's identity. In Ifemelu's school days, one of her classmates is known for her trips abroad to America and Ifemelu is thus exposed to the strangeness of, and the bragging rights that come with, an American accent. The character, Binsi, "had come back from a short trip to America with odd affectations, pretending she no longer understood Yoruba, adding a slurred r to every English word she spoke" (Adichie, 2013, p. 65). The ownership of an American accent is flaunted and understood as a status symbol of being cultured and able to travel abroad. America becomes a collective fantasy and, through

S...

using an American accent, one can claim to be a part of a separate world, a "hallowed American club" (Adichie, 2013, p. 3) of which Ifemelu is later a proud member. Thus, Adichie begins to weave how accents are a reflection of identity into the narrative and their significance to immigrants attempting to assimilate into American society.

Aunt Uju is a character that can be explored as a case study of conversion to an Americanized self. Ifemelu arrives in American to find Aunt Uju's "spirit bleached of colour" (Adichie, 2013, p. 108). This metaphor establishes a loss of vibrancy as Aunt Uju supresses her identity in order to conform. In addition, Ifemelu finds Aunt Uju's name changed, "pronounced it *you-joo* instead of *oo-joo*" (Adichie, 2013, p. 104) and Aunt Uju tells her it's because "It's what [Americans] call me." The alteration of her name is mirrored by the "nasal, sliding accent she put on ... in the presence of white Americans" and "with the accent emerged a new persona, apologetic and self-abasing" (Adichie, 2013, p. 108). Adichie pairs this new, fake American accent with the new identity Aunt Uju forges using repeated listing of an adjective and verb to describe both her accent and persona "nasal, sliding" and "apologetic and abasing", implicitly linking them through her descriptions in addition to explicitly stating their connection. The shift in Aunt Uju is summarised at the end of the chapter, "America had subdued her" (Adichie, 2013, p. 110). America is personified as an oppressive power that restrains and quietens Aunt Uju, pressing upon her a desire and need to surrender her name, accent, and identity in an attempt to belong to her new American society.

Bartholomew provides another example of an immigrant attempting to fit into American society, marked by his "American accent filled with holes" (Adichie, 2013, p. 115). This metaphor evokes the emptiness and fragmentation of his voice as he strives for an American accent. Ifemelu senses "a deprived rural upbringing that he tried to compensate for with his

American affection, his gonnas and wannas" (Adichie, 2013, p. 115). His accent serves as a tactic to impress his status as an American upon others, though it fails to convince Ifemelu. His American accent is inauthentic, he "[mangled] words until they were impossible to understand" (Adichie, 2013, p. 115). Bartholomew lacks a sense of belonging, "home was now a blurred place between here and there" (Adichie, 2013, p. 117). Reflected in his accent is his sense of dislocation and lack of home. Ifemelu suggests that "he was one of those people who, in his village back home, would have been called 'lost.'" (Adichie, 2013, p. 116) Not only does he try to assimilate with his broken Americanized English but when he leaves, Ifemelu tells Aunt Uju "'He uses bleaching creams'" and asks "What kind of man bleaches his skin, biko?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 117) Bartholomew's use of bleaching creams is another means of erasing identity and trying to hide his African heritage. (Pardiñas, 2014, p. 37) Thus his accent and skin become ways to attempt to assimilate into American society by masking his origins and abandoning his past identity. Adichie suggests that, rather than aiding him, this leaves him "lost", straddling two identities, neither of which are complete, both filled with holes.

Both Aunt Uju and Bartholomew attempt to assimilate into American society by masking their previous identities and heritages, and accents are an important tool for doing so. The important role of accents in defining identify is thus explored when their original identities are being abandoned and altered to fit into society. However, while using American accents signifies this attempt to conform, the changing of accent is paired with the changing of name, in the case of Aunt Uju, and the changing of outwards appearance, seen through the use of bleaching creams by Bartholomew. Thus, the transformation encompasses superficial outwards changes as well as changing of accents as Adichie argues the most important, intimate connection to self that is presented to the world remains the voice.

#### Asserting connection to former identity

While accents are one of the first means by which immigrants attempt to conform and mask their previous identities, they can also serve as a means to prove that inner identity remains unchanged, a sign of staying true to one's former self and origins.

Ifemelu meets her friend Ginika, who moved to the United States to the envy of all her peers, when they were still in school. When they meet again in America, "Ginika had lapsed into Nigerian English, a dated, overcooked version, eager to prove how unchanged she was" (Adichie, 2013, p. 122). The use of a domestic, cooking metaphor, similar to Aunt Uju's "bleached" spirit, uses a sensory experience of Ginika's accent to convey a loss of flavour and a lack of authenticity found in her voice, portraying accent as something that is served, like a dish. However, Ginika's overenthusiastic attempt to assure Ifemelu that she remains unchanged leads to an "overcooked" accent that lacks authenticity. Thus, Adichie studies accents as an attempt to assure others of being true to their origins and former selves.

This façade is lifted when Ginika brings Ifemelu to her friend Stephanie's apartment where she is "struck by how like her American friends Ginika had become" exemplified by "her American-accented words sailing out of her mouth" (Adichie, 2013, p. 124). In stark contrast to the Ginika's "overcooked" American-Nigerian voice and words, her American English "sails" out of her mouth. This metaphor conveys a sense of freedom, highlighting the ease with which she uses American English. In addition, this provides a comparison between the effort of using her Nigerian accent and the seemingly effortless employment of her American one. This contrast between her new American identity and the old Nigerian identity she clings on to is highlighted by Adichie's selection of metaphor. Ginika symbolizes the ease of assimilating into a country when young as, "unlike Aunt Uju, ... cultural cues had seeped into her skin"

(Adichie, 2013, p. 125). This fluidity allows Ginika to assume a new American identity painlessly because she lacks strong links to her past. She easily adopts her new life and identity while Aunt Uju is crushed by the effort. Thus, accents are used to explore how identity is affected, at different ages, by relocating to a new country. The ability to change one's accent and voice is paralleled by the ability to fit into a new society and mould oneself into the identity that this demands.

#### Becoming a burden to assimilation

Accents, and whether or not they are used, is clearly linked to their connection to heritage and community. For immigrants, accents can become a burden as they signal association with immigrant communities. Immigrants are thus pressured to conform and change their accents as a means to assimilate and to avoid being ostracized and categorized as outsiders in America. When Ifemelu attempts to get a job after arriving in America, her potential employer immediately identifies her foreign accent and comments on it, "'That's a pretty accent. Where are you from?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 130) The interest in her accent becomes an accusation of her foreignness and a means to question where Ifemelu is from. She doesn't get the job and, after being rejected for several more, she reflects that "there were slippery layers of meaning that eluded her" (Adichie, 2013, p. 131). Ifemelu is still attempting to understand her new country and cannot yet fathom why she is being rejected, unaware that her accent has a major impact on how she is perceived. This, however, later dawns upon her when she goes to register for her university and encounters the woman working at the desk, "Cristina Tomas with her rinsed-out look, her washy blue eyes, faded hair, and pallid skin" (Adichie, 2013, p. 132). In the description of this woman, her full name is used repeatedly to accentuate the contrast between Ifemelu's foreign, Nigerian name and the white, Anglo-Saxon name of the receptionist. In addition, there is repeated negative diction that serves to emphasise a lack

of colour "washed-out", "washy", "faded", and "pallid". The diction serves to contrast allusions often made with whiteness to purity, cleanliness, goodness, or light. Instead, there is a negative implication made regarding the lack of colour in contrast to Ifemelu's vibrant background, personality, and accent. At first, Ifemelu is confused by Cristina Tomas' speech "Yes. Now. You. An. International. Student?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 133) Adichie uses full stops as a means to convey the speech pattern of this character and immerse the reader in the experience of Ifemelu. Ifemelu feels sympathy for Cristina Tomas as she reasons she "had to have some sort of illness that made her speak so slowly, lips scrunching and puckering" (Adichie, 2013, p. 133). The irony of this situation is achieved when Ifemelu realizes "Cristina Tomas was speaking like that because of her, her foreign accent" (Adichie, 2013, p. 133). Here Adichie makes the connection between identity and accent abundantly clear by listing the words "her, her foreign accent" through repetition, making them, in essence, synonymous to each other. Ifemelu's accent is "her", an essential part of her identity, but one that leads to her being spoken to like "a small child, lazy-limbed and drooling." The ridicule and embarrassment of being spoken to in such a manner, despite having "spoken English all her life", leaves Ifemely feeling helpless and deeply hurt. In this moment "she shrank like a dried leaf" (Adichie, 2013, p. 133). The humiliating experience conveyed through simile expresses the withering of both Ifemelu's confidence and identity, mirroring the washed-out Cristina, she loses some of her colour and vibrancy as she realises how she is viewed and judged by Americans due to her voice. Ifemelu then makes a pivotal decision, "she began practicing an American accent" (Adichie, 2013, p. 134). After this encounter, Ifemelu begins to erase a piece of her identity by changing part of herself, her accent, in order to be more palatable to Americans. The word "practising" emphasises how deliberate the act is and that it is a choice made because of Ifemelu's need and desire to fit in.

Though Ifemelu is the main character and her experience is documented in the most detail, Adichie emphasises that the discrimination against and pressure to adopt the accent of her host country is not unique to this character's experience. Throughout the novel, there are references to explain the importance placed on accents and how they impact how people are treated. In the safe space of the hair salon, this becomes a topic of discussion. One character claims that adopting an American accent doesn't make much of a difference and Adichie addresses this claim through Halima, a woman working in the hair salon, who exclaims "When I come here with my son they beat him in school because of African accent" (Adichie, 2013, p.187). Adichie again conveys the speech patterns of her characters, down to the omission of words, to convey how characters differ in speech. Halima elaborates, describing her son's face, "purple like onion. They beat, beat beat him. Black boys beat him like this. Now accent go and no problems" (Adichie, 2013, p. 187). The visceral description, describing her son's face with colour, metaphor and repetition evokes the horror of his treatment. "Black boys" serves to further emphasis how race was not the reason for the bullying, and rather that his accent was the root of his mistreatment.

However, the prejudiced treatment towards those with foreign accents isn't limited to America and, through the perspective of Obinze, who immigrates to England, Adichie explores the parallels in Britain. Obinze meets his friend Nicholas and his family. Nicholas "spoke only in English, careful English ... as if the Igbo he shared with their mother would infect [his children], perhaps make them lose their precious British accents" (Adichie, 2013, p. 239) The comparison of the Igbo language to a disease places emphasis on how it is viewed as something to be contained and prevented from "contaminating" Nicholas' children. Importantly, the fear of losing their British accents isn't merely because they may sound pleasant. Adichie reveals the prejudices and reasons behind this parental fear through the character of Nicholas' wife

who repeats the words of her daughter in a hyperbolic British accent and comments "You see how she sounds so posh? Ha! My daughter will go places" (Adichie, 2013, p. 241). She prizes her children's British accents along with her husband because she knows they will have opportunities they would otherwise be denied if they sounded foreign. The media echoes this sentiment. On the train Obinze spots a woman reading a newspaper with the headline "Speak English at home, Blunkett tells immigrants" (Adichie, 2013, p. 258). Finally, through Obinze, the role accents play in conveying status in British society is demonstrated as Obinze spends time with his colleague, Nigel. Nigel's accent makes it difficult for Obinze to understand him "each word twisted and stretched until it came out ... having become something else" (Adichie, 2013, p. 254), expressing how accents are not reserved for immigrants. Working on a delivery, Nigel refers to the man they are employed to assist as "a real gent, he is" despite the man "[looking] dishevelled and hung over, his hair tousled, his robe open at the chest" (Adichie, 2013, p. 254). Obinze is surprised to find that Nigel does not complain, as is his character, about the grubbiness of the man's kitchen. "[a]nd if the man had spoken with a different accent, Nigel would have called him miserly for not giving them a tip." Hence a bias is explored in the treatment of people due to their accents, which convey status in society. Accents form a means of exploring the wider social issues of racism, prejudice against immigrants, and classism. Accents operate as a means to identify and target foreigners and exclude them from parts of society. Thus, Adichie illustrates through her work how, in both America and Britain, accents serve as a pathway to be either excluded or integrated into society, through conveying identity, heritage, and social class.

#### Playing a role in identity reclamation

While accents influence perception of a person within society, they also play an important role in personal identity. The voice is both intimate and shared, making accents a

part of both the internal and external world. In *Americanah*, the role of accents in the ownership of one's identity is displayed through Ifemelu's experience faking an American accent before finally reclaiming her Nigerian voice and self.

After her encounter at the university admissions desk Ifemelu decides to begin using an American accent, which "was convincing" (Adichie, 2013, p. 173) The word "convincing" portrays the notion that the accent is an careful act used to mask her real voice and conform to American ideals. "She had perfected it, from careful watching of friends and newscasters, the blurring of the t, the creamy roll of the r... but the accent creaked with consciousness" (Adichie, 2013, p.173). Though her accent is smooth and convincing, this is juxtaposed by the conscious effort that it takes due to it being unnatural, a performance. The auditory description, "creaked", creates a sense of unease and discomfort with her own voice. Later, she has a conversation with a telemarketer in which she is praised for her American voice, "'Wow. Cool. You sound totally American" to which she responds "Thank you" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). However, this encounter leaves her questioning herself. She feels a "shame all over her... for crafting 'You sound American' into a garland she hung around her neck" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). The compliment is compared, through metaphor, to a necklace, that does not fit her and that she, shamefully, was proud to wear. She sees the hollowness in her victory, "she had won; Crisitina Tomas... would speak to her normally now... but her triumph was full of air" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). Ifemelu realises that with this American voice she has claimed a new Americanized self, one that does not match her heritage and identity, "she had taken, for too long, a pitch of voice and a way of being that was not hers" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). Adichie, once again, connects voice to identity, to "a way of being". The feeling of betrayal and shame for admiring an American accent pushes Ifemelu to question why she prizes it, "why was it a compliment, an accomplishment, to sound American?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175) Ifemelu thereby

discovers that through adopting this new voice she has partially concealed her true identity and has lost a essential part of her identity.

This leads to a pivotal point in the novel, the moment in which Ifemelu decided to renounce "faking an American accent" (Adichie, 2013, p.175). This moment in the novel serves to study the act of reclaiming her accent as a means of reclaiming her true identity, being proud of her heritage, origins, and self. The word "faking" links to the discomfort she feels over pretending to be someone she is not. After the discussion with the telemarketer, "she returned her voice to herself' (Adichie, 2013, p. 180). This emphasises that the American accent was a means of pleasing others and of hiding her real voice in order to conform to society and, in return, not be treated like a "small child". Instead, Ifemelu returning "her voice to herself" is a means by which she regains pride in her identity. Taking ownership of her voice becomes an essential act of self-affirmation. Using her Nigerian accent fills her with delight, as she "felt a rush of pleasure from giving the t its full due... from not rolling her r" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). Ifemelu creates harmony between her own, authentic identity and the identity presented to the world, "This was truly her; this was the voice with which she would speak if she were woken from a deep sleep" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). Additionally, she develops a defence for when anyone "responded to her accent by speaking too slowly as though to an idiot" which is to "she put on her Mr. Agbo Voice... mannered, overcareful pronunciations she had learned during debate meetings in secondary school" (Adichie, 2013, p. 175). This defence means she is free from masking her identity and Nigerian heritage through a fake American accent. Instead using what she has learned as part of her past to counter the humiliation of being spoken to as if incompetent. Consequently, Ifemelu grows as she reclaims her accent and identity and develops defences so that she will never again need to conform to outside pressures at the cost of losing her voice and self.

#### Conclusion

The use of accents as a technique in *Americanah* convey identity, especially of immigrants, to their new world. Adichie artfully depicts the navigation of new identities by immigrants. The accents used by the characters in *Americanah* serve to; firstly, establish a sense of belonging, convey a sense of heritage and cultural identity (as well as a connection to homeland); secondly, become a point of tension and restriction to assimilation; and finally, allow an reclamation of identity. Language is explored as a means of portraying the inner conflict between past and present selves. Thus, accents serve as a portal to the inside world and a signal to the outside world of identity, history, and cultural heritage. This technique is vital to the portrayal of the process of assimilation and identity formation for immigrants and thus its role within the text is significant. Adichie conveys the breadth and depth of human experience in an increasingly globalised world, expanding the realm of literature to encompass the important subtleties of each of her character's realities. Adichie captures the significance of accents within her work. This allows her writing to expand beyond previous dimensions of literature as she uses accents to brilliantly convey the reality of a specific place and time.

#### References

- Adichie, C. N. (2013). Americanah. London: Fourth Estate.
- Anderson, B. (2006). Imagined Communities (2nd ed., p. 136). London: Verso.
- Mode, D., & Sani, A. (2015). Varieties of English in Achebe's Things Fall Apart. *International Journal Of Language And Linguistics*, 2(5), 61-63. http://dx.doi.org/2374-8869
- Pardiñas, V. (2014). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah: (Re)Opening A Conversation About Race And Beauty (Masters). Universidade Da Coruna, 37.
- Pitia, H., & Mugaddam, A. (2015). Power Relations Between Colonial Administration and Obierika Character In Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. *International Journal Of Recent Scientific Research*, 3(6), 3232-3234. http://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/PP.3229-3234

# EE/RPPF

For first assessment in 2018

Page 1/3



# Extended essay - Reflections on planning and progress form

Candidate: This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.

The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.

**Supervisor:** You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.

#### First reflection session

Candidate comments:

love. I was drawn to Americanah by Chimamanda Adichie because I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and it for important contemporary issues. I connected with this novel as I've lived abroad most my life and it explores identity in a relevant and mesmerizing way. I reread and completely annotated it and discovered several id interested in exploring. I narrowed down my potential topics by removing the ones that had already been contextually explored in the ideas in her work, and it gave me a sense of how to construct my own essay both in terms of style and writing. I developed several potential avenues for exploration and the most difficult part of the process for not trying to choose a RQ. I've decided to map out my annotations so that I can analyse them in search of the topic to explore. I'm very excited about the process and the insights I hope to develop into the work of one authors.	s immigrant eas I was overed in the elaborated upon methodology of ne so far has beer most pertinent
---	--

Date

20 October 2017





S...

### Interim reflection

Candidate comments:

After mapping my potential EE topics, I have chosen my research question, focusing on the significance of the accents used by characters in the novel. This really appealed to me as I'm fascinated by how voices and language are shaped by culture and migration. Initially, I planned to focus on accents and language but I found that this left me with too much content to discuss, leading me to narrowing the focus to accents alone. One of the other issues I faced was how to anchor my research in the existing literature. I was extremely excited when I found out that Chinua Achebe had, to a lesser extent, used different dialects in his work and I knew from my past research on Adichie that he had played a major role in her life through his writing. I found the connection between the two writers, and focused on how Adichie's use of different accents as a technique throughout the novel has brought to a whole new level the previous use of different dialects by Achebe.
Date: 7 February 2018

# Final reflection - Viva voce

Candidate comments:

Through this process, I've developed a much greater appreciation for Adichie's craft and I actually cherish the text more as a result of my research, feeing a better connection to and understanding of the themes of migration and identity, as well as the characters that she constructed. After some initial challenges, I found that once I'd established my topic the process of analysing the text went smoothly. I developed the skill of reading literature with a critical eye, and now pay more attention to the underlying messages authors convey through their use of language and characters, rather than simply following the story.

Date: 30 May 2017