

# An Analysis of the Personalities in *Love Is a Fallacy* From the Perspective of Cooperative Principle

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**Abstract**—Pragmatics, closely related to the literature, serves as an effective tool for studying and appreciating literary works. From the perspective of Cooperative Principle, this study analyzes the conversation in *Love Is a Fallacy* with an aim to help readers to systematically decode the characters' personalities. The results of the analysis indicate that vivid personalities have been successfully portrayed through characters' violation of Cooperative Principle, but Polly only violated the maxims of quantity and relation as a result of her simpleness and ignorance, which offers different perspectives in critically interpreting the female images in Shulman's works.

**Index Terms**—Cooperative Principle, violation, personality, *Love Is a Fallacy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Theory of the Study

Pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics and semiotics, centers on the specific discourse in a specific context and how to interpret and use language through the context. Among theories critical to pragmatics, Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975) in his paper *Logic and Conversation* sheds light on how to interpret what someone says in order to keep the conversation going. The Cooperative Principle encompasses four maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner. Grice (1975) proposed a general principle for the speakers to comply with, which is "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 45). And they are truthful, brief, orderly and unambiguous in what they say (Paltridge, 2012). However, Thomas (1995) argues that a conversation becomes dreadfully dull if the speakers observe all the maxims through and through. As a matter of fact, the observation of these maxims varies from person to person in conversations (He & Ran, 2002). Grice (1975) points out that a conversational implicature is generated if participants in the conversation violate the maxims and sub-maxims.

### B. Purpose of the Study

This paper, based on Cooperative Principle, explores the characters' personalities of *Love Is a Fallacy*. First of all, a detailed analysis of the violation of the maxims of Cooperative Principle in the story's conversations helps to interpret its characters' personalities by analyzing the conversational implicatures, which can also offer a deeper look at its contribution to the story's splendid humorous effect. Secondly, a study on the violation of Cooperative Principle offers a systematic mechanism in interpreting the characters of *Love Is a Fallacy*, given that current studies on this text mainly focus on the violation of the maxims of Cooperative Principle with scattered analysis of their personalities. Lastly, the paper aims to help readers to critically evaluate the female character in *Love Is a Fallacy*.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. An Introduction to Cooperative Principle

Grice believes that there is a tacit understanding between the listener and the speaker, which is a principle that both sides should observe in the process of a conversation. Anyone who violates the Cooperative Principle may cause the others' misunderstanding of the discourse. The maxims of Cooperative Principle fall into four categories: quantity, quality, relation and manner (Grice, 1975).

#### 1. The Maxim of Quantity

- (1) Make your contribution as informative as required for the current purpose of the exchange.
- (2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

## 2. *The Maxim of Quality*

- (1) Do not say what you believe to be false.
- (2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

## 3. *The Maxim of Relation*

Be relevant.

## 4. *The Maxim of Manner*

- (1) Avoid obscurity of expression.
- (2) Avoid ambiguity.
- (3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- (4) Be orderly (Grace, 1975, p. 45-46).

The maxim of quantity stipulates the quantity of words, which means that the information expressed by the speaker should be sufficient but not excessive. The maxim of quality stresses that what the speaker says must be true, credible, authentic and well-founded. Contradiction or falsehood will violate the maxim of quality. The maxim of relation means that the speakers need to have a conversation around a fixed topic. Otherwise, the conversation will deviate from the topic, resulting in invalid communication (Li, 2017). The maxim of manner requires the speakers' expression to be clear, concise, and unambiguous.

## B. *Previous Studies of Love Is a Fallacy*

A considerable number of studies have been conducted on *Love Is a Fallacy*. Li and Cao (2007) analyzed the presentation of irony in this text from the perspective of unreliable narration. They believed that the unreliable narration and irony of the text display in two aspects respectively: the unreliable context and its surface irony as well as the distorted value and its deep irony. In the same year, Li and Cao (2007), guided by theory of narrative multiform, interpreted and appreciated *Love Is a Fallacy* through an analysis of its narrative art feature. They argued that Shulman's successful application of narrative multiform skills injected much more vividness into the text, expanded and deepened its theme. Lv (2010) decoded the meaning of fallacy from three aspects. Specifically, it referred to the common logic fallacies, absurd love views in this text and American values in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lu (2013) conducted an analogy study between *A Dream in Red Mansions* and *Love Is a Fallacy* to explore the ways of characterization. Based on the in-depth analysis of the major characters with respect to their name, utterance, appearance and mental life, it could be found that there were some useful similarities in terms of portraying. According to the *Love Is a Fallacy*, Jia Lin (2016) firstly explored the main protagonists' attitudes toward love, and then analyzed the primary reasons why most people possessed such absurd love views at present. Most significantly, what were the correct love views and how to develop such views had been elaborated.

In addition, many scholars have analyzed *Love Is a Fallacy* from the perspective of Cooperative Principle. For instance, Lu (2011) analyzed it from the perspective of characters' violation of Cooperative Principle so as to help readers understand the implied meaning conveyed by the author and understand his writing purpose more accurately; Lan (2011) analyzed the author's writing purpose and technique from the perspective of pragmatics and found that the author successfully achieved the writing purpose by observing and violating Cooperative Principle, Politeness Principle, and Irony Principle; Li and Cao (2014) analyzed the logical fallacies in their paper from the perspective of Cooperative Principle and believed that interpreting logical fallacies from that perspective can reveal the nature of logical fallacies more clearly.

Although the above-mentioned scholars have conducted several studies on *Love Is a Fallacy* from the perspective of Cooperative Principle, previous studies were not systematic. Less attention was paid to making a detailed analysis of the three protagonists' violation of Cooperative Principle and how their personalities were manifested from that perspective. Meanwhile, the link between a person and the reason why he or she didn't violate certain maxims was ignored by the previous studies.

## III. TEXT ANALYSIS

### A. *Analysis of the Characters*

*Love Is a Fallacy*, as a short story, is one of the great works of Max Shulman who is a well-known American humorist. In addition, this text is a classic excerpt of the collection of short stories, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. As a prolific writer of many talents, he has turned out a large number of novels, short stories, stage and screenplays and television scripts throughout his writing career. The whole story of this excerpt has taken place in the University of Minnesota. And there are three major characters. Specifically, Dobie Gillis, a law school freshman, is acute, calculating and perspicacious. He craves for love, but he believes that it is all about sense and logic. In other words, he is well aware of the importance of a suitable wife to the lawyer's career. The successful lawyers tend to marry beautiful,

gracious and intelligent women. However, as Dobie's roommate, Petey Burch is quite different from him because he is nearly a faddist with sensibility. In essence, both of them have an adversarial relationship in that they are associated with Polly in matters of love. Polly Espy is the girl whom Dobie intends to marry after suitable re-education. In Dobie's view, he believes Polly would become an intelligent person under his guidance.

### B. Analysis of the Contents

In this excerpt, the main contents involve four parts, namely the start, development, climax and denouement. The origin of this story lies in a covert and hidden deal. In other words, Dobie gives Petey a raccoon coat which is the embodiment of fashion. Meanwhile, with Petey's permission, Dobie has got the chance to date with his girl. From then on, there are a few dates between Dobie and Polly. It is not so much a date as a difficult process of making her intelligent. In order to achieve this goal, Dobie guides the girl to recognize the common fallacies of logic including the Dicto Simpliciter, the Hasty Generalization, the Post Hoc, the Contradictory Premises, the Ad Misericordiam, the False Analogy, the Hypothesis Contrary to Fact and the Poisoning the Well (Zhang, 2018). Although Dobie encountered various difficulties during this process, the girl finally has learned how to recognize these fallacies. At that moment, he shows his love because he thinks Polly has fitted his requirements. Nevertheless, the climax of this story is reached when Polly refuses to go steady with Dobie by using those fallacies. The denouement follows rapidly and ends on a very ironic note. Polly promises to go steady with Petey because he has owned a raccoon coat that all fashionable people on Campus are wearing. The raccoon coat which Dobie, the narrator, gave to Petey helped him win Polly's heart, and the raccoon coat which Dobie disliked and abhorred has been the root cause of his failure.

### C. Analysis of the Theme

The motif of the story is illustrated by the author in the title of the story: "*Love Is a Fallacy*." In fact, the writer intends to reveal triple fallacies (Lv, 2010). Firstly, it refers to the common logic fallacies which are regarded as the main stumbling block for rational thinking. Also, it tends to reflect some flaws in human thinking. Secondly, fallacy means the love views that the three people believe are false and absurd. For example, what Dobie has done is to make Polly become a fit wife for him, a proper hostess for his many mansions, a suitable mother for his well-heeled children, just as Pygmalion loved the perfect woman he had fashioned, so he loved his (Zhang, 2018). It is known that Dobie believes love is based on the premise that logic controls everything. However, love is a kind of emotion that does not always follow the principles of logic. Thirdly, this text is highly critical of the "unhealthy" American values in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As we all know, the United States experienced the social shift from production to consumption at that time (Luo, 2019). In other words, consumerism, as a kind of belief, was becoming increasingly prevalent among the whole society. As for the Minkov's Cultural Dimensions, it can be concluded that "most underdeveloped nations place a high priority on industriousness while those countries with a developed economy tilt more toward leisure. This indicates that as a nation's economy improves and people gain more wealth and social security, they begin to value enjoyment of life over work" (Larry et al., 2015, p. 231). Such Cultural Dimensions shows that most people in the United States have owned typical characteristics of indulgent cultures to some extent. So at that time, most of the people paid much more attention to fame, money, luxury, indulgence, etc (Jia, 2016). The writer believes the values based on such society are wrong and awful, and he hopes the reader can ponder over what is love and establish the correct values after reading.

## IV. PERSONALITIES ANALYSIS

The following analysis of characters' personalities in *Love Is a Fallacy* is based on the violation of Cooperative Principle with typical conversational examples taken from *Advanced English* (Zhang, 2018). These examples are presented in italics.

### A. Dobie's Violation of the Maxims of Cooperative Principle

Dobie is a young law school student who believes he is full of talent and superior to others. To achieve his goal of persuading Petey to stay away from Polly and then turning this beautiful but unintelligent girl into his perfect smart wife, Dobie violates the maxims of Cooperative Principle time after time, from which his personalities are on full display.

#### 1. Violating the Maxim of Quantity

*Cool was I and logical. Keen, calculating, perspicacious, acute—I was all of these. My brain was as powerful as a dynamo, precise as a chemist's scales, as penetrating as a scalpel. And—think of it!—I was only eighteen* (Zhang, 2018, p. 52).

Reading is an interaction between the author and his or her target readers. The story is a narrative in the first person and is brimming with Dobie's monologue which serves as the conversation between Dobie and the readers. At the beginning of the story, Dobie provided a loaded self-introduction for the readers. In this self-introduction, Dobie claimed himself as a talent with a stream of such self-flattering words like cool, keen, acute, calculating and perspicacious as well as three similes to heap praise upon himself, which undoubtedly went beyond his required contribution to the conversations. Such a self-introduction unfolds Dobie's intellectual arrogance before the readers' eyes.

*Same age, same background, but dumb as an ox. A nice enough fellow, you understand, but nothing upstairs. Emotional type. Unstable. Impressionable. Worst of all, a faddist. Fads, I submit, are the very negation of reason* (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).

On top of singing his praises, Dobie violated the maxim of quantity again by comparing himself with Petey who was the “same age, same background” as him. Dobie employed a string of degrading words like dumb and impressionable to belittle Petey as a perfect foil for his talent and superiority. Through such a sharp contrast, the author burnished Dobie’s image of a pretentious youth who seemed to be contemptuous of people around him.

## 2. Violating the Maxim of Quality

*I had long coveted Polly Espy. Let me emphasize that my desire for this young woman was not emotional in nature. She was, to be sure, a girl who excited the emotions, but I was not one to let my heart rule my head. I wanted Polly For a shrewdly calculated, entirely cerebral reason.*

*It must not be thought that I was without love for this girl. Quite the contrary. Just as Pygmalion loved mine* (Zhang, 2018, p. 54).

Throughout the whole story, Dobie declared that he didn’t opt for Polly out of love but for realistic reasons, which clashed with the love confession he made in conversations with Polly. What’s more, Dobie repeatedly described Polly as a “beautiful and gracious” girl with “exquisite manners”, which seemed that he was strongly attracted by Polly’s external appearance. Even though her lack of knowledge was appalling, Dobie still thought it was “a nice try” at the thought of Polly’s “abundant physical charms”, which obviously went against his certainty that it is the reality not Polly’s beauty and grace that made him determined to have Polly through thick and thin. Thus, Dobie violated the maxim of quality when explaining why he would plump for Polly to be his future wife in his monologue, which amplified the insincerity in his nature.

*I nodded with satisfaction. “In other words, if you were out of the picture, the field would be open. Is that right?”*

*“I guess so. What are you getting at?”*

*“Nothing, nothing,” I said innocently, and took my suitcase out the closet* (Zhang, 2018, p. 54).

Knowing that Petey would trade whatever he had for a racoon coat and he was the only one Polly was dating with, Dobie hatched a plan to swap his father’s racoon coat with Petey in order to edge him out of the love competition. But when asked what he was getting at, Dobie replied “nothing” which blatantly violated the maxim of quality for he raised these questions purposefully, which mirrored Dobie’s cunning and dishonest.

*“Polly,” I said sharply, “it’s a fallacy. Eula Becker doesn’t cause the rain. She has no connection with the rain. You are guilty of Post Hoc if you blame Eula Becker.”*

*“I’ll never do it again,” she promised contritely. “Are you mad at me?” I sighed deeply.*

*“No, Polly, I’m not mad”* (Zhang, 2018, p. 58).

Even though Polly was so stupid that she couldn’t understand the fallacies he cited, Dobie still persisted and hid his anger, frustration and disappointment to maintain an image of a polite, gentle young man who was intellectual. At such circumstances, Dobie violated the maxim of quality again by giving replies which he knew that were not true. Dobie’s courtesy and obsession with his profile stood out.

## 3. Violating the Maxim of Relation

*“I think she’s a keen kid,” he replied, “but I don’t know if you call it love. Why?”*

*“Do you,” I asked, “have any kind of formal arrangement with her? I mean are you going steady or anything like that?”*

*“No. We see each other quite a bit, but we both have other dates. Why?”*

*“Is there,” I asked, “any other man for whom she has a particular fondness?”*

*“Not that I know of. Why?” I nodded with satisfaction.*

*“In other words, if you were out of the picture, the field would be open. Is that right?”*

*“I guess so. What are you getting at?”*

*“Nothing, nothing,” I said innocently, and took my suitcase out the closet* (Zhang, 2018, p. 54).

The maxim of relation requires that what the speakers say should be relevant to the topic of their conversation. Dobie wanted to make sure that Petey was the only one he would call a rival in winning Polly’s heart, so he bombarded Petey with questions on his relationship with Polly in a much more roundabout way. In this conversation, after answering Dobie’s question, Petey asked why he raised such a question which Dobie ignored on purpose and raised other questions which were irrelevant to Petey’s question. Such pattern repeated for three times until Dobie replied with “nothing”, which was a clear violation of the maxim of relation through which his calculation shined.

## 4. Violating the Maxim of Manner

*I wanted Polly For a shrewdly calculated, entirely cerebral reason.*

*I consulted my watch. “I think we’d better call it a night. I’ll take you home now, and you go over all the things you’ve learned. We’ll have another session tomorrow night.” I deposited her at the girls’ dormitory, where she assured me that she had had a “perfectly” evening, and I went glumly home to my room* (Zhang, 2018, p. 59).

Choice of words can reflect one's education degree. Dobie tended to use big and esoteric words such as "cerebral" instead of "realistic" to reason his choice of Polly as his future wife and used "deposited" rather than "sent" in his dates with her who would call fallacies as "this keen stuff" with exclamations like "Wow-Dow" and "Magnif". However, obscure words often fail to facilitate communication. Nevertheless, Dobie violated the maxim of manner in his monologue as a way to highlight his intelligence, which ended up setting up his image of self-glorification.

Throughout the story, Dobie violated the maxims of Cooperative Principle repeatedly to maintain his talented intellectual image. The above-mentioned analysis provides a many-sided image of Dobie. He is indeed a smart freshman but the absence of strong evidence in the story only makes his self-praise unreliable. For starters, his arrogance was manifested by the fact that he thought he was superior to other people. He looked down on his roommate Petey whom he thought was the sheer opposite to a talented youth like him. Such a figure matches with the individualism prevailing in America since the Second World War. Then, he is conceited and hypocritical. He wanted Polly to be his bride-to-be merely because all the successful man he observed had a gorgeous, graceful and smart wife, so he needed one too. Even though Polly was charming and graceful, he thought she was unintelligent. His plan of teaching her logic in their dates was a mirror of his hypocrisy. Dobie's behavior displayed the stereotype of women in 1950s when beautiful, smart women were regarded as a token of successful men. Moreover, Dobie is cunning and self-assertive. He would get Petey's promise indirectly and estimated the possibility before offering a deal to him. He planned to make a love confession to Polly after imbuing her with logic thinking. He thought he had everything under control but ended up making fun of himself because "smart" Polly didn't choose him as a boyfriend because Petey broke his promise.

### B. Petey's Violation of the Maxims of Cooperative Principle

In terms of the whole text, Petey violates all the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. It is known that the implicature will be achieved if someone purposely doesn't observe the Cooperative Principle. The specific analysis of violation is as follows.

#### 1. Violating the Maxim of Quantity

According to the maxim of quantity of Cooperative Principle, we should make our contribution "as informative as is required for the particular purpose and not make it more informative than is required" (Grice, 1975, p. 45). That is to say, no more and no less.

*One afternoon I found Petey lying on his bed with an expression of such distress on his face that I immediately diagnosed appendicitis. "Don't move," I said. "Don't take a laxative. I'll get a doctor."*

*"Raccoon," he mumbled thickly.*

*"Raccoon?" I said, pausing in my flight.*

*"I want a raccoon coat," he wailed (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

In this context, Petey should have said more about why he felt distressed. However, he just said only one word "Raccoon", which made Dobie felt a little confused.

*I perceived that his trouble was not physical, but mental. "Why do you want a raccoon coat?"*

*"I should have known it," he cried, pounding his temples. "I should have known they'd come back when the Charleston came back. Like a fool I spent all my money for textbooks, and now I can't get a raccoon coat" (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

In this excerpt, Petey said too much when Dobie asked the reason why he wanted a raccoon coat. Actually, the major reason was that the Charleston came back and he wanted to be in the swim. After that, he also said he spent all the money for textbooks, which was nearly redundant.

#### 2. Violating the Maxim of Quality

This maxim stresses the importance of reliability. To be exact, people should only say what they believe to be true and what they have evidence for.

*"Can you mean," I said incredulously, "that people are actually wearing raccoon coats again?"*

*"All the Big Men on Campus are wearing them. Where've you been?"*

*"In the library," I said, naming a place not frequented by Big Men on Campus (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

As for the maxim of quality of Cooperative Principle, what the speakers say should be based on the facts. In other words, the speakers should have enough evidence to prove it is true. In this context, Petey asserted that all the Big Men on Campus were wearing raccoon coats, which seemingly lacked enough evidence.

*"Well, I do," he declared. "I'd give anything for a raccoon coat. Anything!"*

*My brain, that precision instrument, slipped into high gear. "Anything?" I asked, looking at him narrowly.*

*"Anything," he affirmed in ringing tones (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

Based on the definition of the maxim of quality, it was obvious that Petey didn't observe this maxim because he said he would give anything for a raccoon coat. This sentence seemingly embodied his determination, but no one could prove that Petey would absolutely do it in that way.

#### 3. Violating the Maxim of Relation

In terms of the relevant maxim, the whole content should be related to each other. It means there is a connection among lines in some way.

*"Can you mean," I said incredulously, "that people are actually wearing raccoon coats again?"*

*"All the Big Men on Campus are wearing them. Where've you been?"*

*"In the library," I said, naming a place not frequented by Big Men on Campus (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

According to this example, such sentence, "Where've you been?" was unrelated to the context because the topic was about the raccoon coat. Although it seemed irrelevant, Petey used it to explain Dobie wasn't a Big Man and he would never wear the raccoon coat.

*"Petey," I said, "are you in love with Polly Espy?"*

*"I think she's a keen kid," he replied, "but I don't know if you'd call it love. Why?" (Zhang, 2018, p. 54)*

As for this excerpt, there was no direct correlation between the question and the answer. This was because Petey should have replied "yes" or "no" when Dobie said "are you in love with Polly Espy?" However, Petey didn't know what love was at all and he just gave the brief comment on Polly.

#### 4. Violating the Maxim of Manner

The maxim of the manner of Cooperative Principle emphasizes that we should be lucid in what we say, "avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity, and be brief and orderly" (Grace, 1975, p. 46) in our contribution to the interaction.

*One afternoon I found Petey lying on his bed with an expression of such distress on his face that I immediately diagnosed appendicitis. "Don't move," I said. "Don't take a laxative. I'll get a doctor."*

*"Raccoon," he mumbled thickly.*

*"Raccoon?" I said, pausing in my flight.*

*"I want a raccoon coat," he wailed (Zhang, 2018, p. 53).*

As what was mentioned above, Petey said only one word when Dobie asked the reason why he felt unhappy, which flouted the maxim of the quantity. Meanwhile, he didn't observe the maxim of manner because the word "raccoon" was obscure and ambiguous. For the hearer, raccoon usually means a kind of animal rather than the coat.

*"You don't understand," he interrupted impatiently. "It's the thing to do. Don't you want to be in the swim?"*

*"No," I said truthfully.*

*"Well, I do," he declared. "I'd give anything for a raccoon coat. Anything!" (Zhang, 2018, p. 53)*

In terms of this example, there was a slang, namely "in the swim". In this context, it referred to go with the "flow" of wearing the raccoon coat. However, it would be easy to be misunderstood if the hearer didn't get the meaning of this slang. Consequently, Petey violated the maxim of the manner in that the hearer might feel confused.

As we all know, the conversational implicatures result from the violation of the Cooperative Principle. At the same time, a person's typical personalities can be reflected through these words. As for Petey, he is a wiseacre because he believes that all the Big Men on Campus are wearing raccoon coats and they seldom go to the library. The boy seems omniscient, but these words lack corresponding reliability. Moreover, Petey is used to speaking without deep thinking. For example, he would like to give anything for a raccoon coat, which makes the readers think it's a little bit ridiculous. Of course, it can be concluded that the boy is shortsighted because he doesn't make proper or careful judgments. Furthermore, "hypocrisy" can be used to describe Petey. This is because he said the reason why he had no money to buy the raccoon coat was that he spent all the money for textbooks. For the readers, this sentence is more like an invented excuse rather than a justified explanation. Most significantly, compared with Dobie, the boy is an emotional and sentimental person. As mentioned above, he wailed with only one word "raccoon" when Dobie asked why he felt distressed, which is a good example to show he is a mindless faddist. Of course, it's easy to find out that he attaches too much importance to money and material possessions.

In general, Petey's personalities have been reflected vividly through this secret deal. Meanwhile, his values have been criticized by the author. Here, it should be noted that those personalities are related to many factors such as culture, economy and so forth.

#### C. Polly's Violation of the Maxims of Cooperative Principle

Through the analysis of the whole text, Polly violates the maxim of quantity and relation for many times, but does not violate the principle of quality and manner. The specific analysis is as follows.

##### 1. Violating the Maxim of Quantity

As Dobie helped Polly learn logic through fallacies, the number of words that they spoke was different. Dobie dominated the conversation and Polly responded passively by using very simple words. Examples are listed as follows.

*"...These we will take up tonight."*

*"Wow-dow!"*

*"First let us examine the fallacy called Dicto Simpliciter."*

*"By all means," she urged, batting her lashes eagerly.*

*"...Therefore everybody should exercise."*

*"I agree," said Polly earnestly (Zhang, 2018, p. 57).*

There are many examples like the one mentioned above. Obviously, the author wants to reflect the difference in knowledge between Dobie and Polly through the description of their words. Faced with Dobie's incessant input, Polly could only answer with simple words for she hardly understood what Dobie said. The maxim of quantity emphasizes that what we say in a conversation should be adequate and sufficient. But in this conversation, the information provided by Polly is not enough, which obviously fails to observe the maxim of quantity.

## 2. Violating the Maxim of Relation

Polly is not as intelligent as Dobie. It is hard for her to understand the examples given by Dobie and she can not catch up with his paces. For the advanced knowledge mentioned by Dobie, Polly repeatedly violates the maxim of relation and says something unrelated to the subject matter.

*"but it's no argument. The man never answered the boss's questions about his qualifications. Instead he appealed to the boss's sympathy. He committed the fallacy of Ad Misericordiam. Do you understand?"*

*"Have you got a handkerchief?" she blubbered (Zhang, 2018, p. 59).*

Polly should have answered Dobie's question whether she understood the example of Ad Misericordiam. But Polly, as a listener, ignored Dobie's question and asked Dobie if he had a handkerchief. Her answer was not relevant to the previous topic. Instead, she chose to avoid the question and gained the initiative of the turn. So, Polly violated the maxim of relation in this turn.

*"Listen: If Madame Curie had not happened to leave a photographic plate in a drawer with a chunk of pitchblende, the world today would not know about radium."*

*"True, true," said Polly, nodding her head. "Did you see the movie? Oh, it just knocked me out. That Walter is so dreamy. I mean he fractures me" (Zhang, 2018, p. 60).*

Dobie cited Madame Curie's example to explain logic to Polly, but Polly ignored Dobie's intentions. She focused her attention on Walter Pidgeon, the actor in the movie, which clearly violated the maxim of relation. Here, the author aims to portray Polly's simple-mindedness by describing her failure to understand Dobie's intention.

In addition to the examples mentioned above, after Polly had thoroughly understood all those fallacies, her subsequent conversations with Dobie also violated the maxim of relation many times. She used the fallacies that she learned to respond to Dobie's expression of love for her. This shows that she failed to understand Dobie's true intentions from beginning to end.

Max Shulman's Polly is a simple young girl. Shulman describes the characters in a totally different way. When describing Dobie, he uses very rational and knowledgeable language to highlight his calm thinking and profound knowledge. However, when describing Polly, he uses some interjections, such as "Gee" and "Wow-dow" to express her surprise. Meanwhile, he uses some popular truncated words, such as "marvy", "delish" and "sensaysh" to present her inscient and simple-minded image.

Among the four maxims of Cooperative Principle, Polly only violated the maxims of quantity and relation. On the one hand, since she couldn't understand the fallacies that Dobie provided to help her learn logic, her ignorance was vividly reflected in the face of the advanced knowledge. All Polly could do was to express surprise, appreciation, or blind approval of everything that Dobie said. As a result, the simple words she responded with could not meet the needs of communication and violated the maxim of quantity. On the other hand, due to the knowledge gap between Dobie and her, she often deviated from the topic and violated the maxim of relation. In the climax of the article, although Dobie had already officially expressed love to her, Polly strictly used the fallacies that she learned to interpret Dobie's words, which ostensibly reflected her cleverness. But concretely, this mirrored her inflexibility like an emotionless learning machine. In the whole process, she didn't violate the other two maxims, which was closely related to Polly's personalities. In the face of Dobie who was much more knowledgeable than her, a girl with simple mind and limited knowledge would not deliberately tell lies, or say some obscure words.

In terms of appearance, Shulman's Polly is beautiful and gracious, which makes Dobie fall in love with her. However, in the description of action and language, he tries his best to portray Polly's ignorance and boredom. He deliberately exaggerates the weakness and clumsiness of women in science, work and other fields (Lu, 2013). Readers should be aware of the author's intentions and accept his works with a critical aesthetic perspective when appreciating the humor effects in Max Shulman's works.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper makes an analysis of the characters' personalities in *Love Is a Fallacy* within the theoretical framework of Cooperative Principle. There are some major findings:

First of all, Cooperative Principle can be used to analyze the personalities. Through a careful analysis, it can be concluded that Dobie is a law school freshman who is intelligent but arrogant and hypocritical. On the one hand, he admires gorgeous Polly and believes that the simple-minded girl will be clever under his guidance. On the other hand, he is contemptuous of Petey. Their communication is full of calculation and insincerity. His roommate, Petey, as a mindless faddist, attaches too much importance to money and material possessions. Meanwhile, his sentimentality and shortsightedness have been exposed thoroughly during the process of craving for the raccoon coat. However, the female character, Polly, is a simple-minded and inscient girl whose character is in sharp contrast with the other two male

characters.

In addition, by systematically analyzing the personalities of the three protagonists from their violation of Cooperative Principle, it is found that both Dobie and Petey violate the four maxims, but Polly only violates the maxims of quantity and relation, which further proves her simplicity and ignorance. This is a point that previous scholars have never paid attention to.

Last but not least, Shulman's portrayal of female images in literary works deserves our attention. Polly, as the only female character in *Love Is a Fallacy*, is portrayed as a beautiful, elegant, but clumsy and naive image. This is related to Shulman's writing style, which is embodied in all female characters in his works. But that is not Shulman's real purpose of writing. Shulman just wants to arouse people's awareness of respecting women's status in such a way. This is also the point that the readers need to notice when they appreciate Shulman's works.

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