

## Investigating Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion in A Fishing Excursion by Guy de Maupassant with Specific Reference to Johnstone's Model: A Stylistic Study

**Suad Abdullah Maedi**

Technical Institute of Samawah, AL-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University, Iraq  
souad.maidi@atu.edu.iq

### Abstract

Persuasive strategies are formed by the combination of three dimensions: language, culture, and rhetorical devices. This paper is a stylistic study based on Johnstone's model of persuasion, which is applied to "A Fishing Excursion" by Guy de Maupassant, to examine the three linguistic strategies of the model throughout the story. The study is dedicated to showing a detailed analysis of the strategies of persuasion in the story and interpreting the significance of each to the progress of the plot. As well as shedding light on the rhetorical patterns that are used in the story. Besides, the study hypothesizes that the selected model applies to Maupassant's "A Fishing Excursion," and it is significant to reveal the linguistic strategies of persuasion. Therefore, comprehensive tables and illustrative figures are provided based on the statistical data. The results show that some stylistic markers appear to be specific to the writer's style in the selected text.

**Keywords:** Investigating Linguistic Strategies, Guy de Maupassant, Johnstone's Model, Stylistic Study

### 1. Introduction

Language is the most vital tool that we use to communicate and get closer to one another. It is used to do an extraordinarily wide range of activities. Via language, the speakers express themselves, generate thoughts, offer opinions, achieve goals, make requests, give orders, etc. The participants engaged in these activities develop a proper understanding while employing certain strategies such as persuasion. The concept of "persuasion" dates back to Aristotle as it is linked with "rhetoric"; when he argued that rhetoric can be defined as the capability of observing the possible means of persuasion (Kennedy, 2007:37). Persuasion is concerned with the given subject, in contrast to other arts which are directed to their own subjects. Thus, it is the act of no other art.

#### 1.1 Persuasion:

The scholars have long been interested in the various methods of persuasion employed across different eras. Even with the many changes that the communication has undergone over time, its foundation remains rooted in Aristotle's rhetorical appeals which were introduced in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Pelclová & Lu, 2018: 1). Gass & Seiter (2018:88) state that "persuasion involves one or more persons who are engaged in the activity of creating, reinforcing, modifying, or extinguishing beliefs,

attitudes, intentions, motivations, and/or behaviours within the constraints of a given communication context.”

### 1.2 Johnstone's Views on Persuasion:

There are many strategies of persuasion which are proposed by different scholars and applied in many studies. Richardson (2007: 186) states that Aristotle provides three main strategies of persuasion which the persuader uses to convince the audience. Firstly, "Logos" which refers to the use of the rational logic to support the argument. Secondly, "Pathos", in which the emotional language is used to make the addressee more receptive to the message. Thirdly, "Ethos" indicates the speaker's character and his/her credibility.

However, Johnstone (1989:143) goes further to differentiate between persuasive strategies and persuasive styles. The first refers to the range of choices a speaker can draw from in order select the effective tactics of persuasion for a specific situation. Clearly, in all situations that require rhetorical discourse, people do not use the same techniques. Definitely, we all have access to a variety of strategies of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, from which we choose what is needed to achieve effective persuasion. As a matter of fact, speech communities and their subgroups may vary in the range of the strategies that are used by their members. It is conveniently suitable to state that, as Bruner (1986, as cited in Johnstone 1989: 143) argues, no one is ever limited, in all contexts, to a single persuasive strategy, and some strategies are universal.

Persuasive styles are the set of strategies that are assumed to be the best and most universally applicable strategies. The speakers use these strategies in situations where they do not know how to best proceed because they encounter interlocutors whose responses are not predicted. Johnstone (2008:245) argues that for persuasion to take effect, rationality and logic are needed in specific contexts and emotions in others. This argument leads to the conclusion that the persuasive strategies that prove to be effective and acceptable in a certain context may not be so in another.

Johnstone's linguistic strategies of persuasion start with the term 'quasilogical'. Johnstone (1989: 145) suggests that as a form of informal and non-demonstrative type of reasoning, quasilogical argumentation brings its effectiveness from how closely it mirrors formal logical reasoning. The persuader using the quasilogical strategy tries to arrange structural features and lexical items drawn from formal logic so that their message seems rational and convincing. Special attention should be paid to the significance of transitivity which is unquestionably crucial in this particular strategy. Johnstone (1989: 146) defines transitivity as “a property of certain relationships, such as equality and numerical superiority, that makes it possible to infer that because the relationship holds between a and b and between b and c, it, therefore, holds a and c.”. The quasilogical employment of transitivity handles the relationships which are in fact not transitive even if they may look so. An instance of such non-transitive relationship is friendship, which could be built as follows: If Ann is a friend of Tom and Tom is a friend of Alex, then Ann and Alex ought to get along well.

In contrast to quasilogical strategy, which relies on rational persuasion, Johnstone (1989:147-148)

explains that presentational persuasion rests on the assumption that "being persuaded is being moved, being swept along by a rhythmical flow of words and sounds, in the way people are swept along by poetry". The main purpose of this form of persuasion is to embed an argument or claim in the audience's mind by using many methods like repetition or paraphrasing, with the ultimate goal of gaining aesthetic attention to it.

In this respect, the most important thing is that this persuasion process includes suspense and passion. Larson (2010:319) defines alliteration as "the repetition of consonant sounds" which causes a kind of inner rhythms in the messages and makes them more lively. By repeating the sounds in the initial position of the words, the persuaders strengthen their argument and ensure that the viewpoint which they emphasize stays in the audience's mind. In other words, alliteration adds emphasis to the words or the important points so that they will be memorable.

When current situations are related to historical events or myths, there are analogies. These are used to clarify the thoughts by connecting them with commonly recognized phenomena. The effectiveness of the analogy depends on how far the compared items correspond to each other and whether they are similar in ways which are relevant to the argument being presented or not (Beard, 2000: 27-28). According to Johnstone (1989: 149), the analogical persuasion is works by drawing on traditional wisdom, either explicitly or implicitly, through storytelling methods like parables or fables.

## 2. Review of the Literature

Several studies have been conducted on persuasion in various genres like religious sermons, literary work, political discourse, business and advertisements, etc. These studies examine the persuasive strategies to fathom out their role in persuasion and their influence on the addressees.

The first academic study which discusses the linguistic strategies of persuasion was presented by Barbara Johnstone, which is entitled "Linguistic Strategies and Cultural Styles for Persuasive Discourse" in 1989. The study is concerned with the description of the ways in which the three dimensions, language, culture, and rhetorical situation, come together to form the persuasive strategies which are used in the European West and the Arab and Iranian East. In this study, Johnstone tries to find a way of combining a view of rhetoric which sees the persuasive style as a facet of culture with the view which sees speakers as making choices from the "available means of persuasion".

The second significant study that has tackled persuasion is presented by Jasim (2000) who conducted a stylistic study of "Linguistic Strategies for Persuasive Discourse with Specific Reference to Fiction". It is an attempt to show how the combination of language, culture, and rhetorical situation contributes to form the persuasive strategies in fiction. The study aims to examine Johnstone's persuasive modes quasilogic (the formal logic), presentation (the rhythmic quality), and analogy (calling for the time-tested values).

The third relevant study is Ghailan's (2011) examination and evaluation of the persuasive strategies in a chapter from Dickens' "Hard Times" in terms of Barbara Johnstone's model. He explores the strategies of persuasion which are adopted by Charles Dickens the analysis of the study illustrates

that; besides the cultural effects, the social status adds a problem which leads to the failure of the communication between Bounderby and Stephen since Stephen's attempt to escape his failed life was to no avail.

Darweesh & Mahdi (2019) identify the persuasive strategies that are used by the presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, to achieve her political objectives. Politicians have the ability to manipulate and influence their interlocutors. For example, they always use evidences and arguments to persuade the voters to elect them. The study concluded that a political campaign speech is filled with persuasive strategies and relies on stimulation to get response from the addressees and to capture as many voters as possible.

### 3. Methodology

The current study adopts Johnstone's model of the linguistic strategies of persuasion as a linguistic tool in analysing "A Fishing Excursion" and identifying the various techniques of persuasion which are employed by the key characters to convince one another. The story will be divided into three sections based on the plot, which are the exposition, the complication and climax, and the resolution. After dividing up, the researcher examines the entire statements of each phase. It is followed by the identification of the sentences that carry the linguistic strategies of persuasion as presented in the model. Then, the identified sentences will be classified, according to the techniques they have, into the three persuasive strategies. Additionally, the persuasive strategies are presented in clear tables with reference to the percentages reinforced by illustrative figures.

#### 3.1 Guy de Maupassant:

Henri René Albert Guy de Maupassant was a well-known French writer of 19th-century. He is regarded as one of the pioneers of the modern short story. As a student of Flaubert, his stories are noted for their concise style and smooth, effective ending. He became famous because of his works such as "Boule De Suif" ("Ball of Fat", 1880) story of a fille de joie/prostitute travelling by coach and left out in the cold in the trip, "Une Vie" (A Woman's Life, 1883) it is about a Norman wife, "Bel-Ami" (1885) a novel about social climbing, sex, and power. "Pierre Et Jean" (1888) a novel about two brothers doubting their mother's fidelity, "Le Horla" (1887) short horror story depicting supernatural ruled the mankind, La Parure (1884) a short story with its notable ending, Mademoiselle Fifi (1882) it is same as the Boule De Suif in spite of that it has a deep structure and symbolism et caeter.

#### 3.2 The Analysis of the Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion:

Johnston's (1989) linguistic strategies of persuasion are used as linguistic devices to identify the various techniques of persuasion that Guy de Maupassant's characters employ to persuade each other. The three persuasive strategies, quasi-logical, presentational, and analogical, are employed in this study as a foundation for analyzing the text. Quasilogical arguments are investigated through the rational techniques like syllogism, causation, rhetorical questions, conditional clauses and logical connectives. Then, presentational arguments are investigated through other techniques like deixes,

metaphor, image, alliteration, and parallelism. Analogical strategy involves the analogical techniques like biblical references and leaping between the past and the present.

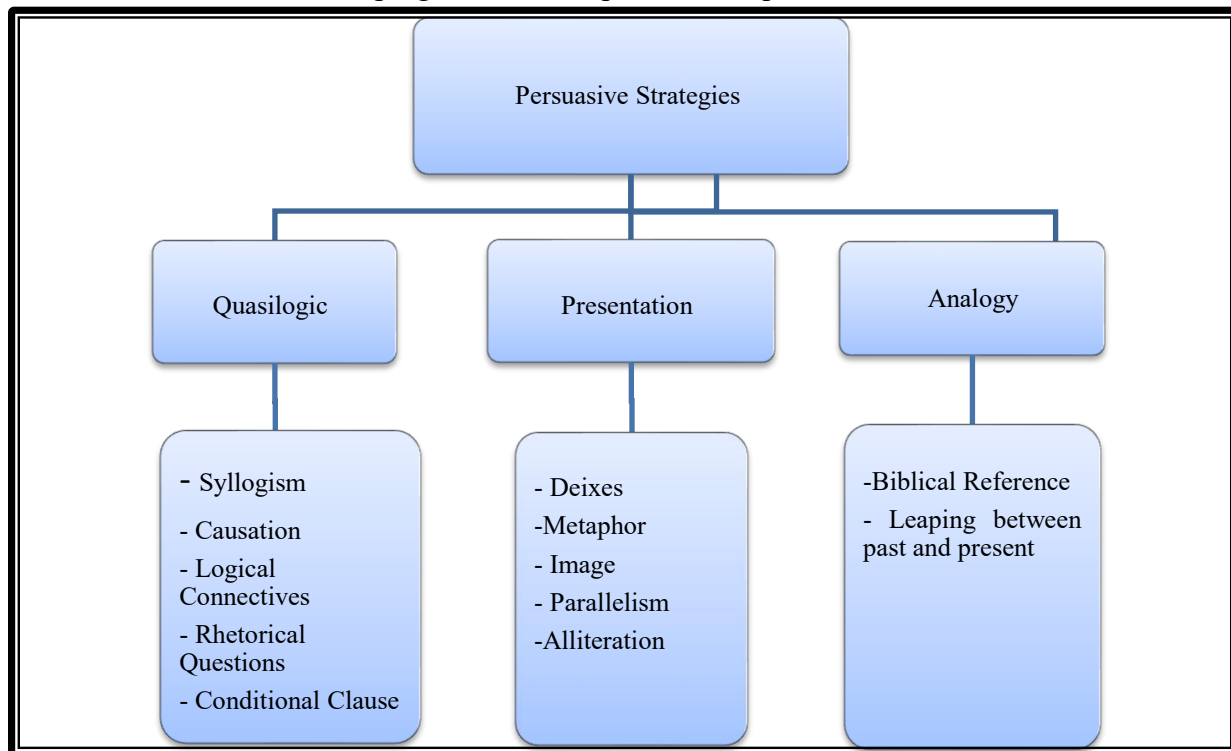


Figure (1): Persuasive Strategies and Their Techniques

### 3.3 The Plot:

Story happens during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. French army thought that they can defeat German forces, but they didn't; then the Germans shut off their port to stop getting goods and supplies from other countries. Famine came to Paris. M. Morissot, watchmaker and a militiaman; walking sadly in the boulevard on a January morning and he met his pal M. Sauvage, also an ally and a riverside associate. Before the war, every Sunday, Morissot will go to Marante Island in his favorite locus to begin fishing. He also meets up with M. Sauvage, a dealer of clothes. They spent time with each other, and they unavoidably built a friendship.

They greet each other by appreciating how beautiful the sky, weather, sun. Captivated by it. Then the two men went into a café with some absinthe then they continue to perambulate alongside the streets and entered another wine shop. After drinking, they decided to fish near Colombes. Arrived by eleven and also The Prussian heights was located there so Morissot and Savauge said they will venture the country, say suppose they met some of them and offer them some fish. They were hesitated but M. Sauvage decided to go carefully. Climbed, runned, plunged then they reached the bank. Soothe by

the silence, they start fish. The two men enjoying their fishing to the point that they forgot the rest of the world. Instantaneously, explosion sounds came in. The cannon of Mount Valerien were beginning. Two men talked about solving serious political problems while Mt. Valerien's cannon destroying French homes, killing precious lives and turning dreams into nightmares.

But they shivered in great fear when they realize that they were people behind them, four tall men, armed men with breads, dressed like uniformed servants, with caps on their head and rifles aimed in their direction. Dropped their fishing lines on the stream. Almost instantly, they were captured, bundled into a rowboat and transported to the island. Next, a man sitting on a chair smoking pipe asked them if they had a good fishing and see that it didn't go badly but the Prussian said they have another to talk about that Morissot and Sauvage are spies to keep an eye of him and just pretending that they're fishing. The Prussian asked for the password in return since they came past out the outposts so that the two fishermen can be reprieved. Still the two friends kept silent palely shaking. The officer went on saying they can go back alive and keep it secret but the two men stood motionless, mouths still shut. The Prussian threatened within 5 minutes they will be at the bottom of the river still the two fishermen stood silent. The German took orders in Deutsch. Officer approached the two Frenchmen, hold Morissot by the arm, dragged him, wanting to know the password but he didn't say a word as well as Sauvage. Officer starts to give the commands. Rifles ready. Morisot's glance fall on the sack full of fishes lying on the grass. He gave his farewell to Sauvage and answered it too with a farewell. Shook hands, trembling head to toe.

Officer shouted fire. Twelve shots rang together. The fishermen fell together, die together. However, the office gave more orders so therefore the four soldiers took Morissot and Sauvage swung the bodies and plunged into the river, feet first. The officer calmly said that the fish will have their turn. He saw the sack of gudgeons picked it up, smiled and order to fry those little animals right away because they will be delicious. Back to his pipe again.

### **3.4 Persuasive Strategies in the Exposition:**

The persuasive strategies, quasilogical, presentational, and analogical, are analyzed in this section according to the persuasive techniques which are employed by Guy de Maupassant. Besides, all the analysis will be supported in tables and figures that show the frequency of occurrence and the percentage of each strategy and its techniques.

#### **3.4.1 Quasilogical Strategy:**

This section emphasizes the first type of these techniques used by the key participants as linguistic devices to convince one another. These quasilogical, within the analyzed passage, are conveyed through causation, logical connectives, and rhetorical questions.

The writer tries to influence our perception through the logical technique of causation. This technique, which is constructed through subordinate clauses that connect the premise to the conclusion, is magnified by the strategic use of causal clauses. According to Lewis (1973:556), causation is the connection of two events, namely the events that cause something, and the events that are caused.

Causation is used as in the sentence *“they understood one another admirably without saying anything because they had similar tastes and responded to their surroundings in exactly the same way.”* This gives readers a glimpse of the friendship between the two men as they are both able to spend an entire period quietly in each other’s presence, entertained by their own thoughts. In addition, they can shift quickly into engaging in an unexpected discussion. The two friends hold a sense of self-respect and appreciate each other's company as shown in their reunion after separation and many transformative experiences.

Rhetorical Questions are presented three times in the exposition as *“It's better than the city, isn't it?”* here Morissot describes the place where they were as a fine sight than the city and persuades M. Sauvage go fishing. The second rhetorical question *“When'll we get back to it?”* reflects their decision to take the risk to go to the fishing spot, which was now near the occupied territory by Prussians, not for the fish but refreshing their old sweet memories. Here Maupassant showed the deep friendship of two friends. How they met after a long time and without caring about their life, they decided to go to occupied territory for fishing to recall their sweet memories.

### 3.4.2 Presentational Strategy:

This section provides a description of the involvement techniques. Rhetorical deixes are the use of pronouns, as well as time and place expressions, by the key participants as a technique to influence one another through involvement. The extracts *“Paris was blockaded”*, *“walk to Marante Island”*, *“It's better than the city”*, *“they entered another wine shop”*, and *“on our island”*, *“January morning”*, *“ten o'clock”*, and *“spring morning”* are charged with many of spatial and temporal deixes which present 38 times in this phase.

Imagery is the literary device which is employed in the passage under examination. From the opening lines of the story, Maupassant paints a bleak picture of Paris during wartime, describing the city as *“deserted, silent, sad.”* This imagery establishes the tone for the remainder of the narrative, conveying an impression of desolation and despair that penetrates the lives of its inhabitants. As Morissot and Sauvage traverse the deserted streets, their surroundings are depicted in stark detail, with crumbling buildings and abandoned barricades serving as constant reminders of the war's devastating toll on the city. In addition, Maupassant uses imagery in the text, *“On an autumn afternoon when the sky, reddened by the sun cast reflections of its scarlet clouds on the water...”* This text demonstrates the usage of imagery, as Maupassant uses the details that allow the reader to create clear mental pictures while reading. Autumn afternoon reveals a description of how the day appears. The sky, reddened by the sun, reflects the setting and the sun’s effect on scarlet clouds displayed on the surface of the water.

Moreover, Personification shows in the text, *“The trees which were already brown and beginning to tremble with a wintery shave.”* The passage shows personification as the trees cannot actually tremble. Through this depiction, Maupassant highlights the nature of the season and the surroundings and their impact on the setting.

Table (1): Persuasive Strategies in the Exposition

No.	Persuasive Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quasilogical Strategy	3	6.9 %
2	Presentational Strategy	40	93.1 %
3	Analogical Strategy	0	0 %
Total		43	100%

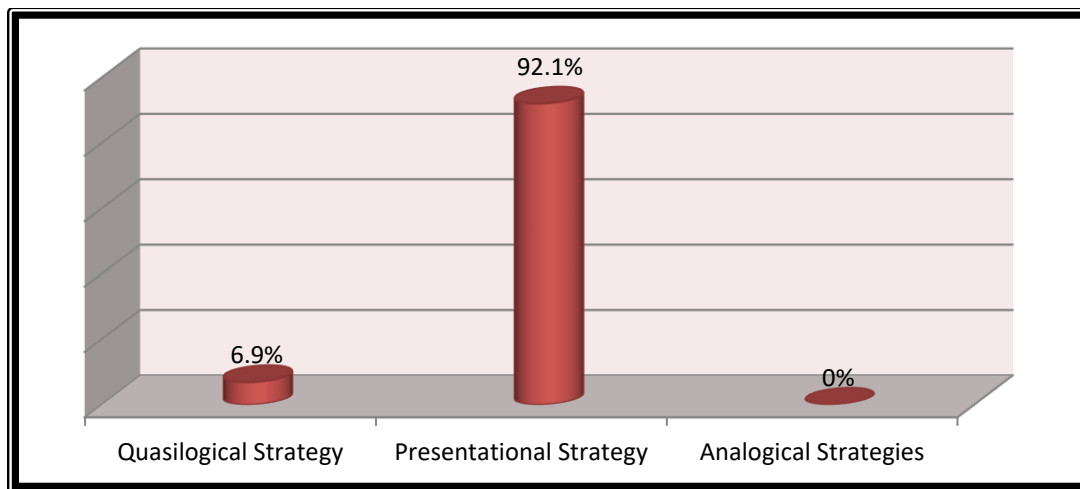


Figure (2): Persuasive Strategies in the Exposition

### 3.5 Persuasive Strategies in the Complication and Climax:

#### 3.5.1 Quasilogical Strategy:

The extract *“the officer smiled and said: I see you have done pretty well, but let us change the subject. You are evidently sent to spy upon me”* is constructed on the model of a series of syllogisms, with the universal quantifiers all and any making major premises and so making conclusion. The Prussian soldiers captured them, they asked them the password that allowed them to come to their area, but they did not tell even a word. Then they were considered spies, and as per the order of the Prussian general, they were shot and thrown into the water. Here, Maupassant showed patriotic feelings towards their nation. The two friends were not dead. They were martyrs for their nation. Here, Maupassant gives us this message that if something like this happens to us too, we must not betray our country and become martyrs for our motherland.

In this phase, the quasilogical argument is reinforced by the use of the conditional connector “if,” which links the premise “if you refuse” to its outcome “it is immediate death- choose”, establishing a clear cause and effect relationship. Throughout this condition, the narrator reveals the authority the soldier has over the two friends and how he considers disobedience to his commands is a big “sin,”

punishable by death. This conditional clause emphasizes that the officer is ready to negotiate: if Sauvage and Morissot reveal the French password, he will spare them. The two men stand silently, pale and trembling. The officer tempts them further. “No one will ever know,” he assures. They could return home safely if they cooperate with him. Otherwise, they will face their destiny. The two remain silent and do not respond. The officer now appeals to frighten them. In only five minutes, they could be at the bottom of the river and reminding them of their families. Yet even as the cannon fire sounds, the two continue to refuse to speak.

Rhetorical questions are used twice in this phase, *“Well, gentlemen, have you had good fishing?”* and *“You have relatives, of course?”*. Sauvage and Morissot are so focused on their fishing and conversation that they fail to notice the approaching footsteps till it is too late. Four Prussian soldiers are pointing their rifles straight at the two frightened fishermen. Startled, the friends drop their fishing rods into the river in surprise, and the soldiers swiftly bind them up and carry them off to their commander.

### 3.5.2 Presentational Strategy:

As the story progresses, Maupassant skillfully employs sensory imagery to evoke the sights, sounds, and smells of wartime Paris. The author describes the streets as *“filled with a great silence,”* broken only by the occasional sound of gunfire in the distance. This imagery creates a sense of tension and unease, underscoring the constant threat of danger that lurks around every corner. Similarly, the descriptions of the characters' physical surroundings – from the muddy trenches to the makeshift shelters – serve to immerse the reader in the harsh realities of life during wartime.

From the analysis, it is clear that the temporal deixes are used (5) times such as *“five minutes”*, *“two seconds”* and spatial deixis are used (6) times such as *“the island”*, *“the bottom of the river”*, and *“behind the building”* which reflect the times and the place of the turning point in the story as the soldiers give them only five minute to save their life and give the password. Before a minute of the French soldiers coming, the two friends were happy to go fishing once more, but it was their last happiness as they could not return home anymore.

Table (2): Persuasive Strategies in the Complication and Climax

No.	Persuasive Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quasilogical Strategy	4	25 %
2	Presentational Strategy	12	75 %
3	Analogical Strategy	0	0 %
Total		16	100%

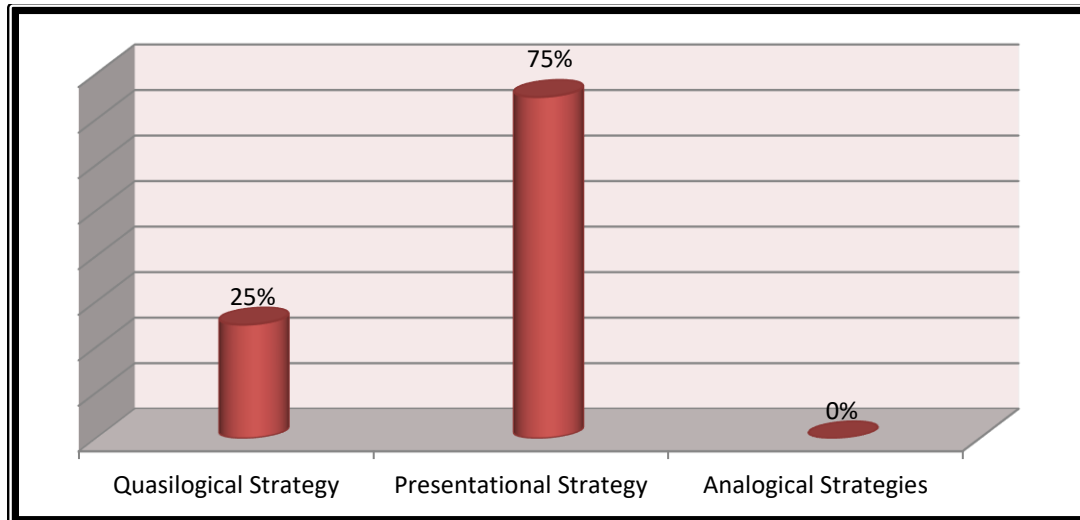


Figure (3): Persuasive Strategies in the Complication and Climax

### 3.6 Persuasive Strategies in the Resolution:

#### 3.6.1 Quasilogical Strategies:

The persuasive techniques which are employed by the narrator to reflect quasilogical strategy in the resolution are only causation. Here causation present the cause clause *“for the weights”* and the effect clause *“made them seem to be stand-ing upright”*. They passed away together supporting one another in the times of death just as they had faced the challenges of life side by side. They died with mutual respect for each other and for the life they led, coming to rest at the bottom of the river that made him live in a storm of happiness, remaining at that position for eternity.

#### 3.6.2 Presentational Strategy:

Diexes are presented in the last phase as the temporal diexes used only once *“Now the fish will have their turn.”*. Whereas, the spatial diexes used three times *“the bank”, “the river”, and “the house”*. The end of the story is particularly striking, as de Maupassant appears to emphasize the theme of loyalty and the senseless nature of the killing of the two friends. The Prussian office wants to obtain the password so he can access to French.

Nevertheless, both Morissot and Sauvage remain faithful to them. This highlights the significance of loyalty during the conflict. If they have given the office the password the Prussians would have been able to penetrate the city and all will be lost. Although some critics may view that Morissot and Sauvage are foolish, de Maupassant instead seems to underscore how deeply patriotic both men are. Despite their awareness that war is wrong, they may be concern of others. Ultimately, an unselfish act has led to their deaths for a cause they might not have fully believed in.

Table (3): Persuasive Strategies in the Resolution

No.	Persuasive Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quasilogical Strategy	1	20 %
2	Presentational Strategy	4	80 %
3	Analogical Strategy	0	0 %
Total		5	100%

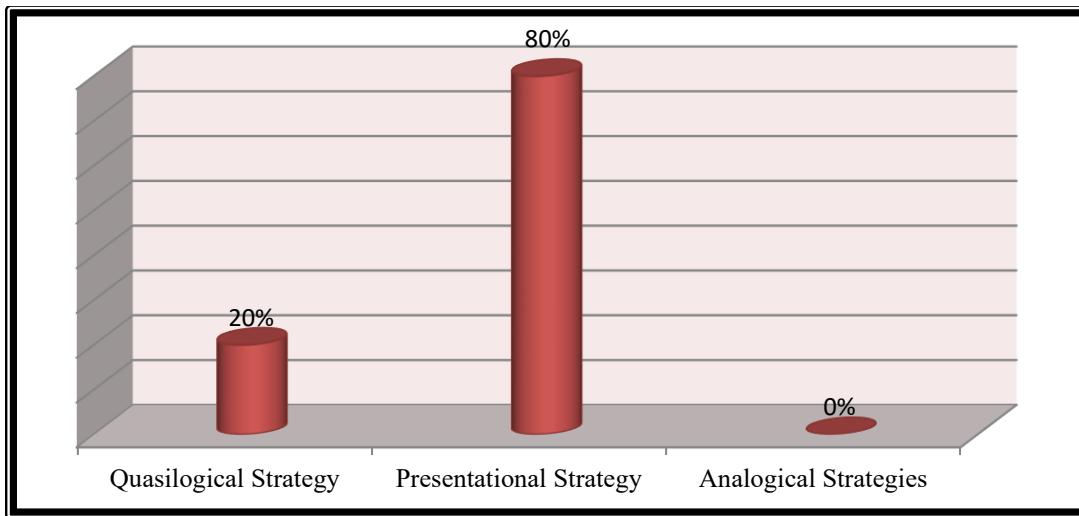


Figure (4): Persuasive Strategies in the Resolution

## Conclusion

The study confirms that the model insightful in literary analysis, offering a valuable tool for understanding how persuasion operates within fictional discourse. The findings of the study indicate the Maupassant predominantly employs presentational strategies throughout the narrative, making them the most prominent among the three types of persuasion. Techniques such as imagery, deixis, and vivid description are extensively used to highlight the sharp contrast between the clam natural environment and the harsh realities of war. Although quasilogical strategies appear less frequently, they become significant in critical moments, especially in the confrontations with the Prussian officer, where logical reasoning. Conditional statements, and rhetorical questions are used to influence and pressure the characters. On the other hand, analogical strategies are nearly absent, suggesting that persuasion in the story relies more on immediate emotional and situational elements rather than on comparisons with past events or traditional beliefs.

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