

The Hunger Games: Linguistic Modality as Reflector of Point Of View in a Dystopian Novel

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ABSTRACT

Dystopian literature is a genre that imagines a futuristic universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are expressed. One famous novel of this genre is *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins (2008). Considering its strong social and pedagogical influences, an analytical study was considered necessary to investigate the linguistic modality of the novel. Modality refers to a speaker's opinion concerning the truth of a proposition. Hence, the primary goal of this study is to examine the linguistic manifestations of modality to identify point of view in the novel by determining the dominant modality shading. Simpson's (2005) framework was used as the analytical tool to conduct the analysis. The results indicate that epistemic modality is the most prevalent modality used in the novel and this has provided the novel with a negative shading. Furthermore, this accentuates notions of alienation and confusion within the narrative, by highlighting the narrator's struggles to make sense of what is happening. The results indicate that the narration reflects the character.

Keywords: Boulomaic, deontic, epistemic, modality, shading

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INTRODUCTION

Some novels from the dystopian genre such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) have remarkable influence on the concept of dystopia. Within the dystopian genre, post-apocalyptic literature deals with phenomena

relating to a remnant of humanity that has survived a disaster. This could be in the form of an environmental devastation, chemical warfare, genetic experimentation, an alien invasion or an asteroid collision. In *The Hunger Games*, it has to do with a new order of society. In the words of the author, Suzanne Collins (2008):

He [Mayor Undersee] tells of the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America. He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed so much of the land, the brutal war for what little sustenance remained.

In this novel, disaster and destruction led to the creation of a post-apocalyptic world. However, not all post-apocalyptic situations are dystopian by nature. A scenario turns dystopian when the survivors are governed by an abusive totalitarian system that has the tendency to violently segregate, categorise and abuse. Therefore, post-apocalyptic dystopian novels generally create a futuristic society that has been rebuilt after a disaster, but which still faces various kinds of oppression. This propels the rise of protagonists who fight to restore balance.

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008) is the first book in a trilogy, of which the second is *Catching Fire* (2009), followed by *Mockingjay* (2010). *The Hunger Games* instantly became a New York Times

Bestseller and went on to top various prestigious literary award lists (Gresh, 2011). Its acclaimed international bestseller title led to its being converted into a film and has also sparked academic interest, with researchers keen to examine various aspects of the novel. These aspects include identity, gender, love, trauma and recovery (Henthorne, 2012); hunger, violence and child soldiers (Simmons, 2012); masculinity and femininity (Woloshyn, Taber, & Lane, 2013); gender performativity and media influence (Loo, 2014); emerging themes and trends (Ryan, 2014) and female rebellion (Day, Green-Barteet, & Montz, 2014).

According to Trask (1998) elements that distinguish between different genres are their distinctive characteristics, and these are constant and easily recognisable. Due to this fact, *The Hunger Games* is being used in academic syllabi and curricula as a subject of analysis. For example, at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Tilton (2012) used the novel to identify characteristics of a fictional human future that could become true. It was also used to gain a better understanding of societal issues through fictional depiction. At the University of Michigan, Berger (2015) used it to study democracy and power. In New South Wales, *The Hunger Games* has been included as part of the suggested texts for the English K-10 syllabus by the Board of Studies of New South Wales (2012) for the past few years. Furthermore, the novel is part of the Seventh Grade English Syllabus (2016) for the past two years at the Powell Middle School in Tennessee. These are just a few examples of academic institutions that

use *The Hunger Games*. The popularity and acceptance of this novel led the researcher to choose it as the subject of the present study.

The story revolves around Katniss Everdeen, a 16-year-old who has to take part in the 'Hunger Games', a televised live battle to death, in which she has to fight for her survival. In *The Hunger Games*, people are divided into districts in the post-apocalyptic world of Panem, a "country that rose up out of the ashes of a place once called North America" (Collins, 2008). Districts are divided according to industries; Katniss is from the coal-mining district, District Twelve, "[w]here you can starve to death in safety". At 11, she lost her father, "who was blown to bits in a mine explosion". The bleak and dismal state of the Seam, where Katniss lives, is rife with illness and death. This is because of the oppressive regime of the Capitol and the punishments executed: starvation, poverty, imprisonment and compulsory fights. Katniss provides for her family by hunting and foraging. She acknowledges her role as provider as seen in her assertive believe, "I kept us alive". She does everything possible to protect her mother and her sister, Primrose. In fact, it is her fierce sense of protectiveness that makes Katniss volunteer to participate in the annual Hunger Games when her sister is chosen during what is called the 'reaping'. From that point on, Katniss faces many challenges: betrayal, loss, the death of peers, deception and having to kill to survive.

Katniss has had to assess and assimilate situations as she tries to comprehend the people in her life and the events that take

place. When she was younger she would blurt out derogative truths about District 12. She soon understands that such behaviour would only lead to more 'trouble' so she learns to 'hold her tongue' and to turn her "features into an indifferent mask" to hide her feelings (Collins, 2008). Hence, she learnt not to show how she really felt so that she would not be punished. Katniss also has to constantly make quick decisions after volunteering to be a tribute. A tribute is someone who participates in the Hunger Games. During the games, each tribute can take any of the supplies strewn around at the 'Cornucopia', a "giant golden horn shaped like a cone" full of supplies such as food, water, medicine, garments, weapons and fire starters. This is where the biggest bloodbath usually occurs as tributes kill for items that they want. Katniss wants to take the sheath of bow and arrows. She is sure of her ability and she knows she is fast but tries to make sense of what is best: "I know I can get it, I know I can reach it first, but then the question is, how quickly can I get out of there?"

This shows that Katniss uses each situation to her advantage by questioning and analysing every aspect of it. She weighs the pros and cons before making an educated guess on what will work best for her. Even at the end of the novel, as Katniss is approaching home, she still feels confused by all that has happened and is going to happen. The last lines she speaks aloud are, "I don't know. The closer we get to District Twelve, the more confused I get, I say. He waits for further explanation, but

none's forthcoming". Before the games, Katniss and Peeta had to pretend to be the star-crossed lovers of District Twelve. Peeta has loved Katniss since he was a little boy. He thought that Katniss had finally fallen in love with him, only to find out that she has been pretending in order to survive the games. As they near home, Katniss is still unsure of her feelings for Peeta and for her hunting partner, Gale.

Katniss embodies the roles of protector, provider and hunter before the games. During the games, she is given various titles, such as The Girl on Fire, The Star-Crossed Lover and also, unknowingly becomes the face of an uprising among the districts of which she was unaware. Despite being a strong character (Balkind, 2014), Katniss is bound to feel confused and wary as she navigates each challenge that she faces in her life. It is evident that Katniss' character is multifaceted; this study examines if this element and dimension of Katniss can be observed in the narration.

In a novel, the point of view establishes the mode of narration and distinguishes the perspective through which the story is told. It also poses an interesting facet in understanding the narrative's intrinsic nature. It interprets a narrative by highlighting whose thoughts and views are followed as events unfold. Genette (1980) introduced the terms heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrative to help distinguish the voice of a narrative. A heterodiegetic narrative is a narration by a third-person narrator who is "external, detached, [and] situated outside

the story," while a homodiegetic narrative is from a first-person narrator "who is internal to the narrative and is on the same plane of exegesis as the story" (Simpson, 2004).

The lives and trials of all characters in *The Hunger Games* are conveyed from the point of view of the protagonist, Katniss Everdeen. This is typified in the following excerpts taken from the novel:

When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim's warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. (p. 1)

Peeta unexpectedly laughs. "He was drunk," says Peeta. "He's drunk every year." "Every day," I add. I can't help smirking a little. (p. 56)

So as I slide out of the foliage and into the dawn light, I pause a second, giving the cameras time to lock on me. Then I cock my head slightly to the side and give a knowing smile. There! Let them figure out what that means! (p. 163)

That brings me back to Cato. But while I think I had a sense of Foxface, who she was and how she operated, he's a little more slippery. Powerful, well trained, but smart? I don't know. Not like she was. And utterly lacking in the control Foxface

demonstrated. I believe Cato could easily lose his judgement. (p. 320)

Given the pervasiveness of this type of narration in *The Hunger Games*, it would be appropriate to say that *The Hunger Games* employs a homodiegetic narratorial point of view. According to Childs and Fowler (2006), the first-person point of view narration in fiction allowed the author to “enter the intimacy of the protagonist’s mind”. By giving the protagonist voice in a story, the author allows the reader to have access not only to experiences but also the thoughts, feelings and motivation of the character. As shown in the examples above, readers get to feel and sense what Katniss is going through as everything is described literally from her eyes: the coldness of the bed, the roughness of the canvas mattress cover, her feelings about Haymitch’s drinking habit (Haymitch is the only living Hunger Games victor from District 12, and in the novel becomes the mentor for Katniss and Peeta) and her opinion of two other contestants, Foxface and Cato. Readers get to share her thoughts as she tries to confuse viewers of the Hunger Games by making them wonder if Peeta had betrayed her or if they had previously planned for Peeta to pair up with other contestants as a games strategy.

Past studies on first-person narration have examined issues related to the reliability of the narrator (Bockting, 1993; Cartwright, 1984; Edmiston, 1989; Murphy, 2012; Semino, 2002). Booth (1961) described a narrator as being “reliable when he

speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), unreliable when he does not.” On the other hand, Martin (1986) claimed that any first-person narrator “may prove unreliable because it issues from a speaking or writing self-addressing someone. This is the condition of discourse in which. . . . the possibility of speaking the truth creates the possibility of misunderstanding, misperceiving, and lying.” Dooley (2004) had examined the use of the first-person narrative in Iris Murdoch’s *The Black Prince* and found that using the first-person narrative in the novel helped to depict events in such a way they were so “closely allied to the perceptions and experiences of the main character.” Cartwright (1984) looked at the unreliability of Nick, the protagonist of *The Great Gatsby*, who was also the narrator of the novel, and discovered how the disillusion of the character had not had much influence on the reader due to his own unreliable assessments of key events in the novel. Bockting (1993), who analysed Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, showed how the narratives of the characters in the novel were characterised by patterns in the representation of their speech that in this case reflected their mental disorder (Bockting, 1993). She concluded that the idiosyncratic ways in which narrators report other people’s words could be exploited in the creation of mind style. Semino and Swindlehurst (1996), on the other hand, had looked at how the metaphors used by Bromden the narrator, who was also the protagonist in

the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* convey the character's mind style. Bromden suffers from clinical depression, hallucination and is also diagnosed as being schizophrenic. Throughout the novel his narration is characterised by the metaphors of machinery that, according to Semino and Swindlehurst (1996), reflect not only the character's conceptualisation of reality, but also his cognitive habits and ultimately, the mental illness that afflicts him.

Narratorial point of view and its relationship with the linguistic system of modality is also a vital aspect of stylistic analysis (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004). Modality is a key tool for recognising the interpersonal function and the expression of social roles between the addresser and addressee in a discourse. It reflects the speaker's attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence or about the proposition expressed by the sentence (Halliday & Hassan, 1985). In other words, modalities are imperative in expressing and understanding the underlying values and the varying degrees of certainty towards a proposition or belief. In narratives such as in fiction, the usage of modalities can determine the 'feel' of a text and that modality is often used in a narrative to depict thoughts, feelings and senses (Simpson, 2005). Fowler (1985) delineated that modality was "signified in a range of linguistic forms" primarily by modal auxiliary verbs, such as *may* and *might*, adverbs, such as *probably* and adjectives, such as *necessary*.

Given the intricacies of the character of Katniss, the protagonist, who is also the

narrator of *The Hunger Games*, this paper seeks to examine modality with regard to the narrative voice and to what extent the narration reflects the different shadings. The analysis of point of view will be based on Simpson's modal grammar point-of-view framework (2005).

The purpose of this paper is twofold. It aims (1) To determine the modalities employed in *The Hunger Games*; and (2) To indicate the dominant modality shading in relation to point of view in the novel.

The Modality Framework

There are four main modal systems as cited by Simpson (2005): deontic, boulomaic, epistemic and perception. Deontic modal auxiliaries actualise a progression of commitment ranging from (i) permission, such as *you may leave*; through (ii) obligation, such as *you should leave*; to (iii) requirement, *you must leave* (Simpson, 2005, p. 43). This particular modality can be found in directives that impose obligations or grant permission and the modal auxiliary verbs that signal this type of modality are *can*, *may*, *must*, *shall* and *should*. There are, however, sentences that do not contain these modal auxiliaries but still indicate deontic modality. Cases like this generally combine adjectives and participles through the 'BE . . . THAT' and 'BE . . . TO' constructions (Simpson, 2005), such as:

- (a) You are permitted to leave.
(BE+participle+TO)
- (b) It is necessary for you to leave.
(BE+adjective+THAT)

Boulomaic modality is used to express wishes and desires as well as “the degree of the speaker’s (or someone else’s) liking or disliking of the state of affairs” (Nuyts, 2005). Simpson (2004; 2005), explicated that modal lexical verbs such as *hope*, *wish* and *regret* as well as their corresponding forms of modal adverbs such as *hopefully*, *unfortunately* and *regrettably* were vital to the boulomaic system. Boulomaic modality can also be observed in participial and adjectival constructions using the BE . . . THAT’ and ‘BE . . . TO’ constructions (Simpson, 2005), such as,

(c) It is hoped that you will leave.

(BE+participle+THAT)

(d) It’s good that you’re leaving.

(BE+adjective+THAT)

Epistemic modality is used to show the speaker’s knowledge or belief concerning the truth of a particular proposition. It could be in the form of certainty that can be verified to complete absolute doubt and uncertainty (Gavins, 2007). For this purpose modal lexical verbs such as *think*, *suppose* and *belief*, modal adverbs such as *maybe*, *perhaps*, *possibly*, *probably*, *allegedly* and *certainly* and modal auxiliaries such as *may*, *could*, *must*, *might* and *should* are used. The adjectival constructions BE . . . THAT’ or ‘BE . . . TO’ structure, as espoused by Simpson (2005, p. 45) can be applied:

(e) It’s certain that you are right.

(f) It’s doubtful that you’re right.

Perception modality is considered a sub-category of epistemic modality, which refers to forms of human perception and

understanding that are related to the degree of the truth of a proposition. These perceptions that are often visual perceptions can be conveyed through the use of adjectives in BE . . . THAT’ structures along with related modal adverbs (Simpson, 2005), such as:

(g) It’s clear that you are right.

(h) Apparently, you are right.

The Hunger Games unfolds from the point of view of Katniss Everdeen, who is the sole narrator of the novel. According to Simpson’s modal grammar of point of view (2005), narratives with such a point of view, i.e. homodiegetic, are categorised into different shades, namely positive, negative and neutral. Narratives with abundant use of both deontic and boulomaic modalities are considered as having a positive shading and, as pointed out by Iwamoto (2007), “the general flow of discourse of this type is binding, obligatory, assertive, and strong.” Positive narratives generally contain a rich use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs such as happily, terrible, hopeless, and the deontic and boulomaic modalities of obligation, desire, duties and opinions (e.g. you should . . . , you must . . . , I want . . . , they hope . . . , she wished for . . .). It tends to be rich in generic sentences and in *verba sentiendi* (words expressing feelings thoughts and perceptions e.g. feel, suffer).

Negative narratives, on the other hand, are foregrounded by the epistemic and perception modalities. This type of shading generally signifies the narrator’s uncertainty or lack of confidence about events or characters in the story. Epistemic and perception modalities are signalled by the

use of modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs, modal lexical verbs (I wonder . . . , I suppose . . .) and perception adverbs (evidently apparently, perhaps) (Simpson, 2005).

A narrative with neutral shading is one without any narratorial modality. The narrator withholds subjective evaluation and favours neutral descriptions (Simpson, 2005). Generally, the style of neutral shading depicts “flat, unreflective, cool, distanced and detached” narration (Simpson, 1993) and contains categorical assertions that suppress any subjective evaluation or opinions on the events or characters in the narrative.

Table 1 shows the relations between shading, modal systems and modals compiled from works of Simpson (1993, 2004, 2005). It summarises how the modal

systems determine the mode of shading. Since issues related to the subjectivity of modal analysis range from its exact definition to its different modal system classification (Nuyts, 2016), the present study investigated the listed modals.

Classifying modals into a particular modality can be difficult (Nuyts, 2016). Some modals may have more than one function and cause modals to overlap between categories. For example, Palmer (2001) explained this scenario using the modal *can* in two sentences: (a) *John can come in now.* (b) *John can speak French.* The former conveys permission while the latter expresses ability. This gives rise to the question of whether undertaking the study of modality is deemed an impossible task. This is not the case because although

Table 1
Relationship between shading, modal systems and modals analysed
 (Adapted from Simpson, 1994, 2004, 2005)

Shading	Prominent Modal System	List of Modals
Positive	Deontic	Should, must, allowed, may, possible, advisable, can, had to, have to, has to, ought to, forbidden, necessary, claim
	Boulomaic	Wish, hope, hopefully, regretfully, need, want, luckily, fortunately, unfortunately
	Epistemic	Could, may, maybe, perhaps, possibly, might, suppose, supposedly, believe, know, think, certainly, believably, surely, doubt, definitely
Negative	Perception	Seem, evident, apparently, obviously, clearly, clear, appears
Neutral	Unmodalised	Absence of modals

there is possible variance in interpretation, the range of this variance remains within very limited parameters. Furthermore, it is found to be accountable within a frame of reference or system. Langacker (2008) elaborated that whether a modal was used or left out in a sentence or utterance basically “indicates whether the profiled occurrence is accepted by the speaker as being real or merely potential.” For instance, it can be seen in the following sentences: (iv) *He is hungry*, and (v) *He may be hungry*. In (v) the presence of the modal *may* shows that there is a possibility that he may in fact not be hungry while (iv) is a categorical assertion and is unmodalised. Therefore, modals can be categorised depending on their context (Marasović, Zou, Palmer, & Frank, 2016).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper presents an analysis of *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins (2008) that follows the challenges faced by Katniss Everdeen as she fights to survive an oppressive post-apocalyptic dystopian world. Simpson’s framework (2005) was applied to study the modal expressions used to realise the deontic, boulomaic, epistemic and perception modal systems in 27 chapters of the novel.

The approach and methodology adopted for this study were both qualitative and quantitative. Using modality as the criterion in this study of point of view, the novel was analysed to determine which modal system is foregrounded. This was done using The Qualitative Data Analysis software, ATLAS.

ti as an organising tool (Frieese, 2014). First, the modal expressions in the text were highlighted using the list of modals identified from the works of Simpson (1993, 2004, 2005) (Table 1). The highlighted occurrences were coded as either deontic, boulomaic, epistemic or/and perception modality depending on their context.

A quantitative approach to the textual analysis was done to calculate the frequency of usage for each modality. The number of occurrences for each modality (code) was then calculated. This was done to determine the prevalent modality to establish the shading of the novel, namely positive, negative or neutral. This analysis revealed the ‘colour’ and ‘feel’ of the narrative (Simpson, 1993). Within Simpson’s framework, a narrative has a neutral shading when there is a “complete absence of narratorial modality” (Simpson, 2005). Since there is evidence of modality in the novel, the rest of this paper will only focus on positive and negative shadings.

Analysis

The following excerpt is a sample of the analysis and shows how the modalities were categorised.

Certainly [Epistemic] Peeta has thrown a wrench into our star-crossed lover dynamic. Or has he? Maybe [Epistemic] people will think [Epistemic] it’s something we plotted together if I seem [Perception] like it amuses me now. (Collins,

2008)

In the excerpt above, four occurrences of modals were identified (underlined) and classified into the different modalities (square-bracketed). The above excerpt was taken from Chapter 12 of the novel, where Katniss discovers that Peeta has joined a group of tributes called the Careers who are looking for Katniss to kill her. Here, she starts off feeling certain that he has betrayed her, and then moves on to doubting that notion and then decides to make the best of her situation by using it to her advantage, all in the span of a few sentences. The above example is a clear example of a negative shading type of narration and illustrates the uncertainty felt by Katniss with the shocking discovery.

Sometimes, there are cases of overlap or 'double up' (Simpson 2005) modal expressions such as *may* and *must*. These two modal expressions are used to express notions of possibility or necessity. For instance, the use of *may* in "And *may* the odds be ever in your favour" (Collins, 2008), is an example of boulomaic modality that is used to express the speaker's [Effie Trinket] desire to wish the people of District 12 another version of 'good luck'. In the following example, *may* is an example of epistemic modality where it is used to reflect possibility: "Above all I am hoping for trees, which *may* afford me some means of concealment and food and shelter". *May* can also be used to realise deontic modality to indicate regulations and permission: "Closer examination of the rule book has disclosed that only one

winner *may be* allowed," he says. Palmer (2013) delineated that when permission was obtained it allowed an action to be made possible, and when an obligation was made necessary, it made the proposition deontic.

The use of the modal auxiliary *must* could also indicate two possible modalities. For example, in the excerpt "Over the period of several weeks, the competitors *must* fight to the death" (Collins, 2008), *must* is an example of deontic modality indicating how the competitors in the hunger games are not given a choice; they have to fight until they die or kill everyone else and survive. On the other hand, in the following excerpt *must* is an epistemic modality: "There *must have been* some mistake". This is a reflection of the narrator's thought when she first hears her sister's name being called out during reaping. Katniss has difficulty in believing Prim's name has been chosen as a tribute, and as illustrated in the above excerpt, the use of *must* signifies the narrator's attempts to understand what is happening in the event.

Given the possible variation in the identification of the modalities, in this study, the context in which the modals are used will be considered to determine the categorisation of the modals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysed, 2215 modals were identified. The elicited occurrences of modality were categorised into four modal systems based on Simpson's (2005) modal

Table 2

Overall result of analysis based on different shadings and modalities

Modality	Positive Shading				Negative Shading			
	Deontic		Boulomaic		Epistemic		Perception	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	706	31.87%	253	11.42%	1,103	49.80%	153	6.91%
Total	959 (43.29%)				1256 (56.71%)			

grammar of point of view in the narrative fiction framework. Table 2 presents the tabulation of the frequency of modalities employed in all the 27 chapters of the novel.

As presented in Table 2, all the four modalities were found throughout the novel, but based on the findings, it appears that epistemic modality is featured the most frequently compared with the other three modalities. In particular, from the results, it seems clear that positive shading (56.71%) is the dominant shading in the novel.

Epistemic modality (49.80%) had the highest number of occurrences. It appears that the narrative foregrounded epistemic modality to augment a general sense of disorientation and perplexity, for instance: “I may be able to get out,” “scares me what they might do to my mother” and “I suppose a canon goes off” (Collins, 2008). Describing the nature of the epistemic modality, Simpson (2004) explained that it enhances the point of view of confusion and bewilderment. Out of the total number of modals that were identified using the lexical of modality in Table 2, deontic modality was seen as the second most frequently used modality. This indicates that there are many rules, obligations and requirements that the

characters are supposed to follow, such as “all forms of stealing are forbidden” and “travel between the districts is forbidden”. Nevertheless, there are more occurrences dealing with the degree of the certainty or uncertainty of a proposition or event in the narrative.

Only 11.42% of the modalities were identified as the boulomaic modality, which, generally, is related to wants and desires of the narrator and characters. For example, during the reaping, Katniss wishes she could “whisper” to Gale to offer him comfort, “that there are thousands of slips” (Collins, 2008) because there is a high probability that Gale’s slip would be drawn from the lot. Perception modality is found at the very small frequency of (6.91%). This could be a reason why it is considered a subcategory of epistemic modality. There are times when Katniss absolutely believes her perception to be true: “Obviously I am being monitored closely monitored”. However, there are instances of doubt, such as, when Peeta compliments her: “Obviously meant to demean me. Right? But a tiny part of me wonders if this was a compliment”.

Table 3 illustrates some examples for each modality. The phrases or linguistic

Table 3

Selected examples from The Hunger Games (Collins, 2008)

Modality	Example
Epistemic	<p>What really scares me is what they <u>might</u> do to my mother and Prim, how my family <u>might</u> suffer now because of my impulsiveness. (p. 103)</p> <p>Another reminder of our weakness, I <u>suppose</u>, just like the Hunger Games. (p. 185)</p> <p><u>Maybe</u> the best approach is to get him talking. (p. 296)</p> <p>It's messing with my mind too much, trying to keep straight when <u>we're supposedly</u> friends and when we are not. (p. 99)</p> <p>Instantly, I know I'm in trouble. (p.100)</p> <p>I <u>wonder</u> if the people she's been plugging us to all day either know or care. (p. 74)</p>
Deontic	<p>You <u>may</u> do this for each of your family members as well. (p. 14)</p> <p>When the train makes a brief stop for fuel, <u>we're allowed</u> to go outside for some fresh air. (p. 364)</p> <p>He <u>should</u> know about fire, being a baker's son and all. (p. 67)</p> <p>But Peeta and I <u>must</u> make an early start. (p. 137)</p> <p>All forms of stealing <u>are forbidden</u> in District 12. (p. 30)</p> <p>We <u>are forbidden</u> to engage in any combative exercise with another tribute. (p. 93)</p>
Boulomaic	<p>I <u>wish</u> she'd hurry because I don't want to hang around here too long. (p. 226)</p> <p><u>Unfortunately</u>, the packet of cookies hits the ground and bursts open in a patch of dandelions by the track. (p. 49)</p> <p><u>Hopefully</u>, it will be put down to excitement. (p. 351)</p>
Perception	<p>His rages <u>seem</u> pointless to me, although I never say so. (p.15)</p> <p>Cinna comes in with what <u>appears</u> to be an unassuming yellow dress across his arms. (p.348)</p> <p><u>Obviously</u>, the noble boy on the roof top was playing just one more game with me. (p. 161)</p> <p><u>Apparently</u>, I'm too 'vulnerable' for ferocity. (p. 118)</p>

expressions that mark the modality have been underlined:

Evidence of epistemic modality abound, making it the foregrounded modality in the novel. Examples (1) to (6) show epistemic modality being used to indicate the certainty or uncertainty of the speaker's belief. In Example (1), Katniss is worried about the actions the Gamemakers (the people who design and control the Hunger Games) would take when she purposely shot the

apple in the roasted pig's mouth that was brought in for them. She does not care if they would punish her but is uncertain if the Gamemakers would resort to extreme actions on her family as a way to reprimand her. Example (3) is taken from Chapter 22, in which Katniss is trying to ramp up romance with Peeta because that is the only way for them to get food. She is not particularly good at seducing boys and in the chapter she is wondering if the best

way to start is to make Peeta talk. For the most part, excessive use of epistemic modal expressions can also convey a “sense of alienation” (Iwamoto, 2007). In Example (4), Katniss and Peeta are sharing a joke about Haymitch. As she “makes a sound between a snort and a laugh”, Katniss stops. Not knowing if he is friend or foe makes Katniss distance herself from Peeta. The uncertainty of whether she can trust Peeta is “messing with my [her] mind too much” as seen in Example (4). She fluctuates between accepting Peeta and alienating him.

Deontic modality is the second most frequently used modality (31.87%). This can be attributed to the totalitarian nature of the dystopian world. As the modal system of duty, it is used to express a continuum of commitment, obligation and requirement. Examples (7) and (8) are instances where deontic modality is used to express permission. The people of Panem are given a way out of their starvation by being able to add their names to the ‘pool’ of names for the Hunger Games in return for tesserae (currency). This actually increases their chances of being selected, making it seem like permission to do something when it is more of a punishment. Next, in (9), Katniss presumes Peeta has to be familiar with fire. He is expected to be able to handle any emergencies once their clothes light up with synthetic fire. For that reason, although she is called “the girl on fire” by her stylist, Cinna, she feels safer knowing Peeta is beside her. *Must* is used as a requirement in Example (10). There are modal expressions reflecting a strict regime of obligations

and rules within the novel, as portrayed in Examples (11) and (12). This type of modal patterning also indicates the instances when the narrator is able to make sense of what is happening around her (Katniss). This notion is supported by Palmer, who sees deontic modalities as “directives concerned with enabling the subject of the sentence to act” (2003).

Instances of boulomaic modality extracted from the data are used to indicate expressions of wants and desires. The rather low percentage of boulomaic modality (11.42%) indicates a large margin of difference between expressions of hope and despair. Modal lexical verbs and related modal adverbs are used to express the wishes and desires of the speaker as seen in Examples (13) to (15) i.e. *wish*, *unfortunately*, *hopefully*. As she travels by train to the Capitol for the Hunger Games, Katniss throws out a packet of cookies given by Peeta’s father. It lands on a patch of dandelions. Katniss remembers that many years ago, when she and her family were on the brink of starvation, Peeta saved her by giving her a loaf of bread. The day after that, when Katniss happens to see the “first dandelion of the year” (p. 33), she suddenly realises how she can provide for her family. When she says, “When I saw the dandelion and I knew hope wasn’t lost” (Collins, 2008), she underlines the significance of hope to herself when all hope seems lost. However, now the reality is that kind Peeta is also competing in this gruesome deadly game. Examples such as this could explain the reason the narrator hardly expresses

herself using ‘I hope’. It implies that such expressions are held back as ultimately, they could lead to disheartenment. Therefore, the implication behind the lack of boulomaic modality must not be overlooked.

There are not many occurrences of perception modality (6.91%) in the data. This modality is usually seen as a subcategory of epistemic modality (Gavins, 2007). The narrator’s uncertainty concerning the motives of other characters and events are chiefly realised through visual perception captured in the use of words such as *seems* and *appears*. It is also used to indicate the degree of commitment to the truth predicated on references to human perception as shown in Examples (16) to (19). Katniss and Gale trust each other and often share their feelings about the injustices they face. Although Katniss agrees with Gale, she perceives his bouts of extreme anger to “seem pointless” because there is no point in “yelling about the Capitol in the middle of the woods” (Collins, 2008). In Example (19), Haymitch has to prepare Katniss for her interview with Caesar Flickerman. They try out different dispositions, for instance, funny, sexy, witty and humble. As far as Haymitch can see, Katniss is too “vulnerable for ferocity”. The use of *apparently* here may imply that Katniss does not agree with his visual perception of her. This mentoring session drives Haymitch back to his drinking because Katniss is unable to hide her hostility towards the Capitol.

The analysis of the modalities frequently used in *The Hunger Games* suggests an augmented use of the epistemic

and perception modalities (refer to Table 2), indicating a greater tendency towards negative shading in the narrative of the novel (56.71%). In contrast, 43.29% of the narration is considered as exhibiting positive shading.

Katniss is highly responsible and goes to any extent to protect her family and friends. For example, she decides to take over Prim’s place in the Hunger Games even if that means she has to sacrifice herself in the deadly game. During the games, she risks her life to get the medication that will save Peeta’s life. Katniss is very intelligent, resourceful and creative. As a young child, she would find food for her family in the forests which are full of wild beasts in order to save them from starvation,

It was slow-going at first, but I was determined to feed us. I stole eggs from nests, caught fish in nets, sometimes managed to shoot a squirrel or rabbit for stew, and gathered the various plants that sprung up beneath my feet. Plants are tricky. Many are edible, but one false mouthful and you’re dead. I checked and double-checked the plants I harvested with my father’s pictures. I kept us alive. (p. 51)

From the beginning of the novel Katniss exhibits a survival mindset and this characteristic is visible to all who know her. During an argument, Peeta reveals his last conversation with his mother before he left for the Hunger Games:

*You know what my mother said
to me when she came to say
goodbye, as if to cheer me?
She says maybe District Twelve*

will finally have a winner. Then I realized, she didn't mean me, she meant you!" bursts out Peeta. "Oh, she meant you," I say with a wave of dismissal. "She said, 'She's a survivor, that one.' She is," says Peeta. (p. 90)

Katniss immediately thinks Peeta is lying, but perceives he is telling the truth when she sees the pain in his eyes.

During the Hunger Games, when someone needs to step up and take control, it is always Katniss, as she possesses natural leadership qualities. This can be seen from the way Katniss takes control of complex situations and figures out how to overcome challenges during the games. When she forms an alliance with another tribute named Rue, Katniss comes up with a plan: "Somehow Rue and I must find a way to destroy their [Career Tributes] food" (Collins, 2008). Career Tributes (usually from District One, Two and Four), come from wealthier districts and are trained and fed all their lives in preparation for the Games. Katniss figures they will struggle to survive if their food supply is destroyed:

Traditionally, the Career Tributes' strategy is to get hold of all the food early on and work from there. The years when they have not protected it well – one year a pack of hideous reptiles destroyed it, another a Gamemaker's flood washed it away – those are usually the years that tributes

from other districts have won. (p. 206)

Rue creates a diversion to attract the Careers away from the Cornucopia while Katniss blows up all the supplies and food that the Careers were protecting there. Later, when Katniss teams up with Peeta, she nurses him back to health and keeps him safe and alive. Katniss is the one who realises that the Capitol needs a victor for the games and decides that both of them will eat some poisonous berries. She asks Peeta to "trust" that her plan will work because, "We both know they have to have a victor. Yes, they have to have a victor". These examples show Katniss' ability to find a solution for every problem thrown at her.

The narrative exposes Katniss' ability to be able to have clarity of mind in deadly and high-strung scenarios. When she sets the tracker jackers on her enemies, Katniss gets stung a few times too. This results in extremely painful welts and hallucinations. As Glimmer (another opponent) lies dying from the tracker venom, Katniss knows she has to get the bow and arrows out of Glimmer's hands before a cannon fires, signalling her death. Once the cannon fires, a hovercraft will appear to remove the body. She thinks to herself, "The bow. The arrows. I must get them". Even when she is poisoned and hallucinating, Katniss is strong enough to fight the spread of the poison and still somehow have the clarity of mind to retrieve the weapons that were originally meant for her. She constantly reminds herself of her obligations, of what she needs to do next to ensure safety: "Now when it is dark,

and I have traveled far, and I am nestled high in this tree, now I must try and rest". Although it is difficult to sleep under such duress, Katniss forces herself to sleep. She always thinks two steps ahead about what she needs to do.

Katniss does not often voice out her desires, wants and needs. However, when she does, it is usually for someone else or for her immediate survival, as these examples denote: "And I need sleep desperately because in the arena every moment I give in to fatigue will be an invitation to death" (Collins, 2008). Knowing when she should rest and when she should not and having the perseverance and grit to do it is not an easy feat. Katniss is aware of her ability and limitations: "I just keep moving, pausing only to check for pursuers. I can go a long time. I know that from my days in the woods. But I will need water". These examples show that Katniss seems sure of herself in the role of hunter and is comfortable in the woods, thus giving the text a positive shade in expressing ability and obligations.

Katniss generally exhibits the moral high ground. During the games, she does not seek out her opponents and kill them although she could if she wants to. When Gale (her best friend and hunting partner) comes to say goodbye, he tells her that she is the best hunter he knows: "'You know how to kill.' 'Not people,' I say. 'How different can it be, really?' says Gale grimly. The awful thing is that if I can forget they're people, it will be no different at all". Nevertheless, she is not bloodthirsty and only kills in

self-defence and once while attempting to protect Rue. She indirectly kills two Career Tributes by setting genetically engineered wasps known as tracker jackers on them as they wait below a tree she is hiding in to kill her. She also kills the boy who puts a spear through little Rue, "The boy from District One dies before he can pull out the spear. My arrow drives deeply into his neck". Despite her attempt to save her, Rue dies.

Physically, Katniss is athletic and at times she appears to be more masculine and mentally stronger than her fellow tribute, Peeta.

"All right, so give me some idea of what you can do," says Haymitch. "I can't do anything," says Peeta. "Unless you count baking bread." "Sorry, I don't. Katniss. I already know you're handy with a knife," says Haymitch. "Not really. But I can hunt," I say. "With a bow and arrow." (Collins, 2008)

The totalitarian nature of the novel crystallises the presence of a lot of rules in the novel, emphasised by the use of the deontic modality and casting a positively shaded text. However, Katniss does not necessarily follow these rules, such as, "trespassing in the woods is illegal," "poaching carries the severest of penalties" and having a weapon will result in public execution for "inciting a rebellion". These are all rules that Katniss breaks on a daily basis in order to survive.

A clear rationalisation of obligations, ability, desires and duties need to be reflected on through the use of positive shading in the narration in order for a positive shading

to be dominant. Although there are such realisations, they occur less frequently than those that indicate a negative shading.

Questions of identity play an imperative and recurring role in reflecting a negative shade type of narration. Katniss' dilemma with the ever-changing roles that are continually thrust upon her often leaves her feeling frustrated and agitated. The protagonist certainly has strong personality traits that have shaped her character and roles in the novel. When there are only four tributes left (Katniss, Peeta, Thresh and Cato), Katniss finally allows herself to think of the possibility of winning:

What would my life be like on a daily basis? Most of it has been consumed with the acquisition of food. Take that away and I am not really sure who I am, what my identity is. The idea scares me some. (Collins, 2008)

Victors get to live in fine houses in their respective district's Victor's Village. They will receive fame, wealth and "will be showered with prizes, largely consisting of food". The winning districts will be given grain, oil and "delicacies such as sugar". With the supply of food, Katniss will lose her pivotal role as hunter and provider. This augments identity issues in Katniss' life in terms of the roles she plays.

Towards the end of the novel, as she gets ready to go home, Katniss feels that she is "transforming back" into herself: "Katniss Everdeen. A girl who lives in the Seam. Hunts in the woods. Trades in

the Hob. I stare in the mirror as I try to remember who I am and who I am not" (Collins, 2008). When she joins the others, the once comforting pressure of Peeta's arms around her shoulders now feels "alien." As thoughts of her mother, Prim and Gale take hold of her, Katniss no longer feels that she is the Girl on Fire or The Star-Crossed Lover. It appears that the negative shading of the novel draws upon such instances of confusion and turmoil. In conclusion, this type of modal patterning highlights the struggles of the narrator and emphasises a negative shading.

The dilemma of how she should behave as opposed to how she wants to be and ultimately chooses to be is portrayed through the use of negative shading as well. After she returns from the games, Katniss sees Effie, Haymitch and Cinna for the first time and runs towards them. "Maybe a victor should show more restraint, more superiority, especially when she knows this will be on tape, but I don't care" (Collins, 2008) She is unsure if she should run or walk towards them, but she follows her emotions and acts accordingly.

It does seem that the text highlights the depth of Katniss' ability to trust and the manifestation of her doubts. She finally lets go of her doubts and misgivings about Peeta: "Peeta, who's been wounded, is now my ally. Whatever doubts I've had about him dissipate," although not because he has gained her trust but because "if either of us took the other's life now we'd be pariahs when we returned to District 12" (Collins, 2008). Seeking comfort from her

horrific surroundings is another issue for Katniss as she doubts and wrestles with the authenticity of those who surround her and her immediate environment. When she sees the moon towards the end of the games, she longs for it to be the moon she sees “from the woods around District 12” because it would give her something to hang on to in “the surreal world of the arena where the authenticity of everything is to be doubted”. Under duress and being hunted in the midst of a world that is actually an engineered arena where anything is possible, continually causes Katniss to deliberate and examine everything she encounters.

In the novel, any unrestricted streams of information that can freely pass between the districts are totally prohibited. Each district is unaware of what happens in another district. This lack of communication is part of the Capitol’s propaganda to oppress the people of Panem. During the games, Katniss forms an alliance with Rue, a 12-year-old contestant from District 11. Rue shares about their severe living conditions and harsh punishments. Katniss realises how little she knows about the people in other districts. She wonders if the Gamemakers are “blocking out” their conversation because “even though the information seems harmless, they don’t want people in different districts to know about one another” (Collins, 2008). This notion of alienation is preponderant in dystopian novels. It suggests that the nature of circumstances in a dystopian novel creates an environment of suppression instead of assertion. In turn, a prevalent positive shading is prevented.

As the protagonist of the novel, Katniss certainly possesses strong personality traits, which to a large extent, have helped her survive the ordeals of her life and of the Hunger Games. She knows that it is not her “nature to go down without a fight, even when things seem insurmountable”. These traits are reflected in instances such as when Katniss’ father dies and her family is on the brink of starvation, and she hunts and provides for her family; when Prim is selected, Katniss quickly volunteers in her stead and when either she or Peeta has to die at the end of the Hunger Games, she changes the situation to her advantage by suggesting that they both eat poisonous berries. Katniss grapples with her surroundings but does all that she can to come out victorious. Ultimately, the elements of a negatively shaded text triumph that of a positively shaded one in *The Hunger Games*.

To sum up, the usage of deontic and boulomaic modalities creates a positive shading, which interjects this dystopian novel with positive depictions. However, epistemic modalities are foregrounded and depict a stronger negative shading. Although there are not many occurrences of the perception modality in the novel, they are still important as they contribute to the overall shade of the novel (Parina, 2014). The findings correspond with Bronia (2005), who stated that through the purposeful practice of language and critical analysis of a given genre, linguistic awareness can be created. More specifically, it shows that the preference for a particular modal system in a narrative affects the shading of a text.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study are important because they show that the assimilation of how utterances are orientated, formed and measured into discourse is mainly highlighted by the grammatical system of modality. Knowledge of this aspect enables comprehensive linguistic awareness of the linguistic modality in point of view. Some modals function in more than one modality, causing an overlap between categories. This was resolved by looking at the context in which each modal occurs to interpret which meaning is expressed. Occurrences of positive shadings using deontic modality are often followed by either epistemic or perception modalities to cast a negative shading. Hence, it appears to create a more profound sense of confusion and disorientation.

The results of the analysis show that there is significant evidence of use of the deontic, boulomaic and perception modal systems in the novel. However, epistemic modalities are frequently used, signifying the limited knowledge of the narrator and protagonist, Katniss Everdeen. It causes her to rely on inferences that are made based on references to external signs. As epistemic modality markers clarify the degree of knowledge, the belief system as well as the attitudinal stance of the narrator concerning the probability of propositions and events, it is evident by their abundant use that the narrator is constantly trying to understand her evolving surroundings in this novel.

Another aim of this study was to determine the dominant modality shading

employed in the novel that governs the point of view. *The Hunger Games* is found to have a prevalent negative shading. The findings of the study correlate with Simpson's (2005) claim that the 'feel' of a text is determined not just based on how the novel unfolds, but from the manifestations of modality in relation to point of view. Thus, in this post-apocalyptic dystopian novel, there are preponderant notions of alienation and steady streams of events that cause perplexity and bewilderment. This provides an overall negative shading that corresponds with the oppressive state of post-apocalyptic dystopian novels as opposed to postulations of assertiveness and hope. In sum, the narration does reflect the character.

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