

Types of Taboo Expressions in Igbo Society

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Abstract : This study investigates taboo expressions and classifications in Igbo discourse, their socio-cultural factors affecting their usage. The study classifies Linguistic taboo expressions by their discourse into five categories: morality-related taboo, veneration-related, decorum-related, religion-related and fear-related taboo expressions. This study argues that while religion-related and decorum-related taboos are unmentioned and have no euphemistic synonyms is because they are closely tied to various Igbo deities and objects, while morality, veneration, and fear-related have permissible alternatives. A descriptive research design was adopted and the data collection was by questionnaire and oral interview. The result of the research proves that aside of the categories of taboos in Igbo, socially, the styles of discourse have some levels of gender, age and class-connected taboos, which for instance, in gender-connected taboos, women in Igbo are forbidden to use style of discourse that are connected with genital organs in social gathering comprising men and women. The same has to do with class-connected where much younger men can use some certain expressions that are taboo, but in much older men gathering such expressions would be tagged forbidden in the context. The study further reveals that there are occasions in which these taboos can be used with reasons. The research concludes that using these taboos in literary text can enhance clear understanding of Igbo taboos to the users and learners of Igbo language.

Keywords : taboo expressions, classifications, Igbo, socio-cultural factors, discourse

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