Godfatherism and Politics of Endorsement
(A Discourse Study of Ex-President Obasanjo and Ex-Governor Tinubu’s Talks)

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Abstract: Godfatherism and politics of endorsement are recurrent features that saturate civic discourses in Nigeria. Contemporary politics deploy linguistic tools to assert meaningful influence and/or negotiate power through the use of words. Utterances are weighed on the scale of linguistic participants and context rather than content or form. Language use is therefore a political instrument that dictates the fate of political aspirants and the political process as a whole. The idea that an aspirant’s goodwill, popularity, acceptability and probability of winning an election can never be guaranteed until he is ‘anointed’ or endorsed by a political godfather is endangering to the concept of good governance and Nigeria’s toddling democracy. Using Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo and Ex-Governor Bola Tinubu’s selected utterances as viable materials, this paper examines the relevance of language of godfathers in political discourse and its attendant impact on the democratic process of Nigeria. The analytical framework for this study is critical discourse analysis and is premised on the social relevance of language cum implications of political discourse in relation to power.

Keywords: Godfatherism; Politics; Endorsement; Utterances; Nigeria; Critical Discourse Analysis, Anointing.

1. Introduction
1.1 Background to the Study

It has been observed that political election in Africa has been centred around few reverend authorities who in successive terms have influenced the ascension to and/or political climb-down of key public officers. Prominent is the case of Nigeria which is tied to the pipe-play and tune of political godfathers in the sphere of power. Political discourse is said to occur when political actors in and out of government communicate about political matters for political purposes. These purposes include the desire to gain power, to exercise power, and to keep power (Gastil 1992; Beard 2000). Politics is an important social process having a context that gives identity to the texts produced within its domain. These texts could be in form of utterances, letters or debates. Therefore, texts are instances of socially regulated discourses and the processes of producing and receiving these texts are socially constrained. A political atmosphere in which vested interest predominate public interest and outcome of public policies in a democratic state can be linked to the culture of godfatherism. Godfatherism has its root in quest for political power which is enacted through discourse (texts or talks).
Language use in political discourse has certain features that differentiate it from other varieties of discourse. Common as some of these features may be in everyday situation, they remain very unique in politics (Opeibi, 2014). They are laced with cosmetics of rhetorical questions, careful use of pronoun, cohesive devices and sometimes speech acts for the chief aim of swaying target audience to achieve civic goals. Political godfathers use these linguistic devices to present themselves as knowing it all and to establish their candidate(s) as the only viable aspirant competent for the political office of interest. It entails a play of the giants and a show off of socio-political influence.

Texts, language and communication would therefore be considered in their social context as they both shape and are informed by wider processes within the society. In this manner, texts do not merely passively report upon the world, but they are used politically to infer, fabricate, shape perspectives and call the world into being (Opeibi, 2014). The broad term discourse (various ways in which communication between people is achieved) is considered intertextually in this paper. Intertextuality or dialogism is a means by which discourse situates itself within a web of social, political and cultural concerns. Critical discourse analysis therefore examines the form, structure and content of discourse, from the grammar and wording employed in its creation to its reception and interpretation by a wider audience. The employment of verbs, pronouns and nouns within discourse is as much part of this analysis as the assessment of the content and tone of the discourse. The methodology facilitates an assessment based upon more than simple quotations but upon what the discourse is doing and what it is being asked to do in its production, dissemination and consumption.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Godfatherism
2.1.1 Godfatherism as a Global Phenomenon
Godfatherism is not a new concept that is particular to any geographical location, state or nation. It is a practice that transcends all fields of human endeavours. It cuts across race, religion, economy, politics, field, industry, profession, discourse, culture and society. In a nutshell, it is a natural feature that operates in every human society. However, the context in which it is practiced differs with reference to space and time. According to Ibrahim Jibrin Gambo (2007), Bernard traced the origin of godfatherism in electoral politics to the city of Chicago in the United States of America in the pre-world war II era, “when the heads of criminal gangs sponsored politicians in elections, manipulated the results to get them elected and, in turn, received protection and contracts from their political godsons”. (International Journal of Politics and Good Governance Volume 4, No. 4.2 Quarter II 2013 ISSN: 0976 – 1195). It was first featured in political science literature of the underworld literature under the euphemism - 'party machine' politics (BBC News Channel 10/11/2003). These kingpins of criminals were absorbed for political aids and thus enjoyed economic and social privileges. The process is also evident in Frank Hague, Jersey City, New Jersey testifies to the global practice of godfatherism. In developed societies or older democracies, the existence of sponsors or godfathers is well accepted and is seen as part of the political fabric. In USA For example, Bill Clinton was helped into office of governor by the Arkanas poultry farmers in 1978. The then governor came into office and was at loggerheads with the same farmers who helped him get elected; the farmers waited patiently till 1980 for the next election to take their revenge. Having learnt by experience, Clinton went back to the same farmers, struck a deal with them and was re-elected in 1982. He remained the governor till he ran for presidency in 1992 - CENDIA (2010).

2.1.2 Godfatherism as a Political Culture in Africa
Godfatherism as a political culture is not new in Africa. Its emergence in Africa dates back to the post-colonial era. Available literature suggests that godfatherism in the past was not essentially for personal gains. Preoccupation in the business of politics was not seen as a personal investment. Rather, the concern of the mentor was to ensure good governance, which is the use of the apparatus of the political parties to re-strategize and re-organize the economic strength of the state to give the citizenry the necessary essentials of life (Emordi et al 2007:14). In South Africa for instance, Nelson Mandela prepared his godson, Thabo Mbeki, to take over from him when he left politics. He did that for the interest of the people of South Africa. Since then it has not been reported that he has been dictating to
his successors how much to be given, who to be given an appointment or what to do. The civic sense of true godfatherism aligns with the tenets of good governance in the pursuit of democracy and development. However, this cannot be said of many African countries as is with the case of Nigeria.

2.1.3 Godfatherism in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the practice of godfatherism dates back to the First Republic when leaders of the three main political parties (Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG) and National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) carefully and meticulously cultivated godsons that they were convinced would advance the well-being of the citizens. According to Gambo, Sir Ahmadu Bello of the NPC, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the NCNC and Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the AG were motivated to do so and not to use godsons as surrogates to promote parochial interests, but to promote the developmental aspirations of the people. These first generation godfathers were essentially benevolent and progressive because they did not abuse their status as godfather as is the case today (extracted from www.researchgate.net/publication: Democracy and Politics of Political Godfatherism in Nigeria: The Effects and Way Forward 23/11/18).

Godfathers in Nigeria are seen to be men who have the power personally to determine both who get nominated to contest elections and who wins in a state or political space. Those who get employed in the Bureaucracy and those who get robust postings and deployments. There is no gainsaying that godfatherism is firmly established in all the sceptre of Nigeria politics and bureaucracy. It has now come to be a guiding principle in contemporary Nigeria - Emeka (2012).

2.1.4 Conceptualising Godfatherism and Politics of Endorsement

The concept of godfatherism is premised on an ideology that certain individuals are influential enough to determine ‘who, what, when and how’ in the corridors of power (paraphrased) - Edigin (2010). Kolawole (2004) describes it as an institution of political king-making through which certain political office holders of tenuous political clout come into power. In the views of Bassey and Enetak (2008), it connotes the power and influence of people who are politically relevant in deciding who gets nominated to contest elections and who eventually wins the election. Adeoye (2009) describes it as a relationship between a godfather and godson. A godfather is a kingmaker, boss, mentor or someone who has built unimaginable respect and follower (voters) in the community, and possessed a well-organized political platform, and general acceptance from electorate that could secure victory for candidates of his choice (Bala and Tyoden, 1987), while godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather. Godfathers are highly politically mobile and can sway political support to the political party and/or candidate behind which they throw their political weight.

Politics of endorsement therefore involves the ‘anointing’ or ‘hand picking’ of a godson who is expected to win an election on the platform of the influence, experience and political structure of the godfather.

2.1.5 The Symbiotic Nature of Godfatherism

Godfatherism entails the sustenance of a kind of social and political relationships in which the subordinate looks onto the superior for the propagation and fulfilment of certain roles, desires and interactions which binds both together or in which both have equal stake but with the superior determining what the subordinate gets in the process (Williams, 2004). It comprises of coalition of strong socio-economic and political elites that share similar value system under an organized structure. In other words, godfatherism connotes a mutual relationship between individuals in which one is superior and the other subordinate to attain life goals.

The conventional civic sense of godfatherism is inclined to posturing credible candidates and granting them mentorship to enhancing result-oriented governance and progressive change. As a true godfather, a political mentor is to provide direction, mobilize support for, and offer constructive advice based on wealth of experience in public domain and civic life, without imposing his preferences on the godson. This is however opposed to the entrepreneurial sense of the nomenclature (godfatherism) in politics at present. Its derivative meaning and negative applications in Nigeria is loathsome, pandemic, epidemic and endangering to politics of good governance and the nation’s toddling democracy. It can
therefore be summed to be “the government of the godfathers, by the godfathers and for the godfathers.” This is opposed to the true intent of democracy which is “a government of the people, by the people and for the people” - U.S. president Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865). Little wonder Nigeria has been a capitalist political nation-state with feedbacks from continual creeping socio-economy status in sharp opposition to her bequeathed natural endowments and potentials.

3. Theoretical Framework
3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The theoretical framework for any linguistic research serves as the tool for the analysis for the data. Hence Critical Discourse Analysis will be used to evaluate utterances in this study. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. All social practice are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served. Where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power is called critical discourse analysis. Fairclough's (1989, 1995) model for CDA consists three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are- the object of analysis, the process and the socio-historical conditions. The object of analysis includes verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts. The process entails the means by which the object is produced and received by human subjects (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) while the socio-historical conditions govern the processes. According to Fairclough each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis. They are- text analysis (description); processing analysis (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation). This approach enables one to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositions, their sequencing and their layout. The structure and relationship of these three and their interplay through political and cultural concerns develop the myriad of social effects of discourse and this social effect is dependent upon the audience accessing, comprehending, using and resisting this discourse (Fairclough 2003:11).

Discourse can be considered as an 'active relation to reality' (Fairclough 1992: 41). Fairclough (2003:26) delineates three characteristics of discourse which describe its operation within social life, as 'part of the action.' These are;

- Genres (ways of acting)
- Discourses (ways of representing)
- Styles (ways of being)

Genres refer to a particular way of manipulating and framing discourse (e.g church sermons, interviews and political speeches). Genres are significant because they provide a framework for an audience to comprehend discourse. Due to this quality, 'genres' can be the locus of power, domination and resistance. Discourses/representation is crucial in assessing the means by which apparently similar aspects of the world can be appreciated and understood from different perspectives or positions. Styles are the ways in which discourse is used to constitute a sense of being and identity, how identification is located through the application and manner of particular discourses.

3.2 Critical Discourse as Political Discourse

The approach to analyse political texts through the lens of discourse analysis or the social relevance of political texts in a linguistic domain is the prime interest of CDA. A political discourse is therefore aligned to fit critical linguistics analysis situated within its socio-political domain of usage. Thus, critical or political discourse analysis examines how political power, abuse or domination/resistance manifest in and/or enacted through discourse. According to Van Dijk (1998:1):

“Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power, abuse, dominance and inequality is enacted, reproduced and resisted in text and talk in the social and political context. Consequently, the main concern is to understand how the discourse is constructed and the reasons for incorporating certain linguistic structures, rather than others, in realizing particular texts or talks Van Dijk (1995a).

Studies in CDA can therefore take many dimensions, one of which is focusing on ideologies framed and propagated in various discourse in social contexts. CDA takes particular interest in the
ways in which language mediates ideology in a variety of social institutions.” Wodak 2002:9). “Ideology in CDA is considered an important means of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. Ideologies framed and sustained in various discourse equally establish and maintain power relations because the linguistic forms that mediate them also express and manipulate power. Power is not only signaled by grammatical forms within a text but also by a person’s control of a social situation by means of the genre of a text.

3.3 Discourse as Action: An Aspect of Speech Act

The Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) is very relevant in analysing texts and talks as it offers insight on how discourses can be viewed as actions. Since the focus of discourse analysis is the social function of language, parallel can therefore be drawn with a view in speech act that when utterances are made (written or spoken) certain acts are performed. Some scholars have observed that although speech act was not first developed as a means of analyzing discourse, its fundamental insights on how meaning and action are related to language provides tools that help discourse analysts explain how a piece of discourse performs actions (Schiffrin, 1994; Opeibi, 2009). Vanderveken (1994, 53) asserts that:

Speakers perform their illocutionary acts within entire conversations where they are most often in verbal interaction with other speakers who reply to them and perform in turn their own speech acts with the same collective intention to pursue with success a certain type of discourse. Thus, above all, the use of language is a social form of linguistic behaviour.…

3.3.1 ‘Coming of Age’: Political Deviance as Speech Acts

The relevance of language in discussing political deviance cannot be underscored. Godsons who decide to come of age or resist the political wimp syndrome do such using words. Some might do that in blunt radical talks while others either ignore their godfathers attitudinally. In whatever form, their discourses (texts and talks) are critical in this analysis. The understanding that those so “anointed” can never have their political will or independency to subscribe to the whims and caprices of the masses in flagrant violation of the interests of their godfathers, has influenced some godsons to resist caged-influence by their godfathers.

In Nigeria, any incumbent who attempt to deviate or secede from the political grip of his mentor incurs the wrath of the “gods” which could significantly halt their political career and/or re-direct the political stage of the nation/state. The collapse of PDP in 2015 and the shattered hope of Chief Obasanjo on Ebele Jonathan speak volumes on this discourse. Also, the recent incidence between Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Governor Akinwunmi Ambode of Lagos state emphasizes it further. Other political scenarios in Nigeria include Oyo politics: between Lamidi Adedibu and Rasheed Ladoja; Anambra politics: between Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige etc.

Language can be used to achieve/resist dominance or act as an instrument of force on any socio-political space. Thus, the interplay among language, men, power and politics in the context of Nigeria and her on-going democratic process is a veritable site for this research work. The chief element of godfatherism is loyalty. It could take the form of playing the good party-man, being a perpetual wimp at the father’s desk, or abiding by the perfect master plan. Linguistic evidences abound from which would be listed below:

3.3.2 Political Rivalry as Speech Acts – (Contest for the Crown)

Since the return of democracy in 1999, some individuals have been a focal point of general elections in Nigeria. In 1999, it was aligned with Bashorun M.K.O’s ideologies; in 2003 it was the Odudua nation struggle; in 2007 it was Chief Obasanjo’s anointing; in 2011 and 2015, Obasanjo remained relevant and enjoyed revered significance within Nigeria’s complex socio-political web. However, the 2019 election seems to take a different turn as another kingmaker significantly emerges priding himself over the immediate past political success of dethroning the incumbent administration. He doubles as an ex-governor of Lagos State (the centre of excellence) and the leader of the present ruling party, his name – Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Although, it should be noted that Chief Obasanjo’s wilful rejection of Jonathan, dissociation from active politics and moral endorsement of Buhari paved
way for the success of the ruling party. However, as the popular saying goes: “there are no two kings in a jungle”.

4. Methodology

The data set for this study were selected utterances (texts and talks) of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (ex-president of Nigeria) and Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu (an ex-governor of Lagos State and the leader of the ruling party APC). The choice of Chief Obasanjo and ex-governor Tinubu’s talks is based on the socio-political relevance of both individuals in Nigeria’s political space and the extent to which their actions and/or inactions potentially influence civic life. Also, the relevance of Lagos state and the federal capital territory- Abuja is based on the centrality of economy and polity with reference to power, men, politics and status. The utterances of these godfathers are considered political discourse deliberately as they convey issues relating to governance, politics and power. The utterances vary in length and context and are approximately forty-one in all. This is also inclusive of few statements that are critical to the subject matter which are included to enhance validity and empiricism. Thus, the analysis would be based on linguistic and grammatical features of the utterances under review.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1 Linguistic Manifestations of Godfatherism as Discourse in Nigeria

5.1.1 Political Godfatherism as Critical Discourse

The extracts below are instantiations of politically regulated discourses which are socially constrained in the context of power. They are evidences of godfather talks and practice in Nigeria.

Talk 1: Let the elders handle it or ignore it until it loses momentum… - Obasanjo

Talk 2: There are elders in any community who are still respected…After all, they’re their fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and can still be used effectively. - Obasanjo

Talk 3: First and foremost, Obasanjo is a father to me. By divine providence and the grace of God, I am the President of Nigeria today. It is not by my strength. But God uses human beings to actualise His own blessings on human beings. And He used so many Nigerians, including former President Obasanjo, to play one role or the other for me… - Jonathan

Talk 4: I brought Ambode to the people. He was a civil servant under me. He performed very well as a civil servant. And when he showed interest in politics after leadership courses in Harvard and others we gave him the opportunity and we presented him to the party and the party accepted him. - Tinubu

Talk 5: Our Buhari is our own; we were the ones who brought him and we will secure the second term for him. (Originally said in Yoruba language) - Tinubu

Talk 6: Mr. President, you have on a number of occasions acknowledged the role God enabled me to play in your ascension to power. You put me third after God and your parents among those that have impacted most on your life. - Obasanjo (to Jonathan)

Talk 7: Amaechi, whether he likes it or not, will cease to be governor over Rivers State, which Port Harcourt is part by the end of May 2015. – Obasanjo

Talk 8: Any politician who ignores Obasanjo does so at its own peril. - Jonathan
Talk 9: From what transpired in the last couple of hours or so, you have shown remorse; you have asked for forgiveness and you have indicated that you have learnt some good lessons and you will mend fences and make amends as necessary and as desirable.

– Obasanjo to Atiku

Talk 10: The Lion Monarch should reach out to the aggrieved but silent Lagoon Lion so that he doesn’t explode like the hippo. The Lagoon Lion controls waters that can drown.”

-Senator Shehu Sani

Talk 11: For me, relatively and of all the aspirants in the PDP, you have the widest and greatest exposure, experience, outreach and possibly the best machinery and preparation for seeing the tough and likely dirty campaign ahead through. From what I personally know of you, you have capacity to perform better than the incumbent. You surely understand the economy better; you have business experience, which can make your administration business-friendly and boost the economy and provide jobs.

- Obasanjo to Atiku

Talk 12: You have better outreach nationally and internationally and that can translate to better management of foreign affairs. You are more accessible and less inflexible and more open to all parts of the country in many ways.

- Obasanjo to Atiku

From the extracts above, the term godfather is metaphorically used to be parallel with such nouns as elders, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers and lion. It can be also deduced that the concept of “godfatherism” is used in its generic sense as women also play critical role in game of power and politics. The affirmative use of the personal pronoun I and the psychological use of the collective plural pronoun we (for wider inclusion) extend the borders of godfather discourse in Nigeria. While Tinubu’s utterance in talk 4 is obviously overt and assertive in terms of power relations, social structure and benevolence; Obasanjo seems to down tone his firm grip on political officers and aspirants (see talk 6 & 9) but Jonathan’s counsel to Atiku in talk 8 reveals the political weight of Obasanjo’s seemingly modest talks in matters of democracy and quest for electoral power.

In talks 11 and 12, Obasanjo tactically made comparism between the incumbent President – Muhammadu Buhari and the presidential flag bearer of the opposition party - Atiku Abubakar using the compound comparative adjective better than on the ground of capacity and understanding of economic matters. It should be noted that part of the issues Obasanjo decries in his 2018 letter to Buhari were the poor handling of economic policies, nepotism and mal-administration. Buhari has been accused of incompetency and responsible for the economic failures of Nigeria whereas Atiku, a former vice president during Obasanjo’s tenure as president of Nigeria is being judged as skilled and experienced in economic matters. However, could it be that Atiku is just another “better than” as Buhari was to Jonathan; could it be that Obasanjo needs another godson as filler for the break-off from indirect politics due to Jonathan’s climb-down or could it be that Atiku is that fresh horse and the dreamed CN of OBJ to Nigeria’s Canaan land? All of these issues are raised in the interest of good governance, posterity and furtherance of our democracy.

5.1.2 Political Symbiosis as Critical Discourse

Talk 13: ...What is at stake is nothing less than the future of the people of this state and how we can best maximise our collective destiny... My goal is and shall always be a better Lagos. To this objective, I have dedicated the greater part of my public life.... Out of this collaborative effort, was born a master plan for economic development that would improve the daily lives of our people... My administration faithfully implemented that plan. The government of my immediate successor, Tunde Fashola, also honoured this enlightened plan...

- Tinubu

Talk 14: I am encouraged by the emergence of a candidate in this primary who has served the state in senior positions in my administration, the Fashola administration and even in the current one. While possessing a wealth of experience and exposure, he is a young man endowed with superlative vision
and commitment. Most importantly, he understands the importance of the **blueprint for development**. He esteems it as a reliable and well-conceived vehicle for the future development of the state. He also knows the value of reaching out and working with others in order to maximize development and provide people the best leadership possible. With people like him at the helm, the state will write the proper history for itself.

– Tinubu

The connective devices (*also, while, even*) in talk 13 and 14 above extend beyond grammatical functions. They are further used to demonstrate the symbiotic nature of godfatherism and to depict the concept as a cyclic chain that operates in a continuum. Other linguistic evidences include the use of collaborative effort, reliable, and working with others alternatively for effects. Also, the description of Sanwo-Olu (the emerged gubernatorial flag bearer for APC, Lagos State) in talk 14 as experienced, well-exposed, endowed, superlatively envisioned and reliable extends beyond positive adjectival usage or corporate image building. They are all linguistic manifestations of a potential loyal godson (godfather-godson relationship).

5.1.3 Political Deviance as Critical Discourse

Talk 15: “**I won’t step down**”. - Ambode

Talk 16: *For one reason or the other, Obasanjo may disagree* with me as his first political son. You can even disagree with your own biological children, as a human being, not to talk of disagreeing with your political children. So, he can agree or disagree with me, but the utterances have to be managed in a way that it does not affect the economy and security of this country. - Jonathan

Talk 17: Ambode Akin, he’s doing well, yes; he **hasn’t been a good party man**. - Tinubu

Talk 18: *...We all were to be partners in a monumental but joint enterprise. None was to be alienated. None was to be left out. And none were to be pushed aside...* - Tinubu

Talk 19: *If you as leader of the Party cannot be seen to be loyal to the PDP in support of the candidates of the Party and the interests of such Party candidates have to be sacrificed on the altar of your personal and political interest, then good luck to the Party and I will also say as I have had occasions to say in the past, good luck to Goodluck.* - Obasanjo

Talk 20: You see, you will remain relevant as a leader if you once in a while submit yourself to what the people want. - Tinubu

Talk 21: *...to ignore this blueprint for progress in order to replace it with ad-hoc schemes of a materially inferior quality contravenes the spirit of progressive governance and of our party...We must arrest this trend before irreparable harm is committed against the people and their future.* - Tinubu

Talk 22: *...I admire his courage and forthrightness in this regard. He has a role to play on the side line for the good of Nigeria, Africa and humanity and I will see him as a partner in playing such a role nationally and internationally, but not as a horse rider in Nigeria again.* – Obasanjo

Talk 23: *...All these led me to take the unusual step of going against my own political Party, PDP, in the last general election to support the opposite side. I saw that action as the best option for Nigeria.* - Obasanjo

Talk 24: *If it is true that the godfather is against Ambode. I will tell him (Ambode) to resist it. I will tell him to promote the interest of the state. Godfatherism is not good. It negates development.* - Wike

From the extracts above, the lexical items in bold serve as linguistic evidences that illustrates deviance tendencies and/or their manifestations. They reflect the crux of conflict between godfathers
and godsons in the sphere of power and good governance. For Tinubu; it was leaving out, ignoring, alienating, and pushing aside party members/gothic figures by Ambode. Also, it was evident that the relevancy of Ambode in the political space was tied to his submission to those that matters and playing the good party man which he came of age to resist. Thus, he suffered the outcome – withdrawal of support from Tinubu (his godfather) and the party to run for second term. Obasanjo disembarked from Jonathan due to issues associated with disloyalty. OBJ swam the opposite direction to deliberately get Jonathan off the rider’s seat. The relative consequence of political maturation and “coming of age” in Nigeria’s socio-political space has been a critical factor for which young politicians cling to the fabric of their godfathers and recycled the political system rather than pure, unadulterated transformation/reformation.

5.1.4 Godfather Rivalry as Political Discourse
Talk 25: Obasanjo can’t tell us who to vote for. – Tinubu

Talk 26: You cannot govern from Otta ... you have used up your time. Let us tell Obasanjo so. – Tinubu

Talk 27: Somebody who’s writing a letter these days, a letter of politics. As if they’ve never been there before. Bad belle letters! Don’t worry; I don’t want to address that today. – Tinubu

Talk 28: The harder they come, the harder they fall 2019 presidential election on my mind.
- Femi Adesina.

The driving force behind godfatherism in Nigeria is value relevance and contest for the political crown rather than the seat. Although the political seat is largely related to and dictated by the crown (that is, the godfather) yet, it is not entirely a function of it. On the other, political education seems to be on the rise as Nigerians are more active in civic life. Will the crown return to the masses or the godfathers dictate whose head it fits?

The linguistic usage of the contracted and uncontracted forms of the present tense modal auxiliary can in the negative is not just to run down Obasanjo’s ability to take political decisions but a form of resistance and defence of spatial sovereignty by political godfather of Lagos. Also, Tinubu subtly swiped at Obasanjo over the January 2018 letter to president Buhari of Nigeria. He bluntly refused to lay his crown at the feet of the octogenarian “militiaocratic” leader who has combed the political web of Nigeria since 2007. The utterance is beyond whom to vote for but a challenge call, a refusal to bow, and a contest for the crown. It is a debate over sovereignty and relevance in the recent Nigerian political space.

5.2 Manifestations of Speech Acts in Godfather Discourse
Talk 29: We must arrest this trend before irreparable harm is committed against the people and their future. – Tinubu

Talk 30: Nigerians are no fools, they can see, they can hear, they can talk among themselves, they can think, they can compare and they can act in the interest of their country and in their own self-interest. – Obasanjo to Buhari

Talk 31: In addition to appreciating all that the Party has done for you, may I advise you to work together with all those who contested for the party’s flag with you as a team for your campaign,” – Obasanjo to Atiku

Talk 32: With Nigerians voting for you, it will mean that you secure their forgiveness and regain their confidence. It will be with the hope or assurance of a Paul on the road to Damascus Conversion. After all, change and conversion are of man. I believe that with a contrite heart, change is possible in everybody’s life and situation.” – Obasanjo to Atiku
Talk 33: *There are still areas, nationally and internationally, where you have to mend fences and make amends. You will know how to handle what is already out and what may yet be put out by the opposition.*

– Obasanjo to Atiku

The illocutionary acts in the examples above include directive acts as evident in talk 29 & 30 which is used to indict voting out Ambode by Tinubu and to warn Buhari of the capacity of the Nigerian masses by OBJ. These acts are used to psychologically arouse the populace to take certain actions for or against the subject of discourse. Particularly in talk 30, OBJ tactically progresses from the human sense organs (hear, talk), to the psychological domain (think, compare) before the physical action (act). He appeals to the trilogy of the complete man to ensure the act is performed. Also, the use of directive act in talk 31 to give counsel (advice) is another manifestation of speech act. OBJ extends this act in talk 33 to charge Atiku as a father does to a son. These acts cumulatively further strengthens the argument for the practice of godfatherism as a political culture in Nigeria.

5.3 The pragmatics of “if” in Godfather Talks

Talk 34: *Look at us in Lagos, we can get angry with one another, it is only God that has perfection. When you elected me as governor, I laid the foundation. If we didn’t lay the foundation for Lagos, there’s no amount of wisdom that Fashola may have that will make the state as progressive as it has been. If we didn’t lay the foundation, there’s no amount of wisdom that Ambode may possess that will make things as smooth as they are… so, Obasanjo that is talking, if he had laid a strong foundation in Abuja, the country would not have scattered; things would not have been going the way they are going.*

The context of word usages in political discourse is crucial to the generation, perception and interpretation of meaning. Indices such as social conditions, culture, and context affect meaning of utterances and texts. The use of the conjunction “if” in the political discourse under analysis cannot be pushed to the rare.

Bola Tinubu consecutively introduces his argument with the conditional clause marker “if” in a cause-and-effect style. On the one hand, he portrayed his king rival – Obasanjo in the negative light, and on the other projects himself as a man to reckon with. Tinubu blames Obasanjo for laying a foundation which is far from being strong at the federal level while he (Tinubu) laid a solid foundation upon which thrives the success ex-governor Fashola and incumbent Governor Ambode of Lagos State. The usage the conditional clause conjunction “if” is premised on the claimed success and failures of the contesting lords.

5.4 Grammatical Manifestations of Godfatherism as Political Discourse in Nigeria

5.4.1 Cohesive Devices as Discourse Tool

Cohesive devices (reference, conjunction, substitution etc.) in discourse help readers or listeners understand any piece of text. They enable us understand how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social and psychological contexts become meaningful and unified for their users (Cook, 1989). Cohesion or cohesive devices are used to order part of a text, establish causal links, sustain topic continuity, determine relations among discourse entities, and establish bridges between distinct parts of a discourse - Prideaux (1997:2). Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of one item depends on the other, i.e. one item presupposes the other (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). As a relational concept, cohesion works within the text to enhance meaning-making process which enhances the interpretive capacity of the discourse (Opeibi, 2008b: 170). Cohesion is thus the linguistic means by which a text functions as a single unit and demonstrates how actual texts are unified lexically and grammatically (Osisanwo, 2003: 31). Lexical cohesion may be realised through repetition, superordinate, synonym or near synonym while grammatical cohesion is expressed through devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

The structural repetition of *if* (talk 35); the connective use of *also* and *while* (talk 14); the synonymous relationship of *elders and lion* (talk 1, 2 & 10); the alternation of *collaborative efforts* and *working together* (talk 13 & 14), the usage of *leaving out, ignoring, alienating, and pushing aside* (talk
18 & 21) as substitutes by Tinubu; the reference to Fashola, previous administration demonstrates that cohesive devices play a crucial role in helping the speakers present their arguments persuasively and meaningfully in seeking political power.

5.4.2 Rhetorical Questions as Discourse Tool

Rhetorical question is a critical tool in politics. It plays a significant role in social interactions. Often used to emphasize reflection, politicians deploy this linguistic device for certain purposes. They could be used for Persuasion (getting the approval and support of the listeners by affecting their attitude, emotion and psychology in political speeches Nguyen, 2010); Self-Promotion (to gain immediate political power and credibility- Edwards, 2007); Challenge the obvious and/or to Inducing doubt more subtly by giving the addressee more freedom to consider the implied message (Bendahmane & McDonald, 1992).

Talk 35: *Who did I support in 2014?* - Tinubu

Talk 36: *If neither APC nor PDP is a worthy horse to ride to lead Nigeria at this crucial and critical time, what then do we do?* - Obasanjo

Talk 37: *There were serious allegations of round-tripping against some inner caucus of the Presidency which would seem to have been condoned. I wonder if such actions do not amount to corruption and financial crime, then what is it?* - Obasanjo

Talk 38: *What does one make of a case like that of Maina: collusion, condonation, ineptitude, incompetence, dereliction of responsibility or kinship and friendship on the part of those who should have taken visible and deterrent disciplinary action?* - Obasanjo

Talk 39: *How many similar cases are buried, ignored or covered up and not yet in the glare of the media and the public?* - Obasanjo

Talk 40: *Presidential assistance for a murderer to evade justice and presidential delegation to welcome him home can only be in bad taste generally but particularly to the family of his victim. Assisting criminals to evade justice cannot be part of the job of the Presidency. Or, as it is viewed in some quarters, is he being recruited to do for you what he had done for Abacha in the past?* - Obasanjo

On the one hand, Obasanjo uses rhetorical questions in the extract above to check the excesses of sitting presidents and perhaps call them to order. He uses these questions to make his view more persuasive and reflective. On the other, Tinubu deploys this device to talk of dynamism in governance. Because it is not a real question, but is only phrased as a question for effect, no answer is required, and in many cases none can be given.

5.4.3 Coinages as Discourse Tool

Talk 41: *You are more accessible and less inflexible and more open to all parts of the country in many ways. As Pastor Bakare, one-time running mate of the incumbent President said, “You are a wazobia man.” And that should help you in confronting the confrontable and shunning nepotism.”*

Coinage is a word formation process in which a new word is created either deliberately or accidentally without using the other word formation processes and often from seemingly nothing. In this case “wazobia” is a linguistic blend in indigenous Nigerian languages. It originated from the fusion of the domesticated form of the lexeme “come” in the three regional idiolects of Nigeria (“Wa” Yoruba; “zo” Hausa and “bia” Igbo). Anyone referred to as *wazobia man* is distant from regionalism, tribalism or nepotism. He/she represents fairness, equity and true national spirit. This coinage is used to portray Atiku in the positive light and to boost his social image/acceptance.
6. CONCLUSION
This study has utilized critical discourse analysis to investigate peculiar social ideologies that manifest inequality and social power with reference to abuse and resistance. It has been able to justify the practice of godfatherism in Nigeria’s political space in terms of actors, participants and discourse. The study constructively examined political utterances on the weight of their linguistic features, structure, compactness (cohesive features), rhetorical usage and social functions. It further generated surging questions regarding the practice democracy in Nigeria and its attendant effects vis-à-vis the influence via actions and/or inactions of political godfathers.

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