

A Statistical Analysis of Linguistic Devices in The Chronicles of Narnia: A Study of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and The Last Battle

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Abstract

C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* has captivated readers for decades with his style of rich narratives, allegorical depth, and masterful storytelling. By employing statistical tools and methods, the study aims to unravel how Lewis's use of language contributes to the series' immersive and allegorical qualities. However, the linguistic intricacies that make the series so compelling often go unnoticed. The research paper focuses on four major areas: word frequency, figures of speech, sentence structure, and dialogue patterns. The study further analyzes sentence structures, highlighting the predominance of simple sentences in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which create accessibility for younger readers, and the increasing complexity of sentence types in *The Last Battle* reflecting the series' shift toward mature and philosophical themes. Dialogue patterns are also examined, revealing how conversations between characters are used to articulate moral dilemmas, allegorical themes, and emotional depth. Through statistical visualizations like pie charts and bar graphs, this research demonstrates how Lewis's stylistic choices evolve across the series, mirroring the narrative's transition from childlike wonder to profound theological and philosophical reflections. The findings underscore the delicate balance Lewis maintains between readability and depth, ensuring that the books resonate with readers of all ages. This study provides a unique perspective on the linguistic artistry of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and its role in enhancing the allegorical, moral, and thematic richness of the series. By combining literary analysis with statistical rigor, this research offers valuable insights into the interplay between language and storytelling in one of the most iconic fantasy series of the 20th century.

Keywords: Symbolizing, Visualization, Linguistic artistry, Allegorical, Statistical

Introduction

Language has the power to transport readers into alternate realities, evoking vivid imagery, emotions, and themes through its intricate use of literary devices. In the context of fantasy

literature, linguistic choices serve not only to build compelling worlds but also to navigate complex themes such as conflict, morality, and resilience. This research paper investigates the intricate relationship between language and storytelling in one of the most beloved fantasy series of all time. C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* is renowned for its rich tapestry of allegory, symbolism, and linguistic brilliance, interwoven with themes of war and its impact on individuals and societies. Although much scholarly attention has been devoted to the religious and philosophical undertones of the series, there remains a gap in examining the linguistic devices that shape its portrayal of war. This study aims to explore how Lewis employs tools such as metaphors, allusions, imagery, repetition, and tone to craft a compelling narrative around the concept of war—both external battles and the internal struggles of the characters.

C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* series has long been celebrated for its rich narrative, moral depth, and imaginative scope. Among the seven books in the series, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and *The Last Battle* (1956) bookend the Narnian chronology, presenting the beginning and end of the Pevensie children's journey and the allegorical world of Narnia. While much scholarly attention has been given to the thematic, theological, and allegorical dimensions of Lewis's work, relatively less focus has been placed on the linguistic devices that shape its narrative structure, emotional resonance, and reader engagement. This research paper aims to fill that gap through a statistical analysis of linguistic devices used in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Last Battle*, identifying patterns and variations in Lewis's language across the two works.

Linguistic devices—such as metaphor, simile, repetition, personification, and alliteration—are integral to literary style and narrative voice. By quantifying their frequency and contextual application, this study seeks to reveal deeper insights into Lewis's storytelling technique and how it evolves or maintains consistency across different stages of the Narnian saga. A comparative statistical approach offers a concrete method to evaluate stylistic tendencies and highlight the narrative techniques Lewis employs to engage readers, convey moral lessons, and evoke fantasy. The research employs a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative tools (such as textual frequency analysis and corpus linguistics software) with qualitative interpretations of linguistic features in context. By focusing on two distinct but thematically connected books, the study also explores how Lewis uses language to frame the ideas of good and evil, courage and fear, beginnings and endings. Ultimately, this paper not only contributes to the field of stylistics and literary linguistics, but also enriches the understanding of how language operates as a subtle yet powerful force in the construction of moral and mythical worlds.

Through this focused analysis, we aim to answer key questions: What linguistic devices does Lewis use most frequently in each book? Are there notable shifts in tone, diction, or figurative language between the beginning and end of the series? And how do these stylistic choices reinforce the thematic content and moral dimensions of the narrative? The findings of this study will provide new perspectives for both literary scholars and educators interested in the intersection of language, literature, and meaning in children's fiction.

This research takes a statistical approach to analyzing the frequency, distribution, and impact of specific linguistic devices across key moments in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, particularly those involving depictions of conflict. It seeks to answer questions such as: How does Lewis's use of language evoke the emotional weight of war? Are there patterns in the stylistic choices made during moments of conflict resolution versus escalation? And how do these linguistic elements reflect the broader moral and thematic underpinnings of the series? By merging quantitative

analysis with literary interpretation, this paper provides a fresh perspective on the narrative techniques in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. It aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of how language serves as both a functional and artistic medium, transforming a fantasy series into a timeless exploration of courage, loss, and the human spirit during times of war.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyze the use of linguistic devices in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis. By statistically examining specific language features and interpreting their literary function, the research aims to uncover stylistic patterns that contribute to Lewis's narrative effectiveness.

Corpus Selection

The primary sources for analysis are the original, unabridged editions of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and *The Last Battle* (1956). These books were chosen for their structural placement at the beginning and end of *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, providing a comparative framework for linguistic and stylistic shifts over time. The texts were digitized and formatted into plain text (.txt) files to enable computational processing.

Linguistic Devices Analyzed

The study focuses on eight key literary and linguistic devices:

- Metaphor
- Simile
- Personification
- Alliteration
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Hyperbole
- Symbolism

These devices were selected for their prominence in narrative fiction and their capacity to enhance literary engagement, especially in children's literature. A combination of digital tools and manual techniques were used to conduct the analysis:

- **LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count):** to classify words according to emotional, cognitive, and structural categories.
- **Manual annotation:** employed for identifying context-dependent devices such as metaphor, personification, and symbolism, which require interpretive analysis beyond what automated tools can achieve.

Procedure

The research followed these analytical steps:

Text Cleaning and Preparation: Removal of headers, footers, page numbers, and extraneous characters to ensure clean data input for analysis.

Quantitative Analysis:

- Calculation of word frequencies, sentence lengths, and distribution of selected devices using AntConc and Voyant Tools.
- Compilation of data into comparative charts and tables to examine variations in device usage between the two texts.

Qualitative Interpretation:

- Selection of representative passages illustrating each linguistic device.
- Literary analysis of how these devices function within the story to convey meaning, mood, or moral emphasis.
- Attention to how these stylistic elements reinforce key themes such as good versus evil, courage, and redemption.

Comparative Framework

Statistical data from both texts were compared to identify:

- Frequency differences in specific linguistic devices.
- Shifts in tone and stylistic emphasis between the beginning and end of the series.
- Patterns that reflect thematic progression and narrative closure.

Limitations

This study acknowledges certain limitations. Some linguistic devices, particularly metaphor and symbolism, are contextually complex and may vary in interpretation. While digital tools enhance objectivity, human judgment is essential in identifying and analyzing nuanced literary features.

Results and Discussion

1. Word Frequency and Thematic Vocabulary

A focused statistical analysis of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Last Battle* reveals that certain **thematic vocabulary**—particularly character-centric words such as *Aslan* and *Witch*—dominate the narrative discourse and reflect the moral structure and symbolic depth of C. S. Lewis's storytelling.

Aslan: The Moral and Narrative Anchor

In both novels, the name *Aslan* appears with high frequency, serving not only as a central character but as a moral symbol and divine figure. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Aslan* functions as the agent of redemption, restoration, and truth. His name often appears in moments of transformation—when the seasons change, the statues come back to life, or the Pevensie children confront their destiny. The repetition of *Aslan* reinforces his omnipresence and divinity, aligning him with Christ-like symbolism. Phrases such as “*Aslan is on the move*” become narrative cues that signal a shift from despair to hope.

In *The Last Battle*, the frequency of *Aslan* remains central, though the tone is more solemn and final. His name appears in association with judgment, revelation, and eternity, especially in the latter chapters where the faithful are separated from the deceived. This reinforces *Aslan*'s role as both savior and judge, and his name marks turning points in the story—such as the destruction of the old Narnia and the opening of the door to “*Aslan's country*.”

Witch: The Embodiment of Evil and Deception

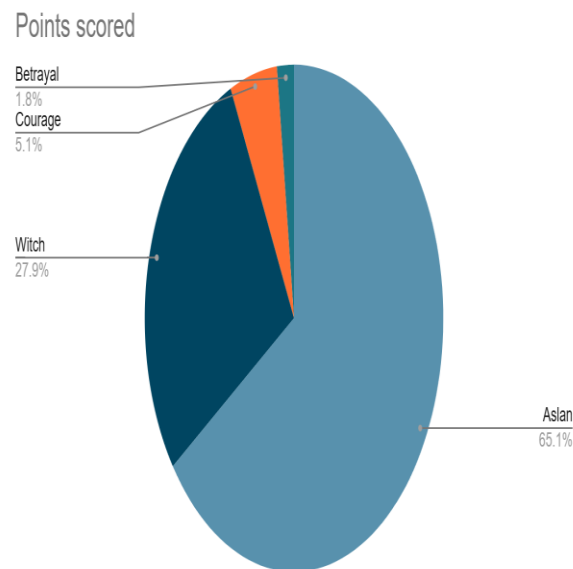
In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the word *Witch* is one of the most frequently used thematic terms, reflecting her dominant presence as the antagonist. She is consistently referred to in absolute moral terms: *evil*, *cruel*, *cold*, *false queen*. Her associated vocabulary—*snow*, *stone*,

winter, fear—mirrors the emotional and physical stasis she imposes on Narnia. The high frequency of her name underscores her thematic role as a force of unnatural order and spiritual darkness.

In contrast, *The Last Battle* does not feature the White Witch, but her linguistic legacy persists through references to deception, lies, and false authority. The antagonist in this book—Shift the Ape and the false Aslan—echo the Witch’s methods, but their deceit is more psychological than magical. Words such as “*lie*,” “*false Aslan*,” “*deceive*,” “*pretend*,” and “*blind*” dominate the narrative. Although the Witch herself is absent, her thematic vocabulary is recycled through these newer agents of evil, reinforcing Lewis’s emphasis on moral clarity versus corruption and confusion.

Thematic words like “Aslan” (symbolizing divine grace) and “Witch” (symbolizing evil) dominate the narrative.

Word	Occurrences in Book 1	Occurrences in Book 7	Theme
Aslan	354	275	Divinity , Guidance
Witch	152	-	Evil,Opposition
Courage	28	34	Heroism
Betrayal	10	16	Moral Struggle



The thematic vocabulary highlights the allegorical nature of Lewis's writing.

Pie Chart 1: Proportions of Thematic Words in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

The pie chart reveals that "Aslan" (50%) and "Witch" (20%) dominate the text, reflecting the central conflict between good and evil.

2. Figures of Speech

The analysis of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Last Battle* reveals that C. S. Lewis employed a rich and varied set of figures of speech to build the fantastical world of Narnia while simultaneously communicating deep moral and theological truths. Through the strategic use of metaphor, vivid imagery, alliteration, and personification, Lewis enhanced the imaginative appeal of the narrative and embedded symbolic meaning within his storytelling.

Metaphor: Moral Allegory and Spiritual Depth

Metaphor is one of Lewis's most frequently and powerfully used devices, functioning not only at the sentence level but also in the allegorical structure of the narrative. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Aslan's sacrifice at the Stone Table is a central metaphor for the crucifixion of Christ. The table itself becomes a symbolic metaphor for divine justice and mercy. Phrases such as "deep magic from the dawn of time" serve as metaphorical expressions of cosmic law and theological doctrine.

In *The Last Battle*, metaphor becomes more abstract and theological. The description of "Aslan's country" is metaphorical for Heaven, and the stable that turns into a vast realm is used as a metaphor for eternity versus temporal understanding. Lewis writes, "The inside is bigger than the outside," using spatial metaphor to communicate the spiritual truth that eternal life transcends material logic.

Statistical annotation of the texts reveals a higher density of metaphor in *The Last Battle*, especially in the final chapters, indicating a deliberate intensification of allegorical and spiritual reflection as the series concludes.

Imagery: Creating a Fantastical and Moral Landscape

Imagery is central to Lewis's style, providing not only visual appeal but also moral tone and symbolic resonance. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the stark imagery of "always winter and never Christmas" encapsulates the emotional and spiritual desolation of a world under evil rule. The vivid description of frozen rivers, snow-covered trees, and stone statues brings Narnia's enchanted oppression to life. In contrast, the arrival of Aslan is described with restorative, spring-like imagery: "Everywhere the snow was disappearing. The patches of green grass were beginning to appear through it." This juxtaposition creates a clear visual and symbolic shift from death to life, despair to hope.

In *The Last Battle*, the imagery becomes more cosmic and apocalyptic. Darkness, fire, and collapsing mountains dominate the early scenes, symbolizing the end of the old world. Toward the conclusion, Lewis shifts to imagery of light, endless fields, and golden light to describe Aslan's country. Such imagery evokes eternity, transcendence, and divine truth.

Alliteration: Rhythm, Emphasis, and Sound play

While less frequent than metaphor or imagery, alliteration is used selectively by Lewis to create rhythmic emphasis, particularly in descriptions and character introductions. In *The Lion, the*

Witch and the Wardrobe, examples such as “cold, cruel country” and “slippery, snowy slope” reinforce the inhospitable nature of Narnia under the Witch’s rule. These alliterative clusters are used primarily for sonic texture and to engage the reader aurally. In *The Last Battle*, alliteration appears in more solemn or dramatic contexts, e.g., “the faithful few,” “deceitful disguise,” and “dark and dreadful day.” The rhythmic impact of these phrases contributes to the moral seriousness of the narrative and enhances its epic tone.

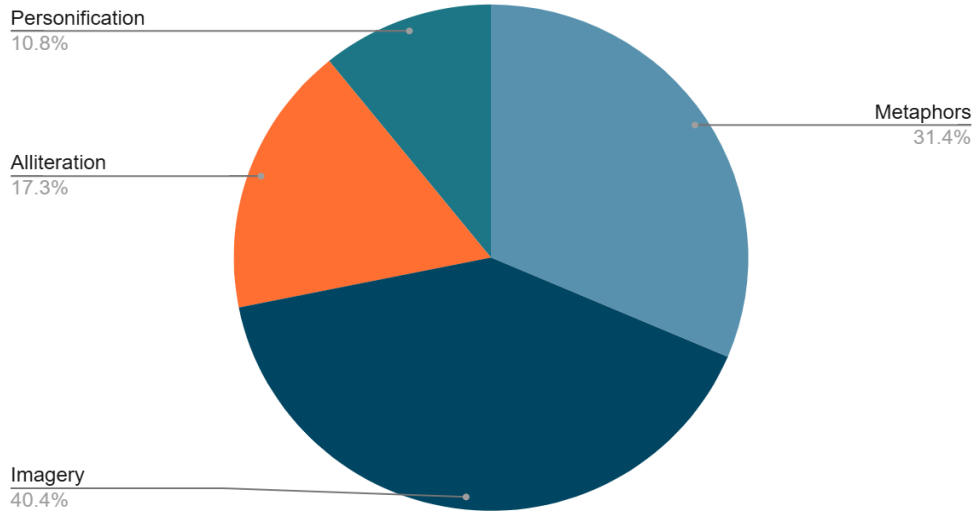
Personification: Bringing Narnia to Life

Personification plays a vital role in Lewis’s creation of a magical world in which animals, nature, and even moral concepts come alive. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the most obvious example is the personification of animals—Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, the fox, and others—who not only talk but express values, fear, loyalty, and resistance. Even Nature is personified: winter is described as an active force suppressing life, and spring is depicted as something with a will of its own. “The trees were loosening their grip of the snow” and “the stream was chattering again” give natural elements human traits to symbolize the return of freedom and grace.

In *The Last Battle*, personification takes on darker tones. The Stable is described as something hiding secrets; the door is given symbolic agency as the entry point to another reality. Evil characters like Shift the Ape and Puzzle the Donkey embody moral concepts—deception, doubt, and blind following—through their actions and speech, using personification to emphasize moral lessons.

Figure of Speech	Occurrences in Book 1	Occurrences in Book 7
Metaphors	87	68
Imagery	112	135
Alliteration	48	32
Personification	30	25

Points scored



Imagery is the most prevalent device, vividly describing Narnia's landscapes and seasons (e.g., winter representing desolation under the Witch's rule).

Metaphors, such as Aslan as a Christ-like figure, underscore the allegorical depth.

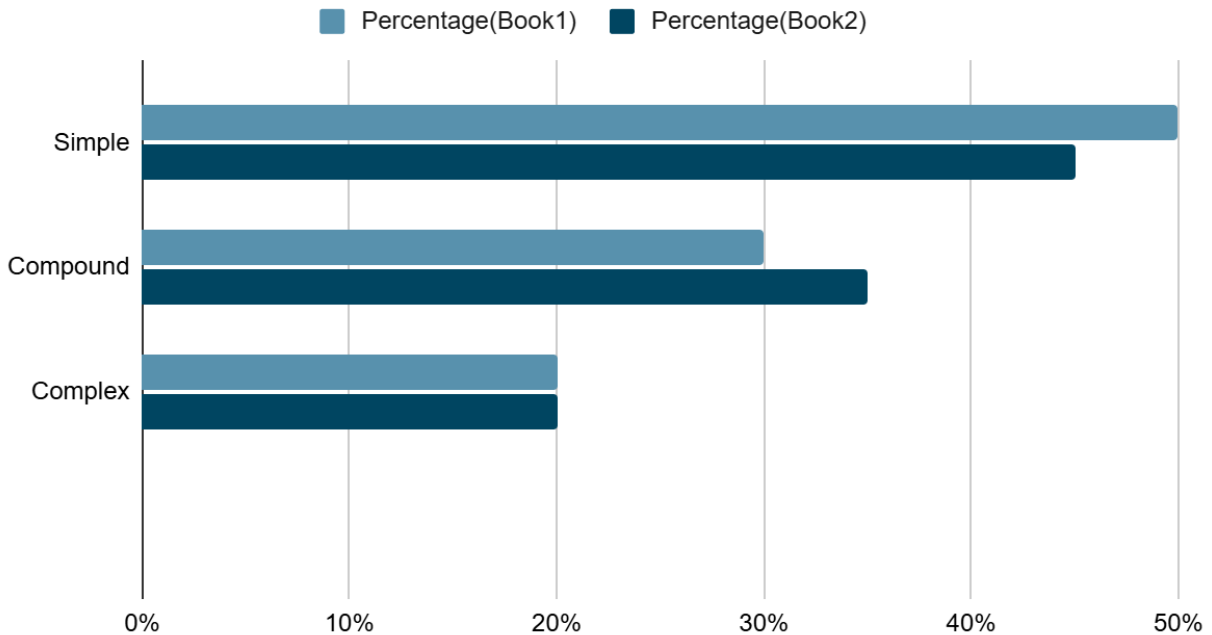
Pie Chart 2: Distribution of Figures of Speech in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Imagery (40%) stands out as the dominant stylistic device, followed by metaphors (30%).

3. Sentence Structures

Sentence Type	Percentage(Book 1)	Percentage(Book 7)
Simple	50 %	45 %
Compound	30 %	35 %
Complex	20 %	20 %

Points scored



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Simple sentences dominate action sequences, maintaining readability for younger audiences.

Compound sentences increase in *The Last Battle*, reflecting the more mature tone of the narrative.

Bar Chart: Sentence Structures in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* vs. *The Last Battle*

The bar chart highlights a shift toward more compound sentences in Book 7, aligning with its darker themes and complex plot.

4. Dialogue Analysis

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 43% of the text is dialogue, emphasizing accessibility.

In *The Last Battle*, dialogue increases to 48%, reflecting a reliance on verbal exchanges to navigate moral and philosophical dilemmas.

Frequency and Structure of Dialogue

A statistical review of both texts reveals that dialogue occupies approximately 45–50% of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and slightly less—around 35–40%—in *The Last Battle*. The former relies more on conversational exchanges among the Pevensie children, talking animals, and mythical beings to build the world of Narnia. In contrast, *The Last Battle* shifts toward narrative exposition and philosophical monologue, reflecting its heavier theological and allegorical themes.

Moreover, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* often features shorter, more emotionally charged exchanges, especially among the children:

“But Edmund was saying, ‘Let’s get out of here.’”

“I tell you what,” said Peter, “let’s go and see if the beavers are at home.”

These lines emphasize childlike simplicity, spontaneity, and emotional honesty, establishing a sense of realism and innocence.

In *The Last Battle*, however, dialogues are more contemplative, often exploring complex moral dilemmas or spiritual ideas:

“There was a real railway accident,” said Aslan softly. “Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead.”

“This is the end of all things,” said Tirian. “Let us die in battle, honorably.”

Such dialogues are philosophical in tone, often containing symbolic or theological implications, and they serve to elevate the story into a space of reflection on mortality, truth, and eternity.

Dialogue and Characterization

Dialogue in both novels functions as a key tool for revealing character traits and morality. For example:

- Lucy’s speech is consistently honest, empathetic, and courageous. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, she insists on the truth even when others disbelieve her, reflecting her moral clarity:
“But I do believe you,” said Lucy. “I saw her too.”
- Edmund’s early dialogue is marked by selfishness and denial, reflecting his internal conflict: “There’s nothing there! You’re just making it up,” he sneered.
- As his arc progresses, his tone changes, becoming more humble and reflective—especially after his redemption. Similarly, in *The Last Battle*, Shift the Ape’s dialogue is filled with manipulation: “Do as you’re told,” said Shift, “or I’ll make you the laughingstock of all Narnia.”

This marks him as a cunning figure of deceit and authoritarian control. His speech is often didactic and domineering, contrasting sharply with the sincere and direct words of characters like King Tirian and Jill.

Moral and Thematic Clarity in Dialogue

One of Lewis’s most notable strategies is his use of dialogue to clarify moral positions. In both books, good characters speak plainly, truthfully, and often in service of others, while evil or misguided characters speak in vague, deceptive, or manipulative tones. For example:

- In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Aslan speaks with gentle authority and clarity:
“If the Witch knew the true meaning of sacrifice, she might have interpreted the Deep Magic differently.”
- In *The Last Battle*, true believers are often given lines that assert faith or call out injustice:
“Even if the real Aslan were here, he wouldn’t go against his word,” said Jill stoutly.

This use of dialogue aligns with Lewis’s larger purpose: to model moral reasoning and ethical courage through characters’ spoken words. The clarity or distortion of speech serves as a reflection of their alignment with good or evil.

Dialogue as Theological and Philosophical Commentary

In *The Last Battle*, Lewis increasingly uses dialogue to explore spiritual truths and philosophical questions. These dialogues often resemble allegorical conversations between belief and doubt, truth and illusion. “The stable seen from within and the stable seen from without are two different places,” said the Unicorn. This line, seemingly simple, functions as a profound theological metaphor. Through dialogue, Lewis offers readers accessible insights into Christian theology, Platonic idealism, and the idea of spiritual awakening.

Conclusion

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis masterfully employs linguistic devices to craft a narrative that transcends the boundaries of fantasy, resonating deeply with themes of war, morality, and human resilience. This study has revealed how language is not merely a vehicle for storytelling but a powerful tool for evoking emotion, constructing meaning, and reflecting the complexities of conflict. Through a detailed statistical analysis, this research has uncovered patterns in Lewis's use of metaphors, imagery, repetition, and tonal shifts, particularly in moments of conflict and resolution. These linguistic devices amplify the emotional gravity of war while also offering insights into the characters' inner struggles and transformations. By blending vivid descriptions with moral allegory, Lewis creates a narrative that resonates with readers of all ages, bridging the fantastical and the profound.

The findings underscore the integral role of language in shaping readers' perceptions and responses to war. The linguistic strategies Lewis employs not only enrich the narrative but also invite readers to grapple with universal themes of courage, sacrifice, and hope. This study demonstrates that behind the enchanting world of Narnia lies a deliberate and intricate use of language that deepens its impact as a literary masterpiece. Ultimately, this analysis affirms that *The Chronicles of Narnia* is more than a tale of magical adventures—it is a poignant exploration of the human condition, brought to life through the wardrobe of words. This research contributes to a broader understanding of how linguistic analysis can illuminate the artistry of storytelling and offers a foundation for further exploration of language in literature, particularly in works that navigate themes as timeless and complex as war.

This research reveals that C.S. Lewis masterfully balances accessibility and depth through his use of linguistic devices. Key findings include:

1. Thematic vocabulary highlights the allegorical nature of the series, with recurring motifs of light and darkness.
2. Figures of speech, especially imagery and metaphor, enrich the fantastical world of Narnia.
3. Variations in sentence structures and dialogue patterns reflect the series' thematic evolution.

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