




## An Analysis of Figurative Possession in *the Film Golden Compass*

Khoirotul Azizah<sup>1</sup>, Joko Wibowo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Al Qolam Malang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author  khoirotulazizah761@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization and technological advancement, films have become a popular medium accessible to all groups, serving not only as entertainment but also as carriers of social, cultural, psychological, and linguistic values. Figurative language in films plays a crucial role in enriching narratives and expressing abstract ideas through more concrete and imaginative forms. This study focuses on analyzing figurative sentences containing possessive meaning in the film *The Golden Compass* using a qualitative descriptive approach. The data, taken from character dialogues, were identified, classified, and analyzed to reveal the possessive meanings embedded in them. The findings show five figurative sentences with possessive meaning that significantly contribute to strengthening characterization, portraying emotional bonds, and representing power relations among the characters. These results indicate that figurative language functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as a means of psychological and social representation. Theoretically, this research broadens insights into linguistic studies, while practically it can be applied as learning material in language and literature education to foster appreciation of figurative language in real contexts. Thus, films can be regarded as both a medium of learning and a reflection of life values.

**Keywords:** *Film, Figurative Language, Possessive Meaning, The Golden Compass*

### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Received Juni 29,  
2025

Revised August 27,  
2025

Accepted September  
30, 2025

Journal Homepage

<https://ojs.staialfurqan.ac.id/IJoASER/>

This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

## INTRODUCTION

The current era of globalization thanks to advanced technology, everyone, including children and students, can enjoy movies easily through various digital services. Therefore, there is a lot of research on popular media such as movies. Researching films has a number of advantages because films are multimodal media that are rich in meaning, combining visual elements, audio, dialog, music, and symbols. This allows researchers to analyze various aspects simultaneously, such as language, culture, ideology, and narrative structure. Movies also represent social realities and worldviews, so they can be a relevant source of study to understand values, norms, identity and power in society. In addition, dialog and interactions between characters in films provide concrete examples of language use in real contexts, which are very useful for linguistic or pragmatic studies. With complex characters and rich storylines, movies also open up space for literary analysis and character psychology. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, researching movies offers a broad and in-depth approach to understanding social, linguistic and cultural phenomena in an integrated way. Films have many advantages that provide a deeper understanding, not only of the structure and techniques of filmmaking, but also of the social aspects. In addition to academic considerations, the selection of *The Golden Compass* as the object of study is also based on the moral messages embedded in the film. It does not merely present an adventurous fantasy storyline filled with suspense, but also conveys profound life values. One of the central values

emphasized is loyalty—both to oneself, to friends, and to the goals one believes in. Furthermore, the film highlights the importance of building harmonious relationships with others and maintaining genuine friendships. Thus, *The Golden Compass* functions not only as a source of entertainment but also as a medium of reflection and character education that is highly relevant for further scholarly analysis. Films can also be an important approach to understanding the dynamics of contemporary culture, and the psychology contained therein. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008) in his book "Film Art: An Introduction", film analysis allows us to uncover the figurative meanings and messages that the makers want to convey. This includes the way films convey certain themes, such as power, identity, or social struggle, which may not be obvious at first glance. Based on information from Figurative meaning, particularly in the form of metaphor, is not random but is shaped by our bodily experiences and how we interact with the world around us. According to (Niles 2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), metaphors arise from the way our physical bodies perceive and move through the world, making the human body central to how we form and understand abstract concepts. Rather than seeing the mind and body as separate, this view holds that our mental processes are deeply influenced by our physical and cultural experiences. Studying metaphors across different languages can reveal both universal and culturally specific patterns in the way people think.

As noted by Ning Yu (2020), figurative language refers to the non-literal use of words, where meaning is extended beyond the basic dictionary definition. It enables speakers or writers to express deeper conceptual ideas, often through conceptual metaphor, which involves mapping one domain of experience onto another. These figurative expressions are part of everyday communication and help convey abstract thoughts in more concrete or relatable terms. Gunawan (2025) also noted that figurative language is language used to compare one entity to another, usually between different things. Its main purpose is to convey meaning implicitly through creative and imaginative ways, so that the message can be more easily understood and appreciated by the audience. One movie that has caught the attention of certain groups, especially researchers, is *The Golden Compass*. *The Golden Compass* is an adventure fantasy film released in 2007, directed by Chris Weitz and adapted from Philip Pullman's novel *Northern Lights*, which is the first book in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy. The movie is set in a parallel world inhabited by supernatural beings, daimons and spiritual forces, and follows the journey of a young girl named Lyra Belacqua on her mission to rescue kidnapped children and uncover the truth about a mysterious substance called Dust. The main character Lyra is played by Dakota Blue Richards, with Daniel Craig as Lord Asriel and Nicole Kidman as Marisa Coulter. Other important characters are Lorek Byrnison, an armored bear voiced by Ian McKellen, and Lee Scoresby, a hot air balloon pilot played by Sam Elliott. The main aim of the movie is to convey a message about the importance of freedom of thought, courage, and the search for truth in the face of oppressive power. Through the conflict between the characters and authoritarian forces such as the Magisterium, the film is about the struggle against dogma and mind control, and emphasizes the values of courage, loyalty, and self-discovery amidst social and ideological pressures. Stunning visuals, thrilling action, and a story full of mystery make it a must-watch for fantasy lovers. *The Golden Compass* not only offers a complex plot but is also rich in figurative language. Keraf (2009), in his book *Diction and Language Style*, defines figurative language as the use of words with meanings beyond the literal, intended to produce a specific effect on the reader or listener. He identifies various forms of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole which enhance textual meaning and add nuance, making *The Golden Compass* an ideal subject for exploring how such language techniques contribute to storytelling and message delivery.

In this film, there are various figurative sentences that not only strengthen characterization but also contain possessive meanings that reflect the relationships of power, control, and ownership among the characters. The figurative language in this film not only beautifies dialogue but also serves as a complex emotional and psychological representation tool. The possessive meanings contained in these expressions are significant as they subtly yet meaningfully showcase the dynamics of relationships between characters. This makes *The Golden Compass* an interesting example for examining how the medium of film utilizes

figurative language to depict power and ownership in interpersonal relationships.

The analysis of the use of figurative language in this film is important because it offers a number of academic and practical benefits. First, this research can deepen the understanding of film texts by revealing the hidden meanings behind figurative sentences, particularly those related to themes of power and ownership. As explained by (Keraf (2009), figurative language provides aesthetic and emotional effects that enrich meaning, allowing the audience to experience the story in a more profound way. Second, this study can enhance cultural awareness by highlighting social issues that are implied in the representation of power in the media. Films like *The Golden Compass* reflect certain values and norms that can be analyzed to understand broader social dynamics (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). Third, this research also contributes to the development of critical thinking skills. By evaluating and interpreting figurative language in depth, Second, this study can enhance cultural awareness by highlighting social issues implied in the representation of power in the media. Films like *The Golden Compass* reflect certain values and norms that can be analyzed to understand broader social dynamics (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). Third, this research also contributes to the development of critical thinking skills. By evaluating and interpreting figurative language in depth, researchers train analytical abilities that are essential across various disciplines, in line with Gunawan's (2025) views on the role of figurative language in encouraging more complex meanings. Thus, focusing on the relationship between figurative language and possessive attitudes in the context of this film provides a new perspective in the study of language and media. Through this analysis, it is expected to understand how filmmakers convey dynamics of power and emotions through figurative yet meaningful language choices

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse figurative sentences containing possessive meanings in the film *The Golden Compass*, as well as to understand how these meanings contribute to the development of the story and characterisation. This study is expected to provide theoretical benefits by expanding insights into the analysis of figurative language and possessive meanings in popular media, as well as practical benefits as a reference for linguistic and cultural studies that utilise animated media as a source of data. Additionally, this research can also make a significant contribution in the context of education, particularly in grammar and literature learning among students. By using popular media such as animation, students can become more interested and motivated in learning figurative language and understand how possessive pronouns are applied, thereby enhancing their understanding of language use in various contexts. Thus, this research can serve as a foundation for further studies on language use in global popular culture and have a positive impact on the development of language education for students. The importance of this research lies in its specific focus on possessive expressions in figurative language, a topic that has not been extensively explored in previous film analysis research.

This figurative analysis is not only relevant in language and literature studies, but can also be used to understand broader social relationships and cultural dynamics. However, to date, there has been little research that has conducted an in-depth analysis of possessive meanings in popular films, especially in the context of figurative language that contains possessive meanings. Previous studies have focused more on the analysis of figurative sentences in literary works or films. For example, (Fatimah, Fauziah, and Nursakinah 2021) explored figurative language in *Lembah Lentera*, identifying types such as simile, personification, hyperbole, and metaphor, although the focus was not on possessive language (Khairunnisa 2022) revealed various types of figurative expressions, but (Muhammad Nur Khasan and Deddi Andrea Chofan 2024) analysed figurative language in Frost's works, focusing on metaphors, irony, and personification, yet did not specifically examine possessive meanings. Additionally, (Riyuda and Oktoviandry 2024) studied figurative language in the eighth season of *Friends*, identifying similes, metaphors, and hyperboles, but their analysis did not delve into possessive language. (Safiitri 2021) analysed figurative language in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, focusing on various figurative expressions without considering possessiveness. (Sandy, Natsir, and Asanti 2021) researched Shakespearean studies, (Yulianda and Sunra 2022) conducted an analysis of figurative language in Shakespeare's sonnets, but again, this study did not (Febriyanti, Za, and Qamariah 2022)

focus on figurative language in the film *Aladdin* by analysing various figures of speech, but did not discuss possessive meaning specifically. Similarly, (Sari 2021) examined Corr's *Talk on Corners* but did not investigate the possessive nature of the figurative expressions used. These studies primarily explore the identification and analysis of various types of figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, and personification, in various contexts, including literature, film, and music. However, these studies do not directly address the concept of possessiveness through figurative language, particularly in film. This current study is unique in that it focuses specifically on possessive expressions in *The Golden Compass* and how these expressions contribute to the film's thematic exploration of power dynamics, attachment, and control. Therefore, this research offers a new perspective by focusing on the relationship between figurative language and possessive attitudes in the context of film. By analysing how possessive relationships are represented through figurative language, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the nuanced ways in which filmmakers convey complex emotional and psychological dynamics.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse figurative sentences containing possessive meanings in the film *The Golden Compass*, as well as to understand how these meanings contribute to the development of the story and characterisation. This study is expected to provide theoretical benefits by expanding insights into the analysis of figurative language and possessive meanings in popular media, as well as practical benefits as a reference for linguistic and cultural studies that utilise animated media as a source of data. This is particularly relevant in the current digital age, where films are easily accessible and widely consumed, making them a rich source for both academic and pedagogical exploration. Figurative language, when presented in a visual and narrative context such as film, offers unique opportunities to observe how meaning is constructed and interpreted beyond literal usage. Additionally, this research can also make a significant contribution in the context of education, particularly in grammar and literature learning among students. By using popular media such as animation, students can become more interested and motivated in learning figurative language and understand how possessive pronouns are applied, thereby enhancing their comprehension of language use in various contexts. Furthermore, incorporating media-based examples can bridge the gap between abstract linguistic theory and real-world language application in the classroom. Thus, this research can serve as a foundation for further studies on language use in global popular culture and have a positive impact on the development of language education for students. The importance of this research lies in its specific focus on possessive expressions in figurative language, a topic that has not been extensively explored in previous studies on film analysis.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis methods. Qualitative descriptive is a research approach that aims to provide a detailed and in-depth description of a phenomenon or situation that occurs naturally. This approach emphasise understanding facts and relationships between phenomena without using numerical data, but rather by explaining conditions contextually and systematically. According to Sugiyono (2017), qualitative descriptive research serves to describe data clearly and accurately regarding the facts and characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. Meanwhile, Moleong (2017) emphasises that this method focuses on revealing social phenomena with an in-depth approach that considers the context in which the phenomenon occurs. In line with this, the descriptive analysis in this study aims to explain how figurative sentences in the film *The Golden Compass* convey possessive meaning. The researcher will focus on a detailed description of how figurative sentences are used in the context of the film to convey messages related to ownership or control. This method was chosen because it is able to reveal the implied meanings hidden in the dialogue and narrative interactions of the film, as well as allowing for interpretation of the cultural values and emotions contained in the visual and verbal language.

This descriptive analysis process includes identifying types of figurative sentences, such as metaphors, personification, hyperbole, or symbolism, and explaining how each type is used in the film to convey the concept of possessiveness. The researcher provides an

overview of the forms of figurative sentences and the meanings conveyed through this style of language. This analysis uses linguistic theory to construct a comprehensive framework, namely the application of Lakoff and Johnson's Theory of Figurative Language (1980), which is highly relevant because it helps to understand how figurative expressions, such as metaphors and symbolism, relate to the way humans think and conceptualise the world, including complex ideas such as ownership or control. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are not merely linguistic tools but also reflect how humans organise their understanding and thoughts.

In the film *The Golden Compass*, many figurative sentences are used to describe the relationship between characters and certain objects or concepts that have a deeper meaning than their literal meaning. Therefore, this theory is very useful for identifying how figurative sentences can describe abstract concepts such as ownership, control, or domination that often appear in the relationships between characters and in the film world itself. Using Lakoff and Johnson's theory, this analysis provides a systematic framework for understanding that figurative language not only functions as an aesthetic tool in language but also as a way to convey more complex thoughts and feelings, such as how characters see and interact with objects or forces around them.

The data in this research is taken from dialogues in the film *The Golden Compass*. The analysis is conducted through three main stages. First, figurative sentences are classified based on their types, referring to the theory of figurative language. In this case, the conceptual metaphor theory from Lakoff and Johnson (1980) serves as the main reference, which states that figurative language such as metaphor and metonymy is not just a rhetorical element, but rather a fundamental part of how humans think and understand the world. Therefore, the grouping of these figurative types is important for understanding how abstract concepts like power and possession are realized in language. Second, each sentence is analyzed to identify both explicit and implicit possessive elements through a basic semantic approach. The possessive meaning can emerge directly through grammatical structure or indirectly through conceptual associations in metaphors, such as in the metaphors "power is possession" or "relationships are control." This analysis helps reveal how language is used to represent relations of control and dominance indirectly. Third, the sentences are analyzed within the narrative context of the film using a pragmatic approach to see how the possessive meanings contribute to the larger themes in the film, such as domination, ownership, and relationships between characters. Through this analysis, the figurative meanings are not only viewed from their structure but also from their contribution to the construction of meaning in the social and emotional context of the film's characters. These three approaches figurative (conceptual metaphor), semantic, and pragmatic are used in an integrated manner to provide a deep understanding of how figurative language conveys possessive meanings in the film *The Golden Compass*, and how this reinforces power dynamics and ownership within the narrative.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figurative language in films plays a significant role in conveying emotional, psychological, and ideological messages that are not always directly expressed through literal language. In *The Golden Compass*, the use of figurative sentences containing possessive meaning functions not only as aesthetic elements of dialogue but also as narrative strategies that illustrate relationships of power, emotional attachment, and symbolic ownership. This supports Bordwell and Thompson's (2008) view that film analysis can reveal figurative meanings and hidden messages beyond the surface of storytelling.

The findings of this study identify five figurative sentences with possessive meaning, such as "Jordan is my home", "Lyra, my child", and "I've gotten rid of my fear." Each of these expressions demonstrates how possessive words like my or your operate not merely as grammatical markers, but as representations of emotional closeness, authority, and identity. For example, the sentence "Jordan is my home" reflects a conceptual metaphor in which HOME is mapped onto SECURITY and BELONGING, in line with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Similarly, "Lyra, my child" embodies figurative possessiveness that symbolically represents affection and protection rather than biological ownership, which

resonates with Keraf's (2009) notion of figurative language as a stylistic tool to enrich meaning.

This indicates that possessive meaning in figurative expressions should not be understood solely from a structural or semantic perspective, but also from a pragmatic and cognitive standpoint. The analysis reveals that figurative possessive language clarifies both the internal and external conflicts of the characters, such as the tension between freedom and authority or between loyalty and domination. This supports Niles' (2016) claim that metaphors emerge from embodied experiences and cultural contexts, as figurative ownership in this film reflects broader themes of control, attachment, and resistance. When compared with previous studies, the findings of this research highlight a specific dimension that has not been extensively explored. For instance, Fatimah, Fauziyah, and Nursakinah (2021) analyzed figurative language in *Lembah Lentera* and identified various types such as similes, metaphors, and personification, but their study did not address possessive meaning. Similarly, Khairunnisa (2022) examined figurative expressions in poetry, while Riyuda and Oktoviandry (2024) analyzed figurative language in the series *Friends*, both focusing on types of figurative expressions without discussing possessiveness. Other studies, such as those by Safiitri (2021) and Yulianda & Sunra (2022), also concentrated on figurative elements like metaphor and hyperbole in novels or Shakespearean sonnets, yet ignored the possessive aspect. In contrast, this study focuses specifically on figurative sentences containing possessive meanings in *The Golden Compass*. This unique perspective reveals how possessiveness is expressed not only as grammatical ownership but also as symbolic representation of emotional bonds, authority, and psychological control. By highlighting this aspect, the study provides a fresh contribution to linguistic and cultural studies, bridging a gap that previous research has not sufficiently addressed.

From an educational perspective, these findings have practical implications for teaching language and literature. Analyzing figurative possessive expressions can help students recognize how meaning is constructed in real contexts and how linguistic choices reflect psychological and social realities. This aligns with Gunawan (2025), who argues that figurative language fosters deeper comprehension and critical thinking. By engaging with figurative sentences from films, students can enhance their interpretative skills and appreciate the complexity of language use in popular media. Moreover, the possessive meanings identified in the film also resonate with contemporary discourses on identity, freedom, and resistance to authority. The conflict between Lyra and the Magisterium reflects struggles over autonomy and control, where figurative expressions such as "You've lost your touch" symbolize the reclaiming of power and self-determination. Thus, figurative possessiveness becomes not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a cultural and ideological expression that articulates resistance to oppression.

This study contributes to the academic literature by addressing a gap in research: while previous studies have examined figurative language in films (e.g., metaphors, similes, personification), few have specifically analyzed possessive meaning as a distinct category. By focusing on possessive figurative expressions, this research offers a new perspective on how language represents emotional bonds and power relations in cinematic narratives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the movie *The Golden Compass*, this study concludes that figurative language containing possessive meaning not only functions as an aesthetic element, but also as a tool to represent emotional closeness, power relations, and psychological ownership between characters. Sentences such as "Jordan is my home", "I've gotten rid of my fear", and "Lyra, my child" show that the use of possessive words such as *my* and *your* have deeper meanings than mere possession of objects; they reflect inner relationships, identities, and complex relational structures between characters. This research reveals that the possessive meanings in figurative language strengthen characterization and deepen the emotional dynamics in the films, and support the audience's understanding of the characters' internal and social conflicts. Academically, this research makes an important contribution to the field of linguistics, particularly in the analysis of semantics and pragmatics in popular media. By employing Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, this study

demonstrates that films can serve as rich objects of study, brimming with symbolic meaning and relevant for understanding the concept of ownership within cognitive and cultural contexts. Additionally, this study enriches the literature on figurative language by highlighting possessive aspects that have not been extensively explored in previous research, particularly within the film medium.

For further research, it is recommended that figurative analysis of possessive meaning be conducted on films from different genres or cultures, in order to examine differences and similarities in the construction of possessive meaning across various social and cultural contexts. Researchers may also expand this study into non-verbal domains, such as gestures, facial expressions, and visual symbols that reinforce possessive meaning in films. Additionally, an interdisciplinary approach combining linguistics, cultural studies, and film psychology would be highly beneficial for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how ownership and power relations are shaped through language and visual media.

## REFERENCES

- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2008). *Film art: An introduction*. McGraw-Hill.
- Fatimah, S., Fauziyah, I., & Nursakinah, S. (2021). Figurative language in Lembah Lentera. *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 7(2), 45–53
- Gunawan, T. (2025). Pengertian dan contoh figurative language secara lengkap. Golden Course. [https://golden-course.com/pengertian-dan-contoh-figurative-language-secara-lengkap/](https://golden-course.com/pengertian-dan-contoh-figurative-language-secara-lengkap/)
- Keraf, G. (2009). *Diksi dan gaya bahasa*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Khairunnisa, E. (2022). Figurative languages used in Robert Frost's selected poems. *ELITERATE: Journal of English Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 2(3), 23–34.
- Khasan, M. N., & Chofan, D. A. (2024). Analysis of figurative language in Robert Frost's "Provide, Provide." *Fonologi: Jurnal Ilmuan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(3), 80–87. [https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i3.843](https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i3.843)
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif (Edisi Revisi)*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Niles, J. (2016). Conceptual metaphor theory and cognitive linguistics. *Journal of Language and Thought*, 12(1), 15–28.
- Riyuda, M., & Oktoviandry, R. (2024). An analysis of figurative language and language style used in Friends season 8 script. *E-Journal of English Language and Literature*, 13(1), 240–250.
- Safiitri, M. (2021). An analysis of figurative language in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. *Jurnal Bahasa dan Budaya*, 7(1), 7–10.
- Sandy, J. K., Natsir, M., & Asanti, C. (2021). An analysis of figurative language in selected Hardy's poems. *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 5(4), 847–858.
- Sari, D. W. (2021). An analysis of figurative language in the Corrs album *Talk on Corners*. *UG Journal*, 15(1), 31–39.
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Yulianda, N., & Sunra, L. (2022). An analysis of figurative languages used in William Shakespeare's sonnets. *ELITERATE: Journal of English Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 2(2), 112–124.