

A Critical Discourse Analysis of women's Empowerment in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*

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ABSTRACT:

This paper critically investigates how women's empowerment is represented in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. The problem raised in the study is the absence of discourse-based examination of how language in *A Doll's House* defines or constructs women's empowerment. The study aims to examine the linguistic devices and discursive strategies employed to shape and undermine gender and power dynamics, especially with regard to Nora Helmer's role. Using qualitative method, 8 extracts were collected purposively from the play *A Doll's House*. Adopting Fairclough's (2003) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, the data were analyzed qualitatively. The results reveal that in a patriarchal context, discursive reconfigurations of identity and authority along with narrative development help facilitate the empowerment of people. They show how Ibsen's language simultaneously criticizes and undermines prevailing gender ideologies by setting the text within its socio-cultural and ideological context. The study extends the use of CDA in feminist literary studies and contributes to the corpus of current work by presenting a linguistically based analysis of empowerment in literary discourse.

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Introduction:

A Doll's House (1879) by Henrik Ibsen is considered a significant modern drama driven by its criticism of patriarchal ideologies and gender stereotypes. Though Ibsen has been considered a prominent supporter of women, he preferred to be considered a humanist rather than a feminist (Creamer, 2016). Central to the drama is Nora Helmer, whose evolution from domestic subjugation to personal autonomy has come to symbolize women's empowerment in literature. In this context, women's empowerment is the ability of women to form their own situations and meet their dreams, so allowing them to lead lives they have reason to value (Annas, 2003; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990).

According to research by Turki, Sabti, and Rashid (2020), gender-based linguistic behavior was evident in the academic environment where female students used more conventionally indirect enquiries than male students. Speech acts, like requests, are crucial for pragmatics and are influenced by cultural and social standards that differ between cultures (Turki, Al-Heety, and Sabti, 2022). Nora's journey in the play shows the process of achieving independence. Although the play questions the established gender roles of 19th-century bourgeois society, the role language plays in expressing and rejecting these power relations is still insufficiently studied. By influencing how people view themselves and others, language serves a critical role in forming societal norms and power dynamics (Sabti et al. 2019; Ananda et al. 2016). In accordance with Sabti, Hassan, Turki, and Hummadi (2024), anxiety may manifest in response to power dynamics via communication, especially in educational environments, similar to the tensions in *A Doll's House*. This illustrates how important it is to comprehend how language influences people's autonomy and sense of self, in particular when it comes to the constraints imposed by social norms. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) represents a significant framework for grasping how language determines these power dynamics. Besides, CDA illustrates how social norms are created and rejected by analyzing language use (Fairclough, 2013).

Few studies have utilized linguistic analysis to analyze the ways in which *A Doll's House* uses discourse to construct empowerment. Ibsen's dramatic dialogue can

be considered as a pedagogical instrument that shapes power and identity, similar to how effects instruction forms identity through language and engagement (Al-Bahrani, Turki, and Sameer, 2024). Based on Richards and Nunan (1990) and Strong, Tucker, and Hindman (2004), as cited in Al-Bahrani et al. (2024), Nora's transition from passive to agentive language indicates communicative competence in education ethical, reflective, and structured discourse. Her shifting vocabulary also illustrates how educators modify their speech to accommodate students' needs (Harmer, 2007, as cited in Al-Bahrani et al. 2024). Thus, this study employs CDA to investigate the linguistic strategies reveal Nora's change in power and asks: How is women's empowerment discursively established? And how does Ibsen's language challenge the patriarchal discourse of his time?

Literature Review:

A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen has long been a subject of critical discourse due to its bold examination of gender norms and portrayal of a woman's quest for independence in a patriarchal society. A wide range of scholars have analysed the text from feminist, sociocultural, and psychoanalytic, offering varying interpretations of Nora's transformation. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been employed incomparatively few studies to explore the ways in which language itself operates as a tool of subjugation or empowerment in the play. Highlighting her moral and psychological conviction as a sort of empowerment, Subramanyam and Tiwari (2023) argue that Nora's final choice to quit her family reflects a stoic contradiction to male authority. Emphasizing how Nora's personal growth questions accepted gender hierarchies, their study mostly examines the play from a feminist ethical point of view. Al-Zubaidi (2022) additionally considers Nora's leaving as a symbolic rebirth, consequently defining it as a turning point for human independence and self-awareness. Though these studies highlight Nora's development, they mostly focus on thematic and philosophical aspects without really engaging with the linguistics structures enabling her empowerment.

Kafshgarkolaie and Kami (2022) analyze A Doll's House from a psychoanalytical-feminist perspective using Luce Irigaray's theory of the female Bildungsroman, claiming that Nora's evolution challenges male-centered narrative standards. While not directly focusing on the textual discourse, their emphasis on identity development supports the aims of Critical Discourse Analysis. Emphasizing Nora as an inspiration to modern feminist awareness, Charan (2020) and Silitonga (2019) also examine the evolving roles of women in society as portrayed in Ibsen's work. While they provide little insight of the discursive techniques by which gender roles are linguistically constructed or rejected, these studies offer valuable social background. Employing a CDA approach, Tayyab, Aqeel, Iqbal, and Hanif (2021) demonstrate how language reflects both internal struggle and social pressure by investigating the connection between discourse and mental states in A Doll's House. Their study, therefore, focuses psychological discourse rather than the discursive developing of empowerment. By evaluating A Doll's House's translated versions via CDA, Wing-bo and Lee (2015) add more to the field by showing how language contains ideological subtleties. Though their analysis is insightful, their comparison highlights the original Norwegian text and its discursive depiction of female agency. Other research, like those by Akter et al. (2019), investigate Nora's character from a feminist perspective, considering her as a symbol of resistance but primarily depending on thematic readings instead of linguistic analysis. In similar vein, Silitonga (2019) revisits the representation of women's roles but fails to evaluate how language itself forms the dynamics of empowerment. Concentrating particularly on how women's empowerment is discursively

adopted, this study reveals a research gap in the application of CDA to *A Doll's House*. While earlier studies have greatly enabled to clarify Nora's character and feminist concerns, few have investigated how linguistic structures such as transitivity, intertextuality, modality and evaluative language form gendered power dynamics. This study aims to fill in this gap by employing Fairclough's (2003) CDA framework to analyze how discourse in *A Doll's House* actualizes women's empowerment, thereby providing a more complex and linguistically centered knowledge of gender and power in literary texts.

Methodology:

The main aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to demonstrate how language reflects and reinforces power, ideology, and inequality (Fairclough, 1993; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). In particular, through Nora's language, this paper employs a qualitative method to examine how female empowerment is discursively constructed in *A Doll's House* (1879). Qualitative research is suitable for examining delicate discourse about identity and power drawing on Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015). The data entails eight purposively selected extracts demonstrating Nora's interactions, specifically with Krogstad and Torvald. These Eight extracts were selected purposefully from the Coradella Collegiate Bookshelf Edition of *A Doll's House* for their significance and relevance to occasions where language obviously constructs, or discusses women's empowerment and power relations. The selection emphasized discursive features such as metaphor, transitivity, modality, evaluative language, and power imbalance, as well as crucial plot turning points as Nora's agency is emphasized. Applying content analysis to look at modality, lexical choices, transitivity, and dialogue structure enables the study to trace Nora's linguistic shift from subordination to empowerment (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). This strategy illustrates how discourse constructs agency and gender identity.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model established by Fairclough (2003) to examine how language in *A Doll's House* forms gender roles, power, and ideology. This research defines key terms modality, empowerment, transitivity, and metaphor as significant tools for examining how discourse in *A Doll's House* builds and undermines gendered power dynamics. In Critical Discourse Analysis, modality links to the speaker's viewpoint and degree of commitment to a statement. It is essential for conveying authority, power dynamics, and ideological opinions in discourse (Hassan, 2022; Makhloufi, 2025). Concerning Empowerment is the process with which people or organisations develop control of their life by transferring power between the powerful and the powerless. It involves making significant decisions and acting in line with personal or communal objectives (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008). On another hand, Transitivity, explains how language represents actions, actors, and events inside a clause. Critical Discourse Analysis exposes how authority and responsibility are distributed who does what to whom, as well as how power is used or resisted in texts, includes literary masterpieces such as *A Doll's House* (Eggs, 2000). Further, Metaphor in CDA is a verbal and ideological tool that forms how reality is perceived, often favouring specific perspectives and preserving power dynamics (Hodge & Kress, 1993; Chilton & Lakoff, 1995).

The three levels of the model social practice, discursive practice, and textual analysis allow for an in-depth analysis of Nora's empowerment. Discursive analysis reveals how Nora's speech both reflects and resists gender norms, social analysis relates discourse to patriarchal

ideologies of the 19th century, and textual analysis centers on linguistic elements like grammar and modality. When integrating linguistic specificity with wider sociocultural understanding, Fairclough's model is ideal.

Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis

This is Fairclough's (2003) CDA model, consisting of three levels: three-dimensional CDA model, consisting of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice.

Results and Discussion

In this section, eight extracts are analyzed with an emphasis on textual, discursive, and social dimensions employing Fairclough's (2003) CDA model.

Extract No. 1: Nora: No, that is just it. You don't understand me, and I have never understood you either before tonight. No, you mustn't interrupt me. You must simply listen to what I say. Torvald, this is a settling of accounts. (Ibsen, 1879, p. 107).

This extract represents a significant turning point in Nora's empowerment as she confronts the prevailing power structures in her marriage and asserts her independence. Utilizing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA), this analysis explores how language determines gender roles, Power relations and resistance for oppression. At the textual level, the statement *No, that is just it* reflects Nora's recently discovered clarity and assertiveness. Her earlier submissive role is undermined by the negation (No), which emphasizes her rejection of Torvald's dominance and their emotional distance. *You don't understand me, and I have never understood you either before tonight.* This statement indicates a shift in power. *Before tonight* indicates a turning point, emphasizing that her awareness is immediate and irrevocable, while the distinction between *You* and *I* underscore the separation between them. The imperative structure *You mustn't interrupt me*, and the deontic modality *must* directly contradict Torvald's authority. During the play, he has controlled conversations, but here, Nora dominates the interaction, changing the traditional gender roles of speech in which women were intended to listen not to command. Furthermore, *you must simply listen to what I Say* strengthens her authority and dominance over the Conversation. Using the obligation word *must* situate Torvald as the one who must comply. The phrase *this is a settling of accounts* defines her departure metaphorically as legal or financial exchange, isolating her from the emotional side relationship. This reinforces the feminist criticisms of marriage as an institution that traditionally functions more as an economic arrangement than an equal partnership. Moreover, the metaphor *a settling of accounts* reflects her demand for justice.

Therefore, at the discursive practice level, this analysis illustrates the 19th century gendered discourse, when women were assumed to be submissive and obedient. Yet, Nora has broken these norms, which makes her a revolutionary character in literary history. The Phrase *Settling of accounts* might be related to general intertextual themes in literature in which women acquire authority through financial autonomy, mirroring subsequent feminist works that dispute financial dependency in marriage. This interpretation challenges Charan (2020), who sees Nora's actions as emotionally motivated rather than intellectually resistant; yet, Nora's intentional linguistic choices here indicate discursive, structured resistance.

At the social practice level, in the context of the 19th century, women were socially and legally reliant on men. This structure is upset by Nora's language, that embodies resistance discourse. Her use of obligation, metaphor, and negation indicates how linguistic devices establish agency. Employing Fairclough's CDA, it reveals that Nora's development is both ideological and personal, undermining patriarchal conventions and expanding the play's feminist legacy.

Extract No.2: Nora: We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?

Helmer: What do you mean by serious?

Nora: In all these eight years—longer than that—from the very beginning of our acquaintance, we have never exchanged a word on any serious subject.

Helmer: Was it likely that I would be continually and forever telling you about worries that you could not help me to bear?

Nora: I am not speaking about business matters. I say that we have never sat down in earnest together to try and get at the bottom of anything.

Helmer: But, dearest Nora, would it have been any good to you?

Nora: That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald—first by papa and then by you.

Helmer: What! By us two—by us two, who have loved you better than anyone else in the world?

Nora (shaking her head): You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me.

Helmer: Nora, what do I hear you saying?

Nora: It is perfectly true, Torvald. When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinions; and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not have liked it. He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you (Ibsen, 1879, p. 108-109).

This extract from *A Doll's House* indicates that Nora recognizes the oppressive dynamics that have dominated their marriage as well as confronted Torvald about their relationship. Utilizing Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this evaluation focusses on how language establishes gendered power dynamics and indicates Nora's progress towards empowerment, as in *You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me.*

At the textual level, Nora's words reflect her awareness of the superficiality of their marriage. The expression of *serious Conversation* indicates the unequal power dynamics and the absence of meaningful communication where Torvald has dominated the narrative in their marriage. Nora's discovery that they have not spoken about *any serious*

subject, emphasizes how their relationship has been guided by Torvald's power instead of mutual competence, reducing Nora to a submissive status. Helmer's answer, *what do you mean by serious?* indicates his incapacity of appreciating the significance of a conversation, reinforcing his authoritative position in their marriage. By neglecting Nora's emotional feelings, focusing on economic matters, he reveals his lack of respect for Nora's emotional and intellectual independence.

Her repeated negation *we have never*, and transitivity structures *he told me his opinion* express Nora's passive role imposed by patriarchal male authority. Nora's next, statement, *I have been greatly wronged, Torvald first by Papa and then by you*, is a crucial moment in which she confronts directly the root of her oppression. By drawing a comparison between her father and Torvald, Nora highlights how both men have considered her as an inanimate thing, rejecting her autonomy and voice.

At the textual level, Nora's rejection of Torvald's perspective on their marriage is vital. She said, *You've never shown me love. You've only found it enjoyable to be in love with me*, illustrates the deceptive relationship between them, which was moulded by his pride rather than genuine love. The metaphor *doll-child* illustrates how her identity has been structured by her infantilization by both Torvald and her father. Through her use of self-assertion and negation *I have been greatly wronged, I concealed the fact*, Nora challenges both emotional repression and gender stereotypes. The silence that has traditionally been imposed on women is questioned by her increasing autonomy. This extract emphasizes how Nora's personal discovering challenges the patriarchal structures of the 19th century concerning the level of social practice. Her realization that her husband and father have both ruled her serves as an instance of deeper female subjugation mechanisms. She starts ideological resistance by conveying her criticism. In contrast, Tayyab et al. (2021) interpreted her behaviors as emotional instead of critical. It becomes obvious from Fairclough's three-dimensional model that Nora's discourse is both ideologically and socially transformative.

Extract No.3: *I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and Papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life (Ibsen, 1879, p. 109)*

In this extract from *A Doll's House*, Nora reflects her developing understanding of the roles she has been made to fulfill. The sentence *I have existed merely to perform tricks for you* highlights a strong sense of victimization and reduction of selfhood at the textual level dimension, particularly her employing of transitivity *I have existed to perform*, portraying herself like a passive agent. In addition, by suggesting that her life has lacked depth and authenticity, the adverb *merely* eliminates the complexities of her existence to one of performance. By utilizing the metaphor of *performing tricks*, she is presented as a puppet or entertainer that is admired and controlled but not respected. The utilization of personal pronouns repeatedly, especially *I*, *you*, and *Papa*, emphasizes the accusatory tone and Nora's effort to reclaim her narrative while creating clear relational boundaries. The past tense *have committed*, the modality, and the direct address *you would have it so* make a retrospective critique, confirming that this was a pattern of imposed roles and restrictions rather than an accident.

Concerning the level of discursive practice, this extract indicates a change from Nora's earlier dependent discourse to a reflective and violent speech. She lefts polite, diminutive language and has a critical stance against male power. This shift indicates an evolution of her subject position and the emergence of a counter-narrative focused on accountability and self-

awareness, departing from previous conversational norms in which she reflected Torvald's expectations. Regarding the social practice dimension, the extract illustrates how Nora's experiences represent larger social structures that form people's identities using marriage and family. Women were perceived as dependent on male guardians through the social order of the time, in the beginning as daughters and later as wives. By recognizing that her father and husband *have committed a great sin*, Nora establishes their actions within a moral framework, indicating that such social arrangements are not merely constrictive but also immoral. The consequences of a system that refuses women autonomy and strengthens conformity over the development of personal independence are highlighted by her statement; *It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life*. In this sense, the prevailing ideologies that normalize male dominance over women's lives and selections are challenged by Nora's language. She not only acknowledges how social practices affect her development, but she proceeds to reject and distance herself from those structures by expressing this recognition aloud. To this end, the analysis serves as an instance of how Nora's language choices illustrate an increasing understanding of her subjugation. Using Fairclough's model as an outline, we can observe how the text, its delivery mode, and the larger social context all combine to expose the power structures that have impacted Nora's life and to mark the moment at which she begins to rebel against them. This view runs counter to Silitonga's (2019) argument that Nora's resistance is purely emotional and has no structural significance. As an intentional confront to prevailing patriarchal standards, Nora's language is revealed in the current CDA to show a greater rupture across textual, discursive, and social practice dimensions.

Extract No.4: Nora. Whose lessons? Mine, or the children's?

Helmer: Both yours and the children's, my darling Nora.

Nora: Alas, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you. Helmer: And you can say that!

Nora: And I how am I fitted to bring up the children?

Helmer: Nora!

Nora: Didn't you say so yourself a little while ago that you dare not trust me to bring them up? Helmer: In a moment of anger! Why do you pay any heed to that? (Ibsen, 1879, p. 110).

This extract highlights Nora's growing awareness of her discrimination and her desire for independence while reflecting the continuous struggle for authority between her and Torvald. Concerning the textual level, Torvald's use of prioritizing tone and possessiveness in phrases like *Both yours and the children's, my darling Nora* reflects patriarchal control. His speech functions to uphold his authority in the home. Inversely, Nora's rhetorical question such as *how am I fitted to bring up the children?* and negation *you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife* reveal a change in her consciousness, and Helmer's failure to guide her. She illustrates resistance and a break from adopted gender roles via her rhetorical questions and negations.

This change is more evident at the discourse practice level. Torvald keeps to be confident in his role as protector and leader, speaking from a position of dominance. But Nora starts to challenge this narrative by promoting doubts about both her own eligibility for

traditional duties and Torvald's authority. After being shaped by marital and societal structures, her language starts reflecting her own developing identity and critical consciousness. The extract addresses 19th-century gender standards that limited women to domestic subservience at the level of social practice. Although Torvald demonstrates these standards, Nora's growing rebellion of them calls into question the legitimacy of the patriarchal system. She declares a woman's right to self-determination by resisting convention by departing the home. This CDA-based analysis finds significant gaps in discourse, whereas Subramanyam and Tiwari (2023) assert that Nora's departure is merely symbolic because of the effect of adopted patriarchy. Nora's statement, *I must do that for myself*, is an ideal example of ideological resistance and signifies her shift from disempowerment to empowerment.

Extract No.5: Nora. Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I am going to leave you now.

Helmer (springing up): What do you say?

Nora: I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer.

Helmer: Nora, Nora! (Ibsen, 1879, p. 110).

In this essential extract of *A Doll's House*, Nora's preference to leave Torvald signals the peak of her quest to independence and self-discovery. Nora's phrase: *You were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task*, implies that she is conscious of the restrictions Torvald has imposed on her. The statement *not fit for the task* indicates that she is aware of her former role in their marriage, where she was required to be submissive and perform specific duties. Nevertheless, Nora's confession that she is not fit for the task also serves an ironic reversal of Torvald's previous belief that she failed to manage important responsibilities. At this point, Nora is referring to her duty as Torvald's wife in addition to the expectations society has imposed on her own rather than on any specific task. By this assertion, she is conveying her disapproval of the marriage that has enhanced her inferior position and the social conventions that have restricted her. The chosen extract from *A Doll's House* reflects Nora's essential moment when she breaks patriarchal authority and declares her independence via her discursive positioning and linguistic choices. She constantly uses the modal verb *must* in declarations like *There is another task I must undertake first* and *I must do that for myself*, which indicates the dialogue at the textual level. Her sense of urgency, responsibility, and the fact that her evolution is non-negotiable are all illustrated by this linguistic construction. The statement, *you are not the man to help me in that*, destroys Torvald's assumed moral and intellectual dominance and breaks the traditional gender hierarchy that limited their relationship. Moreover, Nora's usage of speech act in the statement *I am going to leave you now*, highlights her active agency; she is not being dismissed or passively retreating; instead, she is making an intelligent and assertive choice. Whereas, her last statement and usage of transitivity structure, *I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me*, illustrates the need for self-isolation for true self-knowledge, the progressive verb *going* reflects an intention already in progress, in addition to the modality *must* which emphasizes her resolution. Her inner desire for development and independence now dictates her speech rather than her husband's dominance.

The extract highlights an essential change in Nora's performance within the discursive system of marriage from the discourse practice level. Nora, who was previously involved in a speech pattern which was driven by compliance and disregard, starts to rebuild herself as a speaking subject who challenges the ideological foundations of her place in the home. Her language now indicates internal contemplation and independence rather than external expectations. Nora expresses a mode of speech that undermines the approved narrative of female dependence by stating, *I must do that for myself*. She places herself as a discursive person by distinguishing herself from the submissive language of the submissive wife and utilizing a tone that is self-directed. *What do you say?* is Torvald's response, that draws attention to the imbalance in their communication styles. The limitations of the patriarchal discourse that demonstrates women as incapable of independent thought are apparent in his incapacity to understand Nora's declaration. In this instance, Nora gradually refuses the dominant discourses that previously defined her subjectivity, switching the conversation into a venue for ideological repositioning. From the perspective of social practice, Nora's choice to leave and her desire to advance her education directly undermine the gendered norms of late 19th-century society. The current social norms that placed women as intellectual, emotional, and dependent within the family structure are questioned in the extract. The traditional institution of marriage, that had long used as a microcosm of wider patriarchal control, was profoundly disrupted by Nora's insistence on standing by herself and her rejection to accept Torvald's assistance. Her assertion calls into question not only her husband's personal authority but also the accepted wisdom that a woman's value and role are associated with her ability to take care of the home. Nora's rejection of both emotional reliance and male dominance positions her as a figure of resistance, contrast with the findings of Tayyab et al. (2021), who represents women in patriarchal marriages as subservient and emotionally dependent. Her language turns into a weapon to eliminate oppressive gender roles, and her self-emancipation obstacles the socially constructed identity of the obedient wife. As a result, her resistance is a larger ideological criticism of the systems that have conveniently silenced and marginalized women rather than merely a reflection of her individual discontent. This extract demonstrates how Nora's developing vocabulary undermines patriarchal expectations by refusing subservient roles and asserting her independence. She supports personal empowerment and obtains her identity through conversation.

Extract No.6: I believe that before all else, I am a reasonable human being, just as you are or, at all events that I must try and become one. (Ibsen, 1879, p 111-112).

From the textual level, this extract is from Nora's last interaction with Torvald, in which she proclaims her identity greater than just a mother and wife. Her words undermine societal beliefs that the main role of women is to take responsibility for her children and husband. Prioritizing over all these responsibilities, namely when saying, *just as you are*, Nora rejects the belief that independence and reason are only for men, establishing equivalence with Torvald.

According to discourse practice, Nora's utilization of the statement and epistemic modality *I must try and become one* indicates that she knows how society has constructed her into inconsiderate and obedient role. The modal must, implies necessity, underscores her resistance against social conventions in her way to selfhood. She evolves from passive reliance to active self-awareness, which is highlighted by the contrast between *I am* and *I must try*.

Considering the social practice, this claim undermines the belief that women were inherently dependent and less intelligent than men in the 19th century. This is in correspondence with the subjection of Women by Mill (1869), who indicated that women's lack of authority is socially constructed rather than inherent. In the same way, Beauvoir (1949) eventually asserted that women must actively create their own personalities instead of passively accepting the social roles. This analysis, though, runs counter to Akter, Hossain, Akter, and Zalil (2019), who argued that Nora's exploration of her independence is a personal crisis in which her actions are guided by emotional upheaval rather than a permanent ideological shift, rather than a critique of patriarchal structures. Yet, this interpretation emphasises that Nora's assertion goes beyond simple emotional discomfort by actively challenging prevailing notions, reclaiming her autonomy, and criticizing social expectations of women.

Concerning social practice level, Nora's redefining herself as a self-sufficient individual as opposed to a subservient wife is a distinct evident of actor description. The difference between *I am* and *I must try* indicates polarization and strengthens her struggle for identity. Presumptions reveal the gendered power inequality by indicating that she was never before regarded as a logical human being. This examination illustrates how language both promotes and challenges prevailing perspectives. A significant turning point in Nora's freedom is her assertion of her humanity, which confronts the patriarchal systems that have confined her.

Extract No.7: Helmer: Oh, you think and talk like a heedless child. Nora. Maybe. But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over—and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you—when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened. Exactly as before, I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile. (Getting up.) Torvald—it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children— Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!

Helmer (sadly): I see, I see. An abyss has opened between us there is no denying it. But, Nora, would it not be possible to fill it up?

Nora: As I am now, I am no wife for you. (Ibsen, 1879, p. 115).

This exchange between Nora and Torvald reflects how their marriage collapsed, demonstrating a shift in the balance of power and Nora's self-discovery. Employing textual analysis, Nora's statement *Perhaps. But you don't think or speak like the man I could bind myself to*, she says, suggesting her transition from disempowerment to empowerment. The word *bind*, which originally meant equality and partnership, now indicates Torvald's deficiencies as a partner and the imbalance in power in their marriage. Nora realizes that Torvald's love is dependent and that his priorities are protecting his reputation regarding her welfare.

The passage is full with metaphor such as *your little skylark* and *your doll* that Nora criticizes as representative of her infantilization.

In a discursive practice, Torvald's trivialization of the crisis *when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned, it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened* indicates his inability to comprehend Nora's psychological growth. His failure to see Nora as

an independent, self-willed person is demonstrated by his perspective of her as a decorative, tender object, which is expressed by metaphors like *doll* and *skylark*. A significant turning point in Nora's self-discovery is when she states, *it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man*. Nora's growing awareness of her part in a false relationship is demonstrated by this metaphor of a *strange man*, which further expands the emotional gap between them. Moreover, the transitivity in *I had been living... had borne him three children* emphasizes her labor physically and emotionally.

From a social analysis perspective, Torvald's phrase, *An abyss has opened between us, there is no denying it*, demonstrates the emotional illness in their relationship. He is unable to understand Nora's internal development, yet, as indicated by his wish that the *abyss* can be filled. In contrast, Nora assertively rejects the role of a subservient wife that was imposed upon her by declaring, *As I am now, I am no wife for you*. The term *now* is significant because it indicates her decision to declare her autonomy and her metamorphosis. The peak of Nora's path to independence and self-awareness is this declaration. The substantial shift in power dynamics between Nora and Torvald is revealed by CDA. The gender standards that formerly defined their relationship are questioned by Nora's language. As a result, Nora effectively rejects the patriarchal traditions that bound her by eliminating the myths of romantic love and marital duties via the use of words like *bind*, *fear*, *strange man*, and *abyss*. As she asserts her autonomy and rejects Torvald's attempts to determine her, her linguistic rebellion and empowerment are obvious. Additionally, Wing-bo and Lee (2015) stated that these feminist aspects are hindered in a number of *A Doll's House* translations. According to their study, patriarchal ideologies generally persist in translations, decreasing the impact of Nora's assertive speech. This gap emphasizes how Nora's empowerment differs based on the translation, highlighting the significance of language in determining gendered power dynamics.

Extract No.8: Helmer: I have it in me to become a different man.

Nora: Perhaps if your doll is taken away from you.

Helmer: But to part to part from you! No, no, Nora, I can't understand that idea.

Nora (going out to the right): That makes it all the more certain that it must be done. (She comes back with her cloak and hat and a small bag which she puts on a chair by the table.)

Helmer: Nora, Nora, not now! Wait until tomorrow.

Nora (putting on her cloak): I cannot spend the night in a strange man's room. (Ibsen, 1879, p. 115-116).

A Doll's House's final scenes illustrate a significant moment of women's empowerment when Nora asserts her intention to leave Helmer in spite of his desperate pleas. Helmer asserts, *I have it in me to become a different man*, to which the ironic retort, *Perhaps if your doll is taken away from you*, responds. The usage of the noun *doll* is essential to the text; it repeats Nora's previous claim that her father received her as a *doll-child* and Helmer regarded her as a *doll-wife*. Nora's perceived role as a decorative, subservient figure in a male-dominated family is reflected in this metaphor. The metaphoric discourse *if your doll is taken away from you* indicates her awareness of her the objectified identity reinforced on her and that Helmer's

identity and emotional stability rely on his ability to uphold Nora in her submissive role. Additionally, Nora employs modal certainty to indicate an obvious departure from her former identity in her claimed yet determined statement, *that makes it all the more certain that it must be done*. When Nora describes her husband as a *strange man*, she linguistically repositions him as a person who is unfamiliar and emotionally distant, making the speech act of alienation *I cannot spend the night in a strange man's room* especially noteworthy. Moral and psychological separation is conveyed by the change in pronoun reference and usage of the verb *cannot* implying that remaining in the home would go against her recently discovered self-awareness. From a discursive perspective, this interaction challenges ideological notions regarding female subservience and marital duty in addition to conventional gender roles. Helmer's emotional instability and difficulty to understand Nora's transformation are apparent in his repeated phrases, *But to part! to part from you!* and his exclamatory tone. Nora, on the other hand, asserts discursive control with her calm and structured speech. She shows a greater awareness of how discourse affects relationships by rejecting to re-enter the marriage due to Helmer's proclamation to change. In this respect, her language is now impacted by her need to assert her independence instead of her desire to please. In order to reinforce the metaphor that has been used throughout the play to condemn the objectification and infantilization of women, the reference to *doll*, becomes intertextual. Through this change, Nora is rejecting the ideological systems that previously governed her speech and actions. On the level of social practice, the gendered power structures of 19th-century European society are condemned in this moment. Nora's departure reflects a symbolic break from the patriarchal institution of marriage and goes over a simple personal decision. Her decision to pursue her education and live on her own refuses prevailing social norms that constrained women to household duties. By opting to depart in spite of Helmer's begging and apparent desire to adapt, Nora calls for immediate agency and dismisses postponed promises of equality. Her words maintain her right to self-determination and challenge emotional manipulation. Nora represents women's changing awareness in a society confronting early feminist awakenings through her language. By illustrating how individual speech acts can challenge and modify prevailing ideologies, the text both reflects and improves the greater social struggle over gender relations, argued by Fairclough. This sequence is an effective demonstration of how language can serve as a site of resistance, empowering women to challenge repressive systems and assert their independence and identity. As CDA illustrates her linguistic empowerment, Nora's rejection of Helmer contradicts to Irigaray's (2022) interpretation of her leaving as a return to feminine absence. Although CDA demonstrates her decision as a way of ideological resistance, Silitonga (2019) interprets it as an emotional escape. Based on CDA, Nora's actions convey far more than an emotional breakdown; they additionally reflect a shift in gendered power.

Discussion:

A critical analysis of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* through the use of Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model was conducted and major conclusions were drawn as follows:

1. Deeper comprehension of the power dynamics, ideologies and social practices were underlined in the portrayal of women's empowerment. In this sense, Nora Helmer's dialogues' use of modal verbs, lexical choices, transitivity patterns, and sentence structures helps construct her identity at the textual level. These linguistic features demonstrate Nora's shifting subjectivity from *passive compliance to forceful residence*, consequently highlighting her increasing autonomy in a patriarchal context.

2. At the level of discursive practice, the narrative strategies and character interactions in the play indicate and challenge prevailing gender ideologies. By depicting Nora as a complex figure who negotiates requirements of wifhood, motherhood, and independence, Ibsen undermines the traditional Victorian standards of women. The play promotes a re-evaluation of normative roles given to women in the 19th-century domestic sphere through discursive techniques including dialogic contrast, indirect speech, and repetition. Nora's language thus transforms into a venue of both obedience and challenge under prevailing discourses.
3. The sociocultural practice level sets the text even more in its broader historical and ideological setting. While indicating the possibility of social change, *A Doll's House* demonstrates how patriarchal norms and socio-legal restrictions shaped gender roles.
4. The study infers that Nora's departure from her domestic duty is a symbolic rejection of the cultural expectations imposed on women. This undermines the mainstream belief of female subservience.
5. Employing Fairclough's (2003) CDA framework to *A Doll's House* shows how language reinforces and challenges gender-based power dynamics.
6. This study provides to a comprehensive understanding of how women's empowerment is established in literary discourse by means of linguistic choices, discursive processes, and social factors. At the end, it points out how essential critical language analysis is in exposing the ideological conflicts shaping women's identities and social roles.

تحليل الخطاب النقدي لتمكين المرأة في مسرح "بيت الدمية" لهنريك إبسن

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الكلمات المفتاحية | بيت الدمية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي، هنريك إبسن، الأيديولوجيا في الخطاب، تحليل الخطاب الأدبي.

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المستخلص:

تحقق هذه الدراسة بشكل نقدي في كيفية تمثيل تمكين المرأة في مسرحية "بيت الدمية" لهنريك إبسن. تكمن المشكلة في هذه تهدف الدراسة إلى فحص الوسائل اللغوية والاستراتيجية الخطابية الموظفة في تشكيل وتقويض ديناميكيات النوع الاجتماعي والسلطة، خاصة فيما يتعلق بدور نورا هيلمير. باستخدام المنهج النوعي 8 عينات تم جمعها عن قصد من مسرحية "بيت الدمية". باعتماد نهج التحليل النقدي للخطاب فيركلف (2003)، تم تحليل العينات نوعياً. تكشف النتائج أنه في سياق أبوي، فإن إعادة التشكيل الخطابية للهوية والسلطة إلى جانب التنمية السردية تساعد في تسهيل تمكين الناس. يظهر وكيف تنتقد لغة إبسن في وقت واحد وتقوض الأيديولوجيات الجنسانية السائدة من خلال وضع النص ضمن سياقه الاجتماعي الثقافي والأيديولوجي. توسع الدراسة نطاق CDA في الدراسات النسوية الأدبية وتساهم في مجموعة العمل الحالي من خلال تقديم تحليل قائم على أسس لغوية لتمكين في الخطاب الأدبي.