

The Construction of Time, Place and Society in 21st Century American Dystopia Fiction: A Corpus Linguistics Analysis of Deixis

HUDA H. KHALIL
Department of English
College of Education for Women
University of Baghdad
huda.hadi@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

ABSTRACT

*With the challenges of the 21st century, there seems to be an urgent need to reflect more on the way literature constructs the world for the sensitive age group of young adults. In this vein, the present paper is an attempt to investigate the way time, place and society are linguistically portrayed for young adults in the interesting literary genre of dystopia science fiction. This attempt is the track that the paper pursues to find out why and how the young adult readers get so indulged with the world of dystopia science fiction. The young adult seems to reconstruct the dystopic science fiction temporal, special and social atmosphere with the aid of language. Thus, there must be a certain linguistic structure for the construction of the three vital elements of the world (time, place and society) in this literary genre. To achieve its aims, the paper combines the concept of deixis with Werth's (1999) Text World Theory. For more precise results, the corpus linguistics tools of concordance and frequency are employed by using Anthony's (2019) AntConc software. The data consists of eight young adult dystopia science fiction works; Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* (2008-2010) (a series of three novels) and James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* (2009- 2016) (a series of five novels).*

Keywords: corpus linguistics; deixis; dystopia; science fiction; Text World Theory

INTRODUCTION

The term *dystopia* is a coinage of John Stuart Mill in 1868 from the Greek *dis topos* which means a *bad place*. Miller did not mean it to refer to a literary genre, but to political stance (Milner, 2009, p. 827). Dystopia first appeared in America between 1887 and 1894. At that time, American dystopia could affect the readers through two phenomena: 'the analogous historical tendencies' and 'the popular literary tradition of utopia fiction' (Pfaelzer, 1980, p. 61). Later on, text- related phenomena in American dystopia started being effective in considering 'problems of genre, structure, and the historical origins and the impact of this complex form' (Pfaelzer, 1980, p. 61).

Recently, dystopia has become a kind of fiction, especially science fiction, which presents unpleasant social, political and technological tendencies of the modern world. Dystopia is *anti- utopia* in the sense that it refers to an imaginary world where people experience unpleasant, indecent, unsafe, and improper life (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Traditionally, dystopia was a kind of warning in the sense that 'if you behave thus and so, this how you will be punished' (Sargent, 1994, p. 8). Dystopia is a kind of criticism since it describes an imaginary society in particular time and place that are worse than the readers' are. It presents social structure that is far worse than the present social system (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). Rather than being mere 'beneficial social imagination', dystopia is a nostalgic presentation of the past and it embodies a 'nihilistic attitude toward both the present and the future' to create a new imaginative social scheme (Clowes, 1993, p. 32). Dystopia writers present the society as 'an imaginary oppressive society' that is dominated by the elite. It is a paradoxical society in which, people are in conflict with each other and need each other at the same time (Zirange, 2013, p. 89).

In dystopia, technology carries ‘the potential for both positive and negative social change’ (Schmeink, 2016, p. 9). Horan (2018, p. 1) has coined the term ‘projected political fiction’ to refer to the ‘speculative dystopian literature that is primarily political in focus’. To tackle particular political concerns, dystopia writers of the projected political fiction set their stories in the future. The dystopian plot portrays and widens the image of the uncertain future darkness that covers ‘all aspects of cultural, political, and economic life’ (Horan, 2018, p. 1).

The presentation of otherness and discontinuity from realism are two crucial features of dystopia. These characteristics are common between dystopia and science fiction, but they are very intensive in the latter (Williams, 1978, p. 205). Science fiction explores impossible transformation of technological, biological, ecological and/ or physical reality (Baldick, 2001, p. 231). Although dystopia encounters ‘willed general transformation and a technological transformation’ to create a world in which man lives differently from reality, there is still some ‘implied connection’ with reality to gain more political efficacy (Williams, 1978, p. 206). Thus, science fiction could be dystopian (or even utopian) depending on the concept of presenting a good or bad place. In the same vein, dystopia could be science fiction depending on ‘the presence or absence of science and technology’ (Milner, 2009, p. 830).

From a dystopia fiction point of view, the world is a corrupted place where people of power intentionally violate justice. Classical dystopia was a kind of warning against a future tyrannical state while the twentieth century dystopia is a revolution against a world that is corrupted with terror and injustice (Gottlieb, 2001). Browning (1970, p. 18) asserts that a sense of faith accompanies the warning in dystopia in the sense that there is hope of refinement when man decides to make remedies. In the 20th century, written mainly for young- adults, dystopia fiction has taken a new direction away from political issues towards scientific and environmental issues (Claeys, 2017, p. 480). This could be the effect of the First World War, the Second World War and the Great Depression. At that time, dystopia has reflected the 20th century ‘exploitation, repression, state violence, war; genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity’ (Moylan, 2000, p. xi).

In the 21st century, young- adult dystopia science fiction (henceforth YA- D- SF), has flourished worldwide especially for commercial purposes (Basu et al. 2013, p. 2). The fact that young adults are no longer eager readers, has contributed to the raise of YA-D-SF. Such age group is fascinated and accustomed with the internet as a rich informative source for the latest and most popular YA-D-SF works (Voigts and Boller, 2015, p. 411). YA-D-SF is an attractive genre for young adults for a number of reasons. First, they are well- acquainted with the fast progressing technology and science. Second, YA-D-SF satisfies the curiosity of the young adults to what lies behind the fast progress. Third, the genre is originally intended for their age and represents a self- image as valuable independent individual. Fourth, YA-D-SF is rich with attractive liberty ideas that represent a turning point in an oppressive world (Gadowski, 2014).

The orientation of the present paper is towards the 21st century dystopia fiction that is mainly YA- D- SF in nature. The writers of YA- D- SF construct the basic axes of building fantasy; time, place and society. Time travel is a distinctive feature of dystopia since it is built upon reality detachment that employs time, together with space and the nature of characters, as effective tools for its achievement. The times that are of major concern to dystopia science fiction are the past and the future as kinds of reality detachment (Bould et al., 2010). Language, as a message carrier, is the main factor that reflects such time span. A careful linguistic reflection on place gives well- defined convincing frame for events. The events in science fiction need to take place in extraordinarily attractive places that are as vital as the characters themselves (Athans, 2010). The society of dystopia is reflected in the characters, whether real human beings, animals, demons, monsters, etc., that form an integral part of the well- arranged structure of any kind of fiction. Characters are the dynamo of creating the world in any fiction, especially dystopia fiction (Athans, 2010). The paper aims to investigate the most frequent

linguistic devices (deixis) through which time, place and society are constructed in YA- D- SF and the way this linguistic construction promotes young adults to merge with the dystopic world through the concept of *discourse world* proposed by Werth's Text World Theory.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF TIME, PLACE AND SOCIETY THROUGH DEIXIS

Jeffries (2010), in her critical stylistics model, emphasizes the efficiency of deixis for such linguistic construction of time, space and society. In Ancient Greek, the term *deixis* means *display*, *demonstration* or *reference* (Verschueren, 1999). Deixis helps in pointing out the variables of language to anchor it to the real world. Therefore, contextual information is vital in figuring out the meaning of utterances. Words are deictic when their denotational meaning varies with the variation of time and/or place. For example, the denotation of *I* and *you* in a conversation varies with the shift of speakers and hearers. *Indexical expressions* (indexicals) are linguistic expressions that require contextual information to figure out meaning, such as pronouns, and they are deictic ones (Verschueren, 1999, p. 18; Mey, 2001, p. 54).

According to Jeffries (2010, p. 148), deixis has the effect of constructing 'a focus on the particular time, place and social circumstances of the interaction which is underway'. Thus, an interaction occurs in place (*here*), at a time (*now*), with a speaker (*I*) and an addressee (*you*). The deictic expression establishes its evaluative meaning by a set of theoretical points known as the *deictic center* that represents the focal position of the interaction and consists of the speaker, the time and place of the utterance (Levinson, 1983, p. 64). The ability of people to recognize the deictic center of other participants is known as the *deictic projection*, which is a kind of viewing communication from a different point of view (Lyons, 1977, p. 579).

The most common categories of deixis are those of person, place, time and social deixis. Personal deixis is reflected in the grammatical categories of personal pronouns of first, second and third person (*I, me, you, he, him, she, her, we, us, it*) (Levinson, 2000, p. 68). Place deixis encodes the special location of interaction by *here* and *there*; demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*), place adverbials (*outside, upstairs, ahead, further, forwards*, etc.) and prepositional structures (*up the hill, in the palace*, etc.). Time deixis encodes the temporal identification of interaction by verb tenses, adverbs (*now, then*), demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*), time adverbials (*yesterday, tomorrow, soon, next, later*) and prepositional structures (*at night, in the morning, at noon*) (Levinson, 1983, p. 62; Jeffries, 2010, p. 149). Social deixis is linguistically manifested by social titles (Mr., Mrs., Sir., Lord, Highness, etc.), 'address forms (first name, nicknames, formal names)... [a]nd other referring phrases (my dear)' (Jeffries, 2010, p. 149). Both person and social deixis are related to each other in portraying personal and individual denotations in the society (Tabbert, 2016, p. 159).

In addition to facilitating direct interactions, deixis reflects the empathy of human beings in the form of deictic projection. In indirect interactions, (fax, e- mail, texting somebody on WhatsApp) 'the deictic center of the speaker is no longer the main form of point of view construction by language' (Jeffries, 2010, p. 149). In this case, the job of the analyst is to find out the role of deixis in the indirect interaction. Deictic expressions can go further to relate the reader/ hearer of the text to the contents of that text (Jeffries, 2010, p. 149). In dystopia fiction the narrator takes the reader to an imaginary world and persuades that reader to form a point of view about the imaginary time, place and society. Linguistically, the deictic expressions put the reader's 'consciousness within the text concerned and this position will be the deictic center of the text' (Jeffries, 2010, p. 150). Thus, when a young adult reads dystopia science fiction, s/he detaches him/herself mentally from reality and imagines the dystopia world. The young adult places him/ herself in the position of characters as far as time, place, society, etc. are concerned because the reader's 'direct projection ability' helps decoding the characters' deixis

in the context of reading (Jeffries, 2010, p. 151). Texts, especially fiction and literary texts, construct series of the space and time of the events. This series is known as the ‘deictic field’ (Jeffries, 2010, p. 150).

Deixis contributes to Werth’s (1999) *Text World Theory* (TWT) that explains the way readers understand and contemplate the fiction world. According to TWT, when people participate in a discourse, they build up conceptual worlds that correspond to that discourse. The outside of that conceptual world, referred to as the *discourse world*, represents the context in which the discourse takes place. The discourse world contains discourse participants, language event and a range of cognitive processes (emotions, attitudes, feelings, experience, knowledge, fear, sympathy, etc.) (Werth, 1999, p. 85). The discourse world is a state of affairs occurring at a particular time, in a particular place and containing, at least, a human being (Werth, 1999, pp. 80–84). The way language is structured ‘can provide an unlimited types of metaphorical images and concepts in which the spiritual realities are manifested as physical and vice versa’ (Khajeh et al. 2013, p. 46). Amarinthukrowh (2019, p. 13) considers the mental space to be a tool for performing ‘conceptual blending operations’ and modifying ‘conceptual structures’ in order to ‘suit our communicative intent’.

In direct interaction, participants may form mutual discourse world since they share the same context. In some cases, however, a participant may deviate from the direct spatial-temporal settings of the context and form a discourse world that differs from the direct context of interaction (Werth, 1999, p. 86). In indirect interaction, like reading a dystopia fiction, the discourse world formed by the readers is discrete from the real context of the readers who exist in the real world with real settings. How would they be able to form a discourse world that is identical with the fantasy context of dystopia? Werth (1999, p. 103) suggests that the processing of discourse by readers is ‘text- driven’; i.e., language itself determines the parts of knowledge and conceptualization that will be recovered by the readers. Thus, the text of YA-D- SF itself guides and facilitates the conceptualization of the discourse worlds in the mind of young adults to the extent that they spiritually dive into worlds distinct from their own.

Past research on stylistic analysis of dystopia is rather poor. Mustafa & Khalil (2019) have conducted a critical stylistic analysis on YA- D- SF to uncover the embedded ideologies towards order and chaos. The linguistic tools implemented are derived from Jeffries’ (2010) textual- conceptual functions. Khalil (2014) has investigated discourse deixis in political discourse to figure out the way discourse indexicals contribute to the coherence of the text. In relation to literary discourse, Velasco (2016) has employed diexis as a linguistic tool for deriving the meaning of persona as a paradoxical element in Atwood’s poem “This is a Photograph of Me”. There seems to be a gap in the linguistics studies in general in the realm of dystopia fiction. The present paper attempts to full part of this gap through investigating the most frequent indexicals, as a means of constructing time, place and society in the artificial world of YA- D- SF to arrive at the dominant linguistic tools which help constructing the discourse world.

METHODOLOGY

Although the paper is interested in the connection between the dystopia genre and the presentation of time, place and society through deixis, it does not copy Jeffries’ (2010) model of critical stylistic analysis. The paper does not track time, place and society presentation to end up with a number of ideologies since it is not meant to be a critical linguistics analysis. Rather, it is after the linguistic construction of time, place and society that contributes to forming Werth’s (1999) discourse world in the young adults’ minds. The ultimate aim is to find out the most frequent indexicals to figure out the way language helps young adults to

indulge in a fantasy atmosphere and put themselves in the characters' positions by conceptualizing situations identical to those in the dystopia world. Diagram 1 below sketches the methodological track of the paper:

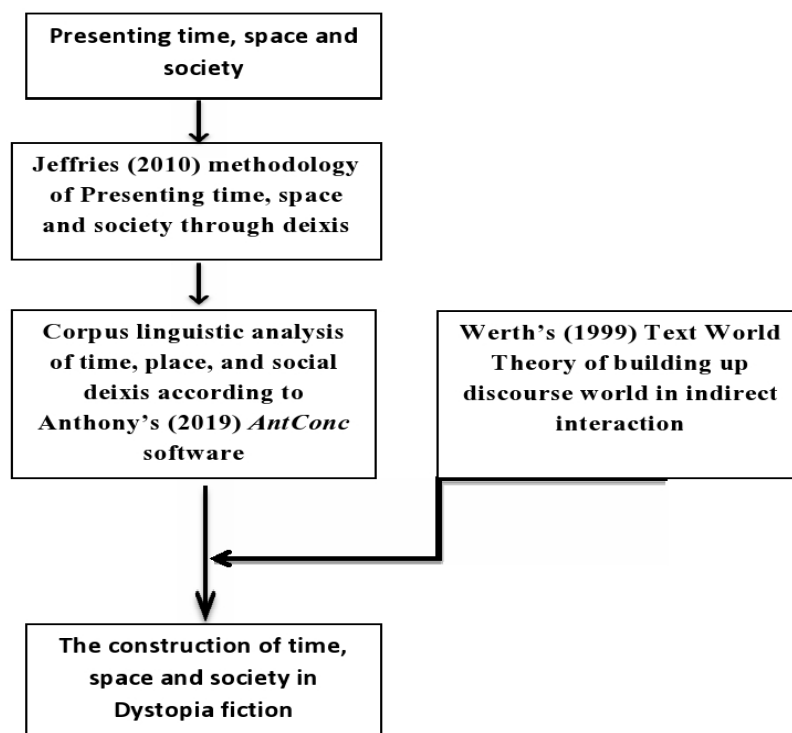


DIAGRAM 1. The methodology of the paper

Jeffries (2010, p. 149) has identified social titles, address forms of proper nouns and endearment address expressions as social indexicals for the construction of society in discourse. The present paper approaches the construction of society by a different linguistic model designed for this purpose. The social deixis model includes categories of various indexicals as shown in Diagram 2. The diagram presents an eclectic model that is a mixture of person and society indexicals. The term *society construction linguistic tools* is coined here since the social indexicals are rather open. The pioneering linguists, who tackled the classification of social deixis, vary in the classifications they proposed. Fillmore (1977) believed social deixis to appear in the linguistic phenomena of person indexicals (pronouns), honorifics (people's occupation terms, social titles, social rank expressions), social acts (greeting, thanking, baptizing) and their accompanying linguistic practices, and specific directional linguistic devices directed from the addresser(s) to the addressee(s) to maintain a deictic field. For Levinson (1983, p. 90), social deixis ranges to cover the encoding of participant roles that are restricted by the social relationships between speaker(s) and addressee(s) or referent(s).

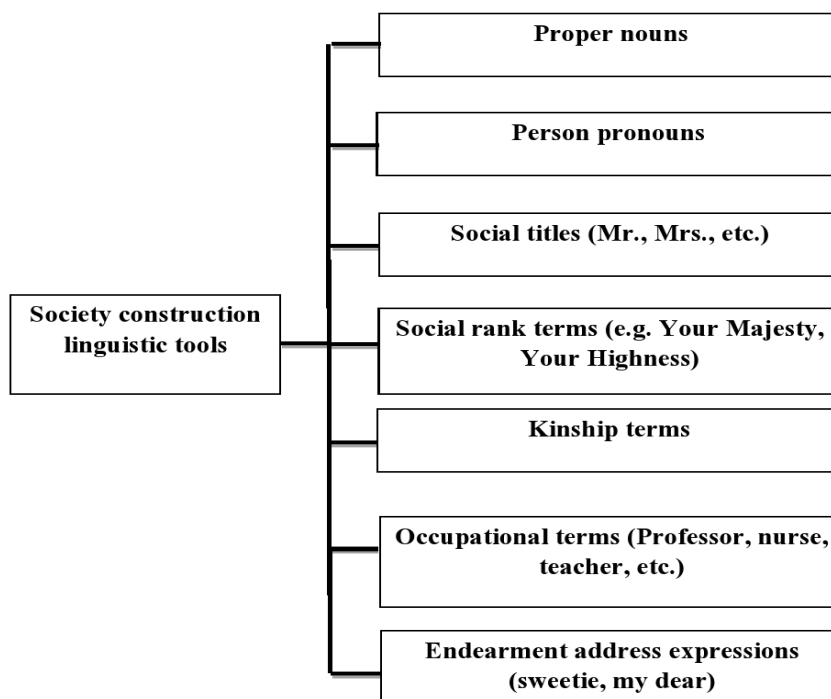


DIAGRAM 2. The society construction linguistic tools (the model designed by the author for the linguistic construction of society)

The model designed consists of the categories of proper nouns, person pronouns, social titles (Mr., Mrs., etc.), social rank terms (e.g. Your Majesty, Your Highness), kinship terms, occupational terms (Professor, nurse, teacher, etc.) and endearment address expressions (sweetie, my dear). It attempts to cover as much social indexicals as possible in English.

For the corpus linguistic analysis, the paper has employed Anthony's (2019) *AntConc* software. It is a one software package that provides tools and advanced options that are all freely available online (Tabbert, 2016, p. 56- 57). The version used is *AntConc* 3.5.8 Windows (2019). Since *AntConc* is able to read and process data in the format of .txt, .htm, .html or .xml, the data (eight dystopia novels) were converted from pdf format to .txt format using the *AntFileConverter* software. The corpus linguistic tools employed are concordance and frequency to find out the most frequent indexicals that pave that way for the TWT to fulfill its postulates in creating the fantasy discourse worlds that simulate the settings of the story.

DATA DESCRIPTION

The dystopia fiction targeted in the paper is the 21st century YA- D- SF since it has flourished around the world in the 2000s, especially with the publication of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* Trilogy (2008-2010). The film industry has contributed to this flourishing (Craig, 2012). During the 2000s, the world has witnessed massive technological development, especially in video games. Young adults became more obsessed with technology that has, in many cases, alienated them from reality. Of the various and rather large number of dystopia works, the two series of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* Trilogy (2008-2010) and James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series (2009- 2016) form the data of the present paper. They both are young adult dystopia, a matter that fits the objective of the present paper in its pursue to find out how time, space and society are constructed to such a sensitive age group with highly receptive minds and obsession in technology. In addition to being authors of best sellers, both

Collins and Dashner are American writers and their dystopia science fiction series were first published and made huge impact within the American society.

Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series consists of five novels; *The Maze Runner* (2009), *The Scorch Trials* (2010), *The Death Cure* (2011), *The Killer Order* (2012) and *The Fever Code* (2016). It was Dashner's first series through which, he could reach to the national market. For over 14 weeks, it was top 10 *New York Times* National Bestseller. In addition to being the first of five- book series, it managed to win the majority of the Young Adult book awards. Such considerable achievements reveal how effective and widespread this dystopia fiction is among young adults (Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008).

Collins' *The Hunger Games* Trilogy includes *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). The popularity of *The Hunger Games* has inspired many dystopia works and movies. The internet accessibility and the emphasis change among young adults have helped in this popularity since awareness of social and political issues became within reach (Voigts & Boller, 2015, p. 413). The global market crash in 2008, the same time of *The Hunger Game*, contributed to its popularity. People became greedier and lost touch with reality, a matter that prompted young adults to connect with the trilogy (Fisher, 2012: 28). Moreover, the female author and character has attracted attention to dystopia (Fisher, 2019, p. 3).

From a corpus linguistic viewpoint, the data consists of eight dystopia novels (three for *The Hunger Games* series and five for *The Maze Runner* series). The data consists of 17650 word types and 804467 word tokens. The novels have all been put together in one txt type directory to be ready for the analysis process by Anthony's (2019) *AntConc* 3. 5. 8. corpus linguistics software.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As for the construction of time, the analysis of time deixis starts with tense. The concordances and frequencies of the following structures have been examined in *AntConc* (2019):

- a. Is *ing
- b. Are *ing
- c. Am *ing
- d. Was *ing
- e. Were *ing
- f. Have been *ing
- g. Has been *ing
- h. Will be *ing
- i. Shall be *ing
- j. Will have been *ing
- k. Shall have been *ing
- l. Have *ed
- m. Has *ed
- n. Had *ed
- o. *ed (for the simple past)

These forms represent the structure of all possible tenses in English. They were investigated separately rather than as a list because they represent possible structures that resemble deep structure forms rather than strings of constituents that may actually exist verbatim in the data. They are readable and processable formulae for *AntConc*. The asterisk indicates an unspecified main verb preceded by auxiliaries and attached to a suitable verbal

suffix. This asterisk employment is one of the facilities provided by *AntConc*. The concordance for each of the above tense structures was performed separately. Each resulted concordance list was manually checked to exclude any irrelevant constructions that might occur in order to adjust the number given in the top of *AntConc* box for the concordance hits of the tense. For example, Figure 1 shows the concordance list for the present continuous tense with third person singular subject:

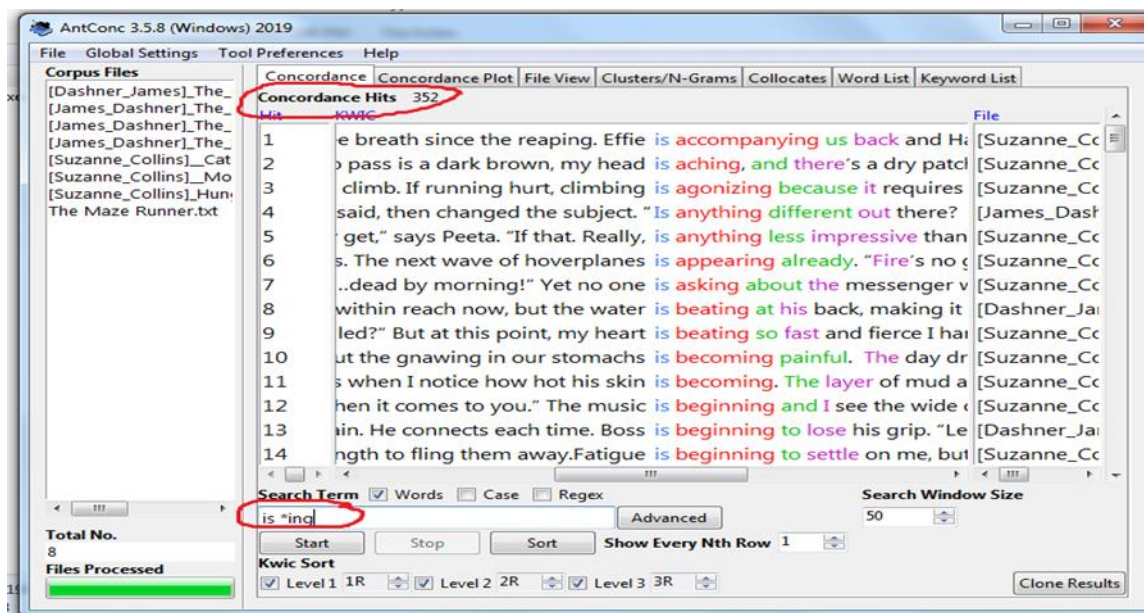


FIGURE 1. Screen 1 from *AntConc* (the concordances for the present continuous tense with third person singular subject)

For the simple present, the frequency depended on the word list (Figure 2) generated by processing all data in *AntConc*. Then, the word list was manually checked to investigate the verbs that were later tested through concordance in *AntConc* to investigate their employment and concordance hits in the data.

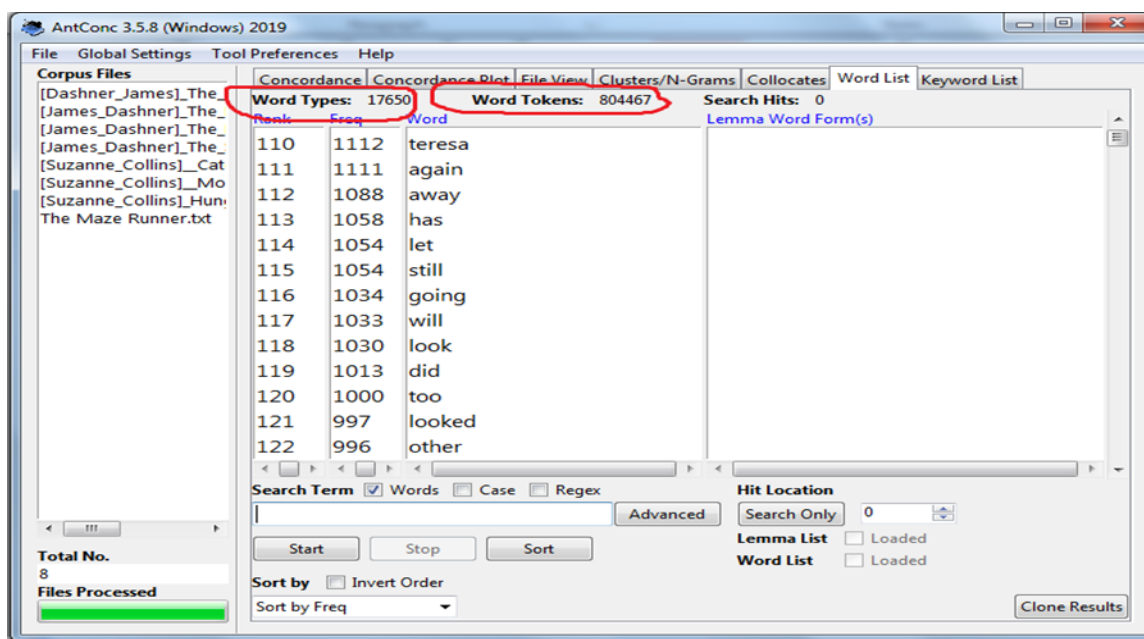


FIGURE 2. Screen 2 from *AntConc* (the word list for the data)

The analysis of irregular verbs has depended on resetting the advanced settings of *AntConc* where there is the facilitation to investigate a list of words. A list of the three forms of the irregular verbs in English (infinitive, past, and past participle) was prepared, converted to the txt file form, and checked through the concordance category of *AntConc*. The concordance list resulted (Figure 3) was manually checked to settle the frequencies for the tense category of time presentation.

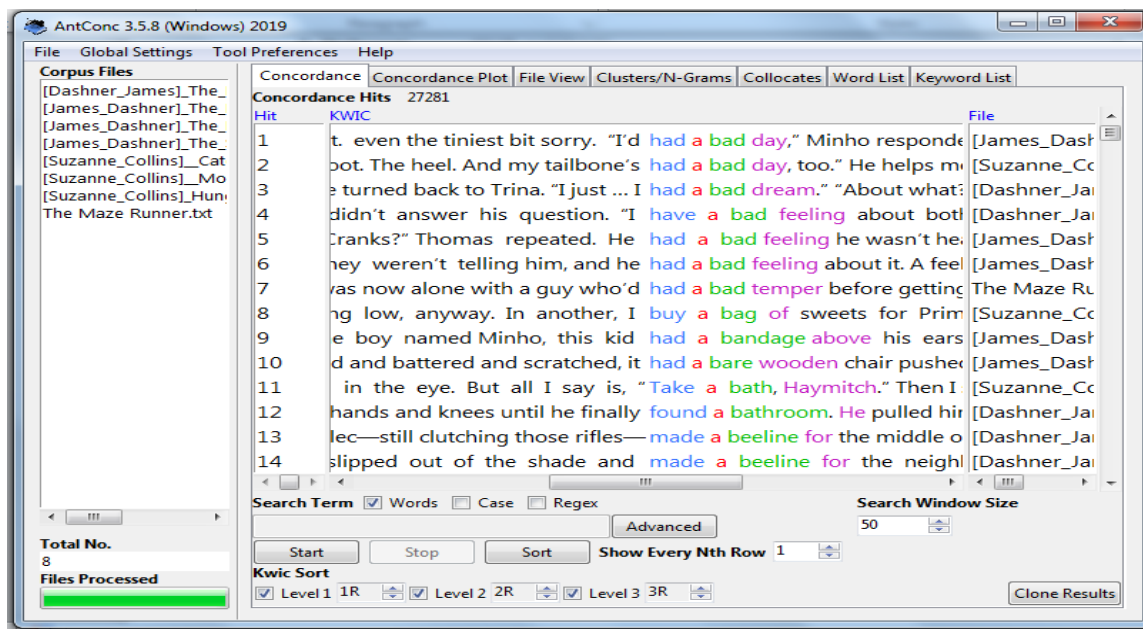


FIGURE. 3. Screen 3 from *AntConc* (the concordance of irregular verbs)

For the adverbs *now* and *then*, each adverb was tested through concordance in *AntConc* that allows manual checking in addition to providing tentative concordance hits that may be adjusted later depending on the checking of concordances, as shown in Figures 4 and 5:

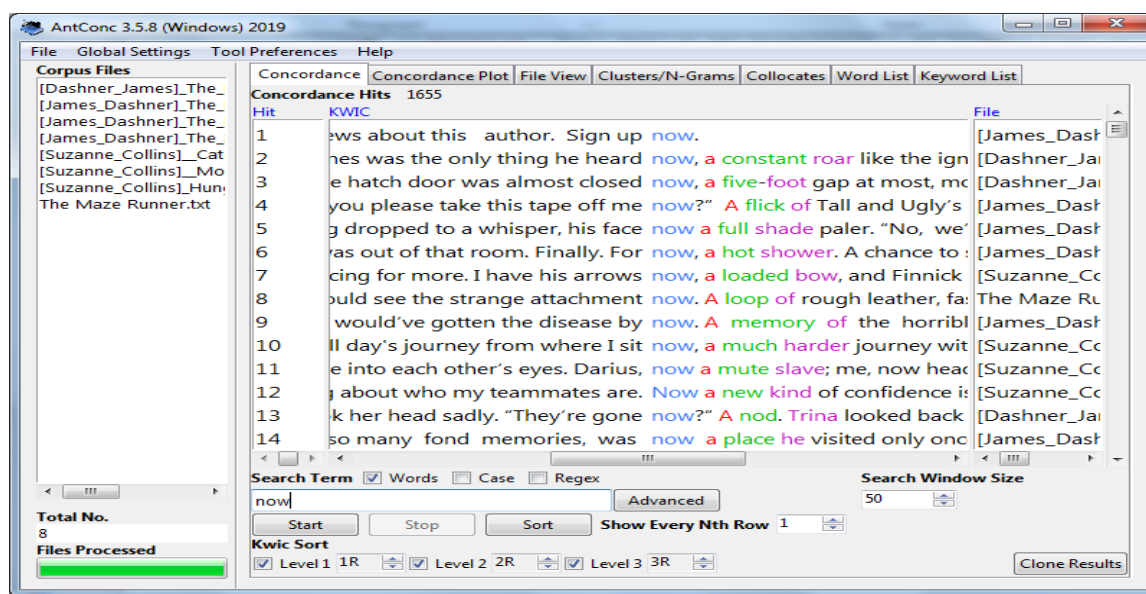


FIGURE. 4. Screen 4 from *AntConc* (the concordance of *now*)

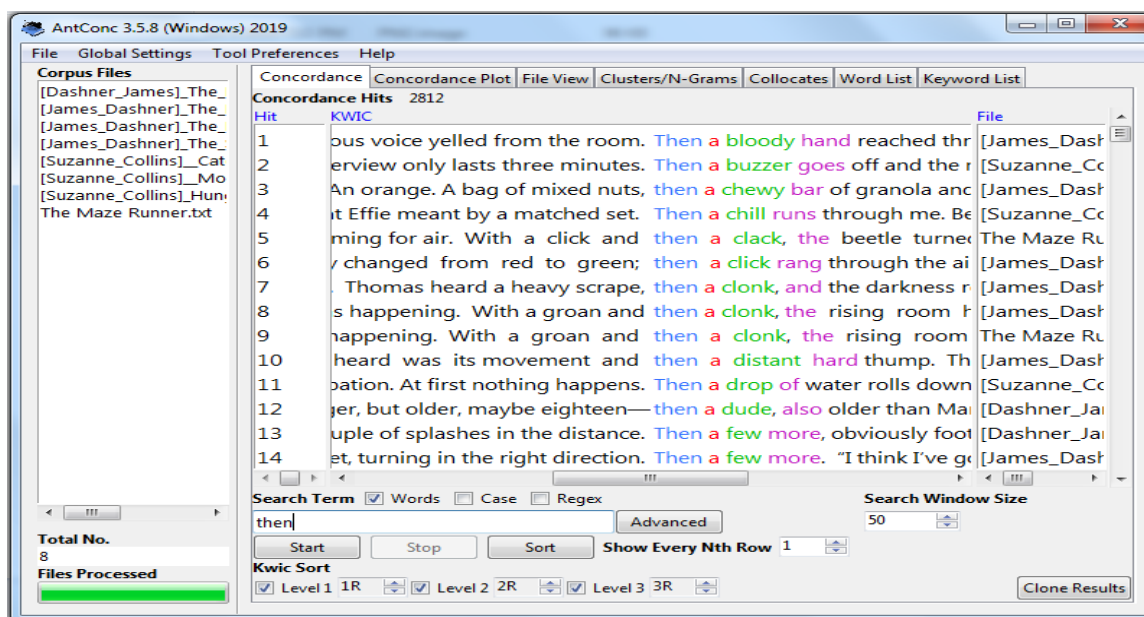


FIGURE 5. Screen 5 from *AntConc* (the concordance of *then*)

The manual checking of each case of concordance helps the solidity of the frequencies to make sure that all *now* and *then* cases refer to time deictic centers in the context of the novels.

The investigation of time adverbials depended on the word list (Figure 2) resulted from processing the whole data in *AntConc*. Each word type, that indicates time reference with the form of time adverbial, was checked separately for concordance and frequency. Examples are *today*, *soon*, *yesterday*, etc. Figure 6 shows the concordance of the time adverbial *today*:

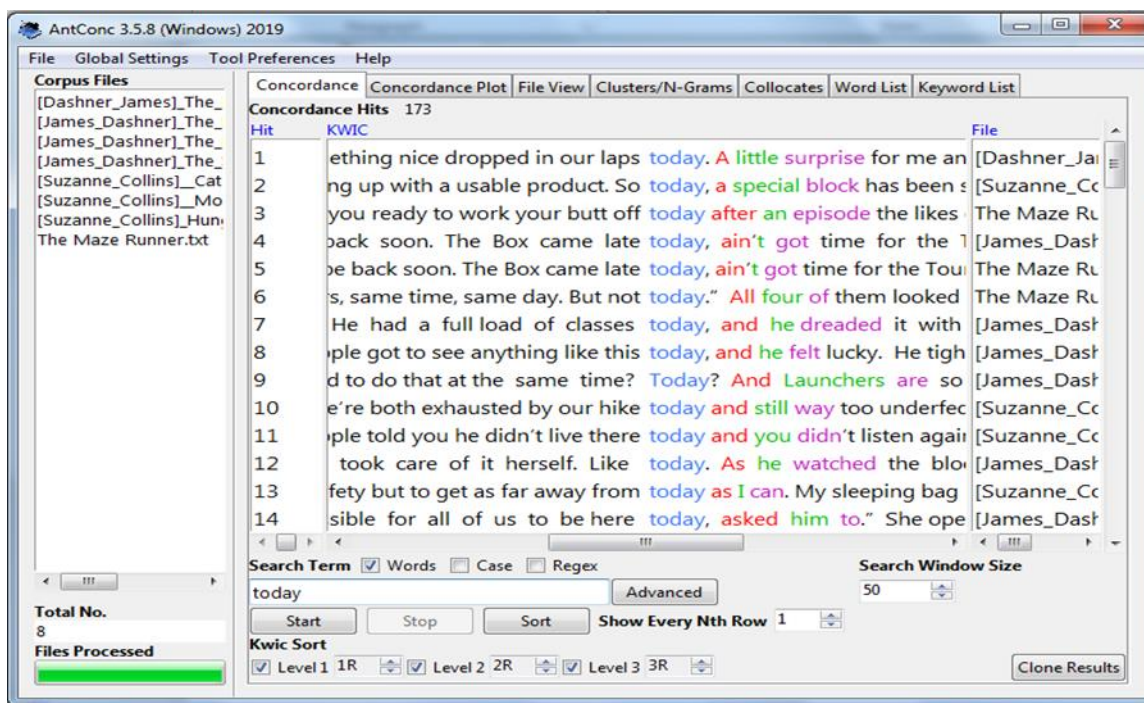


FIGURE 6. Screen 6 from *AntConc* (checking the suitability of *today* as a time adverbial through concordance)

The concordance hits (on the top of *AntConc* window in Figure 6) was adjusted according to the results of the manual checking for each time adverbial found in the data.

As for demonstratives (*this*, *that*, *these*, *those*), each demonstrative pronoun was separately put in concordance processing to manually identify and calculate the temporal referents. Figure 7 shows the *AntConc* concordance of *those*:



FIGURE 7. Screen 7 from *AntConc* (the concordance of *those*)

The corpus analysis for the indexicals of time construction has come up with the frequencies in Table 1:

TABLE 1. The statistics of the indexicals for the construction of time

Verb tenses	adverbs (<i>now</i> , <i>then</i>)		Time construction		
	now	then	Time adverbials	Demonstratives	Prepositional structures
47398	1655	2812	2597	491	634
85%	4467	8%	5%	1%	1%
			55587		

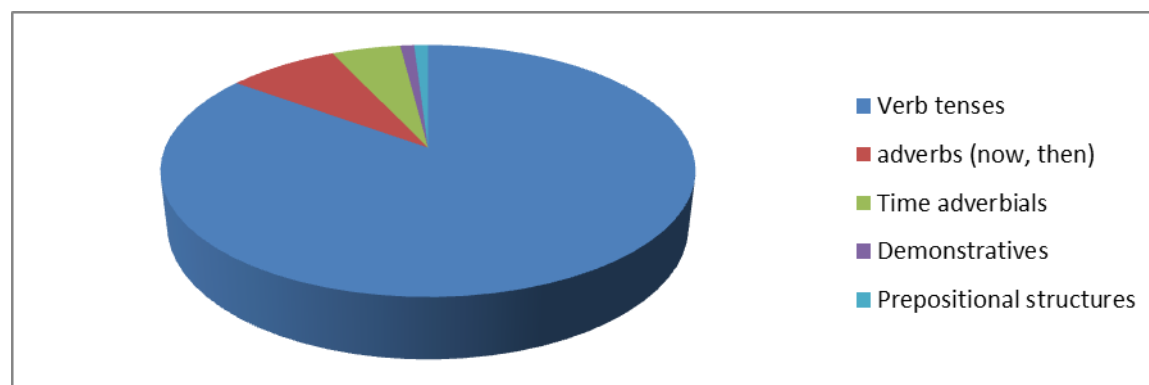


FIGURE 8. The distribution of the time indexicals

The verb tenses occupy the first rank in the construction of time in the data analysed; 85% of the time indexicals are verb tenses that proved to work well within the TWT domain

in involving readers in different discourse worlds and alter in the characters' stances. The process depends on the cognitive bond created between the texts and the discourse worlds they form. Table 2 gives more details about verb tenses detected in the data:

TABLE 2. Details of verb tenses used as time indexicals

	Past			Present			Future	
simple	3597	67.5%	simple	40344	96%	will/ shall- V	113	76%
continuous	1622	30.4%	continuous	621	1.4%	will/ shall- be- V- ing	29	19.5%
perfect simple	110	2.063%	perfect simple	691	1.6%	be- going to- V	4	3%
perfect continuous	2	0.037%	perfect continuous	503	1%	will/ shall- have- been- V- ing	2	1.5%
	5331			41919			148	
	11.2%			88.5%			0.3%	
			47398					

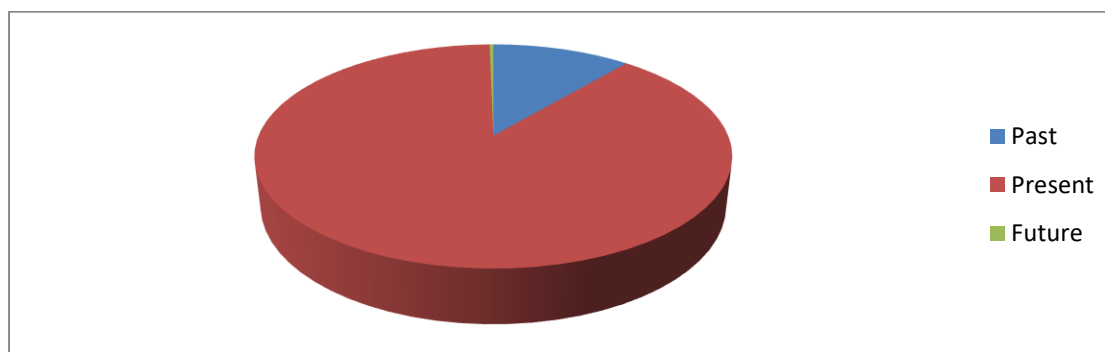


FIGURE 9. The distribution of the past, present and future related tenses

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 9, the forms of the present tense have outdone all other tenses. More precisely, the present simple is more prevalent in comparison with the other forms of tense, as shown in Figure 10:

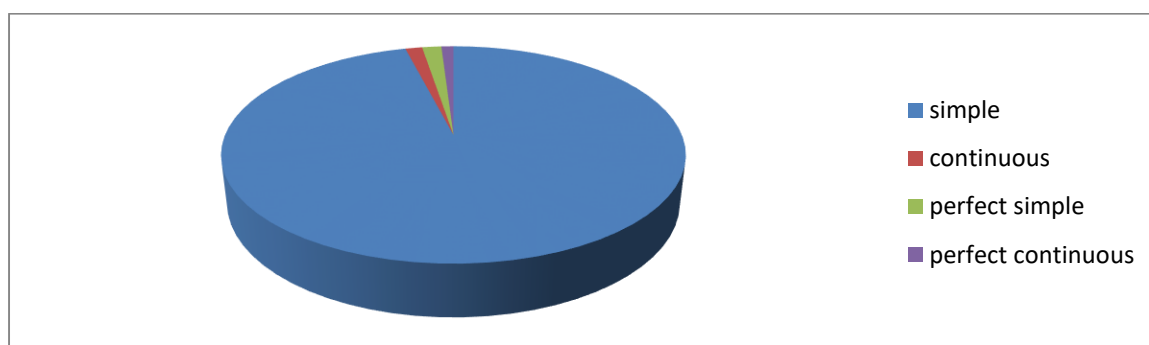


FIGURE 10. The distribution of the present tenses

To investigate the demonstratives that denote time indexicals, a concordance list was created with *AntConc*. Then, the list of concordances was manually investigated to pick up and calculate the demonstratives with temporal reference and exclude others. The results are in Table 3:

TABLE 3. The statistics of demonstratives as time indexicals

Demonstratives as time indexicals			
this	that	these	those
45	387	17	42
9%	79%	3%	9%
491			

As for the construction of place, Table 4 and Figure 11 demonstrate the frequency and distribution of each place deictic category as calculated with both *AntConc* software and manual investigation for the lists of concordances:

TABLE 4. The statistics of the indexicals for the construction of place

adverbs (<i>here, there</i>)		Place construction		Prepositional structures
		Place adverbials	Demonstratives	
<i>here</i>	<i>there</i>			
1211	2685	4661	403	7015
3896				
24%		29%	3%	44%
		15975		

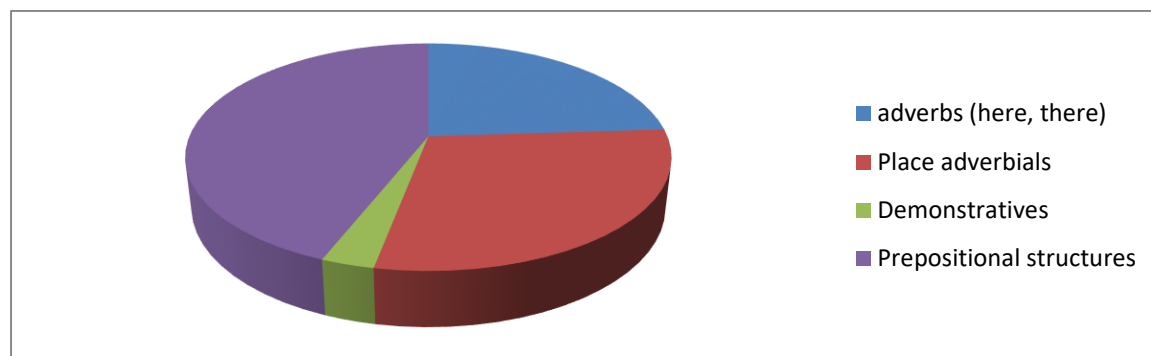


FIGURE 11. The distribution of the indexicals for the construction of place

Demonstratives come in the bottom of the list of place indexicals. Table 5 shows their detailed frequencies:

TABLE 5. The statistics of demonstratives as place indexicals

Demonstratives as place deictic elements			
this	that	these	those
60	310	13	20
15%	77%	3%	5%
403			

Social deixis reflects the social relations among people that form the dystopic society itself. It is just like establishing the society through linguistics in that, according to TWT, a social discourse world is created through social deixis. Table 6 and Figure 12 demonstrate the society construction linguistic tools (according to the designed model) found in the data with their frequencies:

TABLE 6. The statistics of the society construction linguistic tools

proper nouns	person pronouns	Society construction linguistic tools				
		Social titles (Mr., Mrs., etc.)	Social rank terms (e.g. Your Majesty)	Kinship terms	Occupational terms (Professor, nurse, etc.)	Endearment address expressions (sweetie, my dear)
22678	69469	361	14	614	521	28
24. 2 %	74. 15 %	0.38%	0.014%	0.65%	0.55 %	0.029%
93685						

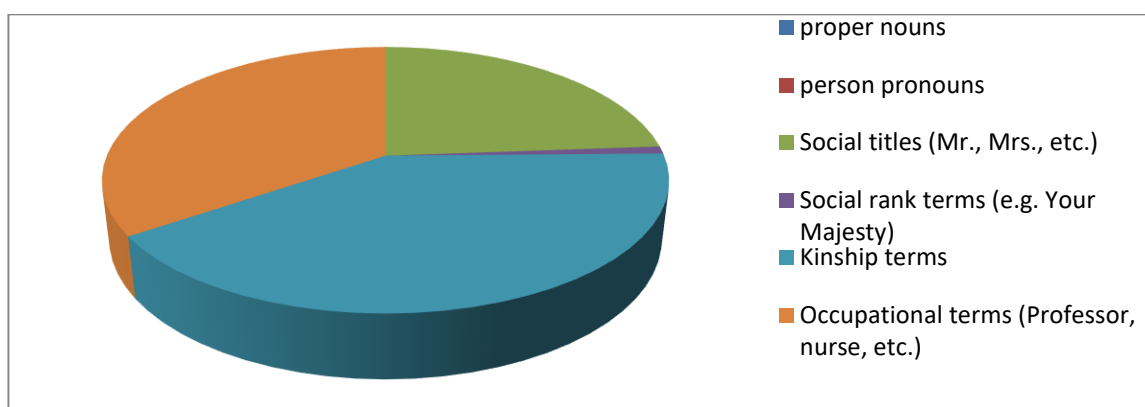


FIGURE 12. The distribution of the Society construction linguistic tools

These frequencies reflect the word tokens rather than the word types. The aim here is to conduct a macroanalysis for the construction of fictional society in general through language rather than a microanalysis for the kind of jobs, pronouns, proper nouns, etc. that mostly occur in the text under analysis. The frequencies for the categories of person pronouns, social titles and social ranks were achieved through the facility of concordance provided by *AntConc* software. These three categories have limited number of members and, thus, manageable to be checked as one member at a time through concordance. The category of proper nouns was checked and investigated through the word list generated by *AntConc* (Figure 3). Kinship terms, occupational terms and endearment address expressions were checked and counted by generating a list of words for all the members of each category (one category at a time and a list of words for the members of each category). For example, a list of words for all the English kinship terms was formed and checked by *AntConc*.

DISCUSSION

According to the results in Table 1 and Figure 8 of time construction, tense is the most frequently used time indexical. This indicates the importance of actions and states in the lapse of time in the YA- D- SF discourse. However, there has been heavy reliance on the present simple in particular (Table2, Figures 9 and 10). This fact explains the linguistic features employed in the text to keep the readers occupied with the current state of events and help building the discourse world that the TWT proposed to imitate the context of the story. There is a kind of perpetuation of the events through the simple present that is associated with the universality of the current time of fiction rather than with the real time of the readers since these times do not match. Examples are:

- (1) ‘He **places** a half crown ..., but **it’s made** of a heavy black metal, not gold. Then he **adjusts** the light in the room to mimic twilight and presses a button just inside the fabric on my wrist’ (Collins, 2009).
(2) ‘They **start** moving forward, and then a figure suddenly **flashes** in from the left, Mark barely **takes** a breath as he **watches** a short but violent burst’ (Dashner, 2012).

The next rank of time indexical frequencies goes to the adverbs *now* and *then* (Table 1). *Now* carries an absolute meaning by anchoring the events at the same moment of speaking (Keizer, 2015, p. 121). It is another linguistic tool that drugs the reader towards the present moment of speaking according to the conceptual time of dystopia. *Now* is stronger in its effect than the present tense since it carries an absolute definite meaning with definite specific moment in the present. As for *then*, it works as a set of rings that make up a chain of events that keeps the reader informed, occupied and smoothly transformed from one event to the other in a coherent way. Examples are:

- (3) ‘Right **now**, it’s silent as a stone. Concealed by a clump of bushes....’ (Collins, 2008).
(4) ‘He might find a sort of peace ..., but he resolved right **then** and there that he would only trust Minho and Newt’ (Dashner, 2011).

The third frequency rank of time indexicals goes to miscellaneous time adverbials that vary depending on their referents in the novel. Such adverbials are *yesterday afternoon*, *tomorrow*, *tonight*, *today*, *afterwards*, *early*, *late*, etc. Following is the category of prepositional structure time indexicals. Such time prepositional structures are *in the meantime*, *after breakfast*, *in the afternoon*, *at eight o’clock*, *during their fight*, *before dawn*, etc. Time adverbials and prepositional structures clarify the meaning in which the verb is used. They help denoting the time that serves the plot in order to fulfill the TWT principles for creating the discourse world. Moreover, they put the reader in a conceptual context that is as close as possible to the dystopic context that the writer is trying to portray.

Demonstratives come in the bottom of the list of time indexicals. The most frequent demonstrative is *that* which indicates a distal relationship between both the writer and reader and the described time. Employing the TWT principles, the deictic center takes the reader’s consciousness to one specific remote time at a time. This tendency supports the delusion of young adults by dragging their direct projection ability towards the encoding of a faraway temporal deictic center rather than distracting the mind with multiple deictic centers whether remote or close. Examples are:

- (5) ‘**That** last night...to tell you about that last night...well, first of all,’ (Collins, 2010).
(6) ‘**That** morning, they awoke to a sight of wonder’ (Dashner, 2016).

As for the construction of place, the prepositional structures have overtopped the other categories of place indexicals (Table 4, Figure 11). The structuring of the place prepositional phrases requires semantically restricted process in that the writer needs to restrict his/her choice to maintain coherence. The choice restriction is due to the collocation relation between the verb, preposition and prepositional complement (Allerton, 2008, p. 39). Examples are:

- (7) ‘Thomas hesitated, then stepped **into it** with his right foot and clutched the rope as he was yanked **toward the sky**’ (Dashner, 2009).
(8) ‘Thomas’s body twitched a little as the tubes and wires snaked **away from their intrusive positions** and back **into his mask**’ (Dashner, 2012).

(9) ‘I grit my teeth as Venia, a woman with aqua hair and gold tattoos **above her eyebrows**, yanks a strip of Fabric **from my leg** tearing out the hair **beneath it**’ (Collins, 2008).

(10) ‘I just go back **to our compartment** or wander **around 13** or fall asleep somewhere hidden. An abandoned air duct. **Behind the water pipes in the laundry**’ (Collins, 2010).

The collocation relation that ties the verb and the preposition creates linguistic bonds that help keeping the reader moving spontaneously from one event to the other. This smoothly going process contributes to the creation, understanding and contemplation of the discourse world.

Place adverbials (*sideways, upstairs, ahead, further, outside*, etc.) come in the second rank as place indexicals. They provide the writer with some freedom to create the discourse world and put actions and events in the matchmaking places that the writer find suitable to reflect the dystopic fiction. As for the young adult reader, such wide variation and freedom of location choice will definitely widen the discourse world he/ she would conceptualize through reading the text.

The indexicals of *here* and *there* occupy the third rank with *there* outweighed *here* by more than the double (Table 4). The focus on *there* has occurred depending on the truck of the plot and the text. This truck represents the direct interaction among the characters. According to Werth’s (1999) TWT, the discourse world conceptualised by the young adult readers would be rather remote in its special referential consideration. The dystopic context that the young adult would conceptualise is remote from reality since the dystopic text itself has been considerably furnished with words, like *there*, with remote referential deictic centers.

The least frequent place indexicals are the demonstratives. *That* comes on the top of the list of demonstratives with the highest frequency (Table 5). This works side by side with *there* to center the discourse world of the young adult in one remote focal (spatial) point to disconnect the young adult’s mind from reality.

The most frequent society construction linguistic tools are the person pronouns and proper nouns (Table 6, Figure 12). Dystopia imitates real direct communication where people maintain social relations that are mostly and mainly maintained by person pronouns and proper nouns. Such linguistic construction promotes the young adults’ deictic projection to create a discourse world that is rich with individuals who are simulated by both pronouns and proper nouns. With the construction of time, verb tenses represented the dominated indexicals (Table 1). Hence, the ‘deictic field’ (a series of the space and time elements of events) in dystopia discourse is strongly linked to the characters (represented by person pronouns and proper nouns) to form images that are as close as possible to real life where people and actions count a lot. Example is:

(11) **I** hate that **they** separated **me** from **you** guys, **she** said.

Thomas understood why **they** had **She** was the only girl and the rest of the **Gladers** were ... a bunch of shanks **they** didn’t trust yet. Guess **they** were protecting **you**.

Yeah. **I** guess. **Melancholy** seeped ..., stuck to **them** like syrup. But **it** sucks being alone after everything **we** went through.

Where’d **they** take **you**, anyway? **She** sounded so sad that **he** almost wanted to get up and look for **her**, but **he** knew better.

Just ... where **we** ate last night. **It**’s a small room with a few bunks. **I**’m pretty sure **they** locked the door when **they** left.

(Dashner, 2010)

The heavy use of pronouns and proper nouns in the example above leads to the conceptualisation of the communicative situation because the linguistic structures affect the

cognitive feature of conceptualisation by forming ‘taxonomic hierarchies consisting of various levels of specificity’ (Verhagen, 2007, p. 51). This way, according to Werth’s TWT, young adults build the dystopic discourse world that juxtaposes the dystopic context as intended to be portrayed by the writer. The discourse world is a continuum to the deictic field and it contains discourse participants that are textualized by both pronouns and proper nouns and events that take place at specific times and in specific places. The other categories of society construction linguistic tools do not seem to have a significant role in dystopia discourse.

CONCLUSION

YA- D- SF establishes itself on the linguistic construction of time, place and society. Deixis contributes to the contemplation associated with reading dystopic fiction through creating a discourse world (in the readers’ cognitive domain) by focusing on the most suitable linguistic variables that simulate the dystopic context. In the same way that ‘actual practices can be influenced by contextual factors’ (Philip et al, 2019, p. 174), the establishment of the discourse world is achieved by language, as a promoter for contemplation, leading the young adult readers of YA- D- SF to dive in the dystopic world (Werth, 1999). The analysis has revealed this fact through the establishment of concordances and frequencies that helped figuring out the solid bases (the most frequent deixis) employed in the text to construct the discourse world that best imitates the fictional dystopic world.

Both concordance and frequency tools have shown that time construction is extremely dependent on the simple present tense since it represents the basic building block of any literary work. Such a building block has a considerable role in YA- D- SF. The simple present tense constructs the time of the dystopic events and creates an eternal discourse world by facilitating the direction of the deictic projection of readers to near deictic centers that are made close and universal by the simple present tense. In comparison with the past and the future, the present tense is the closest to readers and helps avoiding the dispersion that could happen by the anticipation of future events or by going back to past events. Next to tense in the list come the adverbs *now* and *then*. *Then* has prevailed more than *now*. The demonstrative pronoun *that* has also shown a potent role in constructing time. Through *that* and *now*, the deictic center drugs the young adult’s deictic projection into a balanced temporal state to maintain the unconscious delusion and indulgence in the dystopic atmosphere and avoid dispersion. Morphological and semantic flexibility has been available for the writers of the analysed YA- D- SF works through the employment of miscellaneous time adverbials and prepositional structures. These time indexicals added to the quality of the dystopic temporal images that are constructed by language. This way, the writers have guided the young adults to conceptualized situations close to the dystopic events.

Miscellaneous place adverbials and prepositional structures have also played a considerable role in place construction. Accordingly, the writers have furnished themselves with another wide area of morphological and semantic variation to create the dystopic worlds. As for *here* and *there*, place construction is more dependent on *there*. In this case, the deictic projection of the young adult’s consciousness is drugged to a remote deictic center to reinforce the conceptualization of a discourse world that is far away from reality and close to the dystopic context. This far away casting of the reader’s consciousness is also maintained by the demonstrative *that* which has overtopped the other demonstratives in the construction of place.

Social indexicals form a flexible set that can be molded depending on the discourse under investigation and the linguistic concepts that can construct society in discourse. The society construction linguistic tool model (designed in the methodology of the present paper) puts different facets of society together in one eclectic model. It is suitable for the investigation of

society construction in direct and indirect interaction. In the YA- D- SF works analysed, the dystopic society is linguistically structured by both proper nouns and personal pronouns more than the other linguistic tools produced in the model. Such a linguistic tendency of society construction helps creating a dystopic interactional society that is as close as possible to every day interactions.

Thus, future research is recommended to investigate the structure of society in other type of fiction or direct communicative events. Both of these forms of discourse echo real life in which social relations form a vital parameter.

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