

**FAMILY FURY:  
ARGUMENTS THE GILMORE STYLE**

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Pragmatiikan ja keskusteluanalyysin avulla voidaan tutkia luonnollisesti ilmeneviä kommunikaatiotilanteita ja tulkita puhujien todellisia tarkoituksia heidän sanojensa takana. Tutkimusta on tehty viime vuosina jossain määrin myös ei-luonnollisten, kuten televisiosarjoissa ilmenevien kommunikaatiotilanteiden parissa. Television tutkiminen ilmiönä on mielenkiintoinen, sillä television merkitys ihmisten elämässä on nykyään suurempi kuin ennen.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma keskittyy tutkimaan perheensisäisiä konfliktitilanteita Gilmoren tytöt -televisiosarjassa. Teoreettisena taustana on käytetty pragmatiikkaa, keskusteluanalyysia sekä Paul Gricen yhteistyön periaatetta sekä maksimeja. Tutkielmaa varten Gilmoren tytöt -sarjasta valittiin ensimmäisen kauden kolme ensimmäistä jaksoa ja näistä kerättiin tutkimukselle keskeisiä konfliktitilanteita. Dialogit on avattu ja niissä esiintyviä konflikteja on analysoitu pragmatiikan ja keskusteluanalyysin avulla. Tärkeimpinä taustateorioina ovat olleet Paul Gricen yhteistyön periaate (cooperative principle) sekä keskustelumaksiimit. Konfliktitilanteiden analysoinnin apuna on myös käytetty Keiko Ikedan artikkelia, jossa käsiteltiin konfliktitilanteiden syntyä, jatkumista ja lopulta niiden sammuttamista.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että Gilmoren tytöt -sarjasta kerätyn aineiston perusteella henkilöhahmot käyttävät toisiinsa nähden niin erilaisia kommunikointityylejä, että väärinymmärryksiä ja konflikteja esiintyy liki aina, kun keskeiset henkilöhahmot ovat läsnä. Tilanteissa esiintyy esimerkiksi huumoria, ironiaa ja sarkasmia. Oma osansa on myös nonverbaalilla ja kehollisella viestinnällä. Gricen yhteistyön periaatetta ja keskustelumaksiimeja rikotaan usein. Tutkimuksessa korostuivat hahmojen keskinäiset suhteet, vanhat jännitteet ja pitkään jatkuneet kiistat.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Human communication is often more complex than it is thought to be. It is not just about speaking and hearing, but also about finding deeper meanings and then understanding those meanings. Pragmatics is a field of study that digs deeper into the world of speaker meaning; what is said and what is meant by it. Interaction in everyday life is a rather simple thing but when family relations get added into the picture, things can get complicated. First, relationships between family members can be difficult, stormy or complicated in other ways. Second, family members usually know each other well enough to be able to hide deeper, personal meanings into utterances that might not seem offensive at all to an outsider.

Families come in many forms and sizes. There are families with two moms or two dads, adoptive families, families that have been combined from two separate families. Some families have rather close relationships and share a lot with each other. Quite oppositely, there are also families that are not as emotionally connected, and they might even seem distant and cold towards each other. As every person has their own unique way of interacting and communicating, it is rather interesting to study how family members interact with each other, what kind of issues they talk about with each other and to what extent do they talk about their very personal life instead of settling for the basic "how was your day?" kind of interaction.

The aim of this present study is to study family communication in conflict situations and to review the communicative styles of family members represented in the television series *Gilmore Girls*. This television series is known for its quick-paced dialogues,

tight family and friend relationships and witty humor which is often used to deal with rather rough issues as well.

Tuire Oittinen conducted a study on *Gilmore Girls* in 2010. Oittinen's thesis focused on the face-threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness theories that appeared in the above mentioned television series. FTAs and politeness are quite naturally involved in my study also, although they can be considered to be the little things constructing the whole issue of communication, speaker meanings and conflicts.

Merja Hassinen conducted a Master's Thesis on post-traumatic stress syndrome on fictional television series *Grey's Anatomy* in 2014 in which Hassinen studied the presentation of real life situations in fictional television. Fictional television has become more and more popular and that alone is an excellent reason to study it further. In her thesis Hassinen pointed out that current phenomena and topics can be projected through fiction and I find this a valuable aspect in my thesis as well. Recording naturally occurring family conflicts would be near impossible if a set of cameras and microphones were present. A fictional television series brings us closer to the study of family communication and conflict situations.

The present study was conducted by finding episodes of the *Gilmore Girls* that included family interaction between the main characters, Lorelai and Rory, and Lorelai's parents, Emily and Richard. Interaction between Lorelai and her mother Emily is oftentimes rather cutting and especially Emily quite often fails to understand Lorelai's jokes and witty expressions when she attempts to soften things up and make the atmosphere a little more relaxed thus trying to avoid conflicts. Emily's failure to understand these attempts usually leads into the conflicts that Lorelai was trying to avoid in the first place. This study analyses the three first episodes of the first season of the series. There are a lot of conflict situations in the first season and for the purpose of narrowing down the material I have chosen to use only the first three episodes. These

episodes and the dialogues in them are studied through discursive pragmatics in order to find deeper meanings in ongoing conflicts.

Even though the situations in *Gilmore Girls* are not actually authentic family situations as it is a television series with a clear script, the situations are similar to those that can happen in any real-life family. An important point is that in a television series there is a long thought process behind every line. This is not the case in authentic, live conversations in which thoughts and opinions are usually uttered in the spur of the moment. Although, as will be pointed out later on in section 2.2., the fictional dialogue in television has become more and more real-life like.

In section 2, the theoretical background is introduced as well as the criteria through which the dialogues and conflicts are analyzed. In section 3, the research questions and methods of analysis are introduced, as well as the tv series itself. The fourth section is for the transcripts and analysis of the three chosen episodes. Finally, in the fifth section the findings of this study are discussed.

## **2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The field of study mainly used in this thesis is pragmatics. Pragmatics can be seen from several different points of view. As for some, pragmatics is a wide study of all uses of language, to others it is a specific way of studying communication. One can go even deeper and see pragmatics as a way of studying communication and its true functions; what is being said and what is being meant by the uttered words are often two amazingly different things (Allott 2010: 1).

### **2.1 Pragmatics in a nutshell**

Pragmatics was not always as popular or well-known as it is for the linguistics of today. Meaning was seen as too messy of a business to ever be taken seriously as it did not have strict rules or a clear structure to explain it. However, after the 1960's it has been understood that in order to properly understand language, one must understand pragmatics, i.e., the use of language in communicative situations (Leech 1983: 1). Most of the change happened in the USA, within the mainstream American linguistics, but other thinkers had it coming too.

Even the leading pragmatics theorists often consider pragmatics as a multidimensional tool of interpreting communication. Deirdre Wilson (as cited in Allott 2010: 1) would divide pragmatics into three different approaches. Firstly, pragmatics can be

seen as a part of the field of philosophy. The basic question of what one says and what one truly means by what they have just uttered needs an answer. Secondly, the linguistic approach is to see pragmatics as a way of analyzing sentence meaning, context and the relationship between these two and also to create codes that help analyze the said relationship. The third and last approach, which could alternatively make pragmatics a part of cognitive science, is the one that is probably the most important considering the topic of this study. Wilson describes it as "an attempt at a psychologically realistic account of human communication." This is in fact the core point of this study, to analyze the human communication.

According to Leech (1983) communication can be considered as a set of problem solving. The speaker has a problem of wanting to say something to the hearer. How can the speaker say what they wanted to say in order to raise the wanted reaction and to be sure that the one listening has understood the message the speaker is trying to send? Vice versa, the hearer needs to go through a problem of what did the speaker say and *what was meant by it, what did he want me to understand about it*. From this the conclusion can be drawn that pragmatics is goal-oriented and evaluative, i.e., the speaker has an aim of communicating a want by using "good communicative behavior" (Leech 1983: xi), this being the fact separating pragmatics from grammar.

Concepts that are used for analyzing the conflict situations in this study were mostly introduced by Paul Grice who is considered as one of the founding fathers of pragmatics. An aspect that is relevant to this study is Grice's Cooperative Principle and the maxims of conversation. According to Grice, there is a or at least should be a mutual understanding of using language in a communication situation "with maximum efficiency and effectively to achieve rational interaction in communication" (Huang 2015: 29). In short, people should strive to be cooperative in their communication. Grice divided his cooperative principle into four categories of conversational maxims: the maxim of *quality* which implies that one must be truthful and honest, also including not saying things one is not sure whether they are true or not; the maxim of

*quantity* where one should stick to the amount of information that is actually needed, not more, not less; the maxim of *relation* which requires the speaker to be relevant and not wander off to matters that are not discussed at the moment; and the maxim of *manner* which includes matters such as trying to avoid talking about insignificant issues, to avoid prolonging their utterances for too long and in short, striving for clarity (Huang 2015: 29-30). These maxims can be violated and that is a reoccurring happening in the dialogues that have been analyzed for this study. Using humor, for example is a violation of Grice's maxims as it is not considered to be an effective way of communicating (Zienkovski, Östman and Verschueren 2011: 139).

Allott (2010: 2-9) also introduces six main concepts inspired by Paul Grice, and they are *implicatures, figures of speech and loose use, reference assignment and disambiguation, speech acts and illocutionary force, presupposition and intentions and communication*. Allott begins by explaining that "an *implicature* is an implication that the speaker intended to convey". The usual data in pragmatics is the kind where the speaker makes an utterance and the meaning of it is actually more than what the words portray or perhaps even something completely different. Implicature is not a cold, logical analysis of the lexical meaning of the uttered words but a full review of the context, the entire situation at hand and the fashion in which an utterance was made. Allott (2010:2) provided an example of a dialogue in which A is asking a simple "yes or no" question and B's response to it does not seem to answer it at all.

(1)

A: Would you like a haircut?

B: I had one yesterday.

Here, if we look at the written words only, one might say B has not given a proper answer. It is necessary to look deeper into what B wants to *imply* with their response and that B wants A to understand from it. In this case, B had had their hair cut the day before, therefore not needing one today. B is implicating that there is no need for a haircut but is doing it without actually using those exact words.

*Figures of speech* can be for example irony, metaphors, understatements or hyperboles, and these can be used to distinguish word meaning and the actual meaning of an utterance. In Allott (2010:3) an example is provided as follows.

(2)

“The best thing about you is that you are always on time.”

This can be seen as a compliment but in a situation where a person has a bad habit of being late and has yet again kept someone waiting for them this utterance can be considered to be ironic and to criticize the person for always being late. The situation, the context seems to be the judge of how an utterance is to be analyzed and whether it should be considered to be irony, a metaphor, an understatement or exaggeration (hyperbole). An example of understatement and hyperbole is also given by Allott.

(3)

“I am a bit hungry,” by someone who has not had a bite to eat in days.

“I’m starving,” by someone who just had lunch a couple of hours ago.

It can be seen from the context that these are figures of speech and the first one implies an understatement whereas the latter is quite clearly a hyperbole. A conclusion from this can be drawn that sometimes more is implied than is actually said and sometimes more is said than is to be implied.

*Loose use* refers to a similar phenomenon. A person might utter something very precise, but the utterance will automatically be understood to be an estimate and less accurate. Speed limits are a great example as one might announce their speed in full tens (driving 30, 40 or 50 miles per hour) yet no one actually thinks they have been driving *exactly* that speed but rather a speed slightly under or over the announced speed.

*Reference assignment and disambiguation* have one thing in common. Without context the lexical or linguistic meaning of words in an utterance is of no use. In everyday life

words with vague meanings are used regularly. These can be words like 'she', 'they', 'here', 'there', 'this' and 'that', and these words underspecify the meaning of an utterance unless a clear context is given. Therefore, if the *indexical* words have no assigned reference, (i.e. no context) the following phrase leaves a hearer with nothing but questions.

(4)

"I saw him standing there a while ago."

Without *reference assignment* the hearer has no idea of the actual time, location or the person the speaker is talking about.

*Ambiguity* means that an utterance has one or more meanings, depending on the context (Allott, 2010:20). *Disambiguation* happens only if the hearer has all the information and the exact context to understand the correct meaning of an utterance.

The same utterance can work in many ways and imply for example, a statement, a promise, a prediction or, if intonation is added to the picture, even a question. These are called *speech acts*. The *illocutionary force*, i.e. the meaning of a speech act is on the hearer's responsibility to figure out from the context.

*Presupposition* is a state in which the speaker "presupposes" certain truths and implies them in their utterance. In example (5) the speaker seems to know that the hearer has ordered something through the mail and has possibly been very eagerly waiting for it.

(5)

"Has your package arrived yet?"

In presupposition the speaker implies they have more knowledge than their words might convey, and also expects the hearer to acknowledge and understand their supposed knowledge. Related to this phenomenon is *accommodation* in which the speaker

provides the necessary info in their utterance as if the hearer already knew about it (Allott, 2010:18).

Finally, to completely move further away from the linguistic (or semantic) meaning of words it is necessary to remember that communication can also happen entirely without words. In a situation where talking out loud is not possible for one reason or another it is still possible to interact. If a silent speech act is meant to be communicative (i.e. more than a simple shake of the head for “no” or other simple, well-known signs), it can be counted as an utterance. The addresser and the addressee both have communicational *intentions* they want the other to understand and perhaps even act upon.

As the dialogue in *Gilmore Girls* is very fast-paced and relies heavily on inside jokes and cultural references I fully expect to find conflicts happen for the mere reason of the hearer not understanding the context and therefore misunderstanding the entire utterance. From these principles Allott has introduced, especially implicatures and figures of speech were found in most of the conflict situations. I had expected to find more loose use but it turned out to be not as common. Considering Grice’s maxims, mostly maxims of relation and quantity were violated but at times the maxims overlapped and more than one maxim was violated at a time.

### **2.1.1 Fictional pragmatics and pragmatics on television**

Words are interpreted by their context and there can be several contexts happening at once, which can often be the case in fiction (Adams 1985:39). Interpretations may and often do vary depending on how the reader or viewer analyzes the context from their point of view. Therefore, it is vital for the writer of the text (be it a book or a television series script) to understand that utterances are context-dependent. This would mean that time, place and the participants need to be carefully considered to

make the context as unambiguous and understandable as possible for the reader or viewer of the text.

As it is mentioned earlier, the key elements of pragmatics are the utterance, the addresser and the addressee, and the context. Adams (1985:2) introduces the interesting question of what happens to all of these key elements when they become fictional. It is fascinating to understand if something (or anything) changes in the sense of analyzing if the people, the utterances and the time and people are fictional. Adams (1985:2-6) discusses if it is possible to refer to fictional characters in the first place. A few thinkers seem to have portrayed an idea that a fictional character cannot be referred to in a real-life context because they simply do not exist. This would mean that a real-life person would not be able to talk about a fictional giant eating minced unicorn meat due to the fact that giants and unicorns do not exist. However, if the context were related to the fictional world and this was established to all participants, it would be acceptable to talk about such characters (Adams 1985:2-3). Adams criticized this style of thinking by pointing out that in all these examples the fictional characters were actually used in a real-life context, thus making the original thinkers break their own rules. In modern-day life fictional characters are all around us and even the most impossible fantasy figures are discussed in a manner which could make one think they truly exist. They are brought to life through the feelings and emotions depicted in books, movies and television series. Fictional characters do not exist in the real world, however they are true to many people through movies, television series, books and other media. For many people these characters have come to life. As Hassinen (2014) discusses in her thesis, today's fiction can help people relate to the fictional world and have a feeling of peer support and help them find comfort and a sense of belonging even. The difference between fiction and nonfiction is in the discourse (Adams, 1985:7). A fictional character, like Lorelai Gilmore in *Gilmore Girls* exists through her story in the earlier mentioned television series and if information about her is needed, one must look into her storyline. This results in a discourse relationship between the viewer and the character called Lorelai. On the other hand, a nonfictional person, like

Lauren Graham who plays Lorelai Gilmore exists through non discourse and a similar discourse relationship cannot be formed with her as it can be formed with Lorelai.

### 2.1.2 Discursive pragmatics

In this study the conflict talk in the tv series is studied as discourse from the pragmatic point of view and discursive pragmatics can be seen as a platform for the pragmatic study of such discourse. There is a consensus in the field that it is challenging to find a clear definition for both pragmatics and discourse and thus it may seem necessary to bring in the term *discursive pragmatics* which contains two of the vaguest fields in the area of linguistic studies (Zienkovski, Östman and Verschueren 2011: 1). As I consider my thesis to involve textual aspects as the television series is in fact a written script acted out into spoken communication, Robert de Beaugrande's article on the evolution of text linguistics was interesting. Even more interesting is how text linguistics has evolved from rather strict grammatical aspects into a more communicative production and reception of texts. De Beaugrande states in Zienkovski et al. (2011: 294) that pragmatics can be seen as "*a 'critical' view of communication as an ongoing interaction whereby the significance of situation (real or hypothetical) is being negotiated, speaking turns are assigned and relations of power or solidarity are enacted*". Here de Beaugrande points out how the communication situations can also be hypothetical and perhaps a scripted conflict situation in a television series can be considered to be a hypothetical one. Communication is also seen as an ongoing process and in the episodes of Gilmore Girls the ongoing conflicts can be seen quite clearly as the following chapters show.

The reason I have wanted to use discursive pragmatics is the fact that pragmatics alone might not be enough when looking at larger stretches of material. For pragmatics, rather short pieces of utterance or interaction are adequate for studying them but for discourse longer pieces of texts, or in my case interaction, is needed (Zienkovski et al.

2011: 2). Both basic pragmatics and discourse pragmatics hold an outstanding importance in this present study where sometimes the smallest utterances play the largest role and longer stretches of speech require more attention in order to understand the bigger picture, the whole. In their article on conversation analysis Rebecca Clift, Paul Drew and Ian Hutchby (in D'hondt, Östman and Verschueren, 2009) discuss how conversation analysis focuses on not only the verbal, lexical part of human communication but also on non-lexical utterances (such as *uh huh*, *mm* and for example laughter) and non-verbal gestures and actions (D'hondt et al. 2009: 42-43). This is an important aspect considering the topic of this thesis. The communication situations and the conflicts need to be seen as a whole, considering all factors surrounding the conflict situations.

## 2.2 Television studies

Pennycook (as cited in Bednarek 2010: 7) states that instead of dismissing popular culture like television as nothing interesting it should be taken more seriously and more research should be done on it due to the fact that "there are social, cultural, political, aesthetic, philosophical and educational grounds for seeing popular culture in more complex terms". Bednarek (2010:10) and Fiske and Hartley (2003:17) both point out that fictional television is watched by millions and millions of people every single day. It is safe to say that fictional television can affect a considerably large number of people around the world. What strikes as important is the fact that even though television has been accused of all things negative, at the same time it serves as a common platform for a large number of people in all walks of life and regardless of their social or economic status (Fiske and Hartley 2003:25). A television audience can create a community around a television series and this sort of television culture is becoming increasingly social. Television series are not alive only on television screens anymore, but they are the center of discussion even at dinner tables and on office coffee breaks (Bednarek 2010:8, Fiske and Hartley 2003:17). One of the important reasons to study popular culture and fictional television especially is the fact that the language used in

television series provides an opportunity for non-English speakers to use these television series as a source of everyday English use (Bednarek 2010:10). Also, the language used in fictional television is the one non-English speakers can adopt from and copy to their own language use. Bednarek continues by citing Coupland (2007) that it is not only the non-native English speakers who adopt the language used in fictional television but also the native speakers who adopt words from television series to their everyday use of language. With this in mind, it is rather safe to say that if fictional television can have such an influence on people around the world, it most certainly should be studied more thoroughly.

What has to be considered when analyzing television is the fact that television 'text' cannot be analyzed in a similar manner as literary texts (Fiske and Hartley 2003:26). The difference between literary and television discourse is quite obvious as the 'language' of literacy is written whereas television language has a clear resemblance with speech. By forcing literate mode into non-literate mode is simply not going to work. Fiske and Hartley have summarized it rather fittingly:

Certainly; and it is television's familiarity, its centrality to our culture, that makes it so important, so fascinating, and so difficult to analyze. It is rather like the language we speak: taken for granted, but both complex and vital to an understanding of the way human beings have created their world. Indeed, the resemblance of television discourse to spoken language explains our interest in the communicative role played by television in society. (Fiske and Hartley 2003:26-27)

In addition to the argumentation of Fiske and Hartley (2003), Bednarek (2010) studies the difference between television dialogue and the "naturally occurring" dialogue. Bednarek states it is about time to start paying more attention to television dialogue and not just news broadcasts and reality TV shows but also the fictional television. The statement that characters imply a certain identity through their dialogue is fascinating and brings out the fact that there might not be such a big difference between fictional and real-life dialogue after all. At least it could be said that fictional dialogue is increasingly trying to appear real-life like.

## 2.3 Conflict talk and arguments

As conflicts in family situations are the main focus of this thesis, it is necessary to look more into the facts and different aspects of arguments and conflict talk. According to the Merriam-Webster collegiate online dictionary, one way to describe a conflict is to say it is “ the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction”. It is not easy to find one ultimate term to be used of conflict talk. The problems of conceptualizing conflict talk are discussed in an article by Santoi Leung (2002). In their article Leung states there are multiple different terms to be used, such as dispute, disagreement and argument. Leung concentrates on using *conflict talk*. Arguments are to be seen as speech acts that are not always negative and that occur between two or more people (Leung 2002:2). The definition of an argument was discussed and it was established that a single act of disagreement cannot be considered as a conflict or an argument because sometimes people can agree to disagree. What makes a disagreement an argument is the continuation of disagreements (Leung 2002:2-3). Leung discusses how conflict talk consists of turn taking in the conversation and how a conflict is not always only a negative occurrence but it can also be considered as interactive cooperation. The participants need to listen to each other in order to create countering speech acts.

The initiation of an argument seems to derive from an opposition (Leung 2002: 5) which can be considered to be a response to something that was said or, for example, a request for the other person to take some sort of action (instead of something else).

In their article, Keiko Ikeda (2008) talks about arguments and their points are considered valuable in this study. Ikeda studies the situations that lead to arguments, how the arguments are kept going and finally, how arguments are ceased. The terms that Ikeda uses are *argument*, *dispute* and *conflict talk*. Let us first look at what could lead to an argument. According to Ikeda (2008: 3) *complaints versus opposition* is one of the reasons. For example, A is complaining about something B did and B is opposing to

those complaints. This way B is denying A's complaints. The same goes for *accusations and opposition*. For both of these situations, B can either deny the truth value or if they decide to accept the complaints/accusations, they still state how it somehow was not their fault. There are also the cases of *disagreement* and *counterclaims*. In cases of disagreement there can also be partial disagreement where A accepts parts of B's points of view by using an utterance like "Yes, but..." This can be considered as "weak agreement" (Ikeda 2008: 3). Counterclaims are quite self-explanatory and can be found in the dialogues in this thesis as the characters try to counter each other's claims in an attempt to prove how they are more right than the other. Ikeda states how arguments are very different from the everyday friendly talk where agreement is preferred (2008: 6). In an argument disagreement often seems to be the priority and so arguments are kept going by using many of the same methods that are used to initiate an argument, such as opposition, weak agreement, counterclaims. Ikeda also points out that not all arguments have clear winners (2008: 6-7). In such cases the same issues from an earlier dispute may rise in the next argument even though the topic of the argument is completely different. Arguments can be ceased by *agreeing to disagree* where both parties acknowledge that they are not going to find a mutual ground on the issue. There can also be an *involuntary loser* when a person decides to use weak agreement ("oh well, maybe") or to use roles to break an argument (adviser-advisee, teacher-student, mother-daughter). Many of Ikeda's findings can be seen in the dialogues of the Gilmore Girls. There is a lot of ongoing arguments that have not been ceased but instead are kept alive and the same issues emerge in the next conflict situation.

### **3 PRESENT STUDY**

In this section I will go deeper into the set-up of the present study. First, I shall present the aim of the study, followed by the research questions. Second, the data and reasons for specific data collection will be discussed and the basic information on the television series *Gilmore Girls* will be presented and the main characters, the ones that have a significant role in this study will be introduced as well as their relationships to each other. Finally, the methods of analyzing will be presented.

#### **3.1 Aims and research questions**

The purpose of the study is to analyze family conflicts in the fictional television series *Gilmore Girls*. I will look into the speech acts of the characters in conflict situations and analyze the characters' reactions. The analytic framework draws on Allott's Gricean-based terminology which was introduced in section 2.1. The main questions of this study are:

- 1. How do the conflict situations arise and how are they managed by the participants?**
- 2. How do Gricean pragmatic principles help analyse the meanings, both direct and indirect, that arise in the conflict situations?**

## 3.2 Data

In this section the data used in the present study is introduced. Both the series and its characters are introduced as well as some of the main characteristics and features of the series. I have selected the first three episodes of the series' first season. This way the amount of data can be narrowed down and a more in-depth analysis can be made from these three episodes. At first the fourth and fifth episodes were a part of the study but as it later turned out, the episodes did not bring any new value to the study and included only little new material. They were therefore left out of the study.

### 3.2.1 Introducing the *Gilmore Girls*

The *Gilmore Girls* is an American drama comedy television series created by Amy Sherman-Palladino. The series ran for seven seasons from 2000 to 2017 and in those years 153 episodes were broadcast. Every episode lasts for approximately 44 minutes. A follow-up episode "Gilmore Girls: A Year in The Life" was broadcast on Netflix in 2016 (IMDb, 2018). The series is known for its fast-paced dialogue, cultural references and close family and friend relationships. The fact that one episode script of *Gilmore Girls* usually had around 80 pages tells something about the amount of verbal communication in the series.

Lorelai Gilmore (Lauren Graham) is a 32-year-old (in the beginning of the first season) single-parent of one. Lorelai lives with her 16-year-old daughter and works full-time as a receptionist at the Independence Inn. She has a dream of one day owning her own inn with her best friend and an excellent cook Sookie St. James (Melissa McCarthy) who is also working at the Independence Inn. Lorelai is verbally talented and bursts out quite the lively monologues when necessary or possible. She got pregnant at 16 and a teenage pregnancy was not what Lorelai's parents had had in mind for their daughter. Lorelai has separated from her teenage boyfriend Christopher and this is a never-ending thorn in Lorelai's mother's side. It seems as though Lorelai made one big mistake when she was young and cannot do anything to make it right however

hard she tries. Her relationship with her daughter is very tight and resembles more of a friendship than a traditional mother-daughter relationship. In the pilot episode of the series, after finding out Rory got into Chilton, she states: "She can finally go to Harvard like she's always wanted and get the education that I never got and get to do all the things that I never got to do and then I can resent her for it and we can finally have a normal mother-daughter relationship." This describes their relationship extremely well. In her communication Lorelai relies heavily on word play, cultural references and humoristic remarks which can be referred as *gilmorisms* (Oittinen, 2010).

The story begins when Lorelai's daughter Rory Gilmore, full name Lorelai Leigh Gilmore (Alexis Bledel) has been accepted to study at the prestigious Chilton. Rory is an extremely hard-working, talented and ambitious young girl with all her future plans clear in her mind. She wants to study at Harvard, focus on journalism and become a foreign correspondent. All this in mind Lorelai wants to give Rory every chance to pursue her dreams. One thing stands in the way and that is the fact that Lorelai cannot afford the tuition for Chilton. This is where Lorelai is forced to swallow her pride and contact her parents for help. Her parents are more than willing to help with Rory's education but nothing comes free and Lorelai is faced with one condition - a weekly family dinner.

Emily Gilmore (played by Kelly Bishop) is Lorelai's mother, a strong sophisticated woman of the elite and is married to Richard Gilmore (Richard Herrmann). Emily does not understand most of Lorelai's life decisions and one of the most disappointing things Lorelai ever did were to become a teenage mother, leave the prestigious life she could have had and to separate from Rory's father Christopher Hayden (David Sutcliffe). Ironically, Emily adores Christopher and does not seem to hold him responsible for making her a grandmother at such an early stage. Richard is a man who enjoys his golf and brandy and is not ashamed to enjoy the benefits his life offers him. He is slightly calmer in nature than his wife but does not tolerate any kind of scandalous behavior and is very old-fashioned when it comes to good manners. He is also in

personal contact with Christopher and like Emily, he also cannot see Christopher doing anything wrong. Both Emily and Richard seem to be blaming Lorelai for the teenage pregnancy but not Christopher.

There are also other significant characters in the series. Luke Danes (Scott Patterson) is a local diner owner and a good friend to Lorelai. Luke has a crush on Lorelai and they end up dating later in the show. Lane Kim (Keiko Agena), the daughter of a very strict Korean parents (however her father is never shown in the original series), is Rory's best friend. Dean Forester (Jared Padalecki) is a new boy in town whom Rory meets just before going to Chilton and they end up dating for several seasons.

### **3.3 Methods of analysis**

The first three episodes of the first season of *The Gilmore Girls* were chosen as the primary data for this research as they offer a good amount of family conflict situations. The relationships and tensions between the characters are central to the study of conflict talk and often one can find hidden conflicts between and behind the dialogues. There were about 50 conflict situations during those three episodes from which 39 have been included in this study. Some of the situations were left out as they did not provide any new information or they were repetitive. The episodes were watched several times while writing down notes. In the process special attention was paid to family communication, such as dialogues, intonation and non-verbal communication. Allott's six principles of pragmatism as well as Grice's CP and maxims were kept in mind while watching the episodes. Episode transcripts are available on the internet and with the help of both watching the episodes and following the transcripts it was easier to analyze the data.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

In this section I shall go into the actual conflict situations presented in the three episodes that were selected for this thesis. The results will be in chronological order, following the order of the episodes, as the story and the relationships between the characters develop as the story continues. A short summary of each of the episodes is given as well as some background information leading up to the conflict. A transcript of the actual situation will be provided, followed by a more in-depth analysis of the situation. In this analysis I aim to look at the actual meaning behind words and the possible ambiguous interpretations of the speaker meanings. As it is stated before, this thesis focuses on the conflict situations between the close family members, i.e. Lorelai, Rory, Emily and Richard Gilmore.

### **4.1 Episode 1 – The pilot**

This is the pilot episode of the series in which basically all the essential characters are introduced. In this episode Lorelai receives the letter from Chilton stating that Rory had been accepted to study there. After that Lorelai battles with her choices as she has to pay for the tuition immediately, otherwise Rory would lose her place at the school. Rory is already very excited about starting at a new school and is unaware of

her mother's struggles. Lorelai is then forced to ask her parents to help her financially. It comes with a price and in order to keep the whole thing a secret from Rory they will have family dinner every Friday at Lorelai's parents' house. On her last day at Stars Hollow High Rory meets a boy, Dean. It is obvious she falls for him and suddenly she is not all that keen on going to Chilton anymore. This creates some serious tension between Rory and her mother.

Firstly, let us look at the part where Lorelai goes to meet her parents to ask for financial help. Her mother Emily comes to the door and exclaims:

(1)

E: Lorelai, my goodness, this is a surprise. Is it Easter already?

*(Episode 1 Pilot, 19:02)*

As they step inside and sit down in the large well-decorated living room, Lorelai's father, Richard, arrives and a near identical remark is made.

(2)

R: What is it, Christmas already?

*(Episode 1 Pilot, 20:12)*

With these two remarks Lorelai's parents have made it clear to the audience as well as Lorelai that her visits are few and far between and only happen on special occasions. It is most likely clear to all that neither Lorelai's mother nor her father have forgotten which time of the year it is. The context is to reveal how distant their relationship is as apparently they are only meeting each other at Christmas, Easter or other bigger holidays. Appearing on one's doorstep unannounced is clearly not something to happen very often.

A moment earlier Lorelai has sat down with her mother in the living room and they are surrounded by what can only be described as an uncomfortable silence. Lorelai's mother makes the first move to get the conversation going.

(3)

E: You said you were taking a business class?

L: Yeah, mmhmm, yeah. I'm taking a business class at the college twice a week. I'm sure I told you.

E: Well, if you're sure then you must have. (long silence)

(*Episode 1 Pilot. 20:10*)

Here we have an example of a mixture of an *implicature* and *figure of speech*. Looking at the words as such, it seems as though Emily is simply stating that Lorelai has in fact told her about the business class but it has perhaps slipped Emily's mind. Considering the long silence, the few and far between visits and the stiff atmosphere, it is likely that Lorelai never told her mother about the class and is only trying to brush it off lightly. Emily is attempting to initiate a conversation after the uncomfortable silence by asking more about Lorelai's business class. Lorelai only replies with minimal effort and is making it clear that she is reluctant to give any more information on the topic. This gives the viewer a sense of a hidden conflict and it shows in the way Lorelai is avoiding elaborating on the topic. Considering Grice's cooperative principle, Lorelai is giving out only the bare minimum and could almost be blamed to violate Grice's maxim of quantity as she is not exactly giving all the necessary information. Emily's last line states that there does not seem to be anything more to talk about the issue if Lorelai really has already told her about the business class.

After this starts the part where Lorelai very unwillingly has to ask for her parents, Richard (R) and Emily (E) to lend her the money for Rory's tuition.

(4)

L: Well, actually, I came here for a reason. Dad, would you mind sitting down for a minute?

R: You need money.

L: I have a situation.

R: You need money.

L: Dad, will you just please let me get this out, OK? Um, Rory has been accepted to Chilton.

E: Chilton? Oh, that's a wonderful school. It's only five minutes from here.

L: That's right, it is. She can start as early as Monday. The problem is they want me to put down an enrollment fee plus the first semester's tuition, and I have to do that immediately or she loses her spot.

R: So you need money.

L: Yeah. But it's not for me. It's for Rory. And I fully intend to pay you back every cent. I don't ask for favors, you know that.

E: Oh, yes, we know.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 20:27)*

When Lorelai tells her parents she came in for a reason and asks her father to sit down, it implies that there is something serious to talk about. Richard turns his back to Lorelai so he can pour himself a drink at a side table as if he already deduced that a serious talk with his daughter would quite frankly mean she needed money. Both times he bluntly states “You need money” he does not look at Lorelai and his tone of voice is a bit on the colder side, very matter-of-fact. It could be stated that both *implicature* and *silent speech acts* are used in this situation. Richard, by stating Lorelai needs money, may want to imply the message of “you wouldn’t be here if you didn’t need money”. Especially when considering what happened just minutes earlier when both Emily and Richard implied it must be some sort of a festive season because Lorelai

has come to visit them. The *silent speech act* is him not looking at Lorelai, turning his back on her. It could be argued that the same message as above is conveyed with this bodily act. He is implying that such a special visitation could only mean Lorelai needs money.

The second interesting part of the first episode is the part right after Rory has met Dean, realized she might actually want to stay in Stars Hollow because of the boy and is trying to tell her mom she does not want to go to Chilton. Keeping in mind that Lorelai has just had to swallow her pride and ask her parents for money for the tuition, this is bound to create tension between Lorelai and Rory. In this scene Lorelai has just told Rory they are going to her parents' place for dinner on Friday.

(5)

R: But it's September.

L: So?

R: So what holiday's in September?

L: Look it's not a holiday thing. It's just dinner, OK?

R: Fine, sorry.

(*Episode 1 Pilot. 27:29*)

Again, we notice the fact that Lorelai and Rory do not visit Lorelai's parents that often. Rory is asking what holiday is in September. This is a classic *implicature* where Rory implies they only visit her grandparents when it is, for example, a national holiday. This is something she is accustomed to and cannot think of a reason why they are suddenly having dinner on Friday when it clearly is not any known holiday. Lorelai's response to Rory's questioning comes out in a stressed tone of voice and Rory tries to soften the situation by agreeing to the dinner and by apologizing.

The same scene continues with Rory still not quite understanding why they have to have dinner with her grandparents. She is rather grumpy and Lorelai, after a failed attempt to lighten up the mood with a joke, finally reacts in a more frustrated manner.

(6)

L: What the hell is wrong with you?

R: I'm not sure I want to go to Chilton.

L: What?

R: The timing is just really bad.

L: The timing is bad?

R: And the bus ride to and from Hartford, it's thirty minutes each way.

L: I can't believe what I'm hearing.

R: Plus, I don't think we should be spending that money right now. I mean, I know Chilton's got to be costing you a lot.

L: Oh, you have no idea.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 28:19)*

Lorelai's reaction to Rory not being sure if she wants to go to Chilton after all is quite expected. Lorelai's "What?" is a strong expression of disbelief and that she was genuinely surprised. Rory going to Chilton has been a goal for both of them and just the same morning Rory was still excited about it. Lorelai has just gone through with the money negotiations with her parents and all of a sudden Rory is not on board anymore. Rory is trying to explain her point of view with bad timing and bus rides taking too much time. Earlier these seemed to not bother her in the least. This is a moment where

the viewer knows more than the characters do. The viewer knows the truth and that there is a clear lack of mutual knowledge between Lorelai and Rory. After Rory mentions that she knows Chilton must be costing her mother a lot, Lorelai's line "Oh you have no idea" is to be taken quite literally. Rory does not know anything about the deal Lorelai has made and how much it has cost her emotionally. To Rory this statement is probably just a figure of speech or just to do with money. Both Rory and Lorelai are trying to interact from their own point of views. Lorelai after she has made a significant sacrifice by going to her parents for help, and Rory after meeting an interesting boy and not wanting to leave just when things have started to look interesting. Neither is able to tell the truth so both of them circle around the issue. Their joint understanding of Rory going to Chilton has changed – Rory has changed her mind.

Rory is unable to tell her mother the truth about the boy and they leave Luke's diner. Outside they walk past Miss Patty's dance studio where she is having a ballet class for children. Earlier, when Rory met Dean for the first time, Dean told her he needed to find a job and Rory had pointed him to Miss Patty because "she just kind of know everything that's going on in town".

(7)

Miss P: Oh, Rory, good. I think I found a job for your male friend.

Lorelai: What male friend?

Miss P: They need a stock boy at the supermarket. I already talked to Taylor Doose about him. You just send him around tomorrow.

Rory: OK, thanks.

Lorelai: What male friend?

Miss P: Oh he's very cute. You have good taste.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 29:42)*

At this point Miss Patty turns back to her class to instruct her students. During this conversation Rory has barely said a word. Instead, Lorelai has asked twice who this male friend is whose existence is clearly new information for her. Her questions have gone unanswered but Rory's nonverbal gestures have not been missed by Lorelai. Although Rory has said nothing about her new male friend or hinted in any way that he might be the reason for her sudden change of heart, it is "written all over her face", so to speak. Rory's silent speech acts are silent in words but not in actions. Lorelai realizes what has caused Rory's rapid change in her attitude towards going to Chilton. Rory tries to walk away from her mother as quickly as possible and doing so Rory violates the cooperative principle by leaving Lorelai's question unanswered. Lorelai naturally follows her home.

(8)

L: This is about a boy, of course. I can't believe I didn't see it. All this talk of money and bus rides. You got a thing going with a guy and you don't want to leave school.

R: I'm going to bed.

L: God, I'm so dense. It should have been my first thought. After all, you're me.

R: I'm not you.

L: Really? Someone willing to throw important life experiences out the window to be with a guy. It sounds like me to me.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 30:18)*

Lorelai has now gathered that they are in this situation because of a boy and it is interesting how she seems to be blaming herself for not seeing the reason behind Rory's sudden urge to stay in Stars Hollow. As was pointed out earlier in section 3.2.1 Lorelai got pregnant when she was Rory's age and quite naturally wants something different for her daughter. Rory has still not told her the truth and Lorelai is making her own

assumptions. Rory's line of "I'm going to bed" seems totally irrelevant and is violating the maxim of relevance. With this line she is stating that she does not want to engage in this topic anymore. According to Ikeda's (2008) idea of what leads to an argument, this situation could be a case of accusations versus opposition. Lorelai is accusing Rory of throwing her life away just because she has met a boy. Rory opposes and sticks to the excuses she has made earlier by denying the truth value, as can be seen from the following line:

(9)

R: I don't want to change schools because of all the reasons I've already told you a thousand times. If you don't want to believe me, that's fine. Good-night.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 30:50)*

Rory is trying to withdraw from the argument by ending her rant with a "Goodnight". However, Lorelai follows Rory upstairs to try and reason with her.

(10)

L: Well I think that went pretty well, don't you?

R: Thanks for the knock.

L: Listen, can we just start all over, OK? You tell me all about the guy and I promise not to let my head explode, huh? (silence) Rory, please talk to me. (silence) OK, I'll talk. Don't get me wrong. Guys are great. I am a huge fan of guys. You don't get knocked up at sixteen being indifferent to guys. But, babe, guys are always going to be there. This school isn't. It's more important. It has to be more important.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 31:11)*

In this part of their dialogue Lorelai has a calmer tone in her voice as she is trying to stabilize the situation and get into talking terms with her daughter. She is trying to cease the argument by using roles. She is trying to take the listener's role and give Rory the role of a speaker. Rory denies this role and still refuses to talk about it. Rory's line "Thanks for the knock" can be seen as irony. Rory is thanking Lorelai for behaving appropriately when Lorelai did not actually behave appropriately. It is also an implication and as Lorelai has walked in her room without knocking, Rory is pointing that out by thanking Lorelai and in that sense, implicating that Lorelai should have knocked but has not done so. Again Lorelai brings up the fact that she got pregnant as a teenager. She is not merely stating a fact that both of them already know, she is saying more between the lines. She is not telling Rory not to see the boy ever again, she is probably trying to warn her about the risks and is using her own experience as an example. Rory is avoiding all conversation with her mother and ends up asking her mother to leave her alone. The next part of dialogue is significant considering the nature of Lorelai and Rory's relationship.

(11)

L: OK, fine. We always had a democracy in this house. We never did anything unless we both agreed. But now I guess I'm going to have to play the mom card. You are going to Chilton whether you want to or not. Monday morning you will be there, end of story.

R: We'll see.

L: Yeah we will.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 32:05)*

As Lorelai said, they have always made their decisions together, listening to each other and respecting each other's opinions. She is putting her foot down so to speak and by doing that she is doing something that has not been a norm in their household. Lorelai is explicitly telling Rory that she will now play the mom card and doing so she

underlines the authority that comes along with it. At first, she appeals to the cooperation and democracy they have had earlier and then immediately after attempts to use a higher status over her daughter by telling Rory she is going to Chilton “end of story”. In Ikeda’s terms it could be argued that Lorelai is attempting to cease the argument by stating an “agree to disagree” situation and by leaving. What also indicates that this is a new situation in Lorelai and Rory’s relationship, is a part of a dialogue between Lorelai and Sookie the next day at the Inn.

(12)

Sookie: It was a fight. Mothers and daughters fight.

Lorelai: No, *we* don't fight. *We* never fight.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 33:22)*

The emphasis on “*we*” is strong. Lorelai is implying other mothers and daughters might fight but she and Rory never fight. It is difficult for her to comprehend that they are, in fact, just like all the other mothers and daughters who occasionally fight about things.

The third and last significant part of the first episode is when Lorelai and Rory actually arrive at Lorelai’s parents’ house on Friday evening. During the evening Lorelai’s father Richard ends up talking about how successful Rory’s father, Lorelai’s ex Christopher has become. In the end Lorelai ends up having some very heated words with her mother Emily and Rory overhears how her mother got the money for her Chilton tuition. It starts when Lorelai and Rory have arrived at the house and are standing outside the door.

(13)

R: So do we go in or do we just stand here reenacting "The Little Match Girl?"

L: OK, look, I know you and me are having a thing here and I know you hate me but I need you to be civil, at least through dinner and then on the way home you can pull a Menendez. Deal?

R: Fine.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 34:31)*

Rory's remark at the beginning is slightly snappish and Lorelai reacts to it immediately. Lorelai has anticipated the upcoming dinner to be uncomfortable and probably does not want to worry about Rory and she arguing on top of everything. By 'pulling a Menendez' Lorelai refers to a murder case in the late 1980s when brothers Erik and Lyle Menendez murdered their parents in Beverly Hills, USA. This could be interpreted as Lorelai's attempt to cease the fight by stating roles. She as the one offering peace and giving her daughter the all clear for parental murder -although jokingly- and Rory as the equal partner in this deal, or perhaps even giving Rory the upper hand as Lorelai is asking for a favor and Rory is granting it to her. Lorelai rings the doorbell and her mother lets them in. Cut to dinner table and after some chitchat, Richard starts a conversation about Lorelai's work.

(14)

Richard: And how are things at the motel?

Lorelai: The inn? Things are great.

Emily: Lorelai's the executive manager now. Isn't that wonderful?

Richard: Speaking of which, Christopher called yesterday.

Lorelai: Speaking of which? How is that a speaking of which?

Richard: He's doing very well in California. His internet start-up goes public next month. This could mean big things for him. (to Rory) Very talented man, your father.

Lorelai: She knows.

Richard: He always was a smart one, that boy. (to Rory) You must take after him.

Lorelai: Speaking of which, I'm gonna get a Coke. Or a knife.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 36:55)*

There are a few things that are necessary to look at in this short section of a dialogue. First of all, Lorelai corrects Richard after he has used an incorrect term by calling her workplace “a motel”. Emily’s line “Lorelai's the executive manager now. Isn't that wonderful?” is an attempt to imply to Richard how their daughter has done well and could possibly use a few nice words. Richard completely ignores Emily’s words and moves on to talk about Lorelai’s ex, Rory’s father Christopher. As it was pointed out in section 3.2.1. Richard and Emily seem to ignore the fact that Christopher was as much to blame for Lorelai’s pregnancy as Lorelai herself and Richard’s line underlines that quite clearly. He is proudly telling how well Christopher is doing with his business and even makes a remark that since Rory is so smart, she must be taking after her father – not Lorelai, for example. This is an extremely offensive line to Lorelai as she has been the one to raise Rory and how she feels her parents respect Christopher more than her – their own daughter. After her last line, Lorelai storms out of the dining room and into the kitchen where her mother follows her.

(15)

Lorelai: Is this what it's gonna be like every Friday night? I come over and let the two of you attack me?

Emily: You're being very dramatic.

Lorelai: Dramatic? Were you at that table just now?

Emily: Yes, I was and I think you took what your father said the wrong way.

Lorelai: The wrong way? How could I have taken it the wrong way? What was open to interpretation?

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 38:19)*

The conflict has already started at the dinner table when Richard started talking about Christopher. Here Lorelai starts by accusing her parents of attacking her. Emily is opposing by denying the truth value of the accusation. Emily's line "You're being very dramatic" is criticism towards Lorelai and works as a trigger for her to keep the argument going, they have not seen eye to eye and have not been able to agree about how Lorelai is feeling. Instead Emily's line implies Lorelai is being a silly, dramatic girl who should just come back to dinner table and carry on as usual. When Lorelai asks her mother if she was in the same dinner table just a minute ago, it is of course not to be taken literally. Obviously, she knows her mother was there and heard it all. She is looking for her mother's understanding of the situation and maybe some support on why she was so upset by her father's words. However, Emily is yet again unwilling to see her daughter's point of view and rejecting the counterclaim by implying that Lorelai has misunderstood what Richard was saying. The underlying thoughts and attitudes that have been suppressed for years are revealed in excerpts 16, 17 and 18.

(16)

Lorelai: Why would he bring up Christopher? Was that really necessary?

Emily: He likes Christopher.

Lorelai: Isn't that interesting? Because, as I remember, when Christopher got me pregnant, Dad didn't like him so much.

Emily: Oh, well, please, you were sixteen. What were we supposed to do - - throw you a party? We were disappointed. The two of you had such bright futures.

Lorelai: Yes. And by not getting married we got to keep those futures.

Emily: When you get pregnant, you get married. A child needs a mother and a father.

(*Episode 1 Pilot. 38:37*)

Lorelai cannot understand why Richard had to bring up Christopher when he probably knew how much it may hurt Lorelai. She points out that her father has made quite the U-turn in his attitude against Christopher. In this piece of dialogue Emily's rather old-fashioned attitude towards pregnancy and marriage comes out. She expresses deep disappointment on two things. First, the actual pregnancy that has, in her words, cost both Lorelai and Christopher their bright futures. Second, the fact that Lorelai and Christopher did not get married. Lorelai makes a counter argument how they actually got to keep their own dreams and futures *because* they did not get married. Emily disagrees by insisting that a child must have a father and mother, completely ignoring that marriage has nothing to do with someone having both their parents in their lives. After Emily's line, Lorelai visibly rolls her eyes and continues the argument.

(17)

Lorelai: Oh, Mom. Do you think Christopher would have his own company right now if we'd gotten married? Do you think he would be anything at all?

Emily: Yes, I do. Your father would have put him in the insurance business and you'd be living a lovely life right now.

Lorelai: He didn't want to be in the insurance business and I am living a lovely life right now.

Emily: That's right, far away from us.

Lorelai: Oh, here we go.

(*Episode 1 Pilot. 39:01*)

Lorelai and Emily are keeping the argument going by constantly denying the truth value of what the other one is saying. It seems as if they are completely unable to see each other's points of view. Emily is unable to see how Christopher and Lorelai are both living the lovely life they wanted even though it is not the one Emily had pictured in her mind years ago. When Lorelai states that she actually is happy with the life she has created for herself, Emily moves on to argue how that lovely life is far away from her and Richard. Lorelai's line at the end implies that they have been arguing about the same topic many times before.

(18)

Emily: You took that girl and completely shut us out of your life.

Lorelai: You wanted to control me.

Emily: You were still a child.

Lorelai: I stopped being a child the minute the strip turned pink, OK? I had to figure out how to live. I found a good job --

Emily: As a maid. With all your brains and talent.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 39:21)*

Emily is accusing Lorelai of taking Rory, Emily and Richard's granddaughter, away from them. This is also a direct accusation, unlike the earlier sarcastic comments or criticism that were hurtful in an indirect way. Lorelai is explaining her actions by counterclaiming that her parents were controlling her so much she did not have a choice. Counterclaims are thrown back and forth. At the end Lorelai makes an effort to make her mother see how she was able to build her own life even though she was very young. Emily's tone of voice when she says "As a maid" is nothing short of demeaning. It is as if she is stating that working as a maid is somehow not a good job for a young person. "With all your brains and talent" is a line that again speaks for Emily's high hopes for her only daughter. On one hand she is complimenting Lorelai for being

intelligent and talented but on the other hand she is accusing Lorelai of wasting her talent on such a lowly profession.

(19)

Lorelai: I worked my way up. I run the place now. I built a life on my own with no help from anyone.

Emily: Yes, and think where you would have been if you'd accepted a little help, hmm? And where Rory would have been. But no, you were always too proud to accept anything from anyone.

Lorelai: Well I wasn't too proud to come here to you two begging for money for my kid's school, was I?

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 39:36)*

Again Lorelai is trying to explain how she was able to work her way up and make her life the way it currently is. It seems she is trying to imply to her mother how she is proud that she did it all by herself without anyone's help. To Emily this is yet another chance to ignore her daughter's accomplishments and try to make her see how much more she could be if she had listened to her mother's advice years ago. Lorelai and Emily's argument has not been unheard by Rory and Richard. Rory overhears Lorelai's last line and finds out just how far her mother went to pay for the Chilton tuition. The argument ends with Emily's final words with yet another sarcastic comment at the end:

(20)

Emily: No, but you're too proud to let her know where you got it from aren't you? Well, fine, you have your precious pride and I have my weekly dinners. Isn't that nice? We both win.

*(Episode 1 Pilot. 39:55)*

The scene ends with Rory sitting at the dinner table looking pensive, and the atmosphere hints she is thinking about her mother's sacrifice. Lorelai and Emily's argument does not have a clear winner or a loser although it is evident that Lorelai looks like the loser as her mother has had the final word. This conflict has ended with no clear result and according to Ikeda (2008) this kind of ending often leads to other arguments with the same topics.

The episode ends with Rory letting her mother know that she heard the entire conversation and that she thinks Lorelai was brave to ask for the money from her parents. It seems as though Rory and Lorelai's earlier dispute is now forgotten and Rory is ready to go to Chilton.

## **4.2 Episode 2 – The Lorelai's First Day at Chilton**

In the second episode of the first season it is time for Rory's first day at Chilton. The day starts with Lorelai oversleeping and not having anything decent to wear considering they will meet the Chilton headmaster. To make matters worse, Lorelai's mother is also there because she just happens to be close friends with the headmaster. The meeting is uncomfortable to say the least. For Rory, the day does not get any better as she encounters the fact that she is starting a month later than the others and she has a lot to catch up. Two new essential characters, Paris and Tristan, are introduced to the viewers. Paris is used to being the best and makes it very clear. Tristan is teasing Rory and insists on calling her 'Mary'.

In this scene Lorelai and Rory have come to meet the headmaster. Lorelai has forgotten to pick up her nice clothes from the dry cleaners and is wearing old cut denim shorts, a tie-dyed t-shirt and a pair of cowboy boots. Rory has already made a funny remark about rodeo earlier in the episode. Lorelai and Emily leave Rory to the headmaster's office and on the way out Emily comments:

(21)

Emily : Do you need a ride or is your horse parked outside?

*(Episode 2. 10:14)*

Emily's figure of speech is directed at Lorelai and her choice of clothing. After a few words they leave and the discussion continues in the hallway. Emily lets Lorelai know her outfit is totally unacceptable and on Rory's first day out of all days. Lorelai questions Emily's decision to arrive at the school that morning and Emily jumps to the conclusion that she is not allowed to set foot on the school premises. Lorelai denies saying anything of the sort.

(22)

Emily: I'm allowed to pay for it. But I can't actually set foot on the premises. I just want to get the rules straight.

Lorelai: Oh boy...

Emily: How about the street. Can I drive down the street? Maybe I should just avoid the neighborhood altogether. Although my doctor is right down the block. Maybe I can get special permission if I'm bleeding from the head.

Lorelai: I'm sorry. I was just surprised to see you here.

Emily: I thought it was important for this school to know they had a Gilmore amongst them.

Lorelai: A very good thought.

Emily: And that some of the Gilmores actually own clothing.

Lorelai: And on that note, I have to get to work. I'll see you later.

Emily: Dinner, Friday night. No spurs, please.

*(Episode 2. 11:00)*

Emily is overreacting and using figures of speech by exaggerating. Lorelai attempts to cease the argument by smiling in an apologetic and conciliatory manner and also apologizing verbally. She also tries to second her mother on the note that it was nice to let the school know there was a Gilmore in the school now. Emily seems to ignore all Lorelai's attempts to cease the heated situation and goes on to once again pointing out how Lorelai's outfit is unacceptable. Lorelai leaves from the situation, therefore leaving the argument open. Emily has to have the last word by making one final comment on Lorelai's outfit. Emily's comments are yet again veiled and indirect, pointing out a contrast between Lorelai's choice of clothing and "some of us".

The next two examples are two separate dialogues between Lorelai and her mother Emily when they discuss what Rory needs for school. Mostly Lorelai has dealt with everything and Rory has skirts and shirts and the basics that she needs for school. The first time Emily calls Lorelai is to go shopping for more school clothes because Emily thinks two skirts and a few tops are not enough as she reminds Lorelai that there are five days in a school week.

(23)

Lorelai: Are you sure? My days of the week underwear only go till Thursday.

Emily: Is that a joke?

Lorelai: Two skirts are fine. Don't bother.

Emily: What if she gets one dirty?

Lorelai: Well, then, she'll wear the other one.

Emily: What if she gets them both dirty?

Lorelai: We'll use this newfangled thing called a washing machine. The town just chipped in and bought one. My turn's Tuesday.

*(Episode 2. 19:00)*

Lorelai's habit of reacting to many situations with humor is clearly not appreciated by her mother. Her mother emphasizes this by asking if Lorelai is joking when she talks about her days of the week underwear. This could show a violation of Grice's maxims of relation and manner. Talking about her underwear when the topic was Rory's skirts and tops is a violation of relation from Lorelai. The maxim of manner is also violated by joking and thus leaving Emily puzzled. Emily is seeking to justify why she should buy more school clothes for Rory and Lorelai keeps telling they have it under control and Rory is good with what she already has. Lorelai's mention of "this newfangled thing" is an example of irony as both Lorelai and Emily quite naturally know that washing machines exist. Lorelai might have an underlying fear that she would feel more and more in debt to her mother if Emily goes and buys a lot of expensive things to Rory. Also, Rory and Lorelai have managed their lives rather well without Lorelai's parents' money and Lorelai is trying to make her mother see that.

(24)

Emily:           Rory should have these things. She'll be the only one who doesn't.

Lorelai:         She'll live.

*(Episode 2. 19:29)*

Rory has lived and will live happily even though she would not get the new skirts, tops, Chilton logo socks or a Chilton coat that Emily so eagerly wants to buy her. Lorelai's line "She'll live" is implying much more than just that Rory will live and stay alive without the new things. Lorelai is again trying to make her mother see that they will cope on their own. Later on in the episode, still the same day, Lorelai's mother calls her at the Inn to tell that she has bought a parking space for Rory at Chilton.

(25)

Lorelai: You what?

Emily: They are very hard to come by. But I pulled a few strings and it's all hers.

Lorelai: Mom, Rory doesn't have a car.

Emily: No, but she's got a birthday coming up soon.

*(Episode 2, 24:47)*

Emily seems to want to offer her grandchild a lot of nice things. She seems to carry pride over being able to buy the parking space for Rory and is probably waiting for Lorelai to acknowledge that. When Lorelai states that Rory does not have a car, Emily's line indicates not just the fact that Rory's birthday is coming up but she is also implying that she is going to buy Rory a car for her birthday. This implication is also clear to Lorelai.

(26)

Lorelai: Mom, you are not buying Rory a car.

Emily: Why not? She's a smart girl, she's responsible.

Lorelai: She doesn't need one.

Emily: She has to have a way to get around. To get to school.

Lorelai: She'll be taking the bus.

Emily: I hate that she's taking the bus. Drug dealers take the bus.

Lorelai: You know what, Mom? I gotta go.

Emily: Fine. We'll discuss this at a later date.

Lorelai: Okay. Bye.

(Episode 2. 25:06)

Once more they are in a situation where Emily seems to refuse to see how Lorelai and Rory have coped and will cope on their own. Emily opposes Lorelai's vies and they are both giving arguments that counter each other's turns. Perhaps Emily wants to make Rory's life a little bit easier but yet again she has not asked Lorelai or Rory what they want or need. When Lorelai has to end the call, Emily makes a remark to discuss the issue at a later date. This leaves yet another possible conflict open for later arguments. A third incident occurs later on the same day as Lorelai's neighbors call her to let her know that some strange men are at her house. When Lorelai goes home to check the situation, she finds out that her mother has ordered and paid for the installation of a DSL connection. After sending the installers away, Lorelai storms into a beauty parlor where her mother is having her hair done. Lorelai walks to her mother and knocks on a hair device under which Emily is sitting.

(27)

Emily: What on earth...?

Lorelai: You're not buying us a DSL.

Emily: Lorelai, this is hardly the place.

Lorelai: I canceled the order, and it's not happening.

Emily: But Rory needs the Internet for her school.

Lorelai: We have the Internet.

Emily: This is faster.

Lorelai: Well, we like our internet slow, okay? We can turn it on, walk around, dance, make a sandwich. With DSL, there's no dancing, no walking, and we'd starve. It'd be all work and no play. Have you not seen "The Shining", Mom?

Emily: What on earth are you talking about?

(Episode 2. 37:04)

For the third time during the same day Emily has tried to do something that she considers as helping out Lorelai and especially Rory. For the third time Lorelai has declined Emily's help and is about to put her straight. As it was seen earlier, Emily and Lorelai fail to find an understanding of each other's points of views. Emily's intention is to help but not once has she actually asked Lorelai or Rory if they need something or want something or if there is something that Emily could do to help them. Emily has operated on her own, presuming she knows best. She also fails to understand Lorelai's yet another reference to popular culture. Lorelai has described how they like their slow internet because it gives them time to have fun and enjoy things and refers to Jack Nicholson's character in the well-known horror film *The Shining* where he moves to an old hotel with his family to write a novel. He seems to be working all day every day but in the end all that he has written is pages and pages of "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" (Imdb, 2022). Emily is unfamiliar with this piece of popular culture and is totally unaware of the connection between the movie and Lorelai's rambling. Finally, Lorelai puts her foot down and tells her mother how she wants things to go.

(28)

Lorelai: Also, there will be no cars, no parking spaces. And all the uniforms will be supplied by me. The mother. That's final. There will be no discussion.

Emily : You're being stubborn, as usual.

Lorelai: No, Mom, I'm not being stubborn as usual. I'm being me! The same person who always needed to work out her own problems and take care of herself. Because that's the way I was born. That's how I am!

Emily: Florence, I'm dripping.

Lorelai: I appreciate what you have done for Rory in paying for this school. That will not be forgotten. You won't let it. But she is my daughter. And I decide how we live, not you. Now then, do they validate parking here?

Emily: There's a stamp at the desk.

Lorelai: Thank you.

*(Episode 2. 37:30)*

With "there will be no discussion" Lorelai refers to the previous phone calls with her mother. Emily has ended those phone calls with a hint that the subject will be discussed again later. As it was shown in the first episode, Emily is back at accusing Lorelai for being stubborn and proud for not accepting help from others and Lorelai is once more trying to make it clear to her mother that this is the way she wants to do things, on her own and without other people doing it all for her. Lorelai is emphasizing her role as Rory's mother and as Rory's provider. Lorelai also makes a remark about how Emily will not let anyone forget she helped Rory. Just before Lorelai asks about the parking validation there is a long pause in the dialogue. They both stay quiet for a significant amount of time. Lorelai's determined look changes to less determined, more hesitant and as if she was a bit taken back by what she just said.

At the end of the second episode Lorelai and Rory are opening up to each other about their less than perfect days. They bond through joking and by supporting each other.

### **4.3 Episode 3 - Kill Me Now**

In this episode Emily decides for everybody that Rory and Richard should go golfing together. Rory seems to be the only one who does not mind, Richard and Lorelai object the whole idea. During the episode Lorelai has to come to terms with her daughter's wants and needs that may differ from hers. This setup for the episode

causes conflicts between Lorelai and Emily, Emily and Richard and in the end between Lorelai and Rory as well. At the beginning of the episode Lorelai and Rory are at Lorelai's parents' house for the weekly dinner which leads to the main events of the third episode. As they are having dessert it turns out that Rory needs to pick up a sport as it is considered important at Chilton to have social activities and to play team sports. When Emily asks Rory what the choices are and it appears golf is on the list, she insists that Richard takes Rory to the golf club.

(29)

Emily: Golf?

Rory: Yeah.

Emily: Well your grandfather's a golf player.

Lorelai: Oops.

Emily: He plays every week at the club. He can teach you to play like a pro.

Richard: Emily.

Emily: Why he could take you there on Sunday. It's perfect.

Richard: It's not something you can teach in an afternoon.

Lorelai: That's ok, Rory can pick something else.

Emily: Why should she pick something else? She needs to learn a sport and Richard can teach her a sport. You can use your mother's clubs. They're upstairs gathering dust along with the rest of her potential.

*(Episode 3. 3:37)*

While Emily is talking about how Richard can take Rory to the golf club, Richard's facial expression is rather stiff and he calls Emily by name to have her attention. His tone of voice is equally rather stiff, almost as if he was giving Emily a warning to stop

what she is doing. He tries to oppose by stating that golf cannot be taught in an afternoon and it seems as though he implies that because it is difficult to teach, they should not go at all. Lorelai sees what is happening and asks to talk to her mother outside the dinner table. This conflict is divided into smaller sections as there are several issues that need to be addressed. At first Lorelai is simply trying to stop her mother from forcing Rory and Richard to go play golf together.

(30)

Emily: I'm not forcing anybody.

Lorelai: Well you're manipulating the situation in a way that gives no one a way out - that's forced, look it up.

Emily: I'm just trying to help your daughter get an education.

Lorelai: Thank you, she'll find another sport.

Emily: Why should she?

Lorelai: Because she doesn't want to go and Dad doesn't want to take her.

Emily: Oh your father doesn't know what he wants. He'd get his hair cut at the butcher's if I let him.

*(Episode 3. 4:23)*

Here is an extremely good example of how Emily's mind works. She does not necessarily mean bad for anyone but she seems to think she knows best what everyone needs and should do. Apparently, she also knows best where Richard needs to have his hair cut and in all likelihood that is merely the tip of the iceberg. Lorelai has been reading non-verbal signs and has been able to infer that Rory does not want to go and Richard does not want to take her golfing. When Lorelai tells this to her mother, Emily starts blaming Lorelai for being afraid that Rory might actually have a good time with her grandfather.

(31)

Lorelai: That's crazy.

Emily: I agree.

Lorelai: I'm not afraid.

Emily: Then let her go.

Lorelai: She won't enjoy it mom.

Emily: Well why don't we let Rory decide.

*(Episode 3. 4:55)*

It is rather interesting that Emily is suggesting they let Rory decide if she has good time or not. It is interesting because so far not once has she stopped to ask what Rory wants or needs. On the contrary, Emily was going to buy new clothes, new internet connection and even a parking place including a car without ever asking what Rory thought. On the other hand, Lorelai has denied all Emily's efforts to offer them new things without asking Rory if she would like to have them. Emily and Lorelai go back and forth, Lorelai trying to explain how Rory is working hard during the week and needs some down time during the weekends.

(32)

Emily: So let me get this straight - there's no way that Rory could possibly enjoy a weekend day with her grandfather.

Lorelai: Oh, you're just gonna twist it all around, aren't you?

Emily: And you know your daughter so well that you don't even have to ask her opinion on this, she'd be miserable and you know it.

Lorelai: I'm so setting myself up here, but yes, she would be miserable.

Emily: That sounds a little controlling to me.

Lorelai: Yeah, I walked right into that.

Emily: Interesting isn't it, you being the one who's controlling.

Lorelai: I am not being -

Emily: According to you I was the only one in the family with that particular gift.

*(Episode 3. 5:33)*

In this excerpt Emily is accusing Lorelai of the same actions Lorelai has previously accused her mother of. Lorelai is quite naturally opposing and denying the truth value of Emily's accusations. Emily words out what must be one of Lorelai's biggest fears – to be just like her mother and not asking her daughter before making decisions for her. Considering their past, Lorelai is hardly making as drastic decisions for Rory than Emily was making for Lorelai all those years ago. This could go back to their previous dinner when Lorelai and Emily had the argument about how Lorelai and Christopher should have gotten married in order to live lovely lives, according to Emily at least. In this sense it is only natural Lorelai is opposing to her mother's claim that the two are more alike than Lorelai had thought they were. The scene ends here and next Lorelai and Rory are seen to exit the house. Lorelai is apologizing to Rory for not being able to get her out of the whole golfing thing. Rory is not upset and is in fact stating that it may not be so bad after all.

The next day Lorelai is having a busy day at the Inn, organizing a massive wedding. She admits to her co-worker Michel (played by Yanic Truesdale) that she is expecting a "save me" call from Rory, obviously still thinking Rory is having a terrible time with her grandfather. At the same time Richard and Emily are at home and Richard is still complaining about taking Rory golfing. He complains how she is late and would probably want to hang out at the mall instead. Emily is constantly talking about all the things Richard must show Rory when they get to the golf club. It is clearly implicated

in this scene that Richard is extremely reluctant to take Rory golfing. When Emily mentions lunch on top of golfing, Richard objects.

(33)

Richard: Emily, you are not listening to me. I will teach her to golf, as promised by you, but lunch is out of the question.

Emily: You have to eat.

Richard: Yes well -

Emily: So you'll eat together. Do you have sunscreen?

Richard: Emily.

[Doorbell rings]

Emily: Oh she's here.

Richard: Oh 8:30. We must remember to buy her a watch.

Emily: Richard, so help me God, you will be sweet to this girl and make this a memorable day for her. This is the first time we've gotten to show off our granddaughter at the club and it means a great deal for my happiness - and yours - that this day go well. Are we clear?

(*Episode 3. 10:45*)

Richard has been abiding to Emily's requests so far but is now openly objecting to take Rory for lunch after golfing. He is pointing out how this whole thing was Emily's idea ("as promised by *you*") and he has only signed up for golfing and nothing more. When Richard makes the snide remark of getting Rory a watch as she arrives 30 minutes late, Emily stops being nonchalant and lowers her voice for more emphasis. When she states that it means a great deal for her happiness, she emphasizes how it is also very important for Richard's happiness too. The illocutionary force of her line is to imply that if Richard fails to offer Rory a wonderful day, she will make sure Richard feels it

later. Emily is also stating the fact that this is the first time one of them gets to spend quality time with their only granddaughter and it is imperative to make it count.

As the episode continues, Rory and Richard are at the golf club. At first their conversation can be described as awkward and stiff but as Richard realizes that Rory is genuinely interested in hearing more about his work and has proved to be a sensible young woman, he warms up to her. Richard ends up suggesting lunch to Rory and he is actually doing it happily. Richard's friends at the club are complimenting Richard on how Rory seems like a lovely young lady and a slight look of contentment and pride can be seen on his face. It is shown how Rory and Richard are indeed having a wonderful time, sharing gossip she heard in the ladies' steam room and talking about how Rory wants to travel with her mother after high school. What was expected to be an awkward and unpleasant day at the golf club, turned out to be a heartwarming encounter. To Lorelai this is a devastatingly difficult issue to handle. She never anticipated Rory to enjoy the time with her grandfather.

Rory and Lorelai are meeting at Luke's diner and Lorelai enters with a look on her face that implies she is sorry for all the things Rory has gone through that day, expecting she has had a rough and boring day. Rory is trying to convince her mother the day was not all that bad after all.

(34)

Lorelai: You had a big lunch at the club?

Rory: Yup, it was quite good.

Lorelai: Quite? What's with the 'quite'?

Rory: What do you mean?

Lorelai: You don't ever say quite.

Rory: I say 'quite' plenty of times.

*(Episode 3. 26:35)*

Lorelai is surprised Rory had also stayed for lunch at the club. The fact that she fixates on Rory's use of the word 'quite' is interesting. Is she implying that once Rory has set foot on a prestigious golf club, she has suddenly started using more upper class words such as 'quite'? To emphasize this sudden use of fancy words, Lorelai uses the word later in the episode as she and Rory are having a chat on their front porch.

(35)

Rory: I think I wanna change my hair.

Lorelai: Really? I think it looks *quite* good.

(*Episode 3. 30:17*)

Going back to the scene at Luke's, Lorelai is visibly surprised about the things Rory tells her. That Rory and her grandfather actually talked, that Richard thought Lorelai and Rory's travel plans sounded like a great idea. The next day Richard calls at the Inn asking for Rory and Lorelai is visibly surprised and also slightly disturbed by the fact that Richard called Rory as, apparently, he has never called Lorelai. Lorelai's frustration grows during the day and it leads to a rather massive conflict between Lorelai and Rory. Lorelai is trying to suggest that Rory going golfing with Richard should count as dinner and they could wiggle their way out of Friday dinner. Rory seems to be fine with going to dinner as well as golfing. She has been looking for a certain book and Richard has found it for her so on Friday dinner she could get the book. Lorelai seems to be rather upset about Rory's willingness to go for the dinner. What Lorelai may be feeling is betrayal. How she used to have a partner in crime in Rory and now she has turned to the other side. Lorelai starts the argument by accusing Rory of borrowing her sweater without asking. Rory has already apologized but Lorelai decides to keep the argument going.

(36)

Lorelai: It's my favorite sweater too.

Rory: Since when?

Lorelai: Since always.

Rory: This is not your favorite sweater.

Lorelai: Yes, it is and now it's gonna be all stretched out just like everything else you borrow.

Rory: What are you talking about?

Lorelai: I'm talking about that you take my sweaters and you wear them and you stretch them out.

*(Episode 3. 33:02)*

When Rory opposes and says it is not in fact Lorelai's favorite sweater, it is implicated that Rory knows her mother so well she knows it is not her mother's favorite sweater and that there is something more behind her mother's accusations. Lorelai is not talking about her sweater but is more likely talking about the situation with her parents and the complicated relationship that she thought Rory would share with her. The argument ends the same way as most of the earlier ones – someone leaves the situation. Rory has had enough and she steps inside the house. The next day Lorelai confesses to her friend Sookie that the real reason she got upset was because she had left that life behind and it never occurred to her that Rory might want it. She also mentions how it frustrates her that it had occurred to her mother and how Lorelai hates that Emily was right.

The next day at the Inn Lorelai attempts to settle the argument with Rory. Lorelai is trying to explain her decisions to Rory and why it is difficult for her to relate to the fact that Rory wants to have a closer relationship with Emily and Richard. As they are talking, they hear and see a mother scolding her very young daughter.

Mother: I did not pay \$500 for this dress so you could run around and mess it up. Now you sit and be still. Cross your legs, you're a lady.

Lorelai: God, I must have had a million dresses like that when I was a kid.

Rory: It doesn't really scream you.

Lorelai: No, I did all the screaming.

Rory: Thank you for not putting me in a dress like that.

*(Episode 3. 38:56)*

Lorelai is talking about dresses but hidden between the lines is a message for Rory to understand that also the mother's behavior is familiar to Lorelai. She is using the situation they both observe to talk about herself. Lorelai seems to identify with the child and this can be seen as an indirect reference to her childhood family relations and her mother's attitude and conduct. When Rory thanks her mother for not dressing her like the little girl they saw, she seems to also be thanking her mother for letting her be a child, to run around and make a mess. The argument ceases, Lorelai apologizes and Rory makes a silent speech act by leaning towards her mother and linking her arm with Lorelai's.

At the end of the episode Lorelai and Rory have arrived at the weekly dinner. Lorelai is attempting to put on a happy face and be positive. Emily is in a happy mood, however there is a message in her words how she was right all along and how Lorelai was wrong.

(38)

Emily: I mean in this age of MTV and 100 tv channels, who would've imagined that a young girl could still get a thrill spending a simple afternoon with her grandfather?

*(Episode 3. 40:58)*

True to her nature, Lorelai is again trying to lighten the mood by joking. Her mother ignores the joke and continues to feast on her victory.

(39)

Emily: It's just very interesting the way things turned out, isn't it?

*(Episode 3. 41:27)*

The episode ends with Richard taking Rory to his study to see the book he got for Rory and as Emily also decides to join them, Lorelai is left alone in the sitting room. This scene seems to underline how Lorelai is different and distant from the rest of the family.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section the findings of this study are discussed. The aim of this study was to analyze the conflict situations in three first episodes of the first season of the television series *Gilmore Girls*. From these three episodes 39 examples of conflict situations were chosen for closer analysis. The purpose of this study was to analyze these conflicts with a pragmatic approach and especially through Allott's six principles and Grice's cooperation principle and maxims of conversations. These approaches are important when studying the conflicts in the series. These conflicts give information about the relationships and tensions between the main characters and in that sense are an essential part of the whole series.

Most of the conflicts occurred between Lorelai and Emily Gilmore. There were several conflicts between Lorelai and Rory Gilmore and at least one clear conflict between Emily and Richard Gilmore. All in all, 39 excerpts of conflict were chosen for this study and only one did not include Lorelai Gilmore. She is one of the main characters and as she is balancing between having a relationship with her mother Emily as well as with her daughter Rory it leads to the situation where Lorelai quite often is stuck between a rock and a hard place, trying to balance between two worlds. These two worlds are represented quite clearly during the episodes. There is the world of Lorelai and Rory Gilmore, a mother and a daughter living their simple but very happy life where everything is not perfect but whatever lacks is compensated in their tight and warm relationship to each other. The other world is

the one Lorelai left as soon as she could, the very privileged life in a rich environment where life is seemingly easy and preplanned. Both Lorelai and Emily refuse to see the good in each other's worlds as Emily thinks Lorelai and Rory are missing a lot of things in their life and Lorelai does not want anything from the previous life she had. When Lorelai actually needs something from her previous life - her parents' money, that is when the problems begin. Rory, on the other hand, is pretty much stuck in the middle, happy with what she has with her mother but also being interested and curious of the possibilities her grandparents could offer her.

Considering the research questions on Grice's maxims and the pragmatical terms, there is a significant amount of irony and sarcasm in the conflicts between Lorelai and Emily. Lorelai's humor lies heavily on popular culture which often is unfamiliar to her mother and Emily usually responds with irony or sarcasm. Considering Grice's maxims, the maxims of relation ("be relevant") and manner ("be clear and avoid ambiguity") are violated a few times, especially by Lorelai. Her use of humor often causes the violations. For example in section 4.2. when Emily has ordered a faster internet connection for Lorelai and Rory, Lorelai uses a yet another cultural reference by quoting *Shining*, a movie classic, and by doing so violates the maxim of relation as Emily fails to understand the connection between a DSL connection and Lorelai's line of "it'll be all work and no play, haven't you seen *The Shining*?" by which Lorelai refers to the famous movie quote "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". These cultural references are clear as day to Lorelai but due to their extremely different communication styles, Emily and Lorelai fail to be on the same page. As it was noted in section 2.1.2, it was rather important to look at the conflict situations as a whole, taking into account the little details as well as the worded utterances. In the conflict situations it was not merely about the words that were spoken but also things like small gestures, intonation and non-lexical responses. In this sense, pragmatics is the most fruitful approach to studying these conflict situations as it does not limit itself to words only but considers all aspects of communication as important as the spoken words.

The length of a Masters Thesis sets certain limitations for the amount of analyzed data and thus the findings of this study are quite narrow. As there are seven seasons to the series, it could be interesting to study if the main characters' communication styles change along the way and if their conflicts evolve differently compared to the ones that have been analyzed in this thesis. Moreover, three episodes of one television series is hardly an in-depth analysis on television studies. In that sense, the findings of this thesis might not be groundbreaking as such but this study does bring light to how television series can be used as data for conversational analysis and how pragmatics and conversational analysis can also be used in the field of television studies.

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