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Bachelor's thesis

**LOVE DECLARATION IN “GILMORE GIRLS” SERIES
(2000-2007): SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Perlovska D. O. Love declaration in “Gilmore Girls” series (2000-2007): sociolinguistic perspective - Qualification (bachelor’s) thesis for obtaining the educational and qualification level of higher education specialisation 035 “Philology” of the educational and professional programme “English Studies and Translation and Two Western European Languages.” — Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, 2025.

This bachelor’s thesis investigates the sociolinguistic aspects of love declarations in the American television series *Gilmore Girls* (2000–2007). The study explores how a genre of romantic discourse, namely love declaration, functions as a culturally and socially embedded communicative situation, shaped by sociolinguistic factors such as age, and social class. Drawing on contemporary sociolinguistic theories of Basil Bernstein, Robin Lakoff, Deborah Tannen, Anna Ogarkova, Iryna Diakonova and Judith Butler, the research analyzes how characters express love through verbal means across different social and age groups and communicative contexts.

Through a detailed discourse and pragmatic analysis of selected episodes, the study identifies key communicative strategies, such as attention gaining, idealization, emotional tuning, and expression of personal feelings and respective tactics of their verbalisation. The study highlights distinct patterns in the verbalization of love across different social groups and age categories, revealing how sociolinguistic variables shape the linguistic realization of romantic discourse.

The research contributes to a deeper understanding of how love is linguistically constructed and socially negotiated emphasizing the role of discourse in shaping human relationships.

Key words: love declaration, communicative strategy, communicative tactic, age, class, love verbalization

АНОТАЦІЯ

Перловська Д. О. Освідчення в коханні у серіалі «Дівчата Гілмор» (2000–2007): соціолінгвістичний аспект — Кваліфікаційна (бакалаврська) робота на здобуття освітнього ступеня вищої освіти за спеціальністю 035 «Філологія» освітньо-професійної програми «Англійські студії та переклад і дві західноєвропейські мови». — Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка, Київ, 2025.

Ця бакалаврська робота присвячена дослідженню соціолінгвістичних аспектів освідчень у коханні в американському телесеріалі «Дівчата Гілмор» (2000-2007). Дослідження досліджує, як жанр романтичного дискурсу, а саме освідчення в коханні, функціонує як культурно та соціально обумовлена комунікативна ситуація, сформована соціолінгвістичними факторами, такими як вік та соціальний клас. Спираючись на сучасні соціолінгвістичні теорії Бейзіла Бернстайна, Робіна Лакоффа, Дебори Таннен, Ганни Огаркової, Ірини Дьяконової та Джудіт Батлер, було проаналізовано, як герої виражають любов за допомогою комунікативних стратегій та тактик у різних соціальних групах та вікових категоріях.

Завдяки детальному аналізу дискурсу та прагматичного аналізу вибраних епізодів, дослідження визначає ключові комунікативні стратегії, такі як привернення уваги, ідеалізація, емоційне налаштування, вираження особистих почуттів та відповідні тактики їхньої вербалізації. Дослідження висвітлює чіткі тенденції у вербалізації кохання в різних соціальних групах і вікових категоріях, показуючи, як соціолінгвістичні чинники формують вираження романтичного дискурсу мовними засобами.

Дослідження сприяє глибшому розумінню того, як кохання лінгвістично конструюється і соціально обговорюється, підкреслюючи роль дискурсу у формуванні людських стосунків.

Ключові слова: освідчення в коханні, комунікативна стратегія, комунікативна тактика, вік, соціальний клас, вербалізація кохання

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INTRODUCTION

Love declarations are fundamental communicative acts that play a crucial role in relationships. The ways in which people articulate love reflect broader sociolinguistic patterns related to identity, power, and social roles. In recent years, the study of love declarations has attracted interdisciplinary interest, drawing from fields such as linguistics, sociology, psychology, and media studies.

The **relevance of this research** lies in its examination of how language constructs and negotiates intimacy, gender identity, and social roles within romantic discourse, particularly using popular American series the *Gilmore Girls* (2000–2007).

The **practical significance** of this study lies in the possible application of its results and conclusions to the core courses in lexicology as well as in specialized courses in ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguoculturology, stylistics, cognitive semantics, and discourse studies.

Although the expression of love has been examined from various linguistic perspectives—by researchers like Deborah Tannen, Robin Lakoff, Jennifer Coates, and Anna Ogarkova—specific sociolinguistic analyses of love declarations within the context of TV series, remain underdeveloped highlighting a gap that this study aims to address. The **aim** of the study is to explore the sociolinguistic characteristics of love declarations in the series *Gilmore Girls*, with particular focus on the influence of age and social class.

The **object of the research** is the communicative situations of love declarations in the TV series *Gilmore Girls*.

The **subject of the research** is the communicative strategies and tactics and their verbalizations employed in these declarations as well as the components of love declarations, shaped by the characters' sociolinguistic characteristics

The **objectives** of the research are to:

- compare love declarations made by characters of different age groups (e.g., teenagers vs. adults) to identify age-related differences

- analyze variations in love declarations across social classes (e.g., working-class vs. upper-class)
- identify and categorize communicative strategies and tactics used in love declarations
- examine how sociolinguistic factors influence the choice of verbal means in love declarations.
- contribute to the broader understanding of how love as a social and emotional phenomenon is constructed and negotiated linguistically.

The **data samples** for the analysis were taken from 48 episodes of series *Gilmore Girls* providing a substantial dataset of 170 minutes of research corpus for examining love declarations across different communicative contexts. The episodes were selected to ensure comprehensive representation of characters from diverse social classes (working-class, middle-class, and upper-class), various age groups and included only interactions between the opposite sex.

Research methods are based on the method of critical analysis of theoretical works by various scholars to define the concept of romantic discourse, communicative strategy, and sociolinguistic variables such as age and class. Descriptive linguistic analysis and qualitative analysis are used to systematically examine the form and function of language in love declarations, focusing on how specific linguistic features reflect the use of various communicative strategies and tactics that are studied using discourse analysis of communicative situations. Discourse and pragmatic analysis are employed to identify communication strategies and tactics used by characters, while contextual interpretation allows for their categorization into communicative strategies (attention gaining, idealization, emotional tuning, and expression of personal feelings) and corresponding tactics.

This bachelor's thesis consists of the following components: an annotation, abstract, introduction, two main chapters, conclusions to Chapters 1 and 2, a general conclusion, a list of references, supporting materials, appendix and a summary. The total scope of the work is 58 pages.

1. SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON ROMANTIC DISCOURSE

1.1. Discourse and its varieties

Within the cognitive-communicative paradigm in linguistics, researchers have consistently focused on the cognitive, socio-cultural, and psychological foundations of verbal communication. Since the latter half of the 20th century, discourse has become a prominent research object in linguistics, closely associated with discourse analysis, functional and cognitive grammar, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguopragmatics. Mammadov (2018, p. 1) explores various dimensions of discourse analysis and references foundational scholars who studied the diverse aspects of discourse research which have led to multiple interpretations of discourse with numerous studies carried out by Halliday (1976), van Dijk, Foucault (2005), Chafe, and Fairclough (2013).

Discourse is fundamentally a social phenomenon involving language use within social contexts with Van Dijk (1998) defining discourse as “ a speech flow, language in its constant movement, absorbing all the diversity of the historical era, individual and social characteristics of both the communicant and the communicative situation, in which communication takes place. Discourse reflects the mentality and culture, both national, universal, and individual, private” (p. 47).

Further Fairclough (2004) provides more structured conceptualization, which complements and extends Van Dijk’s view by breaking discourse down into three interconnected aspects: (a) meaning-making within the social process; (b) language tied to specific social fields or practices; and (c) a method of interpreting aspects of the world from particular social perspectives. To avoid confusion, Fairclough et al., (2004) prefers using the term "semiosis" in the most abstract sense, which suggests that discourse analysis involves the study of various semiotic modalities, including visual images, and body language.

According to Brown & Yule (1988, p. 1) discourse can be defined as “language in use,” focusing on language as an active communicative practice. Ehrlich and Romaniuk (2018) further emphasize that discourse is “language embedded in social interaction,” pointing out the interactive and situational nature of communication (p.

460). Moreover, Cornish (2022) expands on this view by describing discourse as being “the product of the contextually-situated sequence of indexical, propositional and illocutionary acts,” stressing its dynamic and evolving interpretation within communicative events (p. 91-93).

In our research, we follow Wodak (2001) who frames discourse as “spoken or written texts in the context of social processes and structures,” highlighting the embeddedness of language within societal frameworks (p. 2-3).

One of the main issues explored in discourse studies is the dichotomy between “text” and “discourse” with the aim of identifying all aspects allowing for a comprehensive description of the communicative intentions of the text and its components. Batsevych (2006) states that there is a connection between the written form of discourse with the concept of text, which appears as “stopped” discourse. Martyniuk (2012) conceptualizes discourse as a situationally conditioned intersubjective speech-cognitive activity, aimed at mutual orientation in life through the attribution of semiotic significance to linguistic form (p. 11). Further supporting these ideas, Serazhym (2010) considers discourse to be a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon of the modern communicative environment, with a “visible” – linguistic and “invisible” – extralinguistic structure, characterized by the commonality of the world “built” during development of the discourse by the author and interpreted by his listener or reader (p. 12–13) highlighting the interactive nature of discourse as a co-constructed process. The concept of discourse as a sociolinguistic phenomenon has been studied by many scholars, including Batsevych (2006), Kost (2010), Romanyuk (2016), Selivanova (2006), Serazhym (2002), and others.

According to Van Dijk (1998, 2014), discourse extends beyond the mere linguistic structures of text and talk, involving cognitive-affective processes that underpin the individuals’ mental representations and expressions. This approach examines discourse through mental models—subjective representations of personal experiences (including emotional states) and socially shared knowledge systems, such as collective attitudes, norms, values, and ideologies.

As Kostiuk (2013) points out, the interpretation of discourse may vary depending on the research goals, discourse in one case may refer to a specific communicative event, and in another, to an event conceived as an *integrative set* of communicative acts, the outcome of which is a thematic and semantic coherence among multiple texts (p. 77–78).

A shift from examining the systemic and structural aspects of language to exploring its function as a tool of communication is currently seen in the studies of discourse. Belova (2002) observes that "the descriptive systemic and linguistic approach, which previously yielded positive results, now lacks the explanatory power necessary for a comprehensive analysis of dialogue as a product of linguistic activity". According to Bulkina (2013), discourse is realized through a variety of speech genres, which are understood as systemically structured phenomena selected and combined based on communicative appropriateness (p. 43). From a pragmatic perspective, Koroliov (2009, p. 11) posits that a speech genre is defined as the verbal representation of a typical situation of social interaction functioning synonymical with the term communicative situations.

Given this complex and multifaceted nature, discourse can be classified into various types based on different criteria. According to Maslova (2013), discourse types may be broadly divided into personal and institutional, based on the communicative-social criterion. Personal discourse typically involves informal, affective communication between familiar interlocutors, while institutional discourse is shaped by status-based interactions and institutional roles. Supporting this pluralistic approach, Strashevskaya (2015) suggests that discourse should be categorized along three main axes: content, form, and participants. From this perspective, thematic differentiation (e.g., political, religious, scientific), formal structure (formal vs. informal), and the linguistic and numerical characteristics of participants (e.g., monolingual vs. bilingual, monologue vs. dialogue) all contribute to how discourse is understood and analyzed.

Another typology that should be taken into account is one by Pocheptsov who defines newspaper, theater, television and radio, film, discourse in the field of public

relations (PR), advertising, political, religious discourses. Further, Teun van Dijk (2015) considers the following types of discourse from the standpoint of critical discourse analysis: media discourse, political discourse, courtroom discourse, medical discourse, discourse of education and science, corporate text and talk.

Overall, the definition of discourse and its typology reflects the evolution of linguistic science and sociocultural changes, and it is continually enriched by new approaches and variations. This process is unlikely to be ever fully completed because alongside new types of discourse, numerous subtypes continually emerge, and are continuously described and analyzed with researchers choosing the classification principles that are most relevant to the current linguistic paradigm and suited to the requirements of their particular study which leads to conclude that discourse analysis provides a wide space for further research.

1.2. Romantic discourse and its speech genres

Until the second part of the 20th century research on the topic of love expression has remained focused on love definition (Bierhoff, 1991; Lee, 1973; Sternberg, 1986), historical changes in conceptions of love (Badinter, 1986), gender differences in love styles (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Sprecher et al., 1994).

In the linguistic research of Ukrainian scholars romantic discourse has been prominent recently with its individual aspects being studied by Yemelianova (2006) (linguistic expression of the addressee's status within romantic discourse), Ogarkova (2005) (features of lovers' speech based on love letters) and Bulkina (2013, 2014) (characteristics of communicative situations of romantic discourse) (p. 104-113). Additionally, Kyshnir (2005) studied verbal and non-verbal components of communication in romantic interactions proposing typologies of speech tactics used in the communicative situation of a "love declaration".

According to Ogarkova (2005), romantic discourse is a subtype of interpersonal communication between individuals engaged in a romantic relationship, which includes primarily dialogic exchanges. The unique nature of romantic discourse lies in its combination of elements from both personal and socially determined discourses. Romantic discourse contains elements of personalized

discourse as it is marked by the use of lexical expressions that possess symbolic meaning known only to the partners involved, referred to as relationship-specific messages or personal idioms e.g., expressions of affection such as pet names, teasing, insults and nicknames. At the same time, it also has socially determined elements reflecting social or professional status, age, ethnic background and gender roles of interlocutors.

Bulkina (2014, p. 104) points out that the sphere of romantic communication is served by romantic discourse, which is realized through various speech genres, such as marriage proposals, lovers' quarrels and declarations of love. The marriage proposal constitutes a highly ritualized and culturally significant speech genre best described as an *argumentative-ritual genre*, combining persuasive intent with formalized structure. The speaker aims to convince the addressee to accept the proposal of marriage, employing rhetorical strategies that showcase their communicative competence. At the same time, the act is shaped by cultural expectations and follows a recognizable script, typically involving initiation, proposal, response, and resolution. Despite its conventional nature, Bulkina (2014) concludes that the genre allows for variation in expression and structure, but it always centers around the core dialogic exchange: "*Will you marry me?*" – "*Yes/No.*" This makes the proposal both a deeply personal act and a socially regulated communicative event.

According to Bulkina (2013, p. 47), the quarrel of lovers is a speech genre in the romantic discourse which typically arises from a clash of interests between partners manifesting as disharmonious communication aimed at suppressing the other person and establishing dominance. A dialogical communication between romantic partners aims to preserve their romantic connection following 9 main stages: 1. silence, 2. an invitation to talk, 3. denial of any conflict, 4. a repeated call for conversation, 5. verbalization of the conflict, 6. denial of inappropriate behavior or minimization of the triggering issue, 7. renewed and expanded explanation of the conflict or direct accusation, 8. justification or clarification of behavior, 9. reconciliation.

Declaration of love is a communicative situation when the speaker expresses their feelings to their loved one. Batsevych (2006) states that a love declaration is a speech genre that is situationally conditioned and should take into account the extralinguistic context, which includes three dimensions: spatial, socio-psychological, and temporal. Further building on this classification Kosach proposed an analysis of love declaration communication situation based on the theoretical contributions of Dyakonova (2012) and Semenyuk (2010) stating that speakers implement communicative strategies such as "attention gaining" "emotional tuning," and "intimization," and appropriate tactics within above mentioned strategies to achieve their communicative goal.

Research by Ogarkova (2005, p. 176) and Hatalaska (2017, p. 24) concludes that the romantic discourse verbal components depend on the psychological portrait of each participant in such communication, with the concept of **linguistic personality** categorizing different lover types in romantic discourse who use distinct manipulative strategies and tactics. **Ludus lovers** usually employ such manipulative strategies and tactics of seduction, evasion, deliberate use of vagueness, compliments, humor etc. **Manic lovers** often use verbal abuse, shaming language, metaphor, simile, repetition, provoking feelings of guilt, playing the victim role to gain pity, sympathy, or compassion from their victim. Tactics of false modesty, lying, information concealment (giving irrelevant, rambling responses, deliberate use of vagueness and lying by omission) belong to the most common manipulative strategies of **pragmatic lovers**. **Agapic lovers** prefer using guilt tripping and evasion manipulative techniques by using interrogative sentences, tag questions, imperatives. **Romantic lovers** show techniques of flattery and compliments, evasion, demonstration of knowledge and skills to others.

In addition to verbal strategies, non-verbal aspects of communication have been systematically studied by Batsevich (2009), Soloshchuk (2006, 2022), and Selivanova (2006), classifying them into four categories: kinesic, proxemic, prosodic and physiological. According to the study of Sauter (2017), the nonverbal components of communicating love are characterized by low voice intensity, low

pitch, and a slow speech rate, with facial markers like genuine smiles and affiliative body language including head nods, forward leans, and open posture, signaling emotional warmth and connection (pp. 222 - 223). Ogarkova (2005) further states that in love declarations, speakers often try to reduce emotional distance by physical touch (e.g. holding hands) to help create a sense of intimacy in the relationship (p. 55).

Currently, a standardized definition of romantic discourse with a comprehensive characterization and classification of its categories is lacking, which leads to possibilities of research in the area. The verbal and non-verbal components within romantic discourse studies have not been deeply studied, particularly taking into account how these modalities interact and influence each other. Additionally, while manipulative strategies have been categorized, their contextual effectiveness and reception by interlocutors are underexplored.

1.3. Sociolinguistic factors in love declarations

Romantic discourse is a socially determined type of discourse which reflects not only the individual style of the communicants but also shared intuitive and cultural knowledge about love, conventional ways of expressing it, and the extralinguistic elements accompanying romantic communication as suggested by the research of Ogarkova (2005), Skriabina (2011), Kushnir (2005), Kosach (2014), Lakoff (1973, 1975, 2004) and Coates (2015) etc. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms regulate how interactions within romantic discourse are expressed within a given linguocultural context, providing ground to study the sociolinguistic factors of romantic communication such as gender, culture, age and class. In the following subsections, the above-mentioned factors will be discussed in more detail.

1.3.1. Culture

Since the beginning of the 21st century, few linguistic studies directly address the expression of love and its verbalization. In recent years, the conceptualization of emotion as removed from its cultural context has sparked interest of scholars. Notably, Wilkins & Gareis (2006, 2011) and Kline et al. (2008) explored emotion as a type of cultural discourse, highlighting how it is shaped by linguistic, social, cultural,

and historical factors. Furthermore, Lutz (1988) states that emotions like anger, sadness, and love are situated in specific contexts which reflect and negotiate social and cultural realities in communication.

To further illustrate this, the contrast in the expression of love in different cultures can be further understood through Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of individualism with individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands) emphasizing personal autonomy, independence, and individual achievement. Consequently, communication in these cultures tends to be direct, assertive, and focused on expressing personal opinions and desires.

Douglas (1986) also contributed to the study of cultural behavior by proposing a classification system comprising four primary schemas: individuating, institutionalizing, hierarching, and interrelating. With English speakers typically exhibiting an Individuating or Institutionalizing cultural schema, English often employs first-person singular pronouns (I, me, mine). Collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, prioritize group harmony, interdependence, and social responsibility. Communication tends to be indirect, cooperative, and focused on maintaining relationships and avoiding conflict with many East Asian languages reflect Interrelating or Hierarching schema, favoring first-person plural pronouns (we, our, ours) that highlight group membership and collective responsibility (Sizzler, 2016). Empirical evidence supports these distinctions. Kline, Horton, and Zhang (2008) observed that Americans tend to express love through both more physical contact (e.g., hugging) and more direct verbalizations than East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans) (Wilkins & Gareis 2011, p. 217).

Moreover, cultural norms and values shape the concept of love by establishing rules for romantic behavior. According to Cole (2020), these norms are passed down through socialization processes, influencing people from childhood. By observing role models who directly reinforce an individual's behavior, resulting in imitation, people acquire cultural norms about love. Cherry (2023) (source para 2) further supports the idea that the internalization of cultural definitions of love is conducted through cognitive processes of schema formation. According to Wierzbicka (2014),

cultural scripts prescribe socially acceptable ways of expressing and experiencing emotions, including love, providing individuals with a set of guidelines for navigating romantic relationships and communicating their feelings in culturally appropriate ways (p. 339). Complementing this, cultural schema theory explains how cognitive frameworks store and process cultural knowledge, influencing speech acts, courtship, and displays of affection (Sizzler, 2016).

For instance Ogarkova (2005) states that in American culture, the concept of love is that love is perceived in deep connection with concepts of *fear* and *anxiety*, which does reflect the fear of losing a loved one. In contrast, according to Nelson (2021) in South Korean culture, love inherently involves a degree of *self-sacrifice*, where lovers are expected at times to prioritize the well-being and needs of their beloved over their own.

These findings reveal that love declarations vary across cultures, as they are deeply embedded in specific cultural norms and communicative traditions rather than being universally practiced or understood. While existing research has begun to uncover these culturally situated expressions of love, the field remains underdeveloped, with substantial gaps in understanding how love is expressed and interpreted across different relationship types and cultural contexts. Further investigation is needed to explore these variations more comprehensively, particularly in diverse social settings and evolving communication landscapes.

1.3.2. Age

Age as a sociolinguistic factor in declaring love has drawn attention from several linguists, including Sternberg (1986) who proposed a triangular theory of love, which states that the importance individuals place on intimacy, passion, and commitment changes with age, influencing the type of love they are likely to pursue (p. 123-124). Sternberg (1986) offers a framework where romantic relationships are viewed as fundamentally composed of three core components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Younger individuals often place a higher value on physical attractiveness and sexual attraction. As individuals mature, they tend to prioritize

intimacy and commitment over passion, with older individuals further emphasizing loyalty and reliability in their relationship.

In terms of age-related differences in communicating love, Kushnir (2005) drawing on Berne's transactional analysis model, concluded that individuals in Parent or Adult ego-states favor the use of direct communicative tactics while people in Child ego-state tend to use indirect communicative tactics. Kosach (2014) further confirms this idea, stating that when communicating in the situation of high emotional tension, individuals in Adult ego-state are realising direct communicative tactics employing declaratives and imperatives (p. 254).

Soloshchuk (2022) highlights clear age-related differences in the communication of love within pre-marital and marital discourse. The findings reveal that teenagers (13-19 years) tend to exhibit *ludus* and *manic* love, characterized by high emotional intensity and volatility, often using slang and dynamic language. Adults (20-40 years) display a mix of *romantic*, *pragmatic*, and *ludus* love, balancing passion with a growing emphasis on intimacy and commitment, leading to varied communication styles. Older adults (40+ years) primarily exhibit *pragmatic* and *agape* love, prioritizing stability, loyalty, and selflessness, with communication that is more consistent, formal, and nurturing (p. 47-48).

Age as a sociolinguistic factor in love declaration has not yet been deeply researched, with only limited findings, which leaves this field open to explore the influence of age on pragmatics and communicative strategies and tactics of love declarations in both anglophone and cross-cultural studies.

1.3.3. Gender

Gender plays a crucial role in shaping romantic discourse as any romantic communication is inherently gender-marked, typically occurring between a man and a woman and directly influencing the communicative strategies chosen by interlocutors. Skryabina (2011) states that every culture differentiates human behavior according to gender, assigning individuals specific social roles, norms of conduct,

and communication styles, making them adhere to socially constructed expectations based on culturally embedded “gender rules” (p. 54).

Recent sociolinguistic studies view gender as a performative, socially constructed identity rather than a fixed binary, following Judith Butler’s (1990) theory emphasizing that gender is enacted through language and social norms. Wood & Eagly, (2002) suggest women typically express love verbally to build intimacy, while men often show affection through actions. In line with this, Wodak and Benke (2002) advocate a context-sensitive approach separating gender from biological sex, highlighting variability in communication.

A key theoretical contribution to the study of gendered communication is Deborah Tannen’s (1990) “genderlects” theory, which proposes that men and women exhibit distinct conversational styles, with men typically using language to assert status and independence, while women use it to foster connection and intimacy. In addition to theoretical perspectives, empirical research by Wilkins and Gareis (2011) highlights how gendered communication patterns influence expressions of affection suggesting that men are more likely to declare love first in heterosexual relationships (p. 217).

Recent research conducted by Dinata (2023) and Augustina et al. (2024) investigates how gender functions as a sociolinguistic variable in communication. These studies employ Lakoff’s framework, which identifies ten specific linguistic characteristics that are claimed to be typical of female speech patterns and serve to distinguish how women communicate differently from men.

Modern studies by Dinata (2023) and Augustina et al (2024) explore gender as a sociolinguistic factor in communication by using Lakoff’s approach, which offers a set of ten linguistic features associated with “women’s language,” differentiating women’s speech from that of men. They include: the use of lexical hedges or fillers; frequent tag questions; a tendency towards rising intonation on declarative statements; a preference for “empty” adjectives; greater precision in color terminology; the use of intensifiers; adherence to “hypercorrect” grammar; adoption of “super-polite” forms; avoidance of strong swear words; and a marked use of

emphatic stress (p. 2474-2481).

According to Lakoff (2004), male speech tends to be more assertive, concise, and focused on conveying information or solving problems, reflecting a referential function of language. In contrast, female speech is generally more socially and emotionally oriented, often characterized by politeness and expressiveness (Lakoff, 1995). Building on this framework, Augustina et al. (2024) cite Coates (2015), who identifies several features typical of men's language use, including minimal responses "mhm" or "yeah" that serve as backchannels used to assert control, the frequent use of commands and directives in same-sex interactions to mark informality, frequent use of swearing and taboo language to express emotion or solidarity, and a tendency to interrupt more often as a means of asserting dominance (p. 47-58).

While the intersection of gender and love declarations is acknowledged as significant, systematic pragmatic and discourse-analytic studies on this topic remain scarce, highlighting a clear need for further research to unpack how gender shapes the verbal and nonverbal strategies of expressing love across cultures and social contexts.

1.3.4. Class

Class as a sociolinguistic factor shaping the discourse of love declarations hasn't been studied in depth, however, the issue of economic inequality seems relevant since according to the study of Pew Research Center (2020) it not only shapes access to resources but also significantly impacts interpersonal romantic relationships that influences partner selection, expectations in relationships, and communication styles (Emery, 2021, p. 4).

Building on this, Skriabina (2018) points out that romantic discourse, as a form of social practice, studies the role-based and social statuses of relationships between communicators. Social status is defined as a relative (higher/lower) position in the social system determined by the person's gender, age, position in the family and social standing, profession (roles as a husband, lover, boss, colleague, etc.) (p. 58).

Expanding on this perspective, Barrett (2024) explores the work of Basil Bernstein, one of the most influential sociologists studying language variation across classes is Basil Bernstein (1958) who proposed a theory of linguistic codes

originating from the concepts of “public” and “formal language” with public language characterized by its focus on the emotive rather than logical implications of language (p. 164). Bernstein posits that middle-class individuals typically use ‘elaborated’ codes, which are context-independent and explicit, while working-class individuals use ‘restricted’ codes, which are context-dependent and implicit (Hasan, 2002). Restricted language is accessible to both lower, middle and upper classes, but the latter also had access to formal language. According to Bernstein (1958) public language is characterized by its focus on the emotive rather than logical implications of language (p. 164). Bernstein (1959) identified ten attributes of public language: short, simple, and often incomplete sentences with poor syntax; repetitive use of conjunctions; frequent commands and questions; limited use of adjectives and adverbs; infrequent use of impersonal pronouns; statements framed as implicit questions (e.g., “It’s only natural, isn’t it?”); frequent categorical statements (e.g., “Do as I tell you”); frequent idiomatic phrases; low-order symbolism; and much implicit meaning (p. 311). (Littlejohn, 2008) further highlights that working-class individuals tend to use restricted codes, while middle-class and upper-class individuals have access to both restricted and elaborated codes due to their greater geographical, social, and cultural mobility.

Although social class is a prominent sociolinguistic variable influencing discourse, its specific role in shaping the verbal and non-verbal components of communicative situations of love declarations remains underexplored highlighting the need for further interdisciplinary research, particularly through use of pragmatic analysis and critical discourse analysis to have a more comprehensive understanding how socioeconomic status affects romantic love communication.

Conclusions 1

The first chapter of this study has laid a comprehensive theoretical and methodological foundation for the investigation of sociolinguistic elements present in romantic discourse. By situating romantic communication within the broader framework of discourse studies, the chapter has demonstrated that love declaration, as

a communicative act, is not merely a private emotional expression that reflects and constructs social identities, relationships, and values.

This chapter gives ground for analyzing romantic discourse through the lens of speech genres and communicative strategies. Romantic discourse is highly governed by culturally specific conventions and expectations, yet allows for individual variation and creativity. The analysis of these genres also highlights the dialogic nature of romantic discourse, where meaning is co-constructed by interlocutors through both verbal and non-verbal means.

The chapter further emphasizes the role of sociolinguistic variables such as culture, age, gender, and class in shaping the form and function of romantic communication. Cultural norms determine the degree of directness or indirectness in expressing affection, while age influences the prominence of intimacy, passion, or commitment in romantic interactions. Gender, as a performative construct, manifests in distinct linguistic behaviors, with women more likely to use expressive, polite, and affiliative language, and men often favoring assertive, action-oriented, or indirect expressions of love. Class, though less frequently addressed in existing literature, emerges as a significant factor in access to linguistic resources and preferred communicative styles, particularly through Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes.

Furthermore, the chapter draws attention to the multimodal nature of romantic discourse. Non-verbal elements, such as prosody, gesture, facial expression, and physical proximity, are shown to play an important role in the expression and interpretation of romantic intent complementing verbal expressions.

2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECT OF LOVE DECLARATION IN “GILMORE GIRLS” SERIES (2000-2007)

The research adopts a **qualitative** and **descriptive linguistic analysis**. It involves a **discourse analysis** of the selected scenes, using a communicative strategy classification to identify different ways characters deliver love declarations. In addition, **pragmatic analysis** is applied to interpret the contextual and functional aspects of language use, focusing on how lexical choices and situational factors contribute to the construction of meaning in romantic discourse.

Drawing on prior research in romantic discourse, three primary strategies were identified: **attention gaining** realized through **tactics of prompting and provocation, tactic of compliment, tactic of humor**; **strategy of expression of personal feelings realized with persuasive tactic** and **tactic of foregrounding emotional sincerity** and vulnerability, and **strategy of idealization** (realized with the **tactic of emotional reflection**) that characters employ to express love.

The analysis is based on a corpus of dialogues from the show *Gilmore Girls*, selected to represent diverse characters and contexts. Data samples were collected from 48 episodes of “*Gilmore Girls*,” totaling approximately 170 minutes of relevant dialogue. These episodes were carefully chosen to ensure a comprehensive representation of love declaration instances across different age groups and social classes. Only scenes involving romantic interactions between characters of the opposite sex were included (to control for variables in interaction dynamics). Key sociolinguistic elements guiding the analysis are the characters’ age (comparing teenage love confessions versus those by adults) and social class (contrasting declarations made by working-class characters with those made by upper-class characters). Throughout the analysis, specific attention is given to communicative strategies and tactics used and their verbal means of realization.

The study focuses on a range of key characters from “*Gilmore Girls*,” encompassing various ages and social backgrounds. The character sample includes **teenagers** and **adults** across the social classes of **working** and **upper class**. Teenage characters studied include Rory Gilmore, Dean Forester, Jess Mariano, Lane Kim,

Paris Geller, Tristin Dugray, and Jamie. The study also examines adult characters from different social classes. From the working-class context, it looks at characters like Lorelai Gilmore, Luke Danes, Sookie St. James, Jackson Belleville, Kirk Gleason, and Alex Lesman. From the upper-class context, the analysis includes Emily Gilmore, Richard Gilmore, Logan Huntzberger, Jason Styles and Christopher Hayden, who represent affluent backgrounds.

2.1. Love declaration in the communication of teenagers

In our research we are focusing on the communicative strategies and tactics employed by these characters to declare love. We noted that the love was also verbalized through a variety of communicative strategies, such as the strategy of attention gaining, which is realized through the primary tactics of prompting and provocation and tactic of compliments. The **tactic of prompting and provocation** is realized by the use of rhetorical questions and tag questions that invite the interlocutor to affirm their feelings. It is spotted in (1) *Really? After all this – the marathon hymns, the weak punch, the crabby Koreans, you still wanna go out on a date with me?* (Season 3, Episode 9, 34:07), (Season 1 Episode 21, 36:51) (2) *And what was going on at the town meeting, all that stuff about writing a song?* (3) (Season 1 Episode 21, 37:01) *That had nothing to do with me?* (4) *You never called. (...) You lost my number?* (Season 3, Episode 7 (7:54). (5-6) (Season 2, Episode 9, 11:49) “*Oh, Paris, you hurt me. Do you no longer have any need for me at all?* Similarly, tag questions are used in examples (7) (Season 3, Episode 7, 40:26) *He was right, about all of it. Well, wasn't he?*, (8) *I guess we'll just have to pair up on something else then huh?* (Season 1, Episode 13, 8:11).

The tactic of compliment is verbalized in communication of teenagers by the use of **superlatives** and **positive evaluative lexic**. In the examples below we can see the use of the superlative *most amazing* (9) *You were the most amazing boyfriend in the world* (Season 3, Episode 8, 41:02) and the use of positively evaluative lexic particularly through adjectives *cute*, *amazing*, *nice*, *good* and *beautiful* used as a predicative (10) Dean: *You eat cute* (Season 1, Episode 16, 27:10) (11) Dean: *I think that you look amazing* (Season 1 Episode 9, 22:56), (12) Dean: *You look beautiful*

(Season 2, Episode 22, 36:28) and (13) *Rory: You look nice* (Season 2, Episode 22, 36:26), (14) *Tristin: Looks good* (Season 1, Episode 9, 12:32).

The tactic of **foregrounding emotional vulnerability** is realized with the use of verbs that express emotional states particularly the verb of volition *want*. In utterances such as (15) *“I want to be able to actually pick you up, stop the car, and take you out”* and (16) *“I wanna be able to call you, at your house”* (Season 4, Episode 21), the speaker is foregrounding a personal need for relational connection. Further (Season 4, Episode 21, 42:05), (17) *I want to be with you* reflects and (31) *“I figured you'd want to spend some time with me”* (Season 2, Episode 2, 20:43), where the emotional focus shifts to the addressee with the use of modal *would* that functions to soften the assertion framing the speaker's assumption about the addressee's emotional state as tentative or hypothetical, suggesting mutual wish. In example (18) *“I don't want you to go”* (Season 2, Episode 13, 11:17) the speaker expresses vulnerability through the fear of losing the loved one. The verb of emotional state *miss* signals emotional vulnerability and attachment in (19) *I've just missed you...* (Season 2, Episode 2, 34:58) and (20) *Well, then put a name tag on 'cause I miss you.* (Season 2, Episode 16, 26:27). The humorous framing in (20) *put a name tag on* aims to lighten the emotional intensity of the situation.

The communicative **strategy of idealization** is realized with the **tactic of emotional reflection** verbalized using superlatives, causative verbal construction *[you] made me [...]* and positive evaluative adjectives. Superlatives can be traced in examples (21) *She has the prettiest hair* (Season 4, Episode 4, 31:34). Causative construction (22) *You made me so happy. You made me laugh, you made my mother like you* (Season 3, Episode 8, 41:06) which positions the beloved as the agent of emotional transformation. Evaluative adjectives *perfect, good, amazing* can be traced in the following examples elevating the addressee and idealizing them (23-24) *He's sitting in there and he's watching the movie and he's perfect and he smells really good.* (Season 1, Episode 7, 37:50), (25) *He looks amazing.* (Season 1, Episode 8, 9:10), (26) *Rich has this amazing hair* (Season 1, Episode 8, 9:13), (27) *Oh, my God, it's so perfect.* (Season 1, Episode 8, 9:14).

Another example of love declaration can be seen in the use of **strategy of expression of personal feelings**. One of its tactics namely **the tactic of direct love declaration** is verbalized through use of verbs of feelings such as *like* and *love*. Construction with the verbs of feelings *love* and *like* linking the subject *I* to the object *you* are found (28) *I love you* (Season 1, Episode 16, 35:50), (29) *I think... I think I may have loved you* (Season 3, Episode 22, 40:16) which is heavily mitigated by using a repeated hedge *I think* signaling uncertainty and emotional hesitation, softening the impact of the declaration. Additionally, the use of the modal verb *may have* introduces retrospective distancing. Another examples feature verb of feeling *love* (Season 2, Episode 21, 40:25) (30) *No, I love Dean, Dean is my boyfriend and he will always be my boyfriend* intensified by the use of the future tense *he will always be* and adverb of time *always*, a lexeme with a pantemporal meaning. (Season 1, Episode 21, 37:14) and (31) *Because I love you, you idiot* also has the affectionate insult *you idiot* breaks with the norms of hyper-politeness aiming to mask emotional vulnerability and express romantic feelings through mock irritation letting the addressee know the speaker is frustrated with his obliviousness of her love. *Like* is spotted in (32-34) Season 5, Episode 4 (37:52) (32) *I like you, Zach*. (33) *I have liked you for some time now* and (34) *Uh, I thought -- I don't know -- I thought that maybe you liked me* (Season 1, Episode 5, 34:52). In (34) the declaration is softened by the use of hedges *I don't know, I thought*.

The tactic of foregrounding emotional sincerity and vulnerability is verbalized with the lexemes with semantic meaning describing psychophysiological symptoms that can be traced in Season 1, Episode 21 (38:27) (35) *I must have had a stroke or something*, (36) *I am sick, I'm ill, I'm cracked*. with noun *stroke* and adjectives *sick*, *ill*, and *cracked* belonging to the semantic field of psychophysiological symptoms of love's influence that are used to express the speaker's emotional disorientation or shock. Similarly, the love declarations (37) *Because sometimes you have something you need to say but you can't..* (38-39) *...because the words won't come out or you get scared or you feel stupid* (Season 1, Episode 21, 23:57 - 24:01) (40) *I couldn't stop thinking about you* (Season 3,

Episode 7 (8:50–9:04) (43) *Okay, I gotta tell you something. I'm madly in love with you. I can't eat, I can't sleep...* (Season 1, Episode 6, 22:00) feature verbs and adjectives denoting psychophysiological symptoms. The inability to speak (*the words won't come out*), the inability to think clearly (*"I couldn't stop thinking about you"*), insomnia (*can't sleep*), lack of appetite (*can't eat*) and the emotional states (*scared, feel stupid*) reflect the psychosomatic effects of unexpressed love. The semantic field includes highly emotional and evaluative vocabulary such as *scared, stupid*. ...The intensifier *madly* in (40) further amplifies the emotional force of the declaration.

Another tactic used by teenagers to express their love is the **tactic of persuasion** expressed by the use of verbs with the semantic meaning of necessity and certainty. In (Season 4, Episode 21, 42:43) (44-46) *Look, you know we're supposed to be together (...) and you know it, too. I know you do* the cognitive verb *know* appeals to the idea of shared knowledge and its repeated use serves to persuade the addressee that their emotional connection is mutual and undeniable. The verb of cognition is used to stress that (47) *Think how dull your life would be without me* (Season 2 Episode 19, 24:17) to invite the addressee to imagine the hypothetical scenario without the speaker implying that the speaker's love is what gives life excitement and meaning. Season 1, Episode 14 (27:44 - 27:46) (48) *I promise I'll kick anyone's butt who comes near those pearls* uses a promise of an action (*kick anyone's butt*) by means of a mental verb *promise* to persuade the Rory of seriousness of his commitment and emotional investment into their relationship.

The **tactic of emotional reassurance** is verbalized through the lexemes with the meaning of extreme generalization and evaluative adjective *important* to emphasize addressee's importance and reassure them of it. In example (49) *I would never do anything to hurt you*. (Season 2, Episode 13, 11:34) the use of *never* and *anything* emphasizes the speaker's loyalty and care for the addressee. In examples (50-51) *Tomorrow, the whole day is all about you* (Season 2, Episode 16, 10:35) and (52) *If I was going to have anyone over tonight, it definitely would've been you* (Season 2, Episode 16, 30:17). The definite pronoun *whole* emphasizes complete dedication of time and attention, while the indefinite pronoun *anyone* underscores

exclusive emotional preference reinforcing the addressee's importance and centrality in the speaker's emotional world.

Reassuring value and emotional significance by the use of evaluative adjective *unimportant* and negation can be seen in (53) "*But I don't want you to feel unimportant, because believe me, you're not*" (Season 2, Episode 2, 35:32). The adjective "*unimportant*" carries a negative evaluative meaning, implying emotional devaluation. The second clause explains why the speaker doesn't want the addressee to feel that way affirming their value in their lives. In (54) *The only way you could be more important to me is if you had a Kit Kat bar growing out of your head* (Season 2, Episode 2, 35:45) *important* is used in the pseudo-cleft conditional construction ("*the only way... is if...*") which expresses a hypothetical condition and implies that the addressee already holds the highest possible emotional significance, affirming deep affection.

2.2. Love declaration in communication of the working class

Romantic discourse in *Gilmore Girls* offers a space for examining how language reflects both gender and class identities. In this chapter, we are focused on a group of working-class characters of the series, notably Lorelai, Luke, Kirk, Bette, Joe, Sookie, Jackson, Max, and Marty (starting Season 7). These characters are primarily engaged in manual, service-based, or small business professions (e.g. owning a diner, being a farmer, culinary work, teaching at school etc.).

To investigate the love declarations of the working class, we propose to explore the **strategy of attention gaining** which is predominantly realized through the tactic of **prompting and provocation** implemented using rhetorical questions and tag questions: (55) *You know the last time I bought flowers for someone?* Season 4, Episode 22 (37:33) and (56) *Don't you love me?* (Season 6, Episode 22, 37:22). In (57) *You know I love you, right?* (Season 6, Episode 15, 32:23) love is verbalized indirectly using a tag-question inviting the addressee's validation. The use of the cognitive verb "*know*" shifts the focus from speaker's feelings to the addressee's presumed awareness of them, indirectly affirming his love. In Season 3, Episode 11

(24:20 - 24:50) (58) *We always had a good time together, didn't we?* love is verbalized in (58) through the use of *always* an adverb with pantemporal meaning emphasizing the long-term nature and consistency of the emotional bond. A tag question *didn't we?* invites confirmation by seeking mutual acknowledgment of their emotional history.

Following this, we propose to examine another tactic of the strategy of attention gaining, specifically the **tactic of compliment** verbalized using positive evaluative adjectives, superlatives and verbs describing physiological states. In (Season 1, Episode 5, 4:11) (59) *God, I love a man that blushes!*, compliment is grounded in a specific observable physiological trait *blushing*, linking affection to a personal characteristic of a person. A superlative can be traced in (60) (Season 3, Episode 2, 7:25) *By the way, I think you might be the prettiest girl I've ever seen.* (61) *And you are more beautiful than ever* (Season 7, Episode 9, 38:14) employs a positive evaluative adjective, *beautiful*, emphasized by the comparative degree *more ... than ever* and positive evaluative adjective *amazing* (62) *You're an amazing guy* (Season 5, Episode 14, 40:56). In another example a causative construction *you made [X]* the use of a comparative adverb *better* (63) *You always made it [time spent] better* (Season 3, Episode 11, 24:25) highlights the positive transformative force of the object of his love and related feelings and events.

Strategy of expression of personal feelings is realized with the use of the **tactic of direct love declaration, tactic of foregrounding emotional vulnerability** and **tactic of persuasion**. The **tactic of direct love declaration** is verbalized through use of verbs of feelings such as *like* and *love* (64) *I love you* (Season 3, Episode 11, 5:22), (Season 4, Episode 22, 16:07), (65) *I think I love her* characterized by directly declaring his love at the same time softening his statement using a hedge, *I think*. By singing (66) *I will always love you* (Season 7, Episode 20, 36:22), employs adverb with pantemporal meaning *always* and future tense modal *will* reinforces the certainty of her feelings. (67) *Yes, I love Luke* (Season 7, Episode 1, 13:00 - 13:12).

The **tactic of foregrounding emotional vulnerability** is realized with the help of verbs denoting psychophysical condition (68) *My head is spinning* (Season 2,

Episode 22, 26:24). In Season 2, Episode 14, (39:38) (69) *I've always had you in the back of my mind...* the speaker expresses the long-standing and unique nature of their feelings through use of the adverb with pantemporal meaning *always* and a metaphor *to have in the back of my mind*, (Season 7, Episode 1, 13:00 - 13:12) (70) *I need it to be over because I can't take this anymore* as the verb *take* functions here similarly to how one would describe tolerating pain or enduring sickness. In Season 3, Episode 2 (37:10) (71) *Don't you understand that I can't talk to you because it hurts talking to you, really hurts!* (72) *Standing here right now is killing me, okay?* The verb *hurts* is repeated for emphasis, while the hyperbolic phrase *killing me* further draws on the metaphor. The rhetorical question (73) *Don't you understand?* functions both as accusation and plea, emphasizing her desperation and reinforcing her role as a sufferer. Furthermore, the inability to talk signals a kind of paralysis.

The **tactic of persuasion** is verbalized using imperatives and metaphors. This tactic is spotted in Season 5, Episode 3 (21:42) (74) *I just want you to know I'm in. I am all in.* with the use of a metaphor “to be all in” rooted in gambling. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the phrase implies acting “in a way that shows a lot of determination and a willingness to take a big risk in order to achieve something” which conveys risk, trust, and irrevocable decision-making. Season 1, Episode 8 (33:02) (75) *At some point in your life you're gonna have to decide that some guy is worth opening that front door for. Opening the front door is a metaphor that stands for letting someone into your life, heart, and emotional world. The heart (or emotional world) is implicitly a house or container. Opening the front door symbolizes emotional availability or readiness to let love in. The speaker refers to himself as *some guy* who is positioned as a potential occupant or “filler” of that internal/emotional space. (Season 5, Episode 14, 21:13) (79-80) *Please trust me. (80) Let me show you what a great girlfriend I can be. (81) Remember, it's all those little annoying quirks that make me the fascinating woman you fell in love with* (Season 2, Episode 3, 20:29) features use of imperative structures as pleas for emotional connection, seeking validation.*

Humor is one of the **tactics of strategy of emotional tuning** and it is

verbalized using irony, humorous exaggeration, innuendo, teasing re-interpretations. In Season 5, Episode 3 (22:05) (82) *You're just lucky I never clean out my wallet* the speaker ironically downplays the sentimental act of keeping the horoscope, an item tied to their personal romantic past. Similarly, in (83) (Season 3, Episode 12, 8:54) the speaker humorously uses pragmatism treating dating like an investment of *eleven thousand dollars a month*.

(84) *Lorelai: So I'm a cheap date.*

Alex: Well, the tasting is free, but I have to promise to stock my coffee chain from this warehouse, so actually this date is costing me about eleven thousand dollars a month.

Lorelai: Geez, I hope I'm worth it.

Alex: So far, so good.

The statement *So far, so good* is rooted in a cost-benefit evaluation that the date has a measurable, concrete cost that the speaker is willing to pay which metaphorically represents the effort or resources put into the relationship and returns on the investment are implied in the form of emotional or relational satisfaction.

(85) *Lorelai: Just take the card.*

Max: Might frame the card, Season 1, Episode 5 (19:43) where the speaker's joking suggestion that he might frame the card with the number is a humorous exaggeration which communicates affection and a desire to preserve a symbolic connection to the addressee.

(86) *Well, maybe I'll meet a nice girl at your parent's wedding* (Season 5 Episode 12, 40:51). The speaker's sarcastic use of humor aims to mask emotional vulnerability. The joke implies that he's not seriously considering anyone else; he's emotionally invested only in his partner.

2.3. Love declaration in communication of upper class

In the analysis of the love declaration of the upper class our selection of these characters provides a comprehensive representation of upper-class love declarations across different relationship stages and contexts. Emily and Richard Gilmore, as established Hartford society members, demonstrate how long-married couples within

elite circles maintain intimacy. Logan Huntzberger, heir to a media empire, represents upper-class romantic expression. While Rory's class identity is complex—raised in working-class circumstances by her single mother but educated at elite institutions (Chilton, Yale) and possessing Gilmore lineage—her romantic involvement with Logan (starting season 5) marks a significant shift in her socioeconomic positioning. During their relationship, Rory increasingly inhabits upper-class spaces: she lives in Logan's apartment without financial concerns, travels internationally on a whim, and participates in Life and Death Brigade activities. Christopher Hayden comes from the wealthy and socially prominent Hayden's family.

In our research, we have identified the following strategies employed by upper class representatives: **attention gaining** (realized through **tactic of compliment**), **strategy of expression of personal feelings** (realized through **the tactic of direct love declaration** and **tactic of foregrounding emotional vulnerability**) and **strategy of emotional tuning** (realized through the use of **tactic of humor**).

The **tactic of direct love declaration** can be spotted in examples 87-89 (87) *I love you so much* (Season 7, Episode 8 (36:08), employing the intensifier *so* to amplify emotional intensity, (88) *I love you too*. Season 7, Episode 8 (36:10), (89) *Rory... I love you* (Season 6, Episode 11, 32:14).

The upper-class characters employ the **strategy of expression of personal feelings** realized by the use the **tactic of foregrounding emotional vulnerability** using words with the semantic meaning denoting psychophysical condition and rhetorical questions (90) *I'm tired of not being around you* (Season 7, Episode 5, 8:34), in which the adjective *tired* highlights the pain of separation and the desire to be with the loved one (Season 7, Episode 5, 37:27 - 37:44). In (91) *I can't just live in the moment and enjoy the 26 great hours ahead of me?* the verbs *can't live* and *can't enjoy* and negative evaluative adjectives *sulky* and *miserable* (92) *I have to be sulky and miserable while all the other fruit flies share private jokes with my boyfriend?* refer to the words with the semantic meaning denoting psychophysical condition.

The strategy of **emotional tuning** features the use of **tactic of humor**, specifically use of irony. In Season 5, Episode 22, (30:23) (94) *Perhaps it's Marshall,*

the golf instructor unable to wait until after Mellie's party to have you. I know I couldn't the final clause—“*I know I couldn't*”—functions as an innuendo. It implies the speaker's own impatience or desire for addressee, without stating it explicitly. In Season 5, Episode 13 (31:03) (95) *We should separate more often* the irony lies in the fact that after the interlocutor reconciliation, a suggestion to *separate* aims to tease the addressee.

(97) *Emily: You have a six o'clock flight.*

Richard: Six o'clock, are you sure?

Emily: What do you mean, am I sure? Of course I'm sure. I double-checked it three times with your secretary because I know she's an idiot and all three times she told me six o'clock. I wrote it down, I have your ticket right out on the ... You're teasing me (Season 2, Episode 2, 7:28).

In (97) the detailed explanation of the speaker is semantically focused on certainty, competence, and justification. The humor arises from the speaker's overreaction to what turns out to be a joke. The question *Are you sure?* is pragmatically ambiguous which the speaker takes literally, leading to a defensive ranting.

(98) *Emily: Pretend, I'm not here*

Richard: Emily, you have a presence that cannot go unnoticed (Season 5, Episode 11, 26:58). The request to be ignored is inherently ironic—such a statement draws attention rather than deflects it. Emily's response humorously subverts the request by affirming his undeniable presence, using a stative construction (“*have a presence*”) to express admiration.

The **strategy of emotional tuning** is realized with the help of the **tactic of emotional reassurance** is verbalized through the use of indefinite, quantifying, and personal pronouns, which help express emotional commitment, soothe tension or offer comfort. In Season 7, Episode 7, (29:07) (99) *Anything for you. Anything* uses repetition of the indefinite pronoun *anything* to emphasize unconditional support. (100) *Whatever you want, Richard* (Season 4, Episode 16, 41:38) uses indefinite pronoun *whatever* to signal emotional availability and devotion. (Season 7, Episode

3, 39:23) (101) *This is it for me. You're it for me* reinforces emotional finality and commitment through personal pronoun *it*. statement (102) *He's my whole life* (Season 7, Episode 13, 33:22) uses metonymy emphasized by the use of quantifying pronoun *whole* to express. The word “life” stands in for everything that gives her life meaning. In Season 7, Episode 14 (37:54) (103) *Because I trust you completely, and I am not worried about us* the adverb *completely* intensifies the level of trust being communicated, addressing and neutralizing potential relational insecurity, offering a sense of emotional stability and confidence in their relationship.

The **tactic of compliment** is verbalized through positive evaluative adjectives to highlight the beloved's qualities and reinforce admiration. In (104-106) positive evaluative adjectives *beautiful, intelligent, interesting, charming, excellent and cute* can be spotted (Season 7, Episode 8, 35:25) *You are beautiful. You are intelligent. You are incredibly interesting*, with the repeated structure “*You are + [adjective]*” creating a cumulative rhetorical effect, intensifying the emotional impact of the statement with the adverb *incredibly* further amplifying the speaker's admiration. (107) *Just be your charming blister-ignoring self* (Season 7, Episode 8, 30:21) blends a positive evaluative adjective (*charming*) (108) “*You looked cute in that outfit* (Season 2, Episode 14, 17:52), (109) *I think I'm going to be an excellent boyfriend* (Season 5, Episode 19, 07:04).

The **tactic of persuasion** was spotted in the use of verbs with the semantic meaning of necessity and certainty (know, have to, need) (110) *Lorelai and I belong together. Everyone knows it!* (Season 5, Episode 13) (111) *And if I have to wait until we're both 80 years old for you to see it, then I'll wait* (Season 7, Episode 3, 39:20) with the speaker using the future tense and modal verb *have to* and to project unwavering commitment. Similarly (112) *Right now, I don't need to do anything but be right here with you* Season 7, Episode 13 (18:17) features the modal verb *need* expressing emotional necessity and the verbal phrase *be here* reinforcing support.

Conclusions 2

This study investigated love declarations in Gilmore Girls from a sociolinguistic standpoint, focusing on how communicative strategies and tactics are realized across

age groups and social classes. The comparative analysis of communication of teenagers and adults in *Gilmore Girls* reveals significant differences in how each age group employs communicative strategies and tactics in love declarations.

Teenagers predominantly rely on the strategies of attention gaining and idealization, often realized through the use of rhetorical and tag questions which serves not only to prompt a response but also to seek emotional validation. The tactic of compliment is idealized employing superlatives and positive evaluative adjectives e.g. You're the most amazing boyfriend which reflect an idealized and often romanticized view of love.

In contrast, adults employ the strategies of expression of personal feelings and emotional tuning more frequently. The attention-gaining strategy when used is often realised with the tactic of humor. Tactic of compliment among adults is more contextually grounded, frequently tied to shared history or personality traits and quirks the speaker appreciates in their partner, as in You always made it better or You look even more beautiful.

Using the tactic of persuasion among teenagers often involves dramatic appeals hypothetical scenarios, while adults frame persuasion through responsibility, long-term commitment, or rational argumentation. Emotional reassurance and idealization strategies also differ between the two groups with teenagers using extreme generalizations and intensifiers to assert emotional exclusivity, whereas adults relying on modal certainty to establish emotional security. Idealization among teenagers is often expressed through metaphor and evaluative adjectives, projecting love as transformative. Adults, however, do not tend to idealize yet are prone to emotional reflection linked to shared experiences and values.

In terms of linguistic personality types, we identified romantic and manic love styles as predominant among teenage speakers, the working-class typically expressing the mix of manic, romantic, and pragmatic love styles and the upper-class typically exhibiting a mix of agapic, ludic, romantic and manic love styles.

The comparative analysis of love declarations across social classes in *Gilmore Girls* reveals systematic differences in the deployment of communicative strategies

and tactics, which are closely aligned with the speakers' sociolinguistic positioning. Working-class characters predominantly employ the strategies of attention gaining and expression of personal feelings. These strategies are realized through direct and emotionally transparent tactics, such as rhetorical prompting, straightforward compliments, and metaphors grounded in physical or relational experience. For instance, utterances like "Don't you love me?" or "Standing here is killing me" exemplify the use of emotionally charged language that seeks immediate validation or conveys emotional strain through visceral imagery. Compliments in this group are typically simple and grounded in observable traits, such as reflecting a pragmatic and affectively accessible mode of communication.

In contrast, upper-class characters demonstrate a preference for the strategies of emotional tuning and idealization, often realized through irony, rhetorical sophistication, and abstract metaphor. Their use of humor tends to be indirect which maintains emotional distance while signaling affection. Compliments are syntactically elaborate and generally highlight the addressee's qualities. Emotional vulnerability in upper-class discourse is frequently expressed through metaphors which suggest a more introspective and controlled emotional register. These patterns reflect a communicative style that privileges subtlety, abstraction, and rhetorical complexity.

Upper-class characters tend to use irony often masking vulnerability with wit leaning toward more subtle love expressions. In contrast, working-class characters express emotions more directly and are more emotionally transparent, using superlatives, verbs of emotional state, and sensory detail to convey sincerity and affection.

Both social groups engage in direct love declarations; however, their verbal realization diverges significantly. Working-class speakers often soften declarations with hedging, while upper-class declarations are intensified through repetition. Similarly, emotional reassurance is conveyed differently: working-class characters rely on repetition and assertions of loyalty (e.g. "I would never hurt you"), whereas upper-class speakers employ indefinite pronouns and modal constructions to express

emotional absolutes, such as “You’re it for me” or “Anything you want.” These distinctions underscore the influence of class on the stylistic and emotional framing of romantic discourse.

CONCLUSION

The study of romantic discourse plays a crucial role in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, gender studies and cultural linguistics. Studying romantic communication, in particular, offers an opportunity to see how language reflects and shapes social and cultural identities. This thesis set out with the primary aim of exploring the sociolinguistic characteristics of love declarations in the TV series “Gilmore Girls”. More specifically, the study sought to identify and analyze key communicative strategies and tactics, and the influence of social factors such as age and social class on romantic discourse. By examining how love declarations reflect broader societal norms and individual linguistic identities, the study aimed to shed light on the interaction between language, social roles, and cultural norms in shaping expressions of love.

The first chapter established the theoretical foundation for the study, situating romantic discourse within the broader field of discourse studies and identifying it as a socially and culturally embedded communicative genre. It emphasized the role of sociolinguistic variables in shaping the form, function, and verbal realization of romantic communication. The chapter also introduced the classification of communicative strategies and tactics, which served as the analytical framework for the empirical part of the study.

The second chapter applied this framework to the analysis of love declarations in *Gilmore Girls*, identifying three dominant communicative strategies: attention gaining, expression of personal feelings, and idealization. These strategies were realized through specific tactics, such as prompting and provocation, complimenting, humor, direct love declaration, foregrounding emotional vulnerability, persuasion, emotional reassurance, and emotional reflection with distinct linguistic means of verbalization, as summarized in Table 1.

The analysis revealed several significant trends in the expression of love across different social and age groups. Working-class speakers typically employ direct, emotionally charged tactics including explicit declarations, prompting through

rhetorical questions, and self-deprecating humor that acknowledges vulnerability. Upper-class speakers, conversely, demonstrate analytical self-reflection, elaborate compliment structures with multiple modifiers.

Age emerges as a significant sociolinguistic factor influencing the choice of communicative strategies. Teenage characters predominantly employ the strategies of attention gaining and idealization, often realized through rhetorical and tag questions, superlatives, and emotionally charged metaphors. Their declarations were characterized by expressive spontaneity, emotional intensity, and a tendency to conceptualize love as transformative. In contrast, adult characters favored the strategies of expressing personal feelings and emotional tuning, using humor, nuanced compliments, and metaphors of fatigue or internal strain to convey emotional depth and relational commitment.

Class-based differences were equally pronounced with working-class characters primarily employing more direct and emotionally transparent tactics of love declarations using rhetorical prompting, compliments, and metaphors grounded in physical or relational experience. Their declarations were pragmatic and affectively accessible, often softened by hedging. Upper-class characters, by contrast, demonstrated a preference for rhetorical sophistication and abstraction. Their use of irony reflected a communicative style that privileges subtlety. Emotional reassurance and idealization were also expressed differently: working-class speakers emphasized loyalty and physical traits, while upper-class speakers employed indefinite pronouns and enumerative rhetorical structures to convey emotional absolutes and admiration.

The discourse analysis revealed distinct patterns in the expression of love, highlighting the role of language in shaping human relationships. This research contributes to sociolinguistic theory by providing new insights into the communicative strategies and tactics used in love declarations. The study supports the idea that romantic discourse is highly governed by culturally specific conventions and expectations, yet allows for individual variation and creativity. Furthermore, this research extends existing knowledge by examining how love declarations are influenced by social factors such as age and social class. While traditional studies

have focused on the linguistic features of romantic discourse, this study further emphasizes the importance of context and social variables.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study has practical implications for media professionals, language teachers, and those interested in the sociolinguistic aspects of communication. It provides valuable insights into how love declarations can be analyzed and understood within different social contexts.

While the study provides valuable insights into the evolution of love declarations in *Gilmore Girls*, it has several limitations. The research corpus is limited to 48 episodes, providing a substantial dataset but still constrained in scope. Future research could include a more detailed analysis of love declarations across a wider range of media and cultural contexts. Additionally, a more detailed analysis of the specific contexts in which love declarations occur could provide further insights.

In conclusion, this study provides a detailed examination of the sociolinguistic characteristics of love declarations in *Gilmore Girls*, contributing to a broader understanding of how romantic discourse is constructed and negotiated linguistically within different social contexts.

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SUPPORTING MATERIALS

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Strategies and tactics of love declaration of teenagers

Strategy	Tactic	Linguistic means of verbalization
Attention gaining	Prompting and provocation	rhetorical questions, tag questions
Attention gaining	Compliment	superlatives <i>most amazing</i> and positive evaluative lexis <i>cute, amazing, nice, good, beautiful</i>
Idealization	Emotional reflection	superlative <i>prettiest</i> , causative verbal construction <i>[you] made me [..]</i> , positive evaluative adjectives <i>perfect, good, amazing</i>
Emotional tuning	Humor	humorous exaggeration
Emotional tuning	Emotional reassurance	lexemes with the meaning of extreme generalization and evaluative adjective <i>important</i> , definite pronoun <i>whole</i> , indefinite pronoun <i>anyone</i>
Expression of personal feelings	Persuasion	verbs with the semantic meaning of necessity and certainty <i>know, have to, need</i>
Expression of personal feelings	Foregrounding emotional sincerity and vulnerability	lexemes with semantic meaning describing psychophysiological symptoms

Expression of personal feelings	Direct love declaration	verbs of feelings <i>love</i> and <i>like</i> , adverb <i>always</i> , a lexeme with a pantemporal meaning
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Table 2. Strategies and tactics of love declaration of working class

Strategy	Tactic	Linguistic means of verbalization
Attention gaining	Prompting and provocation	rhetorical questions, tag questions, cognitive verb “ <i>know</i> ”, <i>always</i> adverb with pantemporal meaning
Attention gaining	Compliment	superlatives, positive evaluative adjectives, verbs describing physiological states
Idealization	Emotional reflection	superlatives, causative verbal construction [<i>you</i>] <i>made me</i> [..], positive evaluative adjectives
Emotional tuning	Humor	irony, humorous exaggeration, innuendo, teasing re-interpretations
Emotional tuning	Emotional reassurance	absolute adjectives, indefinite, quantifying, and personal pronouns, lexemes with the meaning of extreme generalization, evaluative adjective <i>important</i>

Expression of personal feelings	Persuasion	verbs with the semantic meaning of necessity and certainty <i>know, have to, need</i>
Expression of personal feelings	Foregrounding emotional sincerity and vulnerability	lexemes with semantic meaning describing psychophysiological symptoms
Expression of personal feelings	Direct love declaration	verbs of feelings <i>love and like</i> , adverb with pantemporal meaning <i>always</i>

Table 3. Strategies and tactics of love declaration of upper class

Strategy	Tactic	Linguistic means of verbalization
Attention gaining	Prompting and provocation	rhetorical questions, tag questions
Attention gaining	Compliment	positive evaluative adjectives <i>beautiful, intelligent, interesting, charming, excellent and cute</i>
Emotional tuning	Humor	irony, humorous exaggeration, innuendo, teasing re-interpretations
Emotional tuning	Emotional reassurance	indefinite pronouns <i>anything</i> and <i>whatever</i> , quantifying pronoun <i>whole</i>
Expression of personal	Persuasion	verbs with the semantic meaning

feelings		of necessity and certainty <i>know, have to, need</i>
Expression of personal feelings	Foregrounding emotional sincerity and vulnerability	lexemes with semantic meaning describing psychophysiological symptoms
Expression of personal feelings	Direct love declaration	verbs of feelings <i>love and like</i>

SUMMARY

Любов — це багатогранний соціокультурний феномен, який формує культурні цінності, поведінкові моделі та комунікативні практики. Упродовж століть кохання було предметом осмислення в літературі, мистецтві, релігії, філософії та науці, що свідчить про його багатовимірність і значущість для людського буття.

З лінгвістичної точки зору, вивчення освідчення в коханні зумовлене тим, що культура любові тісно пов'язана із словесним вираженням. Вербальні прояви кохання відображають не лише індивідуальні емоції, а й соціальні норми, культурні коди та гендерні ролі. Комунікативні ситуації, що є частиною романтичного дискурсу, варіюються залежно від контексту та інтенції мовця. Її вивчення дозволяє глибше зрозуміти, як мова відображає і водночас формує емоційний досвід людини, а також як через мовлення реалізуються соціальні очікування та культурні сценарії.

Об'єктом нашого дослідження є вибірка з 48 епізодів американського серіалу *«Дівчата Гілмор»*, де присутні освідчення в коханні. Метою нашого дослідження є виявлення комунікативних стратегій і тактик, а також типових мовних засобів, що використовуються у висловлюваннях про кохання в серіалі, з урахуванням вікових та соціальних характеристик персонажів. Дослідження ґрунтується на теоретичних засадах сучасної соціолінгвістики (Робін Лакофф, Дебора Таннен, Джудіт Батлер) та аналізі романтичного дискурсу (Ганна Огаркова) і комунікативних тактик флірту (Ірина Дьяконова), зокрема з урахуванням впливу віку і соціального статусу на мовні стратегії, що використовуються у освідченні в коханні.

На лексико-прагматичному рівні проаналізовано 112 прикладів вербалізації освідчення в коханні. За допомогою дискурсивного та прагматичного аналізу епізодів серіалу було виявлено ключові комунікативні стратегії: привернення уваги, ідеалізація, емоційна відкритість, та вираження особистих почуттів.

Що стосується тактик їх реалізації, нам вдалося виокремити спонукально-провокаційну тактику, що вербалізується з використанням риторичних та розділових питань, спонукають співрозмовника до емоційної залученості та закриття потреби у валідації почуттів мовця. Ще однією тактикою цієї стратегії є тактика компліменту, що проявляється у використанні суперлативів (e.g. *most amazing, the prettiest*), позитивно-оцінних прикметників (e.g. *beautiful, nice, amazing, good*), та дієслів, що описують психофізіологічні реакції (безсоння, відсутність апетиту та ін.) (e.g. *blushes, can't sleep, can't eat*).

Стратегія вираження власних почуттів включає тактики безпосереднього освідчення в коханні, що характеризуються вживанням дієслів на позначення емоцій (*love, like*) у поєднанні з хеджуванням та модальними дієсловами, що виражають непевненість (*I think I may have loved you*). У межах цієї стратегії також реалізується тактика емоційної щирості та вразливості, яка виражається через лексеми, що позначають наявність психофізіологічних реакцій *I can't eat, I can't sleep, couldn't think*, метафорично передаючи емоційне напруження. Тактика переконання реалізується за допомогою дієслів зі значенням необхідності та впевненості (*know, have to, need to*), що підкреслюють неминучість та раціональність романтичного зв'язку.

Стратегія ідеалізації реалізується переважно через тактику емоційного рефлексування, яка формує образ коханої людини, яка формує образ коханої людини як ідеального, надзвичайно значущого та піднесеного об'єкта почуттів, що уособлює найвищі моральні чи емоційні якості. Мовні засоби, що використовуються для того, аби це досягти складаються з суперлативів, каузативних конструкцій (*You made me [X]*) та позитивно-оцінних прикметників (*perfect, amazing, good*), що підсилюють ідеалізацію коханого.

Стратегія “емоційного тюнінгу” включає тактики гумору та емоційної розради, які регулюють емоційну інтенсивність освідчення в коханні. Тактика гумору реалізується через іронію, перебільшення або жартівливі переосмислення, що дозволяє приховувати емоційну вразливість або знімати напругу, зберігаючи емоційний контакт. Тактика емоційної розради виражається

через прикметники на позначення абсолютної ознаки *whole*, невизначені та кількісні займенники *whatever, anything* а також слова з значенням граничної узагальненості *anything*, які підтверджують прихильність мовця та забезпечують адресатові емоційну безпеку.

Порівняльний аналіз зізнань у коханні в серіалі *Gilmore Girls* виявив систематичні відмінності між персонажами робітничого та вищого класів у використанні комунікативних стратегій і тактик. Персонажі робітничого класу переважно використовують стратегії “завоювання уваги” та вираження особистих почуттів, що реалізуються з використанням риторичних запитань, компліментів та метафор. Натомість івищого класу надають перевагу стратегіям “емоційного тюнінгу” та ідеалізації, які реалізуються через іронію, риторичні питання та вживання метафор.

Наше дослідження демонструє, що зізнання в коханні є складним соціолінгвістичним явищем, яке формується під впливом віку та соціального класу. Це дослідження поглиблює розуміння того, як любов вербалізується у романтичному дискурсі, і відкриває нові можливості для міждисциплінарного аналізу романтичного дискурсу.

Попри репрезентативність корпусу, дослідження обмежується одним телевізійним серіалом і зосереджується виключно на діалогах, де фігурують представники різних гендерів. Подальші дослідження можуть розширити обсяг аналізу, включивши ширший спектр медіатекстів, культурних контекстів і типів стосунків. Перспективним напрямом є також вивчення ролі невербальних елементів у освідченні у коханні.