CHAPTER-5
CONCLUSION

Drawing on Interpersonal metafunction within Systemic Functional Linguistics, Speech Acts and Language and Gender theories, the analysis of Henrik Ibsen’s three plays, i.e., A Doll’s House, Hedda Gabler and The Lady from the Sea, reveals significant differences in the language used by male and female characters. Mood and Modality analysis shows that all the dialogues which form Representatives are statements which are used for Describing, Asserting, Concluding, Hypothesising and Predicting, and Claiming, in other words, used for giving information. The results of Representatives show that in male dominated plays, A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea, female characters describe, assert, conclude, hypothesise and predict, and claim more than male characters while in female dominated play, Hedda Gabler, male characters do all these things more than female characters.

➢ The results of Describing show that out of total 168 dialogues, 66 dialogues are delivered by male characters as compared to 102 dialogues delivered by female characters. These results show that female characters describe more in all the three plays.

➢ Out of total 87 Asserting dialogues, dialogues delivered by female characters are 68 and by male characters are 19. In male dominated plays, A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea, female characters assert only at the end or towards the end when they feel confident and want to defend themselves but in Hedda Gabler, which is a female dominated play, George Tesman asserts at the end.

➢ Concluding dialogues are also delivered more by female characters than male characters. Out of total 127 times, male characters conclude 58 times and female characters conclude 69 times. It has been found that female characters conclude more in male dominated plays while a male character, Lovborg, concludes more in female dominated play.

➢ The results of Hypothesising and Predicting show that out of total 25 dialogues, 13 dialogues are by male characters and 12 dialogues are by female characters.
For these results also, it can be said that in male dominated plays, female characters hypothesise more and in female dominated play, male characters hypothesise more than female characters. As in *A Doll’s House*, Nora hypothesises more than Torvald, in *Hedda Gabler*, Judge Brack and George Tesman hypothesise more than Hedda and in *The Lady from the Sea*, Ellida hypothesises more than Wangel.

- Female characters also claim more than male characters. Out of 25 *Claiming* dialogues, 11 dialogues are uttered by male characters whereas 14 dialogues are uttered by female characters. The results of *Claiming* do not depict any gender specific characteristic.

  *Commanding*, *Asking*, *Requesting* and *Suggesting* form *Directives* which are used for demanding either information or goods and services. In *Directives* also, the one who is *Dominating* commands and asks more than the *Dominated* one and the one who is *Dominated*, suggests and requests more than the *Dominating* one.

- The results of *Commanding* dialogues show that male characters command more than female characters. Out of total 24 dialogues, *Commanding* dialogues by male characters are 13 while by female characters are 11. It has been found that in male dominated plays, i.e., *A Doll’s House* and *The Lady from the Sea*, male characters command more and in female dominated play, *Hedda Gabler*, female character Hedda commands more than any male character.

- *Asking* dialogues are also delivered more by male characters than by female characters. Total *Asking* dialogues are 241, out of which, dialogues delivered by male characters are 147 whereas dialogues by female characters are 94. For *Asking* dialogues also, it can be said that the one who is *Dominating* asks more like the results of *Commanding* dialogues.

- Total *Requesting* dialogues are 24, which include 19 dialogues by female characters and only 5 dialogues by male characters. The results of *Requesting* dialogues show that in male dominated plays, female characters request more than male characters and in female dominated play, male characters request more than female characters. As Nora and Ellida in *A Doll’s House* and *The
Lady from the Sea, respectively, are found requesting but Hedda is never found requesting anyone in the play.

- The results of Suggesting dialogues also show that female characters suggest more than male characters. Out of total 23 times, female characters suggest 15 times while male characters suggest 8 times. Here also, it can be said that in male dominated plays female characters suggest more and in female dominated play, male characters suggest more. Thus, the one who is Dominated suggests more than the one who is Dominating.

- Commissives dialogues are 35, which includes 20 dialogues by male characters and 14 dialogues by female characters. For Commissives also, the dominance matters. As where males dominate, they expect more commitments and where a female dominates, she expects more commitments.

- There is difference of only one number between the Manipulative dialogues delivered by male and female characters. Out of total 39 Manipulative dialogues, 19 dialogues are delivered by male characters and 20 dialogues are delivered by female characters. In A Doll’s House, Torvald manipulates more and in Hedda Gabler, Hedda manipulates more. But in The Lady from the Sea, all the Manipulative dialogues are uttered by male characters only. Thus, the results of Manipulative dialogues do not reflect any gender specific characteristic.

Dominance consists of both Dominating and Dominated type of dialogues. The results under both the categories show Dominance reflected through language.

- Total Dominating dialogues found are 140, which include 116 dialogues by male characters and only 24 dialogues by female characters. In male dominated plays, male characters utter more Dominating dialogues and in female dominated play, a female character utters more Dominating dialogues.

- Total Dominated dialogues found are 43 and all these dialogues are uttered by female characters only. This category reflects the Dominance of male characters.

- Sexist language is used 40 times which includes 27 times by male characters and 13 times by female characters. In A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea,
Sexist language is used for females but in Hedda Gabler it is used for males also. Both Hedda and Judge Brack talk about men while using Sexist language.

- **Swear words** are uttered more by female characters than by male characters. Out of total 60 Swear words, 32 are uttered by female characters and 28 are uttered by male characters. In A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea, the dialogues reflecting Swear words are uttered by female characters more than male characters but in Hedda Gabler, these dialogues are uttered more by male characters than by female characters.

Agreeing and Disagreeing also show Dominance as the one who is Dominated agrees more with the Dominating but the one who is Dominating disagrees more with the Dominated. The difference here also is situation specific and not gender specific.

- The results of Agreeing show the Dominance of male characters, as out of total 101 times, female characters agree 61 times and male characters agree 41 times while the results of Disagreeing show the opposite. Here female characters disagree 27 times and male characters disagree 5 times out of total 32 times. In A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea, female characters agree more than male characters but in Hedda Gabler male characters agree more than female characters. The results of Disagreeing show that female characters disagree more than male characters in all the three plays. The difference is only of the situation. In male dominated plays, female characters disagree towards the end when they are confident and feel the need to assert themselves but in female dominated play, they disagree since the starting of the play.

- **Tag questions** are used more by male characters than by female characters. While female characters use 13 Tag questions, male characters use 17 Tag questions out of total 30. In A Doll’s House, and Hedda Gabler, Tag questions are used more by male characters but in The Lady from the Sea, female characters use more Tag questions.

On the basis of Mood results, it can be said that the female dominated plays, A Doll’s House and The Lady from the Sea, conform mostly to the theories laid down by Language and Gender theorists but Hedda Gabler, which is a female dominated play, does not conform to these theories. The overall results show that dominance and
authority reflect through the language used by male and female characters but these features are not gender specific. The reaction and speech of the speakers is because of their social position in family rather than their gender. This can also be stated that the theory of “powerless language” stated by O’Barr and Atkins (1980) is more appropriate, than the theory given by Robin Lakoff (1975) regarding “women’s language”, to study gender based language differences.

The results of Modality, i.e., the results of Modalization and Modulation, reflect that male characters are more confident than female characters as they make use of high value modals either more than or equal to female characters in both the cases. But female characters use medium and low modal values in both Modalization and Modulation. It shows their lack of confidence and politeness.

- The results of Modalization show that male characters use more high scale of modals than female characters. Out of total 78 values, male characters use 45 whereas female characters use 33 values. And female characters use medium and low values more than male characters. They use 14 medium and 10 low values as compared to 10 and 5 used by male characters, respectively. This shows that male characters are confident and speak clearly and not vaguely.

- In terms of Modulation, some similarities are found. Both male and female characters use equal number of high value modals but female characters use more medium and low value modals than male characters. Where male characters use 3 medium value modals, female characters use 6 and where male characters use 72 low value modals, female characters use 89 out of total 9 and 161, respectively. These results show that female characters lack confidence and are more polite than male characters.

The results of Appraisal analysis include the results of expressions and evaluations on the basis of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation.

- The results found on the basis of Attitude show that female characters are more expressive than male characters in showing Affect but male characters pass more Judgements than female characters, specifically negative. And there is no difference in the expression of reactions as Appreciations. Affection is shown 39 times by female characters and 30 times by male characters. Male characters
pass Judgements 21 times and female characters pass Judgements 13 times and both male and female characters show reactions equally, i.e., 47 times. The results of Affection and Judgements are gender specific as female characters show more Affection and male characters judge more. Also, when female characters pass Judgements, they pass positive Judgements more than negative ones.

- The Engagement results show that female characters use more denials than male characters. Out of total 557, female characters use 332 denials and male characters use 225 denials. But male characters use more counter forms than female characters as they use 186 times while female characters use 137 times, out of total 323 times. And female characters use more concur forms, i.e., they agree more than male characters; out of 100 times, they use 52 times and male characters use 48 times. Thus female characters dominate the Engagement results.

- The results of Graduation show that male characters express themselves more forcibly than female characters. Out of 240 times, they use Force (Intensification) 108 times while female characters use 69 times. But female characters speak more pointedly than male characters as they use Focus (Sharpen) 68 times while male characters use 58 times out of total 126 times. And there is no difference in the usage of Focus (Soften). Both male and female characters use 74 times each. It can be said that male characters dominate the Graduation results.

It has also been found that the language used by characters in the plays is according to their roles depicting their position in the family. As discussed in Chapter-4, the language used by a female character with her husband is different from the language used by her with a friend. The results of analysis show that in A Doll’s House, language used by Nora with Dr. Rank is different from the language used by her with Torvald. She seems to be happy being dominated by Torvald. Towards the end of the play, she herself mentions that she has been living there by playing tricks with him and she has been a doll-wife to him as she was a doll-child to her dad. In Hedda Gabler, as Hedda is dominating, George Tesman does whatever she wants. But she speaks differently with
Judge Brack and Lovborg. She does not share the intimacy with George Tesman which she shares with Judge Brack and Lovborg. And in *The Lady from the Sea*, Ellida tells Wangel that whatever she did, she thought it was what he wanted. She never bothered to change the things. But in this play also, Ellida at first discusses her problems with Arnholm and afterwards with her husband Wangel.

Feminist critics hold the view that females live a life of repression but Ibsen has created his females differently. He wrote *A Doll’s House*, a revolutionary play, when *Language and Gender* theorists were of the view that it is mandatory for women to speak the language specified for them. Lakoff goes to the extent saying that, “If she doesn’t learn to speak women’s language, in traditional society she’s dead: she is ostracized as unfeminine by both men and women” (Lakoff, 1975: 61). At that time, Ibsen created Hedda’s character, who is dominating and carries her father’s surname even after marriage and is interested in horses and pistols rather than be a mother. In *The Lady from the Sea*, Bolette is interested in leaving her father’s place to learn about the world. And Ellida wants to leave her husband and be with Stranger. All these things deny the oppression theory of feminist critics.

The present thesis, thus, reveals the differences between the language used by male and female characters of the selected plays. Male speech patterns express confidence and dominance where female speech patterns express hesitancy and submissiveness but significantly it happens only where males dominate. On the contrary, female speech patterns represent her confidence in the situations where a female character dominates. For example, in male dominating plays, *A Doll’s House* and *The Lady from the Sea*, Torvald and Wangel speak more confidently and assertively than female characters. But in female dominating play, *Hedda Gabler*, Hedda speaks more confidently and assertively than male characters.

It is evident from Nora’s behaviour that she easily accepts her dominated position and agrees to whatever her husband says. It is in the last part of the play, when she comes to realise that her husband misunderstands her, she asserts herself and decides to leave her husband and family. And this assertiveness and confidence is clearly shown in her language. On the other hand, Hedda is shown confident and assertive since the starting of the play. Even Miss Tesman tells Berta how she looked
when they first met her and both Judge Brack and Lovborg ask her the reason for getting married to George Tesman. This clearly shows her superiority. But Ellida is never shown assertive nor is she seen dominated in the play till Stranger comes back. While talking to Wangel about Stranger, she admits that she did whatever he said. He had a strange power over her but when he comes back, she is assertive and demands freedom. In all these plays one thing common is the love for freedom, be it in any way. And this love for freedom proves that women may be dominated throughout the play but at the end they come out as strong and confident as men. As Nora feels happy in leaving her family, Hedda leaves everything by committing suicide and when Ellida is granted freedom to choose, she chooses Wangel and is happy that she has chosen him of her ‘own free will’ and nobody has forced her for anything. All this lack of confidence, feel of subservience, assertiveness etc. reflects through the language used by the characters. These traits cannot be called gender traits; instead these are human traits as the differences are not because of their fundamental relations in society but because of the situations and roles.

To understand the gendered differences, if Mood analysis has helped in exploring how specific functions are performed through language, Modality has helped in clarifying who is more confident or who is more polite, males or females; Appraisal analysis has helped in stating who is more expressive or evaluative, males or females; and Language and Gender theories suggest that women and men do not choose words to create their gender identities rather they draw upon such linguistic strategies to perform pragmatic and interactional functions of language that constitute their roles in a gendered way.

The study shows that some predictable positions such as back channelling, empty adjectives and intensifiers of Language and Gender theories do not figure out in the data. The data helps in understanding the choice of language in interpersonal relationships only. Thus the study as a whole supports the argument that the language use by male and female characters in the selected plays is different but significantly the differences are situation and role specific rather than inherently gender specific as is generally supposed. To generalise the statement we argue that such a condition applies to the real life situations too. But this can be testified only on the basis of some other attempts at the data collected from real life situations.