

Legislative language and cultural interpretation: the case of the Abia State child's rights law

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The Child's Rights Law was domesticated in Abia State on the 25th day of April, 2006. Before the passage of this Law, it took a lot of advocacy visits to traditional institutions, women groups, trade unions and other interest groups, by the sponsors of the Bill, for the Bill to sail through. These visits and public hearings became necessary because of the resistance put up by the groups mentioned above, as a result of the legislative jargons which contravened the sociolinguistic patterns of language use by the Abia people. Abia State is an Igbo speaking State and the Igbo language and culture prohibit the use of certain expressions included in the Bill which the people felt will negate their culture of child upbringing. The present study sets out to appraise those sections of the Law which affected the passing of the Bill into Law and the sociolinguistic implications of these sections on the worldview of the Abia people, particularly with regard to trends in language choice in Igbo land. Data presented are based on responses from questionnaire administered to some of the groups and oral interview conducted during some of the public hearings and advocacy visits.