

A doll house relationship comparison

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



What impressions of the characters relationship are conveyed by the language they use, and the interaction between them? In this text, the opening scene of Ibsen's Dolls House, the conversation between Helmer and Nora shows who acts as a more authoritative figure through imperatives, patronising lexis and explanative language. This is to show the relationship between the married couple regarding terms of how they address each other. I will also consider gender theories such as Debora Tennen's gender theory of politeness and Zimmerman and West's suggesting men are more dominating in conversation.

The purpose of the text, A Dolls House, is to reveal information about the relationship between Nora and Helmer through the interactions of their conversation and their lexis. Nora speaks in a polite manner, 'just this minute' which could be interpreted through Trudgill's gender theory suggesting women use precise pronunciation to aim to be viewed at a higher class. The adjective, 'just' could imply Nora will act quickly in order to respond to her husband because he has a higher status and power over herself.

However, her husband's language is very different, 'been wasting money again?' this rhetorical question implies a threatening and dominant tone. This could be interpreted by Zimmerman and West's gender theory which suggests men act more dominant in conversation in order to gain and keep power. The terms of address the couple use change in relation to the conversation topic. Nora addresses her husband by his second name, 'As you please, Torvald' which could imply their relationship is formal and she has little authority as he holds all the power.

This could be interpreted by Debora Tennen who states that women use terms of address and politeness to form bonds. However, Helmer addresses Nora in two different approaches; whilst they are having a general conversation Nora is referred to as his possession, ' My little skylark' the adjective ' little' implying she is belittled as she has no authority. Also, the use of the pronoun, ' my' implies Nora belongs to Helmer and she has control over her hence the metaphor for her name.

However, when Nora ' misbehaves' she is addressed with her name, ' Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! ' his use of explanative language portrays his loss of patience with her but also he is telling her off like Nora is a child in a patronising manor. The repetition of ' Nora' implies she has done wrong and he dismisses her to get her to behave like a father would to a child. This could be interpreted by Grice's maxims of quantity as he speaks more than Nora implying he has a higher level of authority and power.