TENSE, ASPECT AND MODALITY
IN SCIENCE FICTION

by
Nawaar Taha Hameed Majeed
Supervised by Asst. Prof. Abdullah Salman Abbas (Ph.D.)
(2003)

0.0 Preliminary Notes

Science fiction is a literary genre that aims at building humane and progressive societies. The writers of this genre, concentrate on man as energy and will. Unfortunately, progress in science does not necessarily lead societies to the Utopia man hopes to achieve. On the contrary, progress in industry may result in horror and destruction

Science fiction writers depict in their novels worlds of the remote future with whatever difference it manifests from our own time. They base the events of their stories on facts, and on mere imagination.

In accordance with the significance of science fiction as a literary genre, the present study aims at analyzing the language of this genre through two selected novels. For this purpose, the present analysis will be concerned with the frequency of each of the three syntactic and semantic categories mentioned above, and then, the predominant ones will be analyzed.

The present study falls into five sections. Section One is the Introduction which specifies the nature of the problem, and deals with the hypotheses, limits of the study and its procedure.

Section Two deals with Tense, Aspect and Modality theoretically and practically through a detailed survey. Section Three shows the way of sampling the data taken from two novels of science fiction, viz. *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World*. The criteria of choosing the texts as

well as those of Forms are explained. The levels of analysis are also shown.

Section Four presents the analysis of the data through tables and statistics, and it ends with a detailed discussion of the results. Section Five gives the conclusions.

1- Introduction

1.1 The Problem and Its Significance

Science Fiction (henceforth SF) has gained special attention as an outstanding literary genre because it is based on science and technology and their vital role in the human societies. It is the fiction that deals with facts rather than myths or mere imagination, and it has indeed, affected these human societies by the feelings it arouses against the numerous achievements of progress in technology and industry. Thus, an investigation of the language of such kind of genre is necessary to reveal its texture.

In the present investigation, three grammatical and semantic categories have been selected for this purpose, viz. Tense, Aspect and Modality, since they constitute a very important triple that is attached to the verb, which is in turn, the heart of the sentence. The questions that this study has to answer are: which tense SF writers tend to use more frequently, which aspect is predominant; the perfective or the progressive one, and how modality is treated syntactically and semantically.

1.2 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. the predominant tense in SF novels is the past tense since it is said to be the tense of fiction, and SF is a branch of fiction though it represents a special kind of fiction in dealing with science and technology,(Fowler, 1974: 10 and Turner, 1973: 91).

2. the aspect predicted to be used in SF novels is the perfective aspect because the perfective comprises the sense of forming a bridge between past, present and future, and

3. the Modal auxiliaries expected to be predominant in SF are those that show capability and probability.

1.3 Limits of the Study

The present study is limited to the investigation of three semantico-syntactic categories of Tense, Aspect and Modality in SF novels. The novels chosen for the purpose of analysis are:

1. *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells, and

2. *Brave New World* by A. Huxley.

1.4 The Aim of the Study

The present study aims at a formal description of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in SF novels. It shows in a systematic way, the frequency of occurrence of the various forms of these three syntactic and semantic categories, and points out the predominant ones.

1.5 The Procedure of the Study

In accordance with the above-mentioned aim, the data selected randomly from the two SF novels will be analyzed in the light of the criteria to be set up. Two hundred sentences represent the two novels under study; the first hundred sentences are taken from *The Time Machine*, while the second hundred sentences are taken from *Brave New World*. The finite verb phrase of each sentence is analyzed in search for Tense, Aspect and Modality.

Such grammatical and statistical information will be helpful to show the frequency of occurrence of these three categories. The findings of this study may be of interest to stylists concerned with differentiating language

styles and variety of style, since these stylists are mainly concerned with the frequency of items,(Crystal and Davy, 1967: 16).

1.6 The Grammatical Model

The theoretical framework of analysis in the present study is based on the work of Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik, A Grammar of Conteporary English (1972), because in this study one needs a type of grammar that facilitates the analysis he intends to carry out. Besides, this analysis does not require much theoretical elaboration. Accordingly, the present study has been restricted to a minimum theoretical explanation.

2-Tense, Aspect and Modality

2.1 Tense

This is one of the three interesting and frustrating categories to the linguist because they are obligatory even when a simple sentence is produced,(Givon, 1984:272). Tense is very important for anyone who studies the English language to understand the tense system thoroughly because there is no single sentence that lacks tense.

Tense has been defined by many linguists. For instance, Hockett(1967:235) states that tense is a grammatical category that is used to show different locations of an event in time. Lyons(1968:149) adds that tense has to do with time relations as expressed by systematic grammatical contrasts. Crystal(1985: 352) postulates that tense is a category used in the grammatical description of verb referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb took place. Finally, Comrie(1986: 26) gives a wider scope to the definition of tense, regarding it as the grammaticalization of location in time. Considering the comprehensive quality of Comrie's definition, the

researcher believes that it is the most appropriate among all the other definitions.

Time and Tense

Time is a concept with which all mankind is familiar. It is a universal category divided into past, present and future. Tense, on the other hand, represents a verb form or a set of verb forms that are used to denote time relations.

In general, tense indicates whether an action, state or event is past , present or future and it can also be used to show whether an action is complete or incomplete(Hornby, 1975:78, Jesperson,1977:230, Quirk et al, 1985: 175).

Close (1975:72) also speaks about time but in another sense. He regards time as an activity since it could be measured in terms of events only. In addition to this, and to obtain more clearness, Jesperson (1977:232) suggests the terms ' notional time' and ' grammatical tense'. This is applicable to ' past ' only, since we can use the term ' past ' for time division and ' preterit ' for the tense. For other divisions of time, we can use, for instance, present time and present tense, future time or futurity and future tense.

Traditionalists, among whom is Kruisinga (1931:22), believe that the verb is only a part of speech that has a form to express distinctions of time. Traditionally, there are three main tenses, i.e., past, present and future (Ibid.: 139).

Palmer (1972: 36) rejects the traditional division of time in terms of past, present and future stating that the future time reference belongs to secondary patterns since there are many of the verbal forms of the primary patterns,(past and present), referring to the future.

Both Palmer (Ibid.) and Lyons (1968: 306) confirm this argument by saying that there is little justification for regarding <u>shall</u> and <u>will</u> as markers of future of tense in English since there are basically four ways of referring to future time. Consider the following examples:

(2.1) I'm giving a lecture next Wednesday.

(2.2) I give a lecture next Wednesday.

(2.3) I'm going to give a lecture next Wednesday.

(2.4) I shall give a lecture next Wednesday.

Besides, <u>shall</u> and <u>will</u> are not only used to denote futurity, but also to express willingness, habitual activities, probability and so on.

(2.5) That will be the postman.

Hirtle (1977: 23) distinguishes between two ways of expressing time. In terms of tense-spheres, i.e., past, present and future. He states that tenses in English follow from dividing a limitless stretch of time by inserting a particular point, i. e., the present moment. This is called, 'universe time' since it can contain any event. Besides, any event in itself has a beginning, a middle and an end. Regardless of its position or place in the 'universe time', The time contained in the event is called 'event time'. According to Hirtle (Ibid.), one can distinguish between the two ways of expressing time in terms of 'inclusion', i.e., time is distinguished as the container of all events. A 'universe time' is equivalent to 'tense', and the time contained in any event is equivalent to 'aspect', (See also Alerton:1972:159).

Tense, for Clark (1965:177) serves the function of indicating the time of an action and/or its quality as regards completeness or incompleteness and duration whether short or long. He (Ibid.) distinguishes two tenses, either ordinary or continuous, and the difference between the two is one of duration.

Traditionalists present as much as eight different kinds of forms of verbs to express time trying to fit these eight different sets into some kinds of tense-system that would correspond to a native speaker's 'feeling' about time. They distinguish three main divisions to express 'all time', i.e., past, present and future regarding the present moment as the moment of reference 'now', (Allen, 1966: 140). Yet, he has his own objections on using the label, 'the moment of speech' or 'now', as the point of reference, and he rather uses 'the moment of coding' relying on the fact that the present moment of reference is not necessarily the moment at which a particular statement is written or spoken. In many occasions, we can use the present tense to denote a past action, one can say," Herodots tells us", and not, " Herodots told us". Thus, the present form 'tells' refers not to the moment of encoding, but rather to the moment of decoding,(Lyons, 1977: 152).

Lyons (1968:304) states that 'tense' is a deictic category that is a property of the sentence. It is deictic since it serves in relating the time of the action, event or state of affairs as it is in the sentence to the time of utterance (being now),(See also McCoard,1987:13). However, Lyons(Ibid.: 306) argues that it is better to use the opposition 'past' and 'non-past' rather than past and present depending on the fact that past tense refers typically to past time or 'the time of the utterance' for, it may serve to denote eternal facts or limitless statements or to denote future time. But, Jesperson (1977:263) distinguishes between simple tenses and expanded ones.

Comrie (1986:12) argues that, in most languages that have tense, tense can be indicated in two ways, either by the verb morphology, e.g., *loves* vs. *loved* or by grammatical words that are adjacent to the verb as with auxiliary verbs. He adds that, traditionally, tense is regarded as a category of the verb since it has a morphological attachment to the verb, i.e., tense is

represented by various verb forms, while recently, the most common arguments consider tense as being the property of the whole proposition depending on the fact that tense is, in Comrie's words, the 'true value' of the proposition as a whole, not merely a property of the verb,(See also Lyons, 1977:678).

Givon (1984: 273) proposes two ways according to which tense-system formulates our conception of time:

a. Sequentiality: According to this, tense is seen as a way of constructing time in terms of succession of points; each has a particular position in the linear order, thus, it either precedes or follows a discrete point in the sequence.

b. Point of Reference: Within the flow of time, Givon (Ibid.) confirms that there must be a point of reference to which the 'past' precedes and the future follows. The common point of reference is the time of speaking or the ' present moment '.

2.1.2 A Brief Discussion of the Main Tenses in English

2.1.2.1 Present Tense

Comrie (1988:37) states that the present moment is a location fixed in the time line. Thus, the present tense is the location of the situation at that point. Yet, this seems somehow a controversial argument since situations that coincide with the present moment are rare. However, such rare situations do occur. Comrie gives an example with a performative verb:

(2.6) I *promise* to pay you ten pounds.

Comrie (Ibid.: 38) adds that one of the most interesting characteristics of the present tense is that it can be used to refer to situations that occupy a much longer period of time than the present moment, including the present moment.

(2.7) Effel Tower *stands* in Paris.

In the above sentence, the utterance is located at the present moment no matter if the situation continues beyond the present moment or not, i.e., whether a situation is restricted to the moment of speech or not. This can be decided by another feature of sentence structure, namely, 'aspect'; progressive aspect requires the situation to continue beyond the moment of speech. So, it does not necessarily denote the present moment.

Strang (1966:143) confirms the above-mentioned idea because, for her, tenses do not necessarily denote real time, but rather, " the speaker's subjective use of distinctions of time in accordance with the conventions of his language." Fowler (1974:114) and Gleason (1961:217) find it illogical to give an appropriate account of tense-system in English depending on a study of literal time relations that are expressed in sentences.

2.1.2.2 Past Tense

The past tense is used when the happening state, action or event is related to a definite time in the past, a point that may be called ' then '.

The past tense is the marked member of the opposition past/ present, as Fowler (1974:42) suggests that tense in English has only two values from a formal point of view, i.e., [± past] avoiding the use of ' present ' in tense opposition. A sentence is either marked (+ past) or unmarked (- past).

There are many different meanings attached to the past tense. These are, as Quirk et al, (1985:95) list:

1. *Past State*

(2.8) He *was* born in 1932.

Here, there is a clear reference of past time or a definite point in the past.

2. *Past Event*

(2.9) John *injured* his leg and could not end the match.

3. *Finally,* we have the hypothetical past or the traditionally called ' preterit of irrealis', (Kruisinga, 1931: 121, Jacobs, 1966:63).

(2.10) I wish I *were* a bird.

2.1.2.3 Futurity

Traditional grammarians divide time into threefold opposition, i.e., past, present and future, while structuralists, being more committed to form than to meaning, reject the term ' future tense ' because there is no verb form that can denote future time like the two forms representing past/ present respectively.

Stone (1976:36) states that simple futurity denotes an action with reference to future time or future intention. It is distinguished by means of two main markers, viz. *shall* and *will* whose function is either to give the meaning of pure futurity or to express *determination* or *promise*. The problem arises, according to Hornby (1977:45) in indicating future activities aside from other notions like *likelihood* , *willingness,* and so on. Yet, one can assume that when future events are not inflected by these notions, i.e., *likelihood* and the like, we are talking about ' pure future '.

The objections that have been raised against dealing with a ' future tense ' is treated by Daoud (1988:1) who considers tense as a semantic category whose main function is to express the concept of time in its three dimensions, i.e., past, present and future. Taking this definition into consideration, Daoud (Ibid.) argues that ' future tense ' should be treated as an integral part of the English tense-system though most linguists reject the use of ' future tense ' since the inflectional morphology of the English verb does not include any affix that could be regarded as an explicit marker of future tense. Futurity is divided into the following:

a. *Future Perfect*

The future perfect is used to denote activities that will extend to and include a point of time in the future. The future perfect lays heavy emphasis on the completion of the activity.

(2.11) We *have been married* for five years. (Hornby, 1977:99)

b. *Future Progressive*

The future progressive is used to denote that an event begins before and continues after a point or period of future time.

(2.12) His children *will be waiting* at the airport to meet him. (Ibid.:97)

One important point is proposed by Fillmore (1976: 110) and Comrie (1986:36); they distinguish two kinds of tenses, i.e., the absolute tense and the relative tense.

The absolute tense relates the time of the situation to the present moment. These tenses are past, present and future, expressed by finite verb forms. Another form of time reference, instead of relating the time of the situation to the present moment, relates it to the time of another situation. Such form of time reference is illustrated by non-finite verbs.

(2.13) John *sings/ is singing/ sang*.

(2.14) When walking down the road, I often *meet* Henry.

In (2.14) we choose the verb *meet* in the present tense in accordance with the situation described by *walking*. The same sentence could be in the past tense.

(2.15) When walking down the road, I often *met* Henry.

Comrie (Ibid.) clarifies his argument by stating the difference between the two as follows: the absolute tense should be interpreted as a ' tense ' which includes as part of its meaning the present moment as deictic centre, while the relative tense is the one which does not include as part of its meaning the present moment as deictic centre.

2.2 Aspect

For the traditionalists, Aspect is a category used to denote , whether the speaker looks upon an action in its entirety or with particular reference to some part (the beginning or end), (Kruisinga,1931:221). Going through the literature of aspect, we find many linguists who dealt with 'aspect'. Among these is Zandvort (1975:19) who believes that 'aspect' is a Slavonic category and states that it is wrong to consider it an English category. He adds that aspect was transferred from Slavonic into German and from German into English. Accordingly, Zandvort stresses that there is no existence of aspect in English.

Aspect, for Strang (1968:143), is ," anyone of the conjugation of the verb which serves to indicate the manner in which the 'action' denoted by the verb is considered as being carried out." She distinguishes two aspects,(Ibid.:162): durative and perfective. Allen (1966:218) uses different terminology; he distinguishes the opposition, inclusive or (perfective) vs. intrusive or (imperfective). Inclusive aspect, is the marked member of the opposition, while Long (1971:122) uses the terms 'common aspect' and 'progressive aspect'.

Brinton (1988:2) defines aspect as a, " way conceiving the passage of time". He adds many viewpoints concerning aspect. For instance, aspect is defined by Brugmann (cited in Ibid.) as, " the manner or way in which the action of the verb proceeds". This applies to Germanic languages. A similar definition is found in Slavic languages, while Friedrich (cited in Ibid.) discusses 'aspect' in Homeric Greek, stating that aspect, " signifies relative duration or punctuality along time line."

Fillipovic (1984:81), Quirk et al (1985:90), and Swan (1988:605) regard aspect as the manner in which the verb action is regarded or experienced.

Lyons (1968:313) argues that the term 'aspect' was first used to distinguish between 'perfective' and 'imperfective' in the inflection of verbs in Russian and other Slovanic languages. English has mainly two aspects, namely, 'perfective' that denotes completion and 'progressive' that denotes continuity. The two aspects may be combined to form the 'perfect progressive'.

Lyons (Ibid.:315) adds that English has a number of other aspectual distinctions of more limited distribution, to mention, the 'habitual' which is attached to past tense,

(2.16) I *used* to read.

and the 'mutative' that is restricted to passive.

(2.17) I *got killed*. (See also Crystal,1985:24.)

Yule (1988:85) confirms that 'aspects' do not relate an event to any specific moment of occurrence, but in relation to some other event which is referred to.

(2.18) She *was sleeping* when I *telephoned.*

Aspects, in this sense, are concerned with temporal distribution and range of events rather than with any specific moment of occurrence.

Comrie (1976:3) sheds light on a very important point, that is, a distinction should be made between *tense* and *aspect* since there is a tradition in many languages to treat both *tense* and *aspect* as *tense* since both denote time, (Ibid.:5).

Yet, aspect refers to the, " different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation," (Ibid.).

(2.19) John *was reading* when I *entered.*

In sentence (2.19), we can state the difference clearly between the first and the second verbs. The first serves as a background to the second that seems to be an unanalysable entity.

Quirk, et al, (1985:189) consider the distinction between tense and aspect as no more than a terminological convenience that helps us to formulate two kinds of realizations: the morphological realization of tense and the syntactic realization of aspect.

Leech (1976:30) and Quirk, et al, (1985:189) state that English has two main ways in expressing past time by means of the verb, i.e., the past tense and the perfect aspect. These two categories can be combined together to form the past perfect (pluperfect). To distinguish simple past from present perfect, one might assume that the latter refers to the past with present relevance. The problem of choosing between the two categories arises because both constructions denote an action that took place in the past. Palmer (1976:50-1) states that the current relevance to the present perfect solves the problem properly.

2.2.1 The Perfective Aspect and the Progressive Aspect

2.2.1.1 The Perfective Aspect

Leech (1975:49) argues that the perfective aspect is mainly used to indicate a period of time that started in the past and continued up to the present. Comrie (1976:3) distinguishes between the opposition Perfective vs. Imperfective by saying that the imperfective looks at the situation from inside, i.e., the internal structure of the situation. Thus, the difference between the opposition is a semantic-oriented one, in the sense that the perfective denotes the termination of the situation. Accordingly, one can assume another meaning attached to the perfective, i.e., ' the resultative ' meaning (Ibid.:20, and Traugott, 1972:44).

(2.20) I *have painted* the room blue.

Stone (1976:7) gives more explanation to clarify the perfective aspect as it is subdivided into:

A. The Present Perfect

Stone **(Ibid.)** states that the present perfect is concerned with the fact that something " has happened ", i.e., it concentrates on the result of the action.

(2.21) She *has lost* her ring.

(2.22) She *lost* her ring. (Leech,1974:30)

Comrie **(1976:52)** discusses the above-mentioned idea stating that the perfect, as seen above, serves to relate a past situation to the present moment. He uses the term *perfect* to mean particularly, the 'present perfect' which represents only one form of the possible tenses of the 'perfective aspect'.

The 'present perfect' gains its importance because it is the only form that relates past to present. Unlike the past perfect which relates a past state to a situation prior to it, the future perfect also relates a future state to a situation prior to it.

(2.23) John *had eaten* the fish before I arrived yesterday.

(2.24) John *will have eaten* the fish by the time I arrive tomorrow.

In addition to its importance, the present perfect has many meanings. These are:

1. Perfect of result in which a present state is seen as being the result of some past situation.

(2.25) John *has arrived* vs. John *arrived.*

The first sentence concentrates on the result, that is, ' John is here ', while there is no such indication in the second, (Ibid.:58).

2. Experiential perfect or in other contexts ' existential '. It represents an action that took place at least once during sometime in the past leading up to the present.

(2.26) Bill *has been* to America, (Ibid.:59).

3. Perfect of persistent situation represents the ordinary use of the perfect in relating the situation that began in the past to the present moment.

  (2.27) We *have lived* here for ten years.

  In discussing the English perfect, McCoard (1978:6) argues whether to consider the notion ' perfect ' , a tense or an aspect, since English has a ' perfect tense' but at the same time the ' perfect ' is used as a marker of 'aspect' namely, the 'perfective' aspect because of the meanings associated with the perfect, i.e., ' completion' and 'result'. McCoard (Ibid.) argues that we can never regard the *perfect* as a second Past tense because the form with auxiliary *have* is regarded equivalent to the ordinary tense forms.

  (2.28) I *come*.   **I *have come*.**

  (2.29) I *came*.   **I *had come*.**

  (2.30) I *will come*.   **I *will have come*.**

  The term 'perfect' is a representative of 'aspect' because as mentioned earlier, the meanings attached to it are 'completion' and 'result'. Yet, Comrie (1976:11) argues that these meanings are not intrinsic to the perfect but rather borrowed from outside, i.e., from the interaction with other linguistic and pragmatic elements. Comrie (Ibid.) and McCoard (1978:151-3) state that the perfect, " fits no distinct category."

  Roberts (1964:62) states that aspect in English is either 'perfective' (have+ past participle) or 'progressive' (be+ing). The third is, when the two aspects are combined together forming the 'perfective progressive'. The main meaning associated with such construction is " a temporary situation leading up to the present."

  (2.31) I *have been reading* a short story.

Quirk, et al, (1985:189) state that the perfective progressive, in the case of the past form, refers to a point in the past.

  (2.32) She *had been cleaning* the window for half an hour before she

fell.

In certain cases, we can freely choose between the present perfect and the perfect progressive; the meaning of both constructions is correct.

(2.33) Jack *has been looking for* the business for several years.

(2.34) Jack *has looked for* the business for several years. (Leech,1976:44)

Another meaning which is attached to the perfect progressive is that it serves to show that the effects of the activity are still apparent.

(2.35) It *has been snowing* (the ground is white), (Ibid.:116).

B. *The Past Perfect*

The past perfect gives the meaning of past in the past. The past perfect, like the simple past, requires an already established point of reference in the past (*I had written).*

Special attention has been paid to the past perfect since it is not a matter of adding the past perfect to the simple past meaning, but rather, it covers an area of meaning equivalent to both the ' past ' and the ' perfect '. One of the most interesting qualities attached to the 'past perfect' is that it can denote both; definite and indefinite time.

(2.36) The parcel *had arrived.* (Indefinite)

(2.37) The parcel *had arrived* on April 15$^{th.}$. (Definite) (Leech,1975:13, and Quirk, et al, 1985:80)

2.2.1.2 *The Progressive Aspect*

Leech (1976:15) lists the major meanings attached to the progressive aspect:

1. *It indicates duration.*

2. *It indicates limited duration.*

3. *The action need not to be complete.*

To differentiate between points (1) and (2), one might use the simple present in its unrestrictive use and contrast it with the present.

(2.38) I *live* in Wimbledon. (permanent residence)

(2.39) I*'m living* in Wimbledon. (temporary residence) (Ibid.:16)

The third point is better illustrated by 'event verbs' that give the sense of transition from one state to another. Compare these two sentences:

(2.40) The bus *stops.* (It already stops.)

(2.41) The bus *is stopping.* (It is slowing down to stop.)

However, the difference is much more obvious in past progressive.

(2.42) The man *was drowning.*

(2.43) The man *was drowned.*

One might add to sentence (2.42), " but somebody jumped and saved him."

This is impossible in sentence (2.43). Leech (1976:17) states that within the flow of time, there is a point of reference from which the 'temporary eventuality' can be seen as stretching into the future and into the past. The moment of orientation proposed by Leech is identical with 'now'; with the present progressive. With the past progressive, on the other hand, another point of reference is needed. This point is usually clear by using an adverbial phrase or clause.

(2.44) This time last year, I *was traveling* round the world. (Ibid.)

Here, Leech establishes a relation between the simple past and past progressive. The relation is one of time inclusion.

(2.45) When we *arrived,* she *was making* some fresh coffee.

The progressive aspect conveys other additional meanings that are considered less important:

1.*The habitual or iterative use of the progressive that corresponds to the habitual use of the simple present and past.* Consider the following example:

(2.46) In those days, we *were getting up* at 7.00 o'clock.

In this sentence and the like, the notion of 'limited duration' is applied to the whole series and not to the event that makes up the series.

2. *Another habitual use is ' repetition of events' of limited duration.*

(2.47) Whenever I *visit* him, he *is mowing* his lawn.

Unlike the first use, here, the notion of limited duration is not applied to the habit as a whole but rather the events that the habit is composed of.

3. *The progressive can be used to denote happenings in the future sharing this function with the simple present.*

(2.48) I hear you *are moving* to a new job.

Similarly, past progressive can be used to anticipate happenings in the future.

(2.49) As we *were visiting* them the next day, there was no point in sending the parcel by post.

4. *Finally, Leech (1976:22) states that the absence of the 'temporary' element of the progressive adds an idiomatic meaning to the progressive.*

(2.50) Day by day, we *are getting* nearer to death.

This sentence gives us the sense of continuous activity. The uninterrupted nature of the activity is usually marked by the use of adverbs or an adverbial phrase, such as; *continually, constantly, forever,* and *always.*

2.2.3 Interaction Between Tense and Aspect

Earlier in this section, we shed light on the difference between 'tense' and 'aspect' since it has been found that some grammatical terminology does not always make the difference so clear. Yet, Fowler (1974:115) and Comrie (1976:71) argue that these two categories are interconnected, in the sense that aspect denotes the manner, duration, and repetition of the action

in relevance to the time of utterance. The argument is based on the two main aspects and their relation to 'tense'.

The 'perfective' and 'progressive' aspects have distinctive morphological manifestation. The 'progressive' aspect with the form (v-ing) characterizes an ongoing action, it is either combined to [- past] or [+ past] tense.

(2.51) I *was walking* down the street. [+ past]

The same is true with the perfective aspect for it is also combined with either [+ past] or [- past]. The meaning is different in accordance with the combination to each type. When the perfective aspect is combined to [+ past], it gives the meaning that the action is complete before the present time.

(2.52) I*'ve finished* my homework.

(2.53) I *had finished* my homework. (Ibid.)

Another interesting area to investigate, concerning the relationship between tense and aspect is the use of one tense in place of another. Comrie (1976:73) uses the 'present tense' as an instant to confirm his argument. He states that the present tense is used to denote past situation and gives the following examples to clarify the idea.

(2.54) I*'m sitting* on the verandah when up *comes* Joe and says…. etc.

(2.55) I *was sitting* on the verandah when up *came* Joe and said…. etc.

Comrie (Ibid.) concludes that the aspect distinction between progressive/ non-progressive is maintained. Thus, the aspect distinction in the past tense version is lost when using the narrative present.

2.3 Modality

Modality is said to be the speaker's attitude towards his speech and the condition he gives to characterize it. Modality is defined by Crystal (1985:230) as,'' a term used in the theoretical and descriptive study of

sentences or clause types mainly of the verb they contain." Semantically, modality exhibits a wide range of meanings signaled by a different verb paradigm such as *uncertainty, possibility, vagueness…..* etc. Such contrasts can either be signaled by various inflectional forms of a verb by using modal auxiliary verbs like, *may, can, shall, etc.*

Lyons (1977:787) states that Modality is a universal category in human communication, yet languages differ in expressing 'modality'. So, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make generalizations in this respect.

Modality, according to Close (1975:263), is expressed by means of a closed-class of helping verbs, i.e., modal auxiliary verbs that express," a variety of moods or attitudes towards a possible state of action." One can distinguish a primary use and a secondary use of the modal auxiliary verbs.

The modal auxiliary *will*, for instance, is usually used to express futurity, while its primary uses may include *determination, persistent habit, promises* and *willingness.*

(2.56) I *will have* my own way.

(2.57) I *will leave* the door open.

(2.58) You *will have* your money tomorrow.

(2.59) I *will answer* the phone.

With the combination of *have, shall* is used to express determination or gives the meaning of unfulfilled obligation.

(2.60) You *shall have* whatever you want.

(2.61) Mr. John *should have gone.*

The primary use of *ought to* and *must* is denoting obligation, while *can* is used to denote ability. The modal auxiliary *may* is used for permission or likelihood, while *might* is used for uncertainty.

(2.62) I *ought to go* to Baghdad.

(2.63) I *must* always *study.*

(2.64) She *can cook* well.

(2.65) *May* I *have* your dictionary, please ?

(2.66) They *may come* at any moment.

(2.67) Ali *might come* in the evening.

In addition to the primary uses of the modals above, there are also secondary uses of these modal auxiliary verbs. They can express a variety of certainty as a secondary use. Close **(1975:269)** arranges the modals beginning with the *uncertain* and ending with the *certain*. The arrangement is: *might, may, could, can, should, ought to, would, will*, and *must*,respectively.

(2.68) That *might be* George.

(2.69) That *must be* George.

Palmer **(1982:273)** states that one of the most interesting points when studying modality is defining its scope because it is a semantico-syntactic category. Thus, both elements should be taken into consideration. Thus, one should pay attention to the markers of modality, i.e., modal auxiliary.

Quirk, et al, **(1985:218)** state that modal auxiliaries can be distinguished from the primary auxiliary and lexical verbs in:

1. *They carry tense: can/could, shall/should, may/might, will/would.*

2. *They do not show subject-verb agreement.*

(2.70) He *can* go.

(2.71)*He *cans* go.

3. *The verb following the modal auxiliary must appear in its stem form.*

(2.72) I *shall go* shopping. (Roberts,1974:61)

4. *They are never inflected, except in forming past tense, e.g. can/could. The only modal auxiliary that has no past inflection is 'must' which has the past form* had to, **(Palmer,1974:126).**

There are many characteristics that modal auxiliaries share:

1. *They have the same grammatical function, i.e., auxiliary verbs.*

2. *Only one modal auxiliary can be used in a sentence.*

(2.73)***I** *must can* **go.**

Such sentence is definitely unacceptable, (Roberts,1986:119).

Lyons (1968:3070 sheds light on a very interesting point, that is, the difference between *mood* and *modality*. He states that *mood* is a grammatical category whose function is to distinguish between sentence types, whereas *modality* refers to a device of meaning utilized by speakers to indicate judgments of non-factuality concerning events of the real world.

Palmer (1982:274) and Eastwood (2000:302) state that *modality* can be divided into three sets: *epistemic, deontic,* and *dynamic.*

The first kind denotes 'the modality of proposition'; it can be represented by *'may'* for *possibility* and *'must'* for *necessity.* The other two kinds denote *'modality of events'.* The *'deontic modality'* is said to be *'discourse oriented';* *modality* represented by *must* for *obligation* and *may* for *permission.*

The third kind of *modality* is subdivided into:

a. *'neutral-dynamic' modality, represented by 'can' in the sense of 'possible for', 'must' in the sense of 'necessary for'.*

b. *' subject-oriented' dynamic modality, represented by 'can' of ability 'will' of volition, and*

c. *' circumstantial-dynamic' modality, represented by 'have to' , (Ibid.).*

3- SAMPLING OF DATA

3.1 The Data

The data used for this study is taken from two novels of SF, viz. *The Time Machine* and Brave New World, as mentioned earlier. These two novels represent two different periods in order to give a sense of

comprehensiveness to the study. The first novel was published in the 19th century, while the second one was published in the 20th century. The two novels belong to two different British novelists.

It is hoped that the data will be adequate to give a clear and general picture of the investigation held since the corpus is selected from two novels of SF.

3.2 The Corpus

The corpus on which the present study is based is randomly taken. It consists of 200 sentences representing the two texts under study. Each novel is represented by a sample of one hundred sentences.

The number of words of the corpus approximates (16099) running words. It is hoped that the number of sentences, as well as the (421) finite verb phrases are adequate for the purpose of analysis taking into consideration the limits of a study like the one presently carried out.

3.3 Criteria of Choosing the Texts

The criteria followed in choosing the two SF novels are:

a. The two novels are British so as not to be misled by the differences between the two main varieties of English, i.e., British English and American English.

b. The two novels belong to two different periods and two different writers. *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells was first published in 1895, while *Brave New World* by A. Huxley was first published in 1932. So, it is hoped they would give a general picture of writing this genre, i.e., SF, during the last two centuries.

3.4 The Selection of Forms

Almost all types of English tense-system, aspect and modality are taken into consideration when analyzing the data because any verb phrase in English must show tense distinctions.

The forms with *have -, - ing,* and *be* make the distinction of aspect. All types of aspect will be investigated wherever found in the data chosen randomly. The same procedure will be followed in investigating the modal auxiliaries that are used in the two samples with the meanings they denote.

3.5 Criteria of Analysis

Quirk, et al, (1972:72-3) designate the possible grammatical form of finite verb phrases and group them into two basic groups:

a. *The simple finite verb phrases* The verb phrase is simple when it comprises one verb only. It may take the form:

(3.1) Present: He *works* hard.

(3.2) Past: He *worked* hard.

(3.3) Imperative: *Work* harder.

b. *The complex finite verb phrases*   The verb phrase is complex when it consists of more than one finite verb. There are four basic types of complex verb phrases:

Type 1: (Modal/ periphrastic auxiliary)   This type consists of modal or periphrastic auxiliary + the base of the verb phrase head.

(3.4) He *must examine* his students.

Type 2:   (Perfective): the auxiliary *have* + the *–ed* participle of the verb phrase
head.

(3.5) He *has examined* his students.

Type 3:   (Progressive): The auxiliary *be* + the *–ing* participle of the verb phrase head.

(3.6) He *is examining* his students.

Type 4:   (The Passive):   The auxiliary *be* + the *–ed* participle of the verb phrase head.

(3.7) They *are examined.*

3.6 Levels of Analysis

The present study falls into three main levels of analysis. The first level is a distinction made of various types of tenses found in the corpus; mainly past and present tenses. The second level is represented by making a distinction between the different aspect classes; the perfective and progressive, and the perfective progressive.

The third level will be an account of the frequency of modal auxiliaries that give various meanings (modality) to fulfil the aim of the present analysis.

Finally, it is important to note that this section will fall into two types; quantitative and qualitative. The former aims at identifying and classifying the various types of tenses, aspect and modality. These are analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage. The results will be shown in the form of tables and then discussed.

The qualitative analysis aims at discussing the benefit of using a particular tense, aspect or modality that gives or serves as an outstanding marker of SF texts. The quantitative work, on the other hand, aims at:

a. making a general account of all the types of the three grammatical categories under investigation that each sample includes and their percentage of occurrence within the same data, and

b. investigating each category within each sample apart The qualitative work is to follow. Then, the benefit of using a particular form of tense, for instance, and what it represents, being a marker of SF texts, will be discussed.

4-Analysis of Tense, Aspect and Modality in SF

4.1 Tense, Aspect and Modality in Sample 1 *The Time Machine*

4.1.1 Tense Categories in Sample 1

The total number of words selected from Sample 1 is (6077) running words. The total number of sentences is (100) in which there are (213) finite verb phrases. The total frequency of occurrence of tense categories is (83). This frequency falls into (81), with the percentage of (97.590 %) for the simple past tense, and only (2), with the percentage of (02.410%) for the simple present tense.

Table (1) Frequency Distribution of the Total Use of Tense Category in Sample 1

Category of tense	Frequency	Percentage
1. Simple past	81	97.590
2. Simple present	02	02.410
Total	83	100%

The ratio between the simple past to simple present is (40.2).

4.1.2 Aspect Distribution in Sample 1

The total frequency of occurrence of aspect categories in Sample 1 is (54). The perfective aspect scores (36), with the percentage of (66.666%). The progressive aspect comes next (17), with the percentage of (31.482%), while the perfective progressive has the least frequency (1), and the percentage of (01.852%).

Table (2) Frequency Distribution of the Total Uses of Aspect Category in Sample 1

Category of Tense	Frequency	Percentage
1. Perfective	36	66.666
2. Progressive	17	31.482
3. Perfect progressive	1	01.852
Total	54	100%

The ratio between the perfective aspect to the progressive aspect is (2.1). The ratio between the perfective and perfect progressive is (36) while the ratio between the progressive aspect to the perfect progressive is (17).

4.1.3 Modality in Sample1

Sample 1 shows almost all modal auxiliaries giving various meanings; the modal auxiliary *could* shows the highest frequency showing two meanings; *ability* (9), (32.142%), and *inability* (3), (10.714%). The next modal auxiliary in frequency is *would* that gives the meaning of *probability* (5), (17.856%), while the other two meanings: *improbability* and *impossible* in the past are less frequently used (1), (03.572%). The rest modal auxiliaries are: *should* that gives the meaning of *ability* (2), (07.142%), or *impossible in the past* (1), (03.572%), *might (possibility), can (ability), had to (obligation in the past), may (likelihood),* and *must (obligation),* all share the same frequency (1), (03.572).

Table (3) Frequency Distribution of the Total Uses of Modal Auxiliaries in Sample 1

Modality	Frequency	Percentage
1. could – ability –	9	32.142
inability	3	10.714
2. should – obligation	2	07.142

- impossible in the past	1	03.572
3. would – probability	5	17.856
- improbability	1	03.572
- impossible in the past	1	03.572
4. might – possibility	1	03. 572
5. may – likelihood	1	03. 572
6. can – ability	1	03. 572
7. had to – obligation in the past	2	07.142
8. must – obligation	1	03.572
Total	28	100%

4.2. Tense, Aspect and Modality in Sample 2 *Brave New World*

4.2.1 Tense Categories in Sample 1

The total number of words chosen from Sample 2 is (10022) running words in which we have (208) finite verb phrases. The number of sentences is (100). The total frequency of occurrence of tense categories is (84). One hundred per cent of the finite verb phrases here are in the simple past.

Table (4) Frequency Distribution of the Total Use of Tense Category in Sample 2

Category of Tense	Frequency	Percentage
1. simple past	84	100%
2. simple present	0	0
Total	84	100%

The ratio between the simple past to the simple present is (84).

4.2.2 Aspect Distribution in Sample 2

The total frequency of occurrence of the aspect category in Sample 2 is (45) distributed as follows: the perfective aspect has the highest frequency (27), (60.000%), the progressive has (16), (35.556%), and the perfect progressive has (2), (04.444%).

Table (5) Frequency Distribution of the Total Uses of Aspect Categories in Sample 2

Category of Aspect	Frequency	Percentage

1. Perfective	27	60.000
2. Progressive	16	35.556
3. Perfect progressive	2	04.444
Total	45	100%

The ratio between the perfective aspect to the progressive aspect is (1.7). The ratio between the perfective aspect to the perfect progressive aspect is (3.5), while that between the progressive aspect and the perfect progressive is (8).

4.2.3 Modality in Sample 2

The total number of modal auxiliaries used in Sample 2 is (34). The modal auxiliary *could* that gives the meaning of *ability* is (10), (29.412%), of *inability* is (6), (17.647%), and *impossible in the past* is (1), (02.941%). It is the most frequently used auxiliary. Next to it is the modal auxiliary *would* that gives the meaning of *probability,*(9), (26.472%).

Then, we have the modal auxiliary *must* that gives the meaning of *necessity,*(5), (14.705%). The rest modal auxiliaries are *had to, can,* and *should* which have the same frequency of occurrence (1), (02.941%).

Table (6) Frequency Distribution of the Total Uses of Modal Auxiliary Verbs in Sample 2

Modality	Frequency	Percentage
1. could – ability	10	29.412
- inability	6	17.647
- impossible in the past	1	02.941
2. would – probability	9	26.472

- improbability		
3. must – obligation	5	14.705
4. had to – obligation in the past	1	02.941
5. can – ability	1	02.941
6. should – impossible in the past	1	02.941
Total	34	100%

The ratio between the past tense to other tense categories in both samples is (8). The ratio between the perfective aspect in the two samples to the rest of aspect categories is (1.75). The total number of the frequency occurrence of the past tense in the two samples is (251), while the total number of the frequency occurrence of the present tense is (9). The total number of the frequency occurrence of the perfective aspect in the two samples is (63), while the number of the frequency occurrence of the progressive and the perfect progressive is (36).

4.3 Discussion of the Results

Crystal and Davey (1969:71) and Turner (1973:91) state that little opportunity is offered for stylistic deviation in the structure of the English verbal group. The finite verbal group consists of a head word preceded by one or more auxiliaries with a fixed word order, thus stylistic variation in verbal groups is not found in word order , but rather in the choice of tenses, aspect contrasts, and so on. Accordingly, the present study tends to investigate the most important categories that constitute the finite verb phrase, i.e., tense, aspect and modality to see if there has been any tendency to use a particular tense or aspect or a modal auxiliary to be a marker to most SF novels.

4.3.1 Tense

The tables set earlier show that there is an obvious tendency to use the simple past tense in SF more frequently than other tense-forms. The frequency of occurrence of the simple past tense shows that SF writers tend

to use this tense more than any other tense form. It has also been shown that the frequency of occurrence of the present tense is much less than the simple past. (See tables 1 and 4.

Linguistically speaking, the past tense, as has been discussed in Section 2, is used particularly when the speaker has in mind a definite point of time in the past and that there should be a gap between the time of the action and the present moment.

Quirk, et al, (1985:182-3) list the meanings and uses attached or incorporated within the past tense. The meanings are the following:

1.*Event past*: when the past tense refers to a single definite event in the past.

2. *State past:* when the past tense refers to a state in the past.

3.*Habitual past:* when the past tense refers to a repeated action in the past.

The past tense does not necessarily refer to past time. It may indicate future time or present time in certain cases:

1. *In the indirect speech, the verb of the subordinate clause is in the past tense in accordance with the reporting verb. This is called Backshift. Similarly, in sentences describing future speech, or thought. One can find Backshift when such sentences are in the reported speech.*

(4.1*)* My brother *will be* sorry that he *missed* seeing you this evening.

2. *With verbs of mental state and verbs of volition, the past tense is used to refer to the speaker's tentative attitude.*

(4.2) *Did* you *want* to see me ?

3. *Hypothetical past: with (If Clauses), particularly, and conditional clauses, the past tense is used to express the contrary of the speaker's expectations.*

(4.3) I wish I *had* a memory like yours.

The uses of the past tense are the following (Ibid.:184):

!. The use of the past tense in relation to an immediate situation.

(4.4) *Did* you *lock* the front door ?

2. *The use of the simple past tense in biographical and historical statements.*

  (4.5) Byron *died* in Greece.

3.*Anaphoric and cataphoric use of the past tense:*

a. When the time in the past to which reference is made is already indicated by a previous use of the past tense is anaphoric:

  (4.6) When we *entered* the city, the building *was* destroyed.

b. Similarly, when we have a preceding use of the present perfect in the definite past, this results in the subsequent use of the past tense.

  (4.7) There have been times when I *wished* myself safely at home in

    bed.

c. When we have anaphoric reference to an adverbial phrase of time in the same clause.

  (4.8) Last Saturday, we *went* to the Theatre.

d. Conversely, when the adverbial follows the past tense, in this case, we have cataphoric use of the definite past.

  (4.9) We *went* to the Theatre last Saturday.

  Applying this to our study, one should assume that tense in writing creates serious problems since written language is transmitted and received at different times. Thus, one expects indications of time identical with a writer's own time. This is not always applicable. (Turner,1973:91)

  Taking this viewpoint into consideration, the present study concentrates on a special literary genre, i.e., SF stories, the time of which must be the future since it describes events/states or actions that are anticipated in the future. Yet, the results of our analysis show that in SF, the past tense is the dominant tense, then comes the present tense in much less frequency of occurrence, while futurity is rarely used. The present is only used in direct speech.

Freeman (1970:340) states that although SF stories describe future events, perhaps taking place in 2040 A. D., for instance, yet, past tense is used because it is ' future' from the viewpoint of the audience while it is in the past from the viewpoint of the narrator. This, however, can be verified by the results shown in the tables which indicate the consistent use of the past tense. Besides, there is an assumption that detailed knowledge of an event presupposes that it has already occurred.

SF stories , though set to take place in the future, are almost always narrated in the past tense because our thinking and understanding are normally about the past.

In Wells's, "The Time Machine", the protagonist does not foresee the future, but actually travels into it and reports what he did there after having done it.

There is a tendency to use the 'pluperfect' to serve as a background since SF writers, generally, tend to locate a scene at a particular time. It has been observed that Wells used the pluperfect in his novel more frequently than Huxley. (See tables 1 and 2.)

The past continuous and the past perfect continuous come next in frequency. The present perfect that denotes past time with present relevance comes next, while the present simple and the future tenses are rarely used. This confirms the hypotheses of the present study stated in Section One.

4.3.2 Aspect

4.3.2.1 The Perfective Aspect

Quirk, et al, (1985:191) state that the perfective aspect denotes an anterior time to whatever time orientation is signaled by tense or other elements of the sentence or its context.

4.3.2.1.1 The Past Perfective

The past perfective gives the meaning of (past – in – the past). It can be viewed, as Quirk, et al, (Ibid.:195) state , as an anterior version either of the present perfective or of the simple past.

The past perfective in its simplest denotes any state or event anterior to a time of orientation in the past. The past perfective implies the three meanings of event/habit and state, respectively, as the following examples indicate.

(4.10) When we bought it, the house *had been* empty for several
years.

(4.11) The goalkeeper *had injured* his leg, and could not play.

(4.12) It was foolish to fire Jack; in two seasons he *had scored* more
goals than any other player.

4.3.2.1.2 The Present Perfective

The most problematic point, as has been discussed in Section Two, is the choice between the present perfective and the simple past. Since the present perfective shares the same past time, as the simple past, yet, the present perfective differs from the simple past in relating a past event/state to a present time orientation. Quirk, et al, (1985:192) state that, in situations where either the present perfective or the simple past can be used, it seems obvious that they are incompatible because the present perfective relates the action more directly to the present time. Compare the following two examples:

(4.13) Where *did* you *put* my purse ?

(4.14) Where *have* you *put* my purse ?

The difference between the two sentences is that (4.13) speaks of a past action, while (4.14) denotes a present time reference.

The present perfective comprises the three meanings of state/event and habit. Quirk, et al, (Ibid.:192) lists these meanings as follows:

1. State leading up to the present:

    (4.15) That house *has been* empty for ages.

2. Indefinite events in a period leading to the present:

    (4.16) John *has broken* the window.

3. Habit, i.e., recurrent event in a period leading up to the present:

    (4.17) Mr. Terry *has sung* in this choir since he was a boy.

4.3.2.2 The Progressive Aspect

As the name implies, the progressive denotes a happening in progress at a given time. This can be clarified when comparing the following sentences:

a. State Progressive

    (4.18) Joan *sings* well. (simple present)

    (4.19) Joan *is singing* well. (present progressive)

The difference between the two sentences is that, (4.18) views the action as a whole, while (4.19) gives a sense of progress to the activity it denotes. The three meanings of state/event and habit have different interpretations when associated with the progressive.

    (4.20) We *live* in the country.

    (4.21) We *are living* in the country.

These two sentences express a state, i.e., residence. (4.20) expresses a permanent state, while (4.21) denotes a temporary residence.

b. Event Progressive The progressive implies that an event has duration and has not yet come to an end.

    (4.22) The train *is approaching*.

c. Habitual Progressive The progressive, when combined with the habitual meaning, implies that a repeated event or action takes place over a limited period of time.

    (4.23) At that time, she *was having* regular singing lessons.

4.3.2.3 The Perfective Progressive

Quirk, et al, (1985:212) state that the perfective progressive comprises the following meanings:

1. The happening has duration, and

2. continues up to the present or recent past;

3. The happening need not be complete, and

4. may have effects which are still apparent.

As the analysis shows, the perfective aspect is the most frequently used in SF novels compared with the progressive aspect in the sense that the perfective aspect is employed to make a kind of connection between the past and the present.

SF writers do not base their assumptions on mere visions but rather on facts. The narrator, in most SF novels, tends to tell things that he had already seen. So, the event came to an end the moment he began narrating his story.

The progressive aspect gives a sense of temporariness to the events and is used to give a sense of duration of time. Thus, the progressive is used in SF to give a sense of duration to the events. This low use of this particular aspect gives the reader the impression that the writer wants him to be aware of what he tells in his novel of things that continued for a limited period of time, usually the past time, and that the present has no influence over them.

4.3.3 Modality

Almost all modal auxiliaries have been used, as can be seen in Table 3 and Table 6, though they vary in frequency due to the meanings that SF writers tend to manifest to the audience. The meanings of the most

frequently used modal auxiliaries will be discussed, since they represent a marker of SF.

The most frequently used modal auxiliary is *could* that gives the meaning of 'ability'. This indicates human control over an action. Quirk, et al, (1985:222) state that the 'ability' meaning associated with *could* can be regarded a special case of 'possibility' meaning, namely, " an action possible to occur due to some skill on the part of the subject referent."

SF writers tend to use the modal auxiliary *could* to give the meaning of 'ability' to convince the reader that what they speak about to take place in the remote future is not imaginary, but possible to happen. Writers of such kind of genre along the passage of time have written about things and explorations of the outer space that were believed to be imaginary. Yet, these imaginary assumptions have become ordinary facts; the atomic bomb, landings on the moon and journeys into the space, etc. They believe in science, the human energy and the will of man to create things that seem impossible in our own time, but technology is capable of leading man to carry out what is considered to be impossible to take place at a certain period; that is how discoveries and inventions turn real.

There is, next in frequency, the modal auxiliary *would* that gives the meaning of 'probability'. Modality, in this sense, indicates that SF writers set their assumptions, their visions about the future, things that would probably occur bearing in mind that the writer is a representative of his own time. Accordingly, SF writers , in their novels, describe events that they anticipate to take place in the future, yet they believe in the ability of man to turn these assumptions or prophecies into real facts. That is why the use of the past modals is in conformity with the frequent use of past tense to give the impression of the possibility of events and things taking place in such novels.

Other modals, like *may/ might/ can/ must/ had to* score little frequency of occurrence. *Likelihood* that is attached to *might/ may* is rare because we are dealing with science and facts where there is no place for *likelihood*. *Must* and *had to* which represent 'obligation' are also found in few instances.

Finally, one can conclude that SF writers are people who believe in science, in facts and in the power that human beings have to create new worlds and that they claim to have almost a full control over their destiny. This explains the technological progress the world of today has been witnessing and more is expected in the future.

5- Conclusions

Tense, Aspect and Modality are considered as the most controversial syntactic and semantic categories due to their importance in the structure of the English sentence. This also goes for all languages because there must be indications of time in any human language since time is measured by events, so, tense and aspect in particular are important since they are closely attached to the verb which is the core of any sentence.

The following conclusions have been drawn:

1. The frequency of occurrence of the past tense scores the highest degree among all other tense categories (165), because the events narrated in SF novels are regarded as past events from the viewpoint of the narrator though they are future events from the audience's point of view. This confirms the first hypothesis. The protagonist does not foresee the events he is narrating, but he had already experienced and lived these events.

2. The perfective aspect is found to be the most predominant one which serves as a background to the events. It has (59) points in the frequency of occurrence. This confirms the second hypothesis.

3. The modal auxiliary *could* is the most frequently used auxiliary; it gives the meaning of *ability*. *Would* comes next in frequency and it denotes *probability.* Thus, the third hypothesis of this study is also verified.

Bibliography

Allen, R. L. (1966). <u>The Verb System of Present Day American English</u>. The Netherlands: Monton & Co. Publishers.

Alerton, D. J., Edward, C., and Croft, D. H. (eds.). (1972). <u>Function and Context in Linguistic Analysis.</u> Cambridge: CUP.

Brinton, L. J. (1988). <u>The Development of English Aspectual System.</u> Cambridge: CUP.

Clark, A. M. (1965). <u>Spoken English</u>. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyed Ltd.

Close, R. A. (1975). <u>A Reference for Students of English</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Comrie, B. (1976). <u>Aspect</u>. Cambridge: CUP.

_____ . (1986). <u>Tense</u>. Cambridge: CUP.

Crystal, D. (1985). <u>A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics.</u> Cambridge: CUP.

Crystal, D. & Davy, D. (1969). <u>Investigating English Style</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Daoud, M. (1988). ," A Contrastive Study of Tense and Aspect in English and Modern Standard Arabic II Tense and Aspect in English". <u>Journal of Language Studies</u>. Vol. 4. Language Center: University of Sana'a.

Eastwood, N. (2000). <u>English Grammar</u>. Oxford: OUP.

Eckersely, C. E. & Eckersley, J. M. (1985). <u>A Comprehensive English Grammar</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Fillipovic, R. (1984). <u>An Outline of English Grammar</u>.Zegreb: Skolska Knjioa.

Fillmore, C. J. (1972). <u>Studies in Linguistics Semantics.</u> New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston Inc.

Fowler, R. (1974). <u>Understanding Language: An Introduction to Linguistics</u>. London: Roultedge & Kegan Paul.

Freeman, D. (1969). <u>Linguistics and Literary Style</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Gleason, H. A. Jr. (1961). <u>An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics</u>. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston Inc. Hammond, J.

Hirtle, W. H. (1977). <u>Time, Aspect and the Verb</u>.Quebec: les presser de

Duniversite laval.

Hockett, C. F. (1967). <u>A Course in Modern Linguistics</u>. New York: The Mcmillan Company.

Hornby, A. S. (1977). <u>Guide to Patterns and Usage in English</u>. Oxford: OUP.

Huxley, A. (1932). <u>Brave New World</u>.London: Longman Group Ltd.

Jesperson, Otto. (1977). <u>Essentials of English Grammar</u>. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Kruisinga, E. (1931). <u>A Handbook of Present Day English</u>. Noordhof: Groningen.

Leech, G. (1975). <u>A Communicative Grammar of English</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

_____. (1976). <u>Meaning and the English Verb</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Long, R. (1971). <u>The Sentence and Its Parts</u>. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lyons, J. (1968). Linguistics: <u>An Introduction to General Linguistics</u>. Oxford: OUP.

_____. (1977). <u>Semantics</u>. Oxford: OUP.

McCoard, R. (1978). The English Perfect: <u>Tense Choice and Pragmatic Inferencies</u>. Amestrdam: North Holland Publishing Company.

Palmer, F. R. (1976). <u>The English Verb</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

_____ . (1979). " Modality and the English Modals". A Book Review by L. Hageman. <u>A Journal of English Language and Literature</u>. Vol. 63, No. 3. 1982.

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. (1972). <u>A Contemporary English Grammar</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

_____ . (1985). <u>A Comprehensive Grammar of English</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Roberts, N. B. (1989). <u>Analysing Sentences: An Introduction to English Syntax</u>. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Stone, L. (1967). <u>Cambridge Proficiency English</u>. London: Mcmillan Education Ltd.

Strang, B. (1966). <u>Modern English Structure</u>. 2nd ed. London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd.

Swan, M. (1988). <u>Practical English Usage</u>. Oxford: OUP.

Traugott, E. (1972). <u>A History of English Syntax: A Transformational Approach to the History of English Sentence Structure</u>. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston Inc.

Turner, G. W. (1973). <u>Stylistics</u>. London: Cox and Wayman Ltd.

Veit, R. (1986). <u>Discovering English Grammar</u>. Boston: Houghton
      Mifflin Company.

Wells, H. G. (1895). <u>The Time Machine</u>. London: Heineman Ed. Books.

Yule, G. (1998). <u>Explaining English Grammar</u>. Oxford: OUP.

Zandvort, W. (1975). <u>A Handbook of English Grammar</u>. 7th ed.
      London: Longman Group Ltd.