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**GROUNDING IN
ENGLISH AND ARABIC
NEWS DISCOURSE**

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UBA003000027

GROUNDING IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC NEWS DISCOURSE

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam,
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Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen

Grounding in English and Arabic News Discourse

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Introduction

This study deals with an elusive property of discourse, namely *grounding* or what is more popularly known as the *foreground* (FG)-*background* (BG) structure. We will account for *grounding* as one of the semantic properties of discourse, and examine manifestations of the FG-BG distinction in terms of schematic features (viz. the global organizers of the propositional content) and specific syntactic structures, namely markers that occur in sentence-initial position. We shall apply this theoretical study of grounding in an analysis of English and Arabic short news texts.

Earlier research that dealt with the theoretical notion of *grounding* has depended primarily on narrative and conversational types of discourse. More importantly, it has been quite unsystematic and sometimes confused. Various levels of description have been conflated, reflecting the lack of explicit, adequate, and independent criteria for the FG-BG distinction. Thus, semantic *grounding* has been discussed in terms of surface structure expression, i.e. *foreground* clauses or sentences, or in terms of the cognitive level of *information*, i.e. *foreground* and *background information*. *Grounding* has also been conflated with *coherence*— another discourse semantic notion.

The major thesis about studying that *grounding* should be defined in terms of hierarchical relationships of semantic importance obtaining between propositions in a text. As a discourse semantic notion, *grounding* is distinct from other notions and levels of description. We posit that it should be distinguished from other semantic properties of discourse such as local and global coherence. While global coherence organizes high and low level topics in discourse, grounding organizes propositions on a FG-BG scalar structure. Although there are relationships between *foreground* meanings and macrosemantically important meanings or topics, both notions are distinct from each other in their theoretical basis and discourse function.

We will make other theoretical distinctions. So we will distinguish *grounding* from the more or less *prominent* ways it is signaled in surface structures. Since one of our intentions in the systematic analytical description is to distinguish different levels, we will use different terms to charac-

terize manifestations of grounding. Thus we will use the term *prominence* to refer to surface structure and the term *salience* to denote another level of organizing meaning, namely in terms of schemata: the hierarchical order of text segments (e.g. headline, lead sentence).

Similarly, we distinguish *grounding* from the pragmatic notion of lesser or greater *relevance* of information for language users, and from the cognitive notion of more or less *importance* of information as represented in the mental models of language users. Conceptual distinctions will allow the assignment of grounding-values to propositions independent of surface structure realization. They will also allow examining surface structure as one manifestation of the FG-BG distinction.

In contradistinction to many other treatments of grounding, where the individual concept or the single lexical item has been the major concern of writers, the present study takes a text-level approach to the grounding phenomenon by focussing on the grounding of the proposition and on certain entities or expressions that occur in sentence-initial position.

The major thesis about studying the surface expression of grounding is that languages vary *inter alia* in (the explicitness of) marking relative grounding-values at sentence-initial position and in the contribution of specific devices to the grounding-signaling function.

The study suggests that sentence-initial position is a potential locus for signaling the FG-BG distinction in text. English news discourse will provide evidence that certain linguistic markers (mainly spatio-temporal and circumstantial expressions) that occur in sentence-initial position perform important grounding-signaling functions and manifest text-level distinctions in the FG-BG structure of news texts. Arabic news discourse will provide evidence for the importance of a certain class of markers that occur in sentence-initial position to the grounding-signaling function. It will show that signaling the appropriate grounding-value of the proposition at sentence-initial position is a prerequisite for maintaining the (coherence of the) grounding structure of the news text and for recasting the intended meaning in the given communicative situation.

The study contributes to broadening the theoretical and empirical foundations of the field. It demonstrates that grounding is a fundamental property of text and that gradual differences of meaning importance in texts could be crucial for comprehension and interpretation.

The study offers insights into the textual structures and linguistic properties of news discourse. Short news texts are one type of the news story

that occupies a prominent place among other types of media discourse. They have hardly been studied from a discourse perspective as a form of written communication.

In addition, using data from other discourses than narrative, and using languages such as Arabic— a Semitic, non-Indo-European language— will increase our understanding of discourse grounding and its manifestations. The linguistic phenomenon of sentence-initial markers in standard Arabic has as yet not been accounted for within a theory of grounding. The present study underscores the importance of this feature in Arabic linguistics and provides evidence that linguistic phenomena can hardly be sufficiently explained by recourse to either sentence-level approach or one level of analysis. In this regard, the study highlights the discourse approach to grammar— one of the themes that engage current linguistic research. It explains the behaviour of a number of tense-aspect entities and examines text-functional distinctions between VS and SV word-order variants.

Furthermore, focussing on differences between Arabic and English in expressions of the FG-BG structure in sentence-initial position reveals patterns of communicating news in both languages and contributes to cross-cultural discourse studies or comparison. It also underlines textual problems in the process of translation and the need to consider structural features of different types of text.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

Our approach to the FG-BG structure as a textual phenomenon will be outlined in chapter 1, where we describe a model of text-production, present basic and relevant notions of discourse, and review the literature on the grounding phenomenon. In chapter 2 we introduce the short news item as a special type of the news story and start our examination of text-level organization features by looking into some schematic manifestations of text-level grounding. Chapter 3 will present a detailed analysis of surface structure manifestations of text-level grounding in English news texts, exemplified by entities that occur in sentence-initial position. Two patterns of these entities will be explained and illustrated: constituents of the main clause such as noun phrases, and constituents that are marginal to the main clause, such as various kinds of adverbials. These constituents are referred to as strong providers of grounding signals at sentence-initial position.

In order to show one way in which Arabic news texts differ from

English news texts in the explicitness of signaling the FG-BG distinction at sentence-initial position and the requirement of that signaling, in chapter 4 we introduce a class of markers from the Arabic language. By way of preparation for the analysis of these markers in chapter 5, the chapter examines the phenomenon of prefatory expressions in news texts, provides empirical evidence of its spread, and explains its significance. The chapter accounts for the requirement to use these expressions in terms of a communicative strategy and the writer's or the translator's goal to perform successful acts. The interplay of these markers with main clause word-order and their influence on the grounding-value will also be examined. Attention will be given to the consequences of the absence of markers from texts where markers should be present. Based on genuine examples from different samples of Arabic short news items, both translated and originally written in Arabic, a detailed description of these markers is presented in chapter 5. Constraints on the interchangeability of markers and cases where markers may neutralize other initial markers in English will be explored and illustrated. Finally, in chapter 6 we present a brief discussion of the major findings of the study and of some major issues, indicating a number of useful avenues for future research. Major concepts used in the study are briefly explained in the end.

The Foreground-Background Structure as a Textual Phenomenon

1.1 Aim and Scope of the Study

GOAL

The main goal of the present study is to account for *grounding*— the major theoretical notion of the study— in terms of the *foreground* (FG)-*background* (BG) structure and to examine certain manifestations of that structure in both English and Arabic news texts. In the vast literature (see 1.5), differing and sometimes conflicting treatments have failed to dissipate the theoretical confusion about the concepts and notions involved. Definitions have been imprecise, levels of description confused and, above all, analyses have been rather limited in scope, for example in terms of individual lexical items or the topic-comment structure of the sentence.

We use various notions to describe distinct features and distinguish levels of description. Taking a text-level approach to grounding and its manifestations, we focus on propositions and examine the FG-BG structure in plausible discourse-semantic terms and its manifestations in discourse-pragmatic terms. It will be shown that grounding is an additional requirement of textuality. We present first the level of discursive manifestations— so-called 'superstructural' categories that occur in this type of news discourse and that are crucial in determining the way surface structure prominence signals the FG-BG articulation. For surface structure manifestations of grounding, we focus on entities that occur in sentence-initial position and examine their grounding-signaling function. In addition, we present and explain empirically-based observations about differences between English and Arabic news texts in entities in that position. Arabic news texts will therefore be used in order to explore and discuss in detail the influence of the FG-BG structure on surface structure expression. It will be argued that grounding considerations account for the occurrence in these texts of 'prefatory' sentences: They are a syntactic manifestation or marking of grounding at text-level. Thus a language-specific illustration will

provide further evidence that not only grounding but also its expression are crucial for textuality.

In the course of the study, we will use the terms 'text' and 'discourse' interchangeably. That is because 'discourse' does not refer only to dialogue and conversation, and a written text may also be a 'monologue discourse' (van Dijk 1977: 8). In fact now 'text takes on more of the interactive qualities of discourse' (Garrett and Bell 1998: 2), and although important differences exist between spoken and written languages, both terms denote forms of linguistic expression.

DATA

The research reported in this study is based on authentic short news texts taken from the *International Herald Tribune* (IHT) and the international edition of the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*. The Arabic data will be explained in chapter 4. The English data consist of a sample of 100 short news items, randomly drawn from the section entitled 'World Briefs', which appears daily on the second page of the *IHT*, over a six month period (January-June 1985). The sample is assumed to be large enough to be representative of English-American news discourse, and to provide sufficiently accurate results for research purposes.

The short news item is a specific type of the news story. It belongs to the news genre, which is central among media genres (see e.g. McQuail 1991, Bell 1991). Other types of media discourse, such as news editorials, background features, and interviews are excluded (but see chapter 4). The texts are limited to printed daily news; neither radio and TV news nor news in weeklies are considered. The limitation to one type of discourse and one medium has been made in order to insure the homogeneity of the corpus. Practical reasons are also involved in the choice of short news items: they are easy to quote fully and to examine in more detail and depth. In addition, they have not as yet been studied—at least not in detail—as a special (sub-) genre, and on this ground alone they merit investigation. Furthermore, in a compact form they exhibit features of longer news texts which have been 'globally' studied, and they are also similar to other forms of short (summarized) news items such as those in TV news programs. More importantly, short news items are suitable because, as a result of their epitomic nature, the sentences show the expression of different grounding-values in close succession.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

The organization of this chapter will be as follows: After explaining the aim and scope of the study in section 1.1, section 1.2 will be an informal introduction to the **FG-BG structure** as a textual phenomenon and will show its place among several other structures and levels of expression. As part of our theoretical analysis, we will introduce some basic distinctions. Thus, we distinguish between **information**— and its distribution in mental models of events and situations— and the way it is textually constructed in **semantic representations**, that is, meaning and its organization in text. In section 1.3 we distinguish between two main principles of (overall) meaning organization in discourse: **coherence**, that is, meaning and its organization in terms of a macro-micro structure and local (conditional and functional) propositional coherence and **grounding**, that is, meaning and its organization in terms of a FG-BG structure. Then we examine the notion of **importance** and present rules that distinguish or assign information importance. In section 1.4 we present the FG-BG structure as a scale of grounding-values and describe the criteria for their assignment in news texts. After that we examine two major constraints on grounding: perspective and relevance. Finally, in section 1.5 we review the literature on the various aspects of the phenomenon of *foreground* and *background*, show a number of deficiencies, and explain the place of the present study as well as its contribution. Since this study is about news, a few words would be necessary about the contribution of other linguistically-oriented news discourse studies.

1.2 The Nature of the FG-BG Structure

Underlying the FG-BG articulation is the organizing principle of objects in terms of 'figure' and 'ground'— two gestalt notions whose perceptual distinction goes back to the Gestalt psychologists (see Koffka 1935; Köhler 1929). (For a review of the first generation of Gestalt psychologists' contribution to the cognitive revolution, see Murray 1995.) These notions are linked to the discourse notions of *foreground* and *background* (see Talmy 1978) in terms of which meaning and its organization in text are described.

In order to get an idea about the nature of this textual phenomenon, let us first consider the following short news text, **T5**, referring to its serial number in the sample. The sentences are numbered and indented at para-

graph boundaries for the purposes of this discussion.

T5

Savimbi Reported Seriously Wounded

LISBON (AFP)— (1) Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader, has been seriously wounded during an attack by government forces on his headquarters in the south of the country, the Portuguese news agency said Wednesday.

(2) In a dispatch from Luanda, the Angolan capital, the agency quoted Angolan military sources as saying the attack by elite troops in helicopters with heavy air support took place late last month.

(3) The troops struck at the headquarters of Mr. Savimbi's guerrilla organization, the Union for the Total Independence of Angola, at Jamba, a small town near the border with South-West Africa (Namibia), it added.

(4) Rumors that Mr. Savimbi had been captured by Angolan troops circulated in South Africa in mid-December.

(5) He has not appeared in public for several weeks, and did not make his usual address at Christmas.

When we examine the text we realize that it is coherent; it has both local and global coherence relations (see 1.3.1). Intuitively, we also realize that it manifests a FG-BG structure or a figure-ground segregation (see Ungerer and Schmid 1996). The headline and the first few sentences seem to organize or express more 'figure' or **important** meanings— i.e. about the fact or event that *Savimbi* was wounded in an attack— than later sentences, which organize or express meanings about the precise circumstances of that event. The writer, then, seems to have selected and distinguished some meanings as *foreground* and some other meanings as *background*. According to this characterization, *foreground* ends with S3, which terminates the report on the main event proper, and *background* is expressed in sentences S4 and S5, since S4 denotes meanings other than those about the main event, namely rumors about *Savimbi's* capture, and S5 provides evidence that supports these rumors.

In addition to the organization of meanings in the text into (a binary opposition of) *foreground* and *background*, it is assumed that there are meanings that are neither the one nor the other. Meanings expressed in sentences S2 and S3 are about specifics of the main event : the troops and the attack they carried out. These meanings are assumed to differ from those expressed in the headline or the lead sentence. They are assumed to serve a different **grounding function** from that served by meaning ex-

pressed in S1, since the underlying information is interpreted to be **less important** than the information that *Savimbi* has been seriously wounded. On the other hand, these meanings are assumed to be more important than meanings expressed in sentences S4 and S5 that are assumed to be *background* and to have a lower degree of information importance.

In addition to the cognitive organization of information, and the distinction between *foreground* and *background* in the textual propositions that encode that information, there are concrete visual signs of the FG-BG structure. In the spatial organization of objects, the 'figure' occupies a **prominent** position in the text as a headline. Being in bold, language users would recognize it easily as such and would focus their attention on it to the exclusion of other 'objects'.

From this preliminary examination of the FG-BG structure in **T5**, we make a few observations. Some of them are about notions that will be distinguished and features that will be examined in more detail in subsequent sections and chapters.

1- Information structure has been referred to as 'organizational meaning' (see Beekman et al. 1981; Larson 1984; Kopesec 1988). Our approach to information is that:

a. it is not a property of text but of the cognitive structure and the knowledge of language users, e.g. as represented in their mental models of events (Johnson-Laird 1983; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983) underlying the text.

b. it may be more or less important. Importance is taken as a measure for information in terms of the size of its knowledge implications. Thus 'importance of information is defined relative to the social cognitions (knowledge, attitudes or ideologies) of a social group, including (the representation of) their goals, norms and interests' (van Dijk 1995: 263). The assignment of importance to information occurs in a certain (viz. the present) context, hence it may vary according to context, but also according to medium or text-type. It should be added that we are only able to infer such importance assignment to information from the organization of the manifestations of such information in discourse meaning, precisely by the surface structure expression of the FG-BG structure.

2- Although we will further ignore a cognitive analysis of mental models,

it is nevertheless important to make a theoretical distinction between mental models or information/knowledge about events, viz. **model information**, and the way information is textually constructed or manifested in semantic representations, viz. **text meaning**, in terms of a FG-BG organization. The semantic meaning of discourses typically selects and hierarchically orders information from models. Thus information as beliefs about events is mapped on semantic representations as propositions, or rather as event propositions, e.g. action, process, or experience. It should be added that while meaning will be described in terms of propositions, no claims will be made about the units or nature of information in models, which might be 'propositional' or 'non-propositional' (see Oakhill and Garnham, eds. 1996).

3- The FG-BG structure is not a binary opposition but a gradual scale of meaning distribution that is based on the assignment of degrees of importance to information (see 1.3.2.1) as well as on criteria for grounding-value assignment in news texts (see 1.4.1).

4- That the organization of meanings as a FG-BG structure involves a distinction among several grounding-values is in accordance with the basic assumption that human communication does not manifest one and the same grounding-value throughout. Events and participants do not enjoy the same significance or insignificance. In fact, a text or a 'story in which every character was equally important and every event equally significant can hardly be imagined' (Callow 1974: 49), and people who produce and comprehend discourse, or language users in general, 'lend more importance to some information than to other information' (Wallace 1982: 208).

5- The organization of discourse meaning as a FG-BG structure makes texts interesting and contributes to their overall coherence. This is a task that defines another kind of coherence than global (macro) coherence or local (micro) coherence between propositions as defined later. The FG-BG structure influences the hierarchical structure of the mental models that readers build about events referred to by the textual propositions. In other words, the FG-BG articulation manages an important aspect of text comprehension and interpretation, viz. how readers assign greater or lesser importance to specific properties of events they read about. In fact, *foreground* may update readers' knowledge (mental models) of the world

by introducing features of current or new events and developments. On the other hand, sup-plying *background* may serve an anchoring function that puts *foreground* in perspective and integrates it properly in the entire structure. It may also help readers keep track of previous events that they are supposed to have known about already for instance from earlier news texts.

6- Properties specific to text-type are assumed to determine the way events and states of affairs are evaluated and referred to in propositions that vary in grounding-values. In news discourse, events must fulfil several conditions such as meaningfulness and unexpectedness (see Galtung and Ruge 1973) in order to get into the news, that is, to be selected for expression: propositionally and sententially. Thus, the specific properties of the short news item may dictate that reference be made to one single event in a *foreground* proposition. On the other hand, *narrative foreground* has been associated inter alia with a summary of a story or a collection of temporally successive events.

7- Properties specific to text-type may also determine the way surface structure signals the FG-BG distinction. In the short news text, the most important information is mapped on textual propositions that are expressed first, that is, in a prominent way, in the headline or the lead sentence. This is typical of news texts and is in accordance with newspaper reporting which 'imposes a certain demand that the main content be given in the first opening sentences, and that in the rest of the story the details be given in successive sentences and paragraphs' (Longacre 1983: 2; for details see van Dijk 1988a). This pattern of organization in news texts is 'in order of generally decreasing importance so that if the story needs to be cut to fit a particular space on the page, that which is cut out will be less important than what is left in' (Thorndyke 1979: 97).

8- While this realization pattern generally applies, as the example we examined shows, and although *background*, which tends to map less important information is expressed less conspicuously in the surface structure, i.e. later in the text, not everything that may be cut out from the end of the news text automatically has an underlying *background* meaning. We assume that in certain situations propositions that may be expressed towards the end of the text— or even cut out— may denote other grounding-values,

and that their deletion or non-prominent signaling is based on a lower degree of **relevance** (i.e. the usefulness or newsworthiness for readers), which may not necessarily coincide with a similar degree of **importance**. This means that there could be different sources for the way the FG-BG structure is prominently or non-prominently signaled. It should be noted that surface structure prominence serves a communicative function in text, namely to influence the perception of readers of what has been reported.

1.2.1 Levels of Textualization

Before we further explain the FG-BG structure, and distinguish it from other semantic structures, it is perhaps necessary to look at its place within the broader framework of the realization-/textualization-process. In that process, we identify four structures (see Figure 1) that operate at different stages— from 'deep'/underlying structures, that is the basic, cognitive information-level (a and b) to textual/expression levels (c and d). The four structures are briefly explained.

a. The structure of facts in the 'world'

Facts in 'reality' are concrete world events, actions or states of affairs, in terms of time and place. They may be historical or fictitious (as in novels), but in our study of news texts, we will deal with facts that are purported by journalists to be historical or 'true', whether or not they are actually the case. That is, we do not hereby claim that news is always true.

Facts are causally as well as temporally arranged in a sequence: one fact f1 precedes or causes another fact f2. If we look at the *Savimbi story* in T5 cited earlier, we find a number of propositions that represent the following temporally or causally related events 'in the world':

- 1- Rumors circulated in mid-December that the Angolan rebel leader, Savimbi, has been captured by Angolan troops.
- 2- Savimbi has not been seen in public for several weeks and has not delivered his usual Christmas speech.
- 3- Elite government troops attacked the headquarters of his UNITA guerrilla organization at Jamba late in December.
- 4- The troops used helicopters with heavy air support.
- 5- Savimbi has been seriously wounded during the attack.

Figure 1 Different structures/stages in the process of text production

The structure of facts in the world is therefore the raw material for other (subsequent) representations in which language users perceive or select differently. There may be, of course, isomorphism between the structure of facts in the world and other representations. This is evident in the case of chronological story telling, where earlier facts or events (which may also be causes) are presented before later ones (which may also be consequences). In this case, the linear representation of events is the 'natural' text ordering (see Levelt 1989), since it coincides with causally/temporally

structured or related facts 'in the world'.

b. The structure of facts in the minds of language users

Cognitively, facts in the world exist for people because of the way these facts are conceptually organized in their minds as mental model structures of the world talked about (Johnson-Laird 1983; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). Mental model structures, then, represent how language users perceive, interpret, and segment the world on the basis of their knowledge (or personal experience), whether of events (i.e. event models) or situations (i.e. situation models). It is to be noted that mental models do not represent or describe features of the text itself but the (reporter's) knowledge of what the text is about: that is, events, objects and processes described in the text (Glenberg et al. 1987). This is the case in the *Savimbi story*. The journalist's mental model structure of the facts about *Savimbi* includes information inferred from parts of scripts: For example, information about Angola, the power-struggle, the position of different parties in it, general geographic knowledge, and background knowledge of previous events.

Since people in general and journalists in particular know much more about events and situations than they (need to) tell or write, mental models are typically much more extensive than the texts derived from them (or than the texts on which they are based). This is also true because language users will activate and integrate in their models large portions of general, socially shared knowledge about people, events, actions or situations, for instance about armies or warfare in the model underlying the *Savimbi* story. This means that texts in principle will only feature the information of a model that is contextually relevant for expression in communication and interaction.

People understand the facts about *Savimbi*— as one manifestation of the organization of the world— because of their 'model of the situation', which is an episodic (subjective) knowledge structure representing these facts. This knowledge structure is the result of the interpretation of relations between these facts: f2 might have been observed or inferred first and f1 might have been observed or inferred later. So, in ordering or linearizing facts, attention may have been focussed first on f2, then it is observed that f2 is a consequence of f1. This shows that sometimes ordering 'in the mind' (viz. in models) is not the same as ordering 'in the world', because *earlier* events may be noticed or represented— understood or perceived— *after* later events. But often there is parallelism: models and reality have a simi-

lar mapping, that is, earlier (cause) events are also represented or understood *before* later (consequence) events, given the temporal direction of events in the world as it is experienced by language users.

This leads us to the ways in which knowledge or information in models may be organized. We suggest that it may be organized in terms of:

1- level/hierarchy: That is, model information is organized in macro and micro terms. It may be mapped on meaning organization in discourse, i.e. semantic structures or representations, as textual macrostructures or propositions and microstructures or propositions. This mapping is subject to possible interference and influence of context constraints. In this case, macro-information in a model may not coincide with topics or macro-propositions in the semantic structure of a text.

2- importance: That is, model information is organized in terms of greater or lesser importance. Information (or fact) importance is defined in terms of how consequential the facts are in the world. This suggests that importance implies a hierarchy of facts or events (e.g. with respect to the structure of the world, causes and consequences) as represented in the mental models of language users. For example, the information about *death* is in general more important than the information about *sickness*, since it has more serious consequences. This means that importance in news usually has more news value or newsworthiness, as is the case in the *Savimbi* story.

3- relevance: That is, model information is organized in terms of the roles, intentions, goals, perspectives, and expectations of language users. These also define what information about an event is more or less relevant for language users in the present communicative situation, and hence their context models. Information relevance, then, is defined in terms of how consequential facts are in the life of writers and readers in the present (media use) context. For example, the writer may attach more or less relevance to the information for what he/she considers to be the possible significance, effect, or consequences of this information for (some) people. This means that **information relevance** need not always be the same as **information importance**, since information is selected on the basis of a relevance criterion. It also means that the importance of information in a model need not always coincide with macro-information in the model. On

the other hand, information that is relevant in the present context may be expressed in the semantic structure of the text as topics or macropropositions and sub-topics or micropropositions. In surface structure, the semantic representation of important or relevant information would usually tend to be expressed earlier in the news text.

c. Semantic representations

The third level or stage in the process of textualization pertains to the conceptualization of fact-representations in propositions, i.e. meanings of texts to be produced. Semantic representations are not (and need not be) as detailed as models: only the contextually relevant and often the unknown information of the model is included in the propositions of the text. So semantic representations are formed as a function of what speech participants or writers want to include as information from their knowledge about a situation (that is, from their models). This semantic mapping of text—i.e. the 'preverbal message' (see Levelt 1989) or the propositional content—is based on a distinction between more or less important or relevant information. It involves a decision on two distinct features of semantic representations:

1- A decision to assign grounding-values to meanings or propositions. This decision is subject to general importance rules (see 1.3.2.1) and more specific criteria (see 1.4.1). In the *Savimbi story*, the information that *Savimbi* has been seriously wounded is considered important and relevant. It has wider political consequences, and hence it should be included in the semantic representation and assigned *foreground* interpretation.

2- A decision to assign a macro-micro structure to meanings or propositions. This decision involves:

i. The choice or construction of a global topic (e.g. *the wounding of Savimbi*), which is an abstract, high-level meaning. Being a global macrostructure, the global topic is neither the grammatical subject (see Givón 1977) nor the topic of the sentence, which is the surface manifestation of the underlying semantic/pragmatic structure of the sentence (see van Dijk 1981). The global macrostructure is thus the discourse topic, which includes both a central referent and the major predications involving this referent, possibly mapped to a single macro-proposition (van Dijk

1979).

ii. The choice or construction of specifics of the global topic (e.g. specifics of the attack by the elite troops on *Savimbi's* headquarters). Specification is provided by propositions that are lower in the abstract macrostructure or by the actual propositions expressed in the text. These textual propositions are organized by various coherence relations (see 1.3.1).

This characterization underscores the difference between the importance of information in models (which is a property of what language users know about events, and which is also personally or contextually constrained), and coherence (i.e. the macro-micro structure) within semantics (which is a property of the meaning of language users' discourse, that is, of what they say or write about events). It underscores on the other hand the relation that might be there between information that is included as a textual macroproposition and a certain grounding-value (viz. *foreground*).

d. Manifestations of organization and surface structure expression

In addition to— and subsequent to— decisions on semantic representations of texts, there are actual production processes: manifestations of the organization of textual propositions as well as surface structure expression. Figure 2 displays the direction in the process of textualization from meaning— two distinct semantic structures or phenomena (see 1.3): the macro-micro structure (viz. coherence) and the FG-BG structure (viz. grounding)— to the various manifestations of organization and surface structure expression. It should be noted that surface structures not only express semantic meaning but also properties of the context model, such as roles and relations of language users, setting, knowledge or goals.

Semantic structures

1- Macro-micro structures: high (general, abstract), low (specific, concrete)
local coherence (functional) relations

2- FG-BG structure: a hierarchy of 'propositional importance'

organization features
and surface structure
expression

hierarchy/linearity

discursive salience: schemata (textual organizers)
(Main Event, Previous Event, ...)

Position: Headline, Lead Sentence, last sentence

Sequence: first-last

syntactic ordering

hierarchy of syntactic structure (e.g. main-
subordinate, left-right)

syntactically based prominence (sentence-form),
defined in terms of sentence grammar as well as
text grammar, i.e. over sequences of sentences or
whole texts

stress, intonation

graphical signals (headlines, bold)

Figure 2 From meaning to expression

Figure 2 shows that as part of semantic structures, the FG-BG propositional structure could be organized in terms of schemata (see chapter 2) that show salience and that are expressed in surface structure more or less prominently by syntactic means such as initial ('topical') position in sentences, word-order and hierarchy (see chapter 3). These features may serve as manifestations of prominence or **prominence markers** (see van Dijk 1995) that signal the perspective of the writer on how to express the FG-BG structure in surface structure.

1.3 Coherence Phenomenon vs. Grounding Phenomenon

After having presented some basic properties of the grounding phenomenon and shown the place it occupies within the process of textualization, we examine in more detail the similarity, difference, or parallelism between it and the coherence phenomenon. That the two phenomena are often conflated is perhaps due to the fact that both are semantic representations, described in terms of (relations between) propositions, and have to

do with the meaning of discourse. The conflation may be also because the highest—top-most—macroproposition (topic) and *foreground* seem to be isomorphous, as is usually the case in news texts.

In spite of this conflation, overlapping, or co-occurrence, the two phenomena represent different dimensions of semantic representations, and *foreground* and *background* are not the same conceptual pair as macro- and micro-levels of the semantic structure of text. In fact, both are not necessarily co-extensive, and grounding has distinct traits that distinguish it in a number of essential ways from coherence.

1.3.1 Propositional Coherence

One basic difference between the FG-BG structure and the macro-micro coherence structure is in the kind of meaning organization. The latter accounts for global and local (conditional and functional) types of relations (see below). Propositional coherence, then, pertains to sequences of propositions that are properly related relative to a macroproposition (i.e. globally coherent) and to each other (i.e. locally coherent). It has to do with a global meaning that is a macrostructure, which is 'a theoretical reconstruction of intuitive notions such as the "topic" or "theme" of a discourse' (van Dijk 1985c: 115). The global topic has to do with the 'information'—the conceptual content or rather the *plan* (for example of a story) or the cognitive structure (of facts, events) that writers have in their minds. It is the top-most information that is derived from the propositions of the (whole) text, and from propositions evoked (by the text) in the knowledge of language users.

The global or highest-level topic is represented in discourse by a macroproposition that subsumes a sequence of lower level micropropositions. These micropropositions are linked with the macroproposition by means of three semantic mapping macro-rules (van Dijk 1980), which reduce, viz. summarize, information by:

- 1- deleting: local detail information that is no longer relevant in the rest of the text.
- 2- generalizing: replacing a sequence of propositions by a general, short statement.
- 3- constructing: replacing a sequence of propositions that denotes usual conditions, components of an event, by one summarizing macro-proposition that denotes the event as a whole.

At the global level, coherence is realized when all propositions— expressed in a text or a text fragment— share the same topic, that is, if they can be subsumed under the same macroproposition or several macropropositions. Hence, a text is globally coherent if it has at least one macroproposition, which denotes a macro-fact or a macro-event. A macroproposition is sometimes, though by no means always, expressed in the text itself, as for example in the headline and the lead sentence of the short news text (see chapter 2).

At the local level, coherence is defined in terms of two basic types of relations: conditional and functional.

1- Conditional relations: or extensional, that is referential semantic relations. In this case, propositions are connected 'through' the links between the facts they denote (viz. fact relations) in some cognitive or logical model. (For studies on local coherence, see e.g. van Dijk 1977; de Beaugrande 1980.) A sentence S1 will be coherent with another sentence S2 if S1 denotes an event or a situation that is a possible, probable, or necessary condition of the event or situation denoted by S2. So a sequence of sentences or micropropositions (part of the same macro-fact denoted by a macro-proposition) is coherent only if the facts to which it refers are related as for example *reasons*, *causes* or *consequences*. In this case, the propositions denote conditionally and/or temporally related facts.

2- Functional relations: or intensional semantic relations. In this case, propositions themselves are connected (viz. propositional relations). Each proposition has a function relative to other propositions (e.g. *generalization*, *specification*, *explanation*). These functional relations may also exist between speech acts, and will then be called 'pragmatic functional relations' (see van Dijk 1979). The semantic-pragmatic distinction (e.g. van Dijk 1981), which is similar to the internal-external distinction (e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1976), and ideational-pragmatic relations (Redeker 1990), defines the 'source of coherence' (Sanders et al. 1992) in discourse.

It should be added, however, that both functional and conditional relations may obtain for the same proposition-pair; the language user may use (and imply the existence of) for example a causal relation— a (referential) conditional relation— in order to produce a *specification* or an *explanation*. But these relations exist within the discourse of the language user, not

in the reality he/she is committing himself/herself to.

We look finally at the following example that consists of a collection of propositions— the propositional content of a still to be expressed text. Each proposition includes a single event or state and immediately related concepts (Larson 1984: 189). (Illustrative examples other than those from the sample are serially numbered in the chapter.)

(1)

- p1 Food prices increased in Nicaragua.
- p2 Nicaragua's ministry of internal trade raised the price of meat and milk about 100 percent.
- p3 Eggs increased 110 percent.
- p4 Chicken increased more than 50 percent.
- p5 The price of basic grains might be increased later.
- p6 The move spotlighted economic troubles.
- p7 The war against insurgent forces partly caused the economic troubles.

It is evident that the propositions are globally coherent; there is one macroproposition, p1, which denotes a general concept about increasing food prices in Nicaragua. Subsequent micropropositions denote functional and conditional coherence relations. Thus, p2-p5 are more specific examples of the items that have been/might be increased, and p6 denotes the context of the proposition about increasing food prices. The last proposition, p7, refers to the cause of the situation referred to in p6 and is therefore referentially/extensionally coherent with it.

1.3.2 Discourse Grounding

The preceding analysis shows that coherence has to do with the organization of meaning in text at the levels of generality and specificity: what is topic and what is more detailed meaning as well as local, sequential relations. It tells us how facts are related in models or reality. It is therefore a minimum requirement of textuality. Coherence does not have a dynamic aspect of meaning so as to distinguish between propositions as regards their grounding-values. For example, the propositional content in (1) does not tell us which meaning is *foreground* and which meaning is *background*. *Foreground* need not be the general proposition p1 that is abstracted from subsequent specific propositions but it may be assigned to a

more specific and concrete proposition such as p5, which is about the probability of increasing the price of basic grains. Furthermore, coherence does not show where a *foreground* proposition will be expressed in text. If for example there is an Agent role, the macrostructure does not say anything about the way that role is being realized in actual discourse. It may therefore be said that the macrostructure is *FG-BG neutral* or insensitive to the grounding phenomenon. We have seen in **T5** that the proposition expressed in the headline and the lead sentence is about a concrete event, namely that *Savimbi has been seriously wounded*, and that it is organized as a *foreground* proposition. This proposition, however, is not the highest-level topic (that subsumes most other propositions) of the text. Such a topic is not expressed in the text, but, of course, can be derived from lower-level propositions and may be something like: *An attack on the Angolan rebel leader*.

THE NEED FOR DISCOURSE GROUNDING

What would be also required for textuality is another dimension that organizes meaning in terms of what part of the structure of meaning represents what information of the model that is more or less important in the present (con)text. In other words, what is required is discourse grounding that distributes whole propositions in text in terms of a FG-BG structure. Looked at from the perspective of language production, discourse grounding is a dynamic process (Givón 1987); a dynamic unfolding of the meaning of a text for readers. It has to do with meaning as it develops and as it is presented in linguistic form in text, chronologically or linearly speaking, from the beginning to the end. What contributes to the dynamic process of discourse grounding is the role that communicative relevance may play, namely in terms of mapping onto textual propositions the information that is considered relevant in the present context for both writers and readers.

Discourse grounding, then, is a further requirement of textuality. It is required in order to map the (abstract) semantic structure onto actual expression. The FG-BG structure is a link between the cognitive or psychological structure and a specific linguistic realization. It might therefore be closer to actual expression or realization strategies of cognitive information than the macro-micro structure. (For a discussion of the notion of strategy, see van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 61ff.) As such, conceptualizing the FG-BG structure would be a decision that is taken consequent to the construction

of the abstract content or text meaning. It may therefore be said that discourse grounding *manipulates the macro-micro structure as well as relations among propositions* in order to distribute propositions along a continuum of grounding-values (see below).

FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENCE

Not only do coherence and grounding phenomena represent different ways of mapping reality, but they also serve different functions. The macrostructure allows readers to read only part of the text, namely the top-most macroproposition that cognitively controls lower level propositions, and still understand the topic of discourse. It serves thus a strategic control function of letting readers know the topic. In this respect, the top-most macroproposition would be similar to a label that denotes the name of something—like the name of a painting, which is not the painting itself.

In addition, the macro-micro hierarchy of text meaning manifests how language users understand events or states of affairs and how they might have represented them in their mental models, independently of interestingness, newsworthiness, and communicative goals. Thus, propositions at the highest level of generalization need not be *foreground*. Any model information may in principle be assigned greater importance and mapped as *foreground* meaning. *Foreground*, we have seen, has a different basis. It also serves a different function in the sense that it does not necessarily summarize a discourse topic or give a complete picture of it. Readers, therefore, may not understand much of the discourse topic on the basis of *foreground* only. Accordingly, *announcing a discourse topic is not necessarily the same as expressing meaning as foreground*. This suggests that *foreground* is more limited than *background*. The 'figure', indeed, is less frequent; it stands out vis-à-vis the more frequent 'ground' (Givón 1990).

That *foreground* tends in general to be more limited or less frequent is evident in short news texts where it is usually assigned to a proposition that denotes the main event and that is expressed in the lead sentence. The lead sentence may therefore express something different from what the headline expresses. In example (1) cited earlier, the macroproposition about increasing the price of food in *Nicaragua* (p1) defines the discourse topic and hence may be expressed as a headline of a news text. But it does not necessarily express *foreground*. A specific proposition—for example about the increase in chicken prices—may map highly relevant model information and represent *foreground*. It may eventually be expressed as a

lead sentence.

The foregoing discussion touches on an important feature of functional differences between coherence and grounding. While a proposition about a low-level detail is assigned *foreground* interpretation, a high-level proposition is assigned *background* interpretation. Consider the two versions of the same 'story' in example (2).

(2)

a.

The French President's visit to the U.S.

(1) The French president Jacques Chirac and the American president Bill Clinton discussed yesterday the bilateral relations.

(2) During the dinner at the White House yesterday evening, Chirac was jovial and exchanged jokes with his host.

(3) The French president pays a four-day official visit to the U.S.

b.

French and American presidents exchange jokes

(1) During the dinner at the White House yesterday evening, the French president Jacques Chirac was jovial and exchanged jokes with his host, Bill Clinton.

(2) Chirac discussed with Clinton yesterday the bilateral relations.

(3) The French president pays a four-day official visit the the U.S.

The headline in (2a) summarizes the high-level topic (i.e. *the visit*), which is the most general meaning and top-most proposition. S1 focuses on one component part of that proposition that denotes a concrete event. S2 expresses a proposition that is subsumed under the general topic and that denotes a sub-event. S3 describes the context of the macroproposition about the visit: its nature and duration. In contradistinction to (2a), the headline in the 'story' in (2b) focuses on the sub-event. The information about the event of *exchanging jokes*, though micro, is assumed to be more important. Importance may be based on an interpretation of the political significance of the event such as the political importance of good personal relations between *Clinton* and *Chirac*, and the political consequences thereof. The textual proposition that maps this information is assigned *foreground* interpretation and is expressed in the headline. As will become apparent later (see 1.4.2), the example illustrates the manipulation of the macro-micro structure under constraints of perspective in event models or relevance in context models.

Notwithstanding the functional differences we pointed out between coherence and grounding, there are, of course, links between the two semantic notions: main or high-level topics in the macro-micro hierarchy represent general information that is often more important than information about details, and cognitively important information is semantically represented as (a macroproposition and) *foreground*. In surface structure, *foreground* is expressed more prominently (that is, in first position as a headline) than *background*, as is indeed usually the case in news discourse.

This suggests that two importance hierarchies, in models and text meaning, may coincide or conflict with each other:

1- Hierarchically-based information importance in models

It pertains to the organization of information in event models according to its importance in a macro-micro hierarchy. For example, information about an earthquake could be considered by language users as high-level information and assigned greater importance than for example details about rescue operations.

2- Hierarchically-based propositional importance in text meaning

Semantic representations may map the hierarchy of information importance in models as a macro-micro propositional structure. In this case, propositions coincide with the organization of information in models. Propositional importance says something about the event or fact as represented. Example (2a) above suggests that top macro-information in a model may be mapped as a macroproposition in the semantic representation of the text and may become propositionally important and *foreground*. However, (2b) suggests some conflict between propositional importance and the hierarchy of information importance in event models. It shows that *foreground* meaning may not coincide with a macro-micro structure, since a detail proposition referring to a minor event has been assigned the highest grounding-value.

1.3.2.1 Information Importance Rules

Since distributing meaning in terms of discourse grounding is based on (a hierarchy of) information importance in a model, we will first look at the default rules that are assumed to account for the assignment of greater or lesser importance, then we explain the more specific criteria. The rules are

independent of discourse and are based on specific knowledge about facts or events and their properties, or general political, social, and cultural knowledge. For example, the assumption that *causes* would be perceived as Ground in relation to which *results* would be perceived as Figure (see Shen 1990) is based on the relative importance of the underlying information or knowledge in models of language users, all things being equal.

The general rules for information importance are basically the following ones:

- Information about wholes is more important than information about (constituent) parts and attributes.
- Information about an event is more important than information about specifics or details of the event.
- Information about specifics or details of an event is more important than information about the spatio-temporal context, occasion, circumstance, and the social, political, or historical context of the event.
- Information about specifics of an event is more important than information about the necessary or sufficient causes or conditions of the event.

1.4 The FG-BG Gradation

We describe the phenomenon of grounding as one principle or dimension of the organization of meaning on a three-level scale (see Figure 3): *foreground* (FG), *midground* (MG), and *background* (BG).

Figure 3 The three-level grounding scale

Figure 3 represents the typical FG-BG structure of the news text. It manifests a gradual departure from *foreground*, which maps the most important information, to *background*, which maps the least important information. Meanings assigned in the vicinity of *midground* would evidently be neither *foreground* nor *background*. Realization may sometimes show that grounding-values occupy variable places on the scale. This is the case in what we refer to as *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* operations (see below). Before we explain these operations, we describe briefly the general features of the three grounding-values on the scale.

Foreground is all meaning that is high on the scale and in terms of which most or all other meanings are interpreted. The underlying information that is mapped as a *foreground* proposition is often unknown, unpredictable, or inaccessible to readers. A *foreground* proposition may imply or refer to concepts that are referred to in propositions that have other grounding-values. It is usually expressed in the first sentence of the text.

Midground is all meaning that is lower on the scale than *foreground* meaning but in the meantime is not *background*. *Midground* may be generally characterized as providing **explanation**. It is usually expressed after expressing *foreground*.

Background is all meaning that is lower on the scale than *midground*. It may put *foreground* (and *midground*) meaning in perspective. Therefore, it may be generally characterized as providing **orientation**. A *background* proposition is usually expressed towards the end of the text and it may map information that is:

- old, known, or accessible (e.g. common knowledge) to readers and writers as members of a speech community.
- recalled, and hence it is a reminder of other information.

FOREGROUNDING AND BACKGROUNDING

The (default) FG-BG structure, or part of it, may be subject to certain constraints such as contextual or pragmatic relevance. Relevance constraints may override other constraints such as the relative importance of information about certain facts and properties of events in models of language users. In this case, writers may opt to emphasize— and hence *foreground*— one feature of an event not so much because it is an important

piece of information, but because they interpret it as being more relevant for them and the lives (and the interests) of readers (for political, socio-cultural, (inter)national or human factors) than (more) important information. As a consequence, the propositions— that have certain grounding-values— may undergo some *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* operations on the grounding-scale.

By *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* we mean a *pragmatic* interpretation of the distribution of meanings in text in terms of grounding-values. While propositions become more or less informative in a given context, they retain their grounding-values. Thus, *foregrounded* or *backgrounded* propositions are not assigned *foreground* or *background* interpretation. In expression, these propositions may co-exist with the *foreground* or the *background* proposition. For example, a *background* proposition may be expressed as part of the lead sentence that expresses *foreground* meaning, and some component parts of *midground* meaning may be expressed in the vicinity of *background* later in the text. This means that early or late expression in text may be an index of *foregrounding* or *backgrounding* in semantic representations.

The distinction that we made between *foreground* and *foregrounded* meaning and between *background* and *backgrounded* meaning underscores the distinction between importance and relevance. It shows that there might be different sources for— or constraints on— the assignment of grounding-values, namely event model importance of information and context model relevance of information.

1.4.1 Criteria for Grounding-Value Assignment in News Texts

Apart from the general information importance rules that we outlined earlier, the assignment of grounding-values is subject to more concrete defining criteria in terms of specific functions that textual propositions typically serve in news texts. Since news texts are primarily engaged with events, the criteria are described in terms of events and their properties.

Foreground

- * Meaning that denotes the main (speech) event that may be:
- * the most recent, current or ongoing.
- * the last phase in a process or in a series of happenings.
- * the consequence or result.

Midground

* Meaning that denotes specifics of one property or more properties of the same/main (speech) event. This includes:

* sub-event

* specification, explanation of— or addition to— the main (speech) event by the same or different participants referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

* reformulation of the *foreground* proposition in somewhat different words; more specifics of concepts may be added.

* Constituent parts, qualities, quantities, amounts, volumes, sizes, weights, substances or other attributes of the main event.

* an initiated speech event that gives the specifics (viz. quotation) of a general characterization of the event referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

* exemplification: an event that serves as an instance of the main event.

* identification of the source of the information (e.g. a newspaper) underlying the report referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

* identification of participants in the main (speech) event referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

* implications: degree of seriousness (e.g. damage).

* further development (e.g. effect of the main event).

* (verbal) reaction to the main (speech) event referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

Background

* Meaning that denotes:

* the way the event happened.

* the temporal setting of the event.

* the spatial setting of the event.

* the circumstance of the event.

* the occasion of the event (e.g. a national day; a TV interview) on which a participant did something.

* the political, social, or historical context of the event.

* a remote past historical fact or event and the historical survey of it.

* how things are (e.g. general or familiar facts/truths and states of affairs in the world (that are timeless)).

* details about participants.

* details about another *background* proposition that denotes an event.

* a comment statement (e.g. about the significance of what happened).

* details of a comment statement.

* conclusion or a claim.

* (external) evidence that supports or consolidates a claim.

* a preceding/anterior event (or a series of happenings). It may serve as cause or reason. It may also provide the necessary or sufficient conditions for the current event.

- * details of the preceding/anterior event.
- * the spatio-temporal setting and/or the circumstance of the anterior event.
- * a forthcoming event that includes concepts referred to before.

The background end of the continuum

- * Meaning that denotes:
 - * an event that is unrelated to what has been referred to in other preceding textual propositions. The proposition that refers to that event cannot be subsumed under other preceding propositions. It represents a digression.
 - * details or specifics of this event.
 - * the context of this event.

1.4.2 Constraints on Grounding

Semantic representations in terms of the FG-BG structure are subject to several constraints among which two are crucial, namely *perspective* and *relevance*. The two belong to two different domains and hence they differ in the nature as well as the extent of influence on grounding or its manifestations that will be examined in subsequent chapters. *Perspective* is cognitively-based and is part of event models, which have a primarily semantic role. *Relevance* is contextually-based and is part of context models, which have a primarily pragmatic role. While *relevance* governs the *selection* (inclusion or exclusion) of textual propositions, *perspective* defines the *angle* from which (facts and) events referred to in selected propositions are seen and presented. The two constraints are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Constraints of perspective and relevance

Figure 4 shows an earlier phase to semantic representations, namely the organization of information in both event and context models. In event models, information is organized by importance in terms of hierarchy or level (generality-specificity) and other importance rules. It is also mapped on semantic structures of texts in terms of macro-micro and FG-BG structures. The Figure suggests that importance usually controls or at least influences also the mapping of semantic representations in terms of macro-micro hierarchical structures. It also suggests that both types of semantic structures, that is, macro-micro and FG-BG, may influence each other. The exact interaction or mutual influence is beyond the scope of the present study.

Perspective, being part of event models, constrains the organization and

description of events referred to in textual propositions in terms of grounding. Since perspective constrains the way events are described, it also governs surface structure expression (see below).

Figure 4 also shows that in context models, information is organized by relevance and that there are possible contextual or pragmatic relevance constraints on:

- 1- macro-micro structures: or rather the mapping of information importance in model macrostructures on textual macrostructures. For instance, the high-level information about a presidential visit may or may not become a high-level topic in a text; and vice versa, some detail of an event may become a discourse topic if it is considered contextually relevant to readers.
- 2- grounding: or rather the mapping of information importance in models on the FG-BG structure. For example, less important information mapped as *background* meaning may be assigned more relevance and consequently *foregrounded* in the semantic representation.

It should be noted that the influence of context models is of course already active before— or in the formation of— semantic representations: depending on the context, writers find it relevant or not to include specific information in semantic representations.

We present now a brief explanation of the two notions of *perspective* and *relevance*.

1.4.2.1 Perspective and Grounding Manifestations

Perspective— alternatively referred to by other terms such as point of view or vantage point that describe more or less the same phenomenon — manifests itself in a typical pattern such as the one exemplified by the following two sentences, which express the same distribution of roles within the message (see Levelt 1989):

- a. John bought a house from Harald.
- b. Harald sold a house to John.

Though denoting the same event, (a) and (b) differ in perspective: In the first sentence, the 'story' or 'scene' has been reported or described from the

point of view of what *John* (the recipient of the house) did. In the second sentence, it is what *Harald* (the seller of the house) did that is at issue. So perspective is part of event models because event models represent the different ways writers 'see' these events. Differences in perspective, then, are not differences of facts or possible worlds (see van Dijk 1981), but are basically differences in 'camera angles' (Kuno and Kaburaki 1977: 627) from which language users observe and organize (the same) events and states of affairs.

Because of differences in camera angles, perspective has been defined as 'the introduction of a subjective point of view that restricts the validity of the presented information to a particular subject (person) in the discourse' (Sanders and Redeker 1996: 293). It should be added that perspective need not necessarily be equated with a subjective viewpoint. In fiction, for example, point of view pertains to the degree of distance from or involvement with the events referred to. However, the speaker—and in our case the writer of the news text—may place himself or herself at a distance from the participants and still give an objective, detached description (Kuno 1987). Besides, perspective is not always a question of *individualizing* the point of view that is reflected. A certain perspective (= presentation) may not necessarily be ascribed to a single individual versus others. Writing news may at times be a collective effort, and in this respect it differs from writing a novel. This is a pragmatic type of perspective that is part of context models. It pertains to the viewpoint of the narrator or sometimes a protagonist as regards the events that are referred to such as in personal storytelling.

It is apparent then that the type of perspective we examine is semantic, since it manifests the influence of event models on the mapping of information on semantic representations as a FG-BG articulation. As such, perspective is a property of knowledge that writers have about events. Writers may place the camera at a greater or smaller distance from particular events and present for example a broad scene or a close up that focusses on details. In other words, the distance is related to a macro-micro distinction in what is described and to selective capturing of certain global or local properties of events, such as reasons, causes, consequences, or circumstances.

TEXT-LEVEL CONSTRAINTS OF PERSPECTIVE ON GROUNDING(-SIGNALING)
Our use of *perspective* is restricted to its text-level constraints, namely on

the grounding of propositions and the way they signal the FG-BG structure. Propositional-level grounding manifests the perspective of writers—their 'conceptualization of reality' or their primary domain (de Regt 1996). Example (2) examined earlier shows differences in angles from which the same events are described, i.e. broad or narrow scope. More importantly, it shows that selective capturing of certain properties of these events leads to different FG-BG structures. So *camera acts* determine which events are referred to in propositions that are assigned certain grounding-values. As we will see in subsequent chapters, they also determine *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* operations.

Perspective taking—investigated primarily in narrative discourse—is involved in several textual phenomena (see e.g. Sanders and Redeker 1996) among which is the signaling of grounding. We refer briefly to the possible influence of perspective on schematic and syntactic manifestations of grounding. Although the assignment of propositions to schematic categories (see chapter 2) is the result of canonical functions, perspective may govern the *organization* and the *distribution* of these categories and hence the way they are expressed. Perspective may also influence the way grounding is expressed in sentences. Since we deal with text-level syntactic structures, we do not examine perspective constraints in terms of single lexical items such as changes in roles that participants play (e.g. *buy*, *sell*) or the use of active or passive structures. We focus on certain constituents that are marginal to the clause proper and that occur in sentence-initial position (see chapter 3). These constituents are assumed to be strongly influenced by perspective and to signal *grounding-angles*. This will be apparent when we examine in chapters 4 and 5 the grounding-signaling functions of a particular class of sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts.

PERSPECTIVE AND SENTENCE-ORDER

Apart from its influence on grounding and on manifestations of grounding in terms of sentence-initial markers, perspective may also govern sentence-order. As will become apparent in other chapters, sentence-order is indicative of whether grounding-values are prominently or non-prominently expressed. The following two sentences illustrate this feature.

- (1) There has been an onslaught on the city. Therefore the garrison surrendered.
- (2) The garrison surrendered. There has been an onslaught on the

city.

The propositional content in (1) is expressed in two sentences that denote a consequence (i.e. *therefore*) relation. In (2), which has the opposite sequence of (1), there is no explicit marker of the relation with the cause event referred to in the second sentence. In FG-BG terms, one may assume that the proposition about the cause, respectively the consequence, of an event has been assigned *foreground* interpretation and prominently expressed in the sequential presentation of the sentences. The choice of perspective, then, determines the order of sentences. Depending on text-type, of course, other interpretations of the significance of sentence-order might be possible.

1.4.2.2 Communicative Situation and Relevance

Relevance is a key pragmatic notion of discourse in the communicative situation. Since the communicative situation is crucial for grounding, we examine it briefly before examining relevance.

THE COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION

In the communicative situation, the relation between the writer and readers is crucial *inter alia* for determining pragmatic relevance. One aspect of the relation and indeed pragmatic relevance is the writer's knowledge of events and states of affairs. In news communication, writers include some information from their event model in the semantic representation of the text. They perform certain global and local informative acts, assuming that they are an authority on the subject matter and that they have evidence for the factual information. They include the information on basis of its relevance in the context model. Writers may also include other information that they want readers to be reminded of (see Searle 1969), for example about earlier news events. Enriching the knowledge of readers may be a response to an imaginary request from them for information about what happened. Readers usually believe that news writers have something newsworthy to communicate and that they are sincere in their intention to communicate it.

The success of writers in performing informative acts and in communicating what they want to communicate depends partly on the way propositions are organized in schematic categories and expressed in sentences.

These organization features provide several kinds of signals that could be crucial for the communication process. The signals could be also crucial for the FG-BG structure. For example, when writers take in consideration the (lack of) knowledge of readers as to the subject matter or earlier events, they use certain signals to make this clear. Thus, they may change the position of schematic categories and use certain sentence-initial markers. Readers—who interact with the text as they read it (Coulthard 1977)—may capture these signals and successfully interpret the intent of writers in performing linguistic acts (see Green 1989).

CONTEXTUAL/PRAGMATIC RELEVANCE

As part of the theory of speech acts (see e.g. Austin 1962; Searle 1969; Grice 1975) that has been applied mainly to spoken discourse or to dialogue situations and short face-to-face communication where a direct context is available, the interest in relevance—the maxim 'Be relevant' (Grice 1975: 46)—has focussed on showing how certain replies may (not) contribute to some conversational goal (see e.g. Leech 1983). The analysis of this notion has been limited to the sentence or utterance level (see e.g. Allwood 1985). Although relevance has not been investigated thoroughly in extended written discourse, some extensions have been made to written communication. One example is the discussion of relevance in news discourse (see van Dijk 1984, 1985b: 79) as a notion that pertains to the relation between text and the language user. The news writer may signal different relevance values by means of a headline, a lead, or the linear order of the text.

The notion of relevance has been interpreted differently and conflated with several other discourse notions such as coherence (see below). We use *relevance* to denote contextual or pragmatic factors such as the knowledge, interests, and expectations of readers, as well as the assumptions of writers about what they consider significant or newsworthy in the given communicative situation. Relevance also includes the usefulness of information for all or some recipients, and what is known about their current information needs (see van Dijk 1995). It fulfils a pragmatic function of informing (some) readers about certain properties of events and states of affairs. This approach to relevance, then, pertains to the subjective interpretation of context by participants. It is also communication-dependent, and hence it is distinct from what writers find relevant for themselves, which is communication-independent. According to our

definition, contextually or pragmatically relevant information is different from, and may be independent of, both the importance of information in event models and inherent importance of facts, or relevance somewhere in the world, that is, in absolute, context-free terms (e.g. a war is considered more important than the occurrence of a minor border incident).

RELEVANCE AND GROUNDING(-SIGNALING)

Contextual or pragmatic relevance influences primarily the selection of information from models for mapping as textual propositions. We mention two specific manifestations of its constraints on grounding:

- 1- *foregrounding* and *backgrounding*.
- 2- the inclusion of propositions that do not belong to the current topic.

Foregrounding operations suggest that in a particular context, any macro or micro meaning may be included in the semantic representation as more relevant (i.e. pragmatically important) than other perhaps more important information, and hence it is *foregrounded*. This suggests that news relevance may take precedence over semantic hierarchies (van Dijk 1988b). A newspaper may *foreground* one feature of an event not so much because it knows or thinks that it is an important piece of information, but because it considers it relevant at a certain point in text, given the present context or communicative situation. This also suggests that model macrostructures and textual macrostructures may not be identical.

The second manifestation of pragmatic relevance constraints on grounding is the inclusion sometimes in semantic representations of propositions that do not belong to the current topic. These propositions map information that the writer considers relevant for contextual reasons. The information fulfils a pragmatic function of enriching the knowledge of readers about certain properties of events and states of affairs. These propositions are usually included as part of *background* meanings (i.e. the *background end of the continuum*) and expressed towards the end of the text as a signal of their lesser relevance and *background* interpretation. We will explore this feature in chapters 3 and 5. It should be noted that relevance may also determine the choice of schematic categories, namely the inclusion of contextually relevant categories from the canonically available ones (see chapter 2).

This provides evidence that what is presented or communicated 'comes

with a guarantee of relevance' (Sperber and Wilson 1987: 697), and that it deserves or gets the hearer's attention (see Sperber and Wilson 1986). The underlying information is *made* relevant by connecting it with the context (see Leech 1983; Sperber and Wilson 1986). It should be added that relevance to the context is established in a continuous process of mental context construction. In that process, expanding the context may sometimes be necessary in order to establish—and comprehend—the relevance of certain information (e.g. about unrelated properties of a certain situation) to the present context.

OTHER APPROACHES TO RELEVANCE

One approach considers relevance in terms of interpretation. Interpreting an utterance involves 'working out the consequences of adding it to the hearer's existing assumptions, or, in other words, working out its relevance' (Blakemore 1987: 112); see also Blakemore 1995).

In addition, contextual relevance has been conflated with the notion of coherence, or rather 'speaking topically' (Brown and Yule 1983: 84) when writers make their contribution relevant in terms of the existing discourse topic framework. It has been suggested that 'coherence can be regarded as the hearer's search for optimal relevance' (Blakemore 1996: 328). It should be noted that the two notions are different: a perfectly coherent text may be pragmatically irrelevant. They are also defined differently: Pragmatic relevance is defined in terms of context models and coherence in terms of event models. On the other hand, if readers search for relevance, this is pragmatic relevance of information, for example in relation to the knowledge that they have.

Furthermore, a relevance based approach has been suggested for surface structure expression in terms of (the role of) discourse markers (see Blakemore 1996). A relevance theoretic account is able to explain the occurrence of markers 'in constructions which cannot be straightforwardly accommodated in a framework which assumes that discourse markers encode sequential coherence relations' (Blakemore 1996: 328).

1.5 Earlier Work and the Contribution of the Study

The FG-BG structure in discourse has been the subject of numerous studies with divergent approaches. Under a few rubrics, we present in the re-

mainder of this chapter a short survey of the main work done in that field and point out a number of shortcomings. We also highlight the contribution of the present study and look at a number of linguistically-oriented news discourse studies.

FIGURE-GROUND

An early linguistic characterization of the gestalt notions of 'figure' and 'ground'— which are linked to the discourse notions of foreground and background— has been provided by Longacre (1968). He uses the notions in a rather limited sense, reminiscent of the topic-comment division of the sentence: Figure refers to the novel material of the sentence, and ground refers to repeated material in each sentence of a narrative. In this way the figure of each sentence becomes the ground of the succeeding one. In another study on figure and ground, Talmy (1978) focusses on subordinate and main clauses and correlates figure with asserted events and ground with presupposed events. (On the figure-ground perception, see e.g. Rock 1975.)

EVENT-NON-EVENT

The type of activity (i.e. event or state) has received much attention in the literature. In their early study on story telling, Labov and Waletzky (1967) characterize background as information that describes states and is off the event-line. Similarly, Grimes (1975)— taking as a starting point the idea that 'different parts of a discourse communicate different kinds of information' (op.cit.: 33)— distinguishes information in oral narrative discourse along the lines of events and non-events. The latter characterizes setting, background, evaluation, and collateral. He identifies background information in narratives as information that is not part of the event sequence (Grimes 1978). Similarly, Omanson (1982) considers events to be focal and to constitute the narrative proper, while descriptions of characters, setting, and previously depicted events and states that do not advance the plot as characterizing: 'They describe what exists' (op.cit.: 198).

SEQUENTIALITY AND TEMPORAL RELATIONS

Several studies have focussed on the contrast between 'sequenced events' and 'non-sequenced states and actions'. Hopper (1983) illustrates this contrast with examples from traditional Malay narrative texts. Within this framework, Thompson (1987) also discusses the correlation between sub-

ordinate clauses in English written narratives and temporal sequencing: that most subordinate clause predicates are not on the time line. In the same vein, Thelin (1984: 229)— in his discussion of Slavonic narrative discourse— identifies foreground material as 'material which supplies the main points of the discourse', or 'plot-advancing events vs. background conditions', and maintains that background information 'can be understood as either *abstracted or totally removed from the time axis*' (op.cit.: 227). Also Flashner (1987: 155) uses foreground to refer to 'the event clauses that move a story's action forward'. And Fox (1983: 29) defines background discourse as 'that portion which contains NONSEQUENTIALLY ORDERED events'. Similarly, Thompson (1983: 44) proposes that background information is 'material that serves to further explicate, amplify, or elaborate what is in the main clause, or that represents an event occurring simultaneously with or providing a comment on or motivation for the event in the main clause'. (See also Longacre and Levinsohn (1978); Fleischman (1985); Carlson (1987).)

The distinction between foreground and background in terms of temporal relations in narrative discourse has figured also in the study of Couper-Kuhlen (1989). For her, the temporal foreground in narratives answers the question: *And then what happened?* The temporal background has an adverbial function and answers the question: *And when did this happen?* She shows that sometimes background events also advance the story. In this regard, Fleischman (1990) points out that the FG-BG contrast is not necessarily synonymous with the distinction between events and description, and that not all temporally ordered events in narrative are of equal importance. Reinhart (1984) also examines narrative texts and suggests that the temporal sequences of the events form the foreground of the text. These temporally ordered events on the time axis acquire significance or interpretation as foreground only if we know the background such as preceding events or circumstances. According to her (op.cit.: 785), temporally ordered events within the background meet the conditions for foreground information, but these events are subsidiary foreground because they are outside the time axis of the main narrative.

BACKBONE-SUPPORT AND LAYERS OF FG-BG

According to Hopper and Thompson (1980), who correlate foreground with high transitivity and background with low transitivity, the most important characteristics of foreground clauses are that they comprise the

backbone of the text and that they are ordered in a temporal sequence. Background material is material which 'does not immediately and crucially contribute to the speaker's goal, but which merely assists, amplifies, or comments on it' (op.cit.: 280). Similarly, Jones and Jones (1984: 33) maintain that the crucial events together 'form the content of a highly abstract, terse summary' of the narrative, while the crucial background material is 'the highly relevant background on which the main events of a narrative hinge'.

The idea of layers of foreground and background recurs in a number of studies. Thus Longacre (1981) likens the backbone of a narrative to a spectrum of elements, some of which are foregrounded and others have graded relevance to the main line of development. He also considers narrative material to possess a spectrum that ranges from the most dynamic information to the most static (depictive) information. And Jones and Jones (1979) present their 'multiple-levels hypothesis'. The languages they examined marked three levels of information: background, events, and peak. The authors point out that background information 'is essentially elaboration or extra information, such as description of scene or characters, or minor events concurrent with major events' (op.cit.: 9). Also, Neeley (1987), in her discourse analysis of the New Testament book of Hebrews, discusses *inter alia* information structure in terms of the distinction between 'backbone' and 'support' information. She refers to, though did not develop, a 'prominence hierarchy' of information in the discourse. She suggests three levels of prominence:

- 1- backbone sentences.
- 2- subordinate or other supportive material within backbone sentences.
- 3- support material.

Likewise, the approach of Fleischman (1985; 1990) is that foreground and background are patterned along a continuum and that they are not a dichotomous or binary distinction. Similarly, Tomlin (1985) divides a foreground-background continuum in narratives into three discrete levels:

- 1- pivotal information: propositions which describe the most important events in the narrative.
- 2- foreground information: propositions which describe successive events in the narrative.
- 3- background information: propositions which elaborate pivotal or foreground propositions, or which perform any other function in the narrative.

The content of narratives has also been classified by Omanson (1982) as

Central (describing the gist of a narrative), Supportive (adding detail that elaborates), and Distracting (adding detail that disrupts). And Reinhart (1984) considers narrative texts to have layers of foreground and background where background may also have foreground and background.

EXPRESSION OF FG-BG DISTINCTION

Several studies have taken the different forms of tense and aspect as a distinguishing feature between foreground and background information. The main thrust of these studies has been the discourse function of these two grammatical categories, that is, as discourse-pragmatic notions, rather than semantic, sentence-level phenomena (see Hopper, ed. 1982). Accordingly, verbs encode distinctions in information (e.g. Hopper 1979, Hopper and Thompson 1980): perfective verbs express foreground events ('the actual story line'), and imperfective verbs express background information ('supportive material'). In this respect, Jones and Jones (1979) point out that in various languages, multiple levels of information might be marked by certain grammatical devices such as shift in tense and/or aspect as well as extra words. In another study (Jones and Jones 1984), they examine some features of the verbal morphology of various Mesoamerican languages in relation to their discourse context (their role in the semantics and structure of discourse), and suggest that one important function of tense-aspect in some Mesoamerican languages is to distinguish foreground from background information.

Longacre (1981) also discusses the correlation between information and verb forms: simple past tenses in English correlate with the foregrounded event-line; the past progressive pictures background activities that follow the event-line in importance; and statives come lower in information relevance. He adds (Longacre 1983: 16) that the 'English past tense not only characterizes the event-line but some of the supportive material as well'.

Among studies on tense in narration and its implications for information structure is the study of Fleischman (1985). She argues that tense switching in Old French functions as a strategy for 'narrative subordination' or 'grounding' in a story. Fleischman (1990) discusses the linguistic structure of narrative discourse and examines the pragmatic functions of tense and aspect, particularly the use of tense-aspect contrasts to mark levels of information salience, viz. grounding. She discusses (in part 1 of chapter 6) textual functions: i.e. the use of tense-aspect morphology for discourse-pragmatic purposes relating to the structure of a text. She adopts a contex-

tual approach to grounding: there is subjectivity in determining what is foreground and/or background.

Investigating the linguistic correlates of the foreground-background distinction in literary texts, Ehrlich (1987) shows that the English past progressive (imperfective aspect) assumes different discourse functions on the basis of its meaning in the local discourse context. Her point is: 'Because local discourse context is crucial to the interpretation of aspect, global discourse functions like foregrounding and backgrounding do not adequately account for aspectual alternations in these texts' (op.cit.: 363).

Wallace (1982) discusses how linguistic categories (tense, aspect, mode, voice) function with regard to the distinction between foreground and background. And Hopper (1983) examines grounding in Malay, with regard to the presentation of participants and events. He discusses the discourse role of the passive to background: 'It tends to denote states, customary actions, descriptions, and the like, and is used less often to denote actions which happen once or which provide a story line' (ibid: 71).

In her study of grounding in classical Greek, Fox (1983) examines the interaction of participles with aspect and voice categories. She concludes that the participle in Ancient Greek is one backgrounding device; it introduces background information and describes a stable or durative event. Similarly, Polanyi (1982) discusses *inter alia* types of information in stories (Event, Durative-Descriptive, and Evaluation), as well as their linguistic encoding. According to her, speakers mark explicitly exceptions to the time line in narrative discourse *inter alia* by 'specific flashback terms' (Polanyi 1982: 510) in order to make clear that certain sentences or segments are to be semantically interpreted as 'off the main time line'.

Particles also have been examined for their role in the structure of information. Thus, in his study of 'mystery' particles in the Cubeo language of Colombia, Longacre (1976) describes one particle which marks the main event line of discourse as opposed to subsidiary developments. And Neeley (1987) takes the use of particles as a criterion of backbone versus support material.

The role of syntax or word-order in marking the foreground-background distinction has also featured in the studies mentioned above. Thus, Hopper (1979) describes VSO or SOV as being characteristic of event line in Anglo-Saxon, with SVO used for supportive material. He shows (Hopper 1983) that in Old Icelandic Sagas, verb-initial syntax characterizes rapid successive events, while subject-verb clauses slow down the tempo and

report background information. Similarly, VSO clauses in Biblical Hebrew (Longacre 1979a) mark the event line, while SVO clauses are reserved for supportive material. Material on the backbone of the Genesis Flood Narrative— as well as of other narratives in Biblical Hebrew— consists of verb-initial clauses; clauses off the backbone have verbs preceded by a noun or are verbless (see also Longacre 1983). In that language, tense, aspect and word-order are among the mechanisms used to distinguish main line from supportive material (Longacre 1982).

Birner (1994) discusses inversion, defined as the appearance of the logical subject in postverbal position in a sentence, while some other, canonically postverbal constituent appears in clause-initial position. She argues that inversion serves an information-packaging function, 'allowing the presentation of relatively familiar information before a comparatively unfamiliar logical subject (op.cit.: 234). She points the following information statuses (op.cit.: 242):

- 1- Hearer-old, Discourse-old-information which has already been evoked in the current discourse.
- 2- Hearer-old, Discourse-new-information which has not been evoked in the current discourse, but of which the speaker believes the hearer is aware.
- 3- Hearer-new, Discourse-new-information which has not been evoked in the current discourse, and of which the speaker believes the hearer is unaware.

Fox (1985) examines two continuity parameters (action continuity and participant continuity) in Tagalog— a verb-initial language of the Philippines— in order to see if inversion clauses are different from other clauses in the circumstances under which they are used. She talks about shift in narrated action and change in participants. She has been primarily interested in the discourse conditions of using word-inversion in that language, and found that the marked (inverted) word-order is associated with features of discontinuity in the text.

In an early study, Labov and Waletzky (1967) propose that subordinate clause predicates— or syntactically dependent clauses— are background narrative clauses. Similarly, Tomlin (1985) tests the hypothesis that independent and dependent clauses are used respectively to code foreground and background information in English discourse. The detached participle has also been examined as one manifestation of grounding in English. Thus, Thompson (1983) shows that it allows the writer to present certain

material as background.

In a study on information structure of paragraphs, Giora (1983) shows that segment-final position correlates with foreground information. Jones (1977) analyzes surface structure manifestations of thematic prominence. She uses the term 'prominence' as a cover term for foreground, figure, theme, focus and emphasis. She follows others (e.g. Grimes 1975) in considering the theme (thematic ideas) as representing the 'backbone'. She discusses the thematic function of conjunctions (e.g. 'moreover'), and considers them as road signs to thematicity that 'tell the interlocutor what he/she is to interpret as significant, and what is relatively less-important' (op.cit.: 215).

Bäcklund (1988) deals with how prominence in English expository texts is achieved. She demonstrates that what marks prominence in these texts is a combination of hierarchical organization, information dynamics, and grounding signals. She uses the term 'grounding signals' to refer to signals of hierarchical structure and the foreground-background distinction. Her findings include a distinction between three main categories of grounding signals in expository text:

- 1- connectives: the coordinator *but* and the class of conjunctions (e.g. *finally, furthermore, of course, on the other hand*).
- 2- syntactic devices: fronted adverbials that may serve the function of clarifying the structural organization of the text (besides a linking function). Fronting is regarded mainly as a foregrounding device.
- 3- lexical items: not functioning as connectives: E.g. 'problem', 'solution'.

Bäcklund suggests that information dynamics might be also part of the creation of relative prominence: if the information contained in a sentence is new and interesting, this may override the hierarchical organization of the text as far as grounding is concerned. According to her: 'New and important information may be contained in a background part of the text; this in turn may make the reader interpret that part as prominent along with the foregrounded material' (op.cit.: 57).

Virtanen (1992a,b) discusses the information structure of clause-initial adverbials of time and place, using Prince's (1981) taxonomy of given-new information: given/evoked information, inferrable information, (brand) new, unused information. She uses the term *information structure* to refer to notions such as topic-comment, given-new that operate within the clause/sentence, and the term *information dynamics* to refer to the overall distribution of given and new— or thematic and rhematic— information in

text. Virtanen notes that some temporal adverbials (e.g. of frequency or duration) begin backgrounded passages such as embedded descriptions, and that such adverbials 'may signal, or add to, the backgroundedness of the textual unit that they initiate' (op. cit.: 321).

Information structure has been seen as a component of sentence grammar and a determining factor in the formal structuring of sentences (Lambrecht 1994). It is 'the formal expression of the pragmatic structuring of a proposition in a discourse' (op.cit.: 5). According to the author, information structure is not concerned with the organization of discourse but with the sentence within a discourse. Lambrecht explores the relationship between sentence structure and the linguistic and extra linguistic context in which it is used. He suggests that the relationship between speaker assumptions and formal sentence structure is governed by rules and conventions of grammar, in a grammatical component he calls information structure. According to Lambrecht, the most important categories of information structure are: (i) presupposition and assertion, (ii) identifiability and activation, and (iii) topic and focus (op.cit.: .6).

In her study of grounding in English narratives, Wårvik (1990) compares grounding distinctions in Old and Modern English narratives and concludes that in the Modern English system, backgrounding marking is preferred to explicit foreground markers. Similarly, Brinton (1996, chapter 2) examines the notion of narrative foregrounding and backgrounding and its linguistic expression. She discusses grounding as one aspect of textual organization in narratives which may be denoted by pragmatic markers.

Linguistic mechanisms that are employed by second language learners (of Italian) and that signal the FG-BG distinction have been identified in oral narration (Orletti 1994). Among the findings is that: 'The most common kind of background information is the one designed to provide a temporal framework for foreground events' (op.cit.: 183). Temporal background is expressed *inter alia* by aspectual and temporal values of verbs, lexical expressions such as *one day*, and temporal subordination markers such as *when* (op.cit.).

CRITERIA FOR FG-BG DISTINCTION

A few authors have dealt in some detail with criteria for distinguishing foreground from background. Reinhart (1984) presents a number of 'content criteria'. They are:

1- Temporal criteria: foreground events show temporal continuity, punc-

tuality, and completeness.

2- Functional-dependency criteria: Material which explains temporal events is background, such as 'irrealis' statements of alternative modes of development. Also, the cause event functions as the background.

3- Culture-dependent criteria: A given culture foregrounds events that are considered more important than others.

Fleischman (1985: 857ff) mentions four identifying criteria:

1- The sequentiality criterion: the foreground of a narrative consists of a sequence of temporally ordered clauses. Thus, narrative clauses— which form the narrative foreground— have an iconic sequence. Most studies in the literature have followed this criterion (e.g. Hopper and Thompson (1980), Reinhart (1984), Thompson (1987)).

2- The importance criterion: foreground information is important information, such as about events or processes.

3- The causality criterion: foreground information is the element that serves to advance the plot, i.e. causality or importance for plot development (Kalmár 1982).

4- The unpredictability criterion: foreground information depends on the degree to which an element is unpredictable or unexpected in a given context. An element in a discourse can be foreground through what the Russian Formalists have referred to as 'defamiliarization'.

CRITIQUE OF THE STUDIES

Having presented a general review of relevant studies on the discourse notions of foreground and background, we will now discuss the main trends of these studies and show a number of inadequacies that pose problems in analysis.

In general, these studies are inadequate on one or more of the following accounts:

1- The lack of explicit and independent criteria for grounding.

2- Restriction of the scope of grounding to the concept-level or single lexical items.

3- Conflating the phenomenon with other discourse notions (e.g. coherence) and structures (e.g. the macro-micro structure).

4- Conflating the phenomenon with its surface structure expression.

5- Restriction of the field of investigation to narrative discourse and to lin-

guistic markers of that discourse.

Studies on grounding have been more interested in a general description of the FG-BG phenomenon and how it is (temporally) marked, than in providing a solid basis in terms of explicit, systematic and objective criteria for distinction. Indeed, there have been divergent approaches to, and definitions of, foreground and background notions. The term 'foregrounding' has become diffuse in its application: it has been studied by means of at least three different methodologies (linguistic, literary, and psycholinguistic) that differ in their assumptions (Dry 1992). Thus, 'foregrounding is used ambiguously for both the cognitive process and for the textual phenomena that trigger or express that process. In addition, the word is applied to three different levels of analysis. FOREGROUND can thus refer to a prior conception of narrative prominence (such as SALIENCE), to the phenomena identified as prominent in texts in general (e.g. temporally successive clauses), or to specific instances in a given text' (ibid.: 438).

Evidently, the main features that the linguistic studies depend on as a basis for the correlation and distinction between foreground and background are:

- 1- Tense/aspect: past tense/perfective verb is used to encode foreground, and present tense/imperfective verb and future, habitual or anterior past encode background.
- 2- Sequentiality: foreground is in-sequence: it consists of sequences of (time-line) events that move the story forward in time and form eventually a summary of it, and background is out-of-sequence.
- 3- Event/State: foreground consists usually of events or event clauses, and background consists of states or non-event clauses that are scene-setting.

The discourse features that have been taken as a basis for the distinction between the two notions are a mere *expression* of an already existing distinction, hence most of the preceding studies talk about foregroundedness of clauses (e.g. Wårvik 1990). They fail to establish the distinction on the basis of semantic criteria. Wald (1987) draws attention to the difficulty encountered in explicating the semantic distinction between foreground and background in precise terms. To propose grammatical encoding as a criterion for the FG-BG distinction is to neglect the fact that grammatical en-

coding is not a defining criterion but an expression of an earlier decision—on another (cognitive) level—about the importance of the information in question and subsequent mapping on a semantic level.

Tense in itself is no fixed marker of either FG or BG— even for narrative: in past tense narrative, imperfect is an index of BG; in present tense narrative, imperfect expresses both FG and BG (Chvany 1985). Besides, a feature such as the punctuality of verbs is not typical of FG. The semantic representation underlying a sentence such as: *He arrived yesterday*, may be assigned a BG value or interpretation. Thus, tense does not have a definite position on the FG-BG continuum. Therefore, if the same linguistic structure, i.e. verb-tense, may signal two different functions, one as FG and the other as BG, then this feature does not provide a solid criterion for the distinction. It fails to distinguish grounding in texts where the same tense is maintained. Tense-maintaining, then, does not imply maintaining either foreground or background meaning. On the other hand, it is of course true that tense-switching may signal the FG-BG distinction, as in stories.

Since much of the work done on the grounding phenomenon has depended mainly on oral narrative and conversational discourse as sources of data, generalizations about the discourse notions of foreground and background have been made on the basis of these (oral) types of discourse. Other types, which may have different characteristics, have remained largely unexplored. Inevitably, this has led to a restricted view of grounding, and to problems when other types of discourse, such as news, are analyzed. For example, the present tense may be encoded in a sentence whose underlying proposition has a background or a foreground function, depending on other factors. This means that a background proposition does not refer only to past events or states encoded by flashback tenses. In our approach, a background proposition may denote events or states that are simultaneous with those of a foreground proposition. So perfective and imperfective verb forms cannot be associated with, respectively, foreground and background meanings. Accordingly, a foreground proposition may be expressed in a sentence that denotes (recent) past, i.e. perfective, events as well as present (impending), or even future (still to come) ones.

Furthermore, contrary to what has been proposed, temporal sequentiality or main event-line is not an identifying criterion of *foreground*. In fact, sequentiality is not always correlated with foregrounding, and temporally sequenced clauses do not comprise all crucial events (Kalmár 1982).

(Information encoded in a temporal subordinate clause in the Past Perfect can move us forward in narrative time (Couper-Kuhlen 1989).) Even if temporal succession works as a criterion for narrative discourse, and *foreground* propositions describe successive events (e.g. Tomlin 1985), it is apparent that it does not apply to other types such as news discourse, since that discourse does not manifest a sequentially organized summary or gist. So features such as a summary, viz. 'backbone', or iconic order do not form a solid basis for identifying foreground in news texts. There is then a difference between *narrative foreground* and *news foreground*. On the other hand, a background function in news discourse is assigned relative to other grounding-values and not relative to the macrostructure. In addition, *background* may be also about an event and not a state.

Apart from that, *news foreground* and *news background* are not organized in terms of (a mapping of) new-old information. A *background* proposition may map new information. Besides, main participants are not the exclusive 'property' of foreground. There are background propositions that denote events involving main participants too.

That the criteria for the FG-BG distinction have been applied primarily and almost exclusively to narrative texts led perhaps to the proposal that the FG-BG opposition should not be used for non-narrative texts. Reasons given for that are the absence of a clear criterion and the lack of FG-BG structuring in other types of text (Vetters 1992). We have shown that the criteria— even for narrative discourse— are neither explicit nor solid. Furthermore, we do not share the restrictive view that the FG-BG structure is absent in other types of text. We have seen that news texts— even those whose propositions are all subsumed under one macroproposition— do not consist of foreground only. Therefore, we cannot lump together 'main line' events as representing foreground only. The texts analyzed here demonstrate that a foreground proposition refers to the main event and that the rest of what is traditionally called 'event-line' manifests other grounding-values such as *midground*. Although high-level information (topics) is one criterion for establishing foreground, the macrostructure is not necessarily equivalent to foreground. Not all propositions organized in a macrostructure are assigned foreground interpretation. In this respect, our approach differs from other approaches that consider constituent propositions of a macrostructure as serving a foreground function.

Among studies that support our approach to grounding as a gradual scale are those of Reinhart (1984), Jones and Jones (1979), Longacre

(1981) and Fleischman (1985, 1990). The assumption of a gradual scale (that each type of text encodes 'progressive degrees of departure from the main line' (Longacre 1989: 414)) makes it possible to distinguish between textual propositions where reference is made to events that are both sequentially arranged and tense-maintaining.

Our theory proposes a clear distinction on the one hand between information structure in cognition and on the other hand the FG-BG propositional structure in semantic representations and the various production processes. The cognitive foundation of the model allows distinctions between importance of information about facts and events, and relevance to language users that may lead to *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* of meanings in the communicative situation. *Background* meaning may map **more relevant** information than higher grounding-values that may map **more important** information. It may then be expressed more prominently. It is to be noted that our study highlights the relationship between the hierarchical structure of discourse constituents and information relevance—a relatively unexplored area (Longacre 1983).

Since differential importance is assigned to information that is mapped on propositions, our approach to grounding is in terms of *whole* propositions and not single concepts that are part of propositions. Besides, our theoretical analysis of the grounding phenomenon is syntax-independent. The need for syntax-independent criteria for identifying foreground and background has been emphasized by Tomlin (1986), who tried to establish a connection between foreground and the significance of events 'where significance is related to visual attention and where such attention can be determined independently of any text' (op.cit.: 468).

Conceptually, the study is close to a few other studies. The closest approach is that of van Dijk (1984, 1988b): that information structure is a separate structural dimension. We extended this approach by examining the relation— similarity and difference— between the FG-BG articulation and other textual and non-textual levels.

In conclusion, the main emphasis of the studies on the grounding phenomenon has been on *foreground* or its marking. Interest in *background* has been limited to showing that it is not *foreground*, that it is off the event-line, and that it is supportive or causal. One important feature of the present study is its concern with *background* and *backgrounding* of meanings. We have shown that *background* is an essential global organizational dimension of text semantics based on information and knowledge

in context models. Another important feature of the study is its concern with how *background* is signaled in surface structure. By establishing a relation between grounding and linguistic markers that occur in Arabic news discourse, the study highlights or 'foregrounds' the phenomenon of background.

LINGUISTICS, NEWS DISCOURSE, AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Language has not occupied a central place in the bulk of mass communication studies that have been engaged with the broad social, cultural, and political issues of the process of information flow. Interest in (the analysis of) news discourse has been primarily non-linguistic— for example, to learn something about the newspapers themselves, to describe the climate of news gathering and selection, to know about the social aspects of news production (e.g. Golding and Elliott 1979), to examine constraints of the manufacture of news (e.g. Fishman 1980), and to describe values, power struggle or relationships within various social institutions (e.g. Cohen and Young, eds. 1973).

Similarly, media language— with its various directions of research— has until recently remained almost totally beyond the range of interest for linguistics. A recent example of linguistic analysis of media language (e.g. news, documentary) is the study of Fairclough (1995), and a state-of-the-art statement on media discourse is Bell and Garrett (eds. 1998). Among the few early studies on media language in general and news discourse in particular, the study of Fowler et al. (1979) is prominent. Its predominantly linguistic approach explains how the use of language— such as syntactic changes in the sentences of news texts— may express or conceal agents of certain acts. The study of Roeh (1982) concentrates on rules that govern presentational processes involved in writing news broadcasts. News items of the B.B.C. have been examined by Noel (1986) in order to show some of their linguistic characteristics. The author shows that informative texts typically make use of *elaboration*, *background*, and *addition* relations.

Pointing out one difference between the general structure of the narrative and the news story, Togeby (1982) suggests that events in the news story are neither in succession nor temporally or causally related, 'but one central event is paraphrased and made more specific again and again' (op.cit. 238). In a relevant study, Jucker (1986) describes several linguistic aspects of news interviews broadcast by B.B.C. Radio 4 as part of their daily news programmes. The study also examines a number of 'discourse

particles' such as *well* and *so*.

An analytic framework for news structure in the press has been proposed by van Dijk (1985b). His study concentrates on the global organization of the news and ignores syntactic, semantic and pragmatic dimensions that have to do with coherence of the news text. In another work (van Dijk 1988a), he presents a novel theoretical framework for the study of news as a distinct type of discourse. The study draws attention to the importance of structural analysis of news reports at various levels of description, where account is also given of notions such as *topic* and *news schema*. In a separate work, van Dijk (1988b) applies the theoretical framework to an analysis of the structures of international news, based on several case studies.

Among linguistically-oriented German studies of news discourse is the study of Kniffka (1980) about headlines and leads of American newspapers. Lüger (1983) focusses on the language of the press. Also Geis (1987), in his study of the language of politics, deals with a number of aspects of journalistic language such as press reports of political speech and the linguistic devices the press employs in reporting on the context. His study deals with television news broadcasts and the issue of bias in the news. In this regard, Sanders and Redeker (1993) examine the question of (limitations of) perspective in news texts/stories as well as tense-shift which may shift responsibility for reported information from the writer to a participant.

Still, very little is known about the textual structure of news discourse (see Bell 1991), and particularly about the (linguistic properties of the) short news item which has hardly been studied from a discourse perspective as a form of written communication. The analysis provided in this study represents a much needed 'micro-level approach' (van Dijk 1985a: 8) to this type of media language or discourse. It differs substantially from other studies on 'the language of news'— which have been primarily engaged with entities such as lexical choices and grammatical (viz. passive) structures— in transcending the boundaries of sentences into the syntax, the semantics, and the pragmatics of discourse, and in providing a linguistic account of expressions that function at text-level. Thus, apart from providing an important meeting point between mass communication and linguistics, the present study on news discourse may be conceived of as a contribution to a theory of journalistic communication, which should have its own distinctive features (see Košir 1988).

Schematic Manifestations of Text-Level Grounding

2.1 Introduction

Building on our theoretical analysis in chapter 1, we present now other features of our model of discourse grounding. These features pertain to two dimensions or domains of text-level organization: discursive and syntactic. We will examine discursive organization in terms of schemata, and syntactic organization in terms of sentence constituents. Both features are presented as part of text syntax that organizes different forms and hence has a broader interpretation than strictly syntactic. We suggest that one function that discursive and syntactic organization may fulfil in news texts is to signal discourse grounding or rather the FG-BG articulation. The grounding-signaling function that a specific schematic or syntactic structure may serve is governed by constraints of the communicative situation. Before we examine syntactic manifestations of grounding (chapter 3), we need to account for a level that precedes actual realization, namely the organization of content in schemata. In this chapter, then, we examine schematic structures and explain schematic manifestations of grounding.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

In 2.2 we present dimensions of text-level organization and discuss briefly the terms *salience* and *prominence* that we will use to characterize respectively schematic and syntactic manifestations of grounding. In 2.3 we look at two main characteristics of short news items. They determine the categories that appear in the canonical news schema and influence surface structure expression of grounding that will be examined in chapter 3. In 2.4 we focus on the communicative strategy that pertains to the signaling of grounding and examine two basic features: linearity and staging. We also introduce *news upstage* and *news downstage* as two expression slots that show whether grounding-values are prominently or non-prominently expressed. Then in 2.5 we explain news schemata that are typical of short news texts and present salience mapping rules for schematic organization

in these texts. Finally, in 2.6 we give a few examples that illustrate schema categories and show how they are manipulated in the hierarchical structure to denote salience and non-salience.

2.2 Salience and Prominence

Since discursive and syntactic organization pertain to two different forms of text syntax and levels of signaling the FG-BG structure, we will distinguish their signaling function by using two different terms, namely *salience* and *prominence*. Though referring to the same phenomenon and serving similar functions, namely to denote relative conspicuousness, *salience* and *prominence* may be distinguished from each other. Thus, while *salience* pertains basically to hierarchical conspicuousness of schema categories, *prominence* pertains basically to linear conspicuousness of syntactic structures and the distribution of sentences in text. Underlying the distinction is the assumption that schemata are basically *global* organizers that, concomitantly perhaps, are realized in text linear organization, and that syntactic structures are basically *local* organizers that, concomitantly perhaps, are realized in text hierarchical organization. Figure 1 presents the two dimensions of text-level organization that signal the FG-BG structure in terms of salience and prominence.

Figure 1 Dimensions of text-level organization

Figure 1 shows that schemata (see below) organize topics or macrostruc-

tures and that syntax organizes the expression of propositions at the local or micro level. It also shows the entities that could be manipulated as part of the communicative strategy for signaling the FG-BG articulation. In order to signal it, the communicative strategy manipulates:

1- the news schema categories, displaying their relative *salience*: position in the hierarchical organization.

2- the order of sentences and their constituents, displaying their relative *prominence*. Text syntax also includes one important manifestation of grounding, namely sentence-initial entities or markers that we will examine in subsequent chapters. They may be the result of sentence structure as a hierarchy (main-subordinate) and constituent order or position (left-right).

Before we mention a few words about salience and prominence, we explain in a general way what text schemata are. Later on, we will present the specific schemata of short news texts.

SCHEMATA

Text schemata represent a level in the actual production process that precedes a specific syntactic realization. As such, they are not the observable surface structure level of expression. In surface structure, schemata are observed in sentences or paragraphs. Schemata pertain to *message-form* that provides the 'overall functional syntax' of the text (see van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 242). The schema or what is called the superstructure is a global organizer of the propositional content or macrostructure of the text. After choosing among content options, determining the macro-micro structure, and assigning grounding-values to propositions, writers organize textual propositions in schemata. Each proposition is assigned to a superstructural category, which is the conventional form that the variable content takes. A schema category, then, denotes the function that the propositional content has. Since schemata organize the global meaning, they are crucial in the strategic process of text production.

Schema categories are assumed to be governed by text-type. Many types of text have their own stereotypical categories, such as the narrative, the argumentative, and news schema categories. For example, the following categories organize the whole narrative text (Labov and Waletzky 1967):

- 1- Setting: in which time, place, participants are introduced.
- 2- Complication: in which important events are mentioned.

- 3- Resolution: where actions of participants are described.
- 4- Evaluation: of the various actions and reactions.
- 5- Coda: or moral of the story.

The inclusion or exclusion of a certain schema category has to do in the first place with the event model a writer constructs and updates with new (information about) events that are mapped as textual propositions. In addition, context models may co-determine the inclusion or exclusion of categories on the basis of relevance. Apart from that, the hierarchy—or the order—in which the categories (are expected to) appear is usually subject to text canonical structure as well as contextual constraints. Hierarchical categorial organization manifests a certain pattern of salient and non-salient realization.

SALIENCE

We use the notion of salience to refer to the relative conspicuousness of schema categories as a measure of how grounding is signaled. Schematic salience means that the function of a specific meaning organized in a schema category is hierarchically high in a given superstructure, hence it gets more 'exposure' and it is better perceived. The categories, however, vary in the basis of their salience. Thus salience may be the result of a canonical structure. Since the higher a certain news category is located in the global hierarchy the higher its salience, a **Main Event** category (see 2.5) is usually very salient and it is realized in text-initial position. On the other hand, salience may be the result of other staging operations that bring a certain category to the attention of readers as early as possible. For example, a category such as **Verbal Reaction** may be assigned more salience in the hierarchy and hence realized earlier. This means assigning more salience to the function of the specific reaction by some participants.

PROMINENCE

'*Prominence* has been seen as the linguistic expression of general human perceptual strategies, according to which we do not perceive at any one time the totality of the component parts of an object such as a picture, but direct our attention successively to individual details, leaving the others unobserved' (Erdmann 1990: 4). It has been suggested that prominence is semantic as well as structural (Longacre 1989). 'Structural prominence exists in its own right, although often correlating with semantic prominence' (ibid.: 414). It has also been suggested that structural prominence leads to

semantic prominence (Zammuner 1981: 270).

Our approach to *prominence* is that it is a surface structure property. It characterizes the way sentences and their constituents stand out in text. Since prominence is by definition a gradual phenomenon (Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 182), certain sentences—whether they express propositions about actions, verbal reactions, or states of affairs—may catch the attention of readers more than others do. It may also be said that prominence is the feature of discourse structure which makes one part more significant than another (Larson 1984). Prominence, then, is 'a formal, surface structure notion, viz. defined in terms of the (set of) textual devices that express importance or relevance of information' (van Dijk 1995: 263). Like salience, prominence may characterize unimportant as well as important textual elements (Dry 1992). In other words, prominence does not necessarily coincide with the underlying (semantic) importance and may be assigned to grounding-values other than *foreground*. For example, a sentence (segment) that expresses *background* may acquire prominence in surface structure.

That prominence is different from importance is perhaps more evident in visual, non-linguistic information. Chvany (1985: 252) explains:

'Like the perception of grounding in text, the perception of figure against ground is independent of importance. A hair clinging to a precious sable coat is still perceived as figure, the coat as ground. A mustache drawn on the Mona Lisa would be a figure, to which the painting becomes ground, regardless of its inherent importance.'

In terms of our theoretical description, 'figure' and 'ground' here would mean prominent and non-prominent expression, respectively of less important information (mapped as *background* meaning), and important information (mapped as *foreground* or *midground* meaning). Thus, while importance is customarily acquired on the basis of inherent traits of objects referred to, it may be subjectively assigned by language users such as when a *background* proposition is prominently expressed in the surface structure of the text.

2.3 Characteristics of Short News Items

At the outset, it would perhaps be useful to shed light on two main traits of

short news items: *compactness* and *discontinuity*. Though distinct, that is, they pertain respectively to the *form* and the *content* of these texts, the two features are related and, as will become evident later in the chapter, they constrain the propositional content assigned to schema categories as well as the organization and the relative salience of these categories. In the next chapter we will see that the two features also constrain syntactic structures in short news texts, and hence the way the FG-BG structure is signaled in surface structure.

COMPACTNESS

The short news item consists of a few sentences or short paragraphs. It can be described as a condensed—in fact the most compact—form of the news story. Its format constrains the number, the size as well as the position of the typical schema categories that appear in it (see 2.5). Among influences of compactness on the content of the short news item are the absence of a global summary that obtains usually in the beginning of a news story, and the omission of much unnecessary details. As a result of this omission, the propositional content of the text, by necessity, refers to fewer events than the elaborated version, viz. the news story, does.

DISCONTINUITY

The second main trait of the short news item is what is referred to as the discontinuous structure (see van Dijk 1988a). Although discontinuity is a feature the short news item has in common with the news story, the effects are more tangible in it than in the news story. So the writer of the short text may for example condense in one 'paragraph' or a few adjacent sentences—and even constituents of sentences—different components of the same story, and sometimes of different stories that are usually expressed in several paragraphs in longer news texts. These texts, then, allow the writer to bridge the 'gap' between different or distant events or topics by means of *extra* propositions, i.e. details, that make the shift among components of the same or different stories less abrupt.

That the short news item misses usually this elaborate or extensive 'report' may result in a sequence of sentences that does not share referents from other preceding ones—a feature that is typical of paragraph juncture or boundary (see Longacre 1979b). Therefore, sentences in short news texts may express different topics and lack the usual unities of *time*, *place*, *action* and *participants* (see Givón 1984a). They may sometimes lack

'thematic unity' of the paragraph, namely identical *participants*, *time*, *location*, and *event* (see van Dijk 1982; see also Fox 1985). Consequently, relations among adjacent propositions that refer to different or distant events may at times be less apparent than in the news story.

The pattern of coherence of the short news text may also suffer and, in the absence of surface structure markers, interpretation may be more dependent on 'bridging assumptions' (Clark and Haviland 1977). This is evident in (1).

(1)

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (Reuters)— (1) The Sri Lankan Parliament voted Thursday to extend a nationwide state of emergency for a further month.

(2) Tamil and Singhalese factions have clashed since July.

(IHT 27-28/8/1983)

The text shows an absence of 'persistence' (i.e. an uninterrupted presence of topic/participant in a number of clauses (see Givón 1983a)), which is also contrary to the expectation that actors tend to remain actors over a stretch of discourse (Givón 1979). The second sentence in the text does not have textual antecedents (i.e. lexico-grammatical realization) such as pronouns or definite noun phrases that refer to referents or concepts referred to before. Though coherent, that is, it has both functional and conditional relations (*explanation*, *reason*, or *cause*), the text does not express these relations in surface structure, since lexico-grammatical cohesion is not a necessary corollary of semantic coherence (but see chapter 4). Nevertheless, the two contiguous sentences express propositions that do not seem to belong to the same discourse topic, namely that they denote different actions, participants, and times— the usual factors of discontinuity.

2.4 Communicative Strategy of Signaling Grounding

Underlying schematic and syntactic manifestations of grounding is a communicative strategy that aims inter alia at signaling the FG-BG distinction by manipulating available text-level means. The degree of success in signaling, i.e. communicating, the distinction to readers depends in part

on whatever goals the writer or the 'composer' (Longacre 1983:17) has in the given communicative situation. These goals, which take the form of a hierarchy, are an important component of the particular text-strategy (see Enkvist 1987b) that is applied in the process of text production. The communicative strategy, then, determines how readers (should) recognize the signals of the FG-BG structure in text. In order to convey to readers a certain picture of the FG-BG structure, the communicative strategy may include staging text segments and **(re)distributing** the conventional news schemata, as we will see later. Also it may include syntactic structures, as we will see in the next chapter. These operations, of course, influence the underlying propositions in the linear organization of text since they also are distributed and (re)ordered. Since *linearity* and *staging* are key concepts in the communicative strategy of signaling grounding, a few words about them would be useful.

2.4.1 Linearity

Linearity is suggested to be 'a reflection of the temporal (spoken) or spatial (written) succession' (Graustein and Thiele 1987: 20). We consider linearity a property of surface structure— since the text, any text, must 'go somewhere' in a linear fashion (Hendricks 1976: 72). As such, linearity has to do with the ordering of (phrases, and clauses within) sentences, which is called linearization (see Levelt and Maassen 1981). But linearity may also indicate how text segments are ordered in surface structure. Subject to text-type specific categories and communicative situation constraints, schema categories may vie with each other for position in text: **intra-sententially** (constituent-order) and **inter-sententially** (sentence-order).

LINEAR ORDERING STRATEGIES AND RELATION TO SIGNALING

The order in which different forms (viz. schema categories, sentences) are linearized may be differently related to grounding and the way in which it is signaled. For example, the salience of schema categories may be differently related to linear ordering. In news discourse, the earlier a certain schema category is located or realized the higher its salience. Readers 'receive' it first and infer that this first position expresses *foreground* meaning. This meaning maps usually highly important information. News discourse, then, makes use of what Enkvist (1987a: 23) referred to as the

'crucial-information-first strategy'. This strategy 'governs the order in which the text builds up the receptor's conception of the universe of discourse' (ibid.: 26). All things being equal, a *background* proposition would be assigned to a schema category that tends to be located or expressed later and hence less saliently. The function of this category may be to include propositions that refer to earlier events, thus representing a typical projection of non-sequential news reporting.

Distinct from news discourse, a narrative schema category such as setting—subsuming a *background* proposition—may be realized in an early position. On the other hand, the category that subsumes *foreground* meaning about *the point* of the story may be located later and may be construed as having more salience. This pattern of signaling grounding is also similar to *the punch line* of a joke, the conclusion of an argument, or a scholarly paper. Also in the narrative text-type, which is the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence (Prince 1982: 1), the ordering strategy may correspond to a natural or chronological text-world ordering pattern. Propositions referring to earlier (cause) events tend to be assigned to categories that precede those in which propositions refer to later (consequent) events. It should be noted that, apart from conditional, spatial, or temporal ordering of facts, the cognitive and pragmatic relevance of the facts (see van Dijk 1985c) may govern linear ordering strategies and hence the way grounding-values are signaled in surface structure. Thus, communicative strategies and text type specific requirements may draw certain schema categories forward or backward and hence assign them greater or lesser salience.

2.4.2 Staging: News Upstage and News Downstage

The second key concept in the communicative strategy of signaling grounding is *staging*. The *stage* metaphor has been used to refer to the particular perspective from which speakers present what they want to say (Grimes 1975), and to ways in which the sender communicates relative importance (Grimes 1982). According to the stage metaphor 'the setup of the constituents in a sentence is similar to what happens in a play on the stage' (Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 182). We use the stage metaphor to refer to a general operation of manipulating existing organizational possibilities, both discursive or schematic and syntactic, in order to distinguish gradual and relative hierarchical salience of categories and syntactic

prominence of sentences and their constituents. In other words, we use *staging* to denote schematic and syntactic manifestations of text-level grounding: Both manifestations communicate a picture of how semantic FG-BG articulation is expressed in text. It should be added that staging also reflects pragmatic or contextual constraints. Since writers differ in their values, attitudes, interests, and knowledge of the world, their perspective as regards (the interpretation of) facts and events constrains inter alia the way discursive and syntactic structures are staged. In this respect, staging is a pragmatically motivated text-organization principle. It should be borne in mind that staging controls **continuity-options** in text and hence influences the type of relation that might be created among adjacent propositions assigned to schema categories and realized in sentences.

In examining staging, we distinguish two major types that manifest different ways of showing how the FG-BG structure in news texts is signaled in terms of the salience of schema categories and the prominence of sentences. Before we present them, we introduce the terms *news upstage* and *news downstage*. Both terms refer to textual slots that show the outcome of staging operations that cover both salience and prominence. Since in this chapter we are engaged with news schemata, we will explain the two textual slots in terms of salience.

News upstage is the slot for categories that are more salient and that subsume typical *foreground* propositions. In this respect, *news upstage* may be similar to the nuclear segment of the text, which is more prominent than the satellite segment and which realizes the primary goals of the writer (see Mann and Thompson e.g. 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b, 1988). But *news upstage* may also be the slot for categories that are usually expressed less saliently and that subsume *background* propositions. In this case, the propositions are assumed to have been *foregrounded* because writers consider them more relevant, hence they assign them maximum contextual informativeness. The salient realization of a schema category that subsumes these *background* propositions demonstrates that feature.

News downstage, on the other hand, is the slot for categories that are less salient and that subsume propositions that are typically *background*. But *news downstage* may also be the slot for categories that are usually expressed more saliently and that subsume propositions that are high on the FG-BG continuum. The assumption is that they have been *backgrounded* because writers consider them less relevant, hence they assign them minimum contextual informativeness. Again, the non-salient realiza-

tion of a schema category that subsumes for example *midground* propositions demonstrates that feature.

TYPES OF STAGING

News upstage and *news downstage* are patterned on the two major types of staging and manifestations of grounding in terms of salience, that is schemata, and prominence, that is syntax (see Figure 2). Examples of staging will be given in section 2.6 when we examine the salience of schema categories.

Figure 2 Types of staging and ways of signaling grounding

Figure 2 shows that *news upstage* is the slot where schema categories are saliently signaled and syntactic structures are prominently expressed. Both *foreground* and *foregrounded* meanings are expressed by these forms, respectively in staging type I and staging type II. The Figure also shows that *news downstage* is the slot where schema categories are non-saliently signaled and syntactic structures are non-prominently expressed. Both *background* and *backgrounded* meanings are expressed by these forms, respectively in staging type I and staging type II. We look now at the two types of staging.

STAGING TYPE I

Staging type I is the operation of signaling *foreground* and *background* meanings according to the canonical structure of news texts. It is therefore *canonically-based*. In this default text-type signaling-pattern, salient schema categories would tend to subsume *foreground* propositions and non-salient categories would tend to subsume *background* propositions. In staging type I thus *news upstage* and *news downstage* manifest a hierarchy of categories whose salience corresponds in a decreasing fashion with the

grounding-values of the propositions assigned to these categories. In other words, there is a one to one relation between the degree of salience and the grounding-value.

STAGING TYPE II

Staging type II is the operation of signaling *foregrounded* and *backgrounded* meanings as a result of communicative situation constraints. It is therefore *communicatively-based*, that is, according to the writer's perspective and the relevance he or she assigns to the underlying information. *Foregrounded* and *backgrounded* propositions are expressed respectively as *news upstage* and *news downstage*. In staging type II, *news upstage* and *news downstage* manifest a hierarchy of categories whose salience does not correspond to the grounding-values of the propositions that are assigned to the categories. Accordingly, *background* meanings that are *foregrounded* would tend to be saliently presented, and *foreground* or *midground* meanings that are *backgrounded* would tend to be non-saliently presented.

It is significant to note that staging type II shows clearly the difference, and conflict perhaps, between coherence considerations and grounding considerations. One important feature of coherence is the *clustering* of concepts in propositions in order to establish *conceptual connectivity* or *closeness* in a hierarchical network of relations between facts and objects. In this network, a sub-topic is usually placed directly under the main topic. The **Main Event** schema category may manifest that pattern, as we will see later. Grounding, on the other hand, may be insensitive to conceptual closeness or connectivity and the expression of propositions need not be according to conditional links among facts. Since what is at issue in grounding is perhaps 'contextual informativeness' (Fleischman 1990: 181), adjacent propositions in the macrostructure may be expressed in non-contiguous sentences. For example, a proposition that is high in the macrostructural hierarchy, that is, conceptually very close to the top macroproposition—because it is, for instance, a sub-topic or a specification of the proposition that refers to the main event—may be assigned to a (recursive) **Main Event** category that is realized as (part of) *news downstage* in the end of the text. This feature will be further examined and illustrated later (see 2.6).

2.5 Short News Items Schemata

In order to explain and illustrate the role of schematic categories in manifesting the way the FG-BG structure is signaled, we need first to examine the specific categories of short news items. (For an overview of the structure of the news story, see Bell 1998.) The presence of these categories in text reflects a general tendency rather than a strict rule. However, one may talk about a few core obligatory categories such as **Headline** and **Main Event**. The propositions assigned to these categories are generally expected to be *foreground*, mapping a high degree of information importance. On the other hand, there are a few optional schema categories such as **Context**, **Previous Event** or **History**. It should be added that a **Context** category might be more expected than the other two. The three categories are hierarchically lower than **Main Event** and the propositions assigned to them are generally expected to be *background*, mapping a low degree of information importance. It should be noted, however, that hierarchically lower categories are sometimes assigned more salience by locating them earlier in the text. Similarly, being canonically high in the news schema does not always guarantee a salient realization in text, as staging type II discussed earlier shows. This suggests that the function that some schema categories have may be independent of the basis of their salience.

The superstructure of the short news item is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 The superstructure of the short news item

Figure 3 shows three main superstructural categories: **Headline**, **Main Event**, and **Background**. The third one is a general schema category that subsumes a number of specific categories. It should be noted that it is independent of semantic *background* on the FG-BG continuum. The **Background** schema category has been suggested to 'dominate those portions of the text in which information is given which is not as such part of the actual news events, but provides general, historical, political or social context or conditions of these events' (van Dijk 1985b: 87). Though presented in a linear fashion, the categories subsumed under **Background** are not hierarchically equal. Patterned on the textual slots of *news upstage* and *news downstage*, the schema categories of the short news item are hierarchically organized as in Figure 4.

Figure 4 The hierarchy/salience of news schema categories

The (unmarked) hierarchy in Figure 4 shows the relative salience of the categories. The **Headline** and **Main Event** categories that represent *news upstage* are hierarchically high and are more saliently presented than the other five categories that represent *news downstage*.

We explain briefly the formal properties of the seven categories in the news schema.

1- HEADLINE

The **Headline**— which, as a formal category, is different from the seman-

tic content of a headline— occupies always the highest position in the news text. It is also independent of the text itself. Meanings assigned to the **Headline** category represent usually the top of the semantic macrostructure or what is called 'macroinformation' (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 242) of the news text.

2- MAIN EVENT

The **Main Event** category is the function of propositions that usually refer to the major and most recent, newsworthy, and interesting events. This category has a very high degree of salience, since it is hierarchically high, linearly first, and visually in the front, namely in the lead sentence. Thus it is more likely to be noticed and its contents read first in strategic (on-line) reading. The **Main Event** category may be recursive: **Main Event** 1 (ME 1), ME 2, etc. (see Figure 3). Its components may be scattered in the hierarchical structure and consequently realized in several sentences of the text.

It should be noted that, strictly speaking, the lead sentence in which the **Main Event** category is realized is a syntactic (grammatical) unit. Among its special traits is that it does not continue or refer back to what has been reported in the **Headline**, for example by personal or demonstrative pronouns. Rather, it starts again from the beginning, as if the **Headline** is not there. In addition, the lead sentence of short news texts does not provide a preview of events. However, it expresses 'important' or 'timely' information as is the case in the news story (see Thorndyke 1979).

3- VERBAL REACTION

The **Verbal Reaction** category is the function of propositions that denote a response to, or a comment on, an event or a verbal action that is referred to in a proposition assigned to the **Main Event** category. The response may be made by one or several participants (i.e. individuals), but may also be made by institutions (e.g. the United Nations). This category is rather high relative to the other categories since it is directly related— and consequently close— to the **Main Event** category.

4- CONTEXT

Propositions that denote the present situation (e.g. spatio-temporal or socio-political circumstances) of the major, current event are assigned to a **Context** schema category. As a function of these propositions, the

Context category is essential in the short news text. Categories other than the **Main Event**, for example **Previous Event** or **History**, may also require **Context**.

5- PREVIOUS EVENT

This category is the function of propositions that denote the immediate pre-history of the main news event. There is then a relation of temporal precedence, usually a few hours or days. A direct condition or cause may also be involved. This category serves as a reminder of preceding events that people are assumed to have known.

6- HISTORY

This category is the function of propositions that refer to old, remote, past events. These events provide the historical background to the main event(s) reported in the news text and do not necessarily affect the course of the current event(s). A **History** category may sometimes fulfil a complementary function to the **Main Event** category.

7- ASSOCIATION

An **Association** category is co-extensive with— and counterpart of— the **Main Event** category. It is the function of propositions that denote independent topics and that cannot be assigned to other schema categories in the text. Functionally, the propositions have a loose relation of *addition* to what preceded, and temporally, they may refer to simultaneous events that need not necessarily be in the same location.

An **Association** category is typically the lowest and least salient category in the news schema of short news texts. Since it is independent of other schema categories, its inclusion in the discourse schema is a direct mapping of contextual or pragmatic relevance. Once it is included, it would not be possible to (re)introduce another schema category (e.g. **Context**, **History**) that serves as the function of propositions relative to other preceding propositions. This also explains its typical occurrence in the end of the news text.

SCHEMA CATEGORIES IN VERY SHORT NEWS TEXTS

The behaviour of schema categories of short news texts will be examined and illustrated in the next section. Anticipating that, it is perhaps useful to look here at the schema categories of a very short news text. The text dif-

fers from the other short news texts in that it manifests a common feature, referred to as the 'integrated' headline (Werlich 1976), which consists of key words marked by bold within the first sentence of the text.

(2)

(1) **A team of Bolivian climbers** fighting high winds and snow reached the wreckage of an Eastern Airlines jet nearly 20,000 feet (6,000 meters) up Illimania Mountain on Saturday and reported finding no survivors of the crash, the airline said.

(2) The Boeing 727, carrying 29 people, crashed on Tuesday, minutes before it was to land at La Paz airport.

(IHT 7/1/1985)

The difference aside, text (2) shares a feature with short news items, namely that a single sentence may express one or even more than one schema category: S1 expresses **Main Event** and **Context** categories. S2 expresses **Previous Event** and **Context** categories. The **Previous Event** category subsumes a proposition that refers to concepts referred to in the other proposition about the plane crash. The underlying information might have been mapped in earlier press reports as a proposition in which reference is made to a major and a very important event ('hot news') about a plane crash, and consequently inserted in a **Main Event** category.

2.5.1 Schematic Salience Mapping Rules

After having defined the schema categories of the short news text, and before examining manifestations of grounding in terms of the salience of schematic categories, we outline a number of rules that account for staging these categories as having greater or lesser salience. Rules that pertain to text syntax in terms of surface structure are outlined in chapter 3. The rules define the relative salience of the categories in terms of the two types of staging explained earlier. In other words, they accommodate canonically-based and communicatively-based staging constraints. In both sets of rules, the **Headline** and **Association** categories maintain, respectively, the most and least salient positions in the hierarchy.

STAGING TYPE I

In staging type I, schematic salience coincides with the canonical hierarchy of news categories presented in Figure 4. Thus:

- A **Main Event** category (including its components) is hierarchically higher and is realized more saliently than other categories.
- A **Verbal Reaction** category is hierarchically higher and is realized more saliently than a **Context** category.
- A **Context** category is hierarchically higher and is realized more saliently than a **Previous Event** category.
- A **Previous Event** category is hierarchically higher and is realized more saliently than a **History** category.

STAGING TYPE II

In staging type II, schematic salience does not coincide with the canonical hierarchy of news categories. That is to say, the two slots of *news upstage* and *news downstage* witness stage manipulation as a result of communicative situation constraints. Accordingly, some categories would be staged differently: more saliently, signaling lower grounding-values, or less saliently, signaling higher grounding-values. Thus:

- Components of a **Main Event** category (e.g. ME 2) are realized less saliently, that is, later in the text, and after the realization of other schema categories (with the exception of the **Association** category).
- A **Context** category is realized more saliently, that is, earlier in the text, and after the realization of the first component of **Main Event** and before the realization of other schema categories.
- A **Previous Event** category is realized more saliently, that is, before the realization of a **Context** category.
- A **History** category is realized more saliently, that is, before the realization of a **Previous Event** category.

2.6 Some Manifestations of News Schematic Salience

We are now in a position to examine a number of short news items for schematic manifestations of grounding. News categories vary in their hierarchical position and hence salience. (On the behaviour of some schematic categories (Event, Background, and Verbal Reaction), see Duszak 1991.) Categorial organization is therefore crucial in showing how grounding is signaled in text syntax. The texts we examine illustrate some operations of categorial organization in both types of staging.

SEGMENTATION OF CERTAIN STRUCTURES

Since in this section as well as in other chapters we examine several texts, it would be necessary to explain here our approach to their segmentation. Units beginning a new paragraph are indented. Sentences and constituents set off by commas are numbered. Many of the constituents correspond to a proposition, which is the smallest unit of communication and is typically expressed by a clause (cf. Callow and Callow 1992); it consists of one predicate/verb and a number of arguments. We also numbered constituents in sentence-initial position.

By focussing on entities in initial position, we did not examine those in non-initial position such as relative clauses and appositions. However, we did divide all sentences of the text into constituents with the exception of those that are quotations. These are embedded participants' contributions and not the writer's management of the structure of the sentence. So sentences that consist of quotations and manifest internal structure are not segmented as the following example shows:

BRASILIA (AP)— "A new central American peace initiative has been drawn up and talks for a regional settlement could be renewed by the end of the month", Foreign Minister Carlos José Gutiérrez of Costa Rica said here Thursday.

In fact, this sentence is the lead sentence of **T41**, which is not a quotation, hence it is segmented as follows:

BRASILIA (AP)— (1) **1a** A new central American peace initiative has been drawn up **1b** and talks for a regional settlement could be renewed by the end of the month, Foreign Minister Carlos José Gutiérrez of Costa Rica said here Thursday.

Although both segments 1a and 1b seem to be ascribed to the participant in the event, they are not quotations. It is therefore possible or probable that the writer of the news text has *selected* these features in both segments from different information that is available about the declaration of the foreign minister and *assembled* them together, that is, (re)constructed the event, namely the declaration ascribed to the official.

In both direct (i.e. non-embedded) and indirect (i.e. embedded) speech we did not segment separately declarative main clauses (i.e. clauses containing a verb of saying or a 'communication verb' (see Banfield 1982) such as *say*, *express*, *warn*, whether in sentence-initial position (that is, an

embedding speech act clause), where the sentence in indirect speech has a complementizer and a subordinate clause, as in: *The minister told Parliament Thursday that ...*, or in sentence-final position (that is, a parenthetical speech act clause) as *the government has announced* in the following lead sentence of **T2**.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)— (1) **1a** Tamil guerrillas have blown up a railroad bridge near Jaffna, **1b** disrupting deliveries of food and fuel supplies to the northern capital, the government has announced.

Since we are concerned with the events and states of affairs that are presented, and not with the speech act itself, we did not separate the declarative main clause from the subordinate clause (*he said that x*, or *x he said* (see Sanders and Redeker 1996: 299)). These features are outside the scope of the present study. (For the phenomenon of quoting and reporting, see Banfield 1982 and Fludernik 1993.)

SALIENCE IN STAGING TYPE I

In staging type I, the salience of schema categories corresponds in a decreasing fashion with the grounding-values that are assigned to propositions in the FG-BG structure. So *news upstage* and *news downstage* are the slots for categories that subsume respectively *foreground* and *background* propositions. Consider **T3**.

T3

Nicaraguan Politician Backs Rebels

WASHINGTON (WP)— (1) **1a** Arturo José Cruz, **1b** leader of the democratic opposition to the Nicaraguan government, has shifted his position to endorse continued U.S. funding for the rebels fighting the Sandinist government.

(2) Mr. Cruz said it would be "a terrible political mistake" to end the U.S. aid program before the Soviet bloc halted aid to the Nicaraguan government.

(3) He also asked other governments and private organizations to demand steps toward democratic reform as a condition for further aid to Nicaragua.

(4) **4a** His support was a help to the Reagan administration, **4b** which regards continued rebel attacks as crucial to its policy of pressuring the Sandinists toward regional peace talks and domestic political concessions.

(5) Mr. Cruz had previously said that the rebels provided the Sandinists with an excuse to tighten repression.

The text exhibits three schema categories: **Main Event** (S1-S3), **Context** (S4), and **Previous Event** (S5). The organization of these categories shows a gradual decrease in salience that corresponds with the typical hierarchical structure of news schemata and the canonical staging of categories. Thus, the **Context** category is subsequent to the **Main Event** category and prior to the **Previous Event** category. In addition, the text shows a **Main Event** category whose components are not scattered: The propositions that are assigned to this category are expressed in several adjacent sentences. The clustering of components of the **Main Event** category and of propositions that belong to the same topic preclude topic-shift.

The *foreground* proposition, that denotes the main and most recent event, is expressed in the lead sentence (1a). It maps information that is cognitively or pragmatically relevant to the goals of the writer, and hence it is considered most newsworthy. *Midground* propositions are expressed in 1b (identification of participants) and in sentences S2 and S3 (specification of the main speech event). They are hierarchically lower than the thing added to. *Background* propositions are expressed in sentences S4 (political context) and S5 (anterior event). They provide the political context that makes the shift of *Mr. Cruz*— and what he says— politically intelligible for readers. They explain the significance of the information that is mapped as a *foreground* proposition. **T3** thus demonstrates the news convention of expressing *background* meaning in the last segment (viz. sentence or paragraph), and hence as *news downstage*.

NEWS AND THE ASSOCIATION CATEGORY

We examine now a distinct feature of salience in staging type I, namely *background* propositions that are assigned to an **Association** category. This category is always realized in the end of the text as *news downstage* and hence it is the least salient schema category. *Background* propositions that are assigned to this category are usually not covered by the topic. Their inclusion in the semantic representation is because they are considered interesting and relevant enough to serve a grounding function as the *background end of the continuum*. This feature is illustrated by **T20**.

T20

Greek Tanker Hit by Iraqi Missile

KUWAIT (Combined Dispatches)— (1) A missile fired by an Iraqi warplane damaged a Greek oil tanker Monday near Iran's main oil export facility in the Gulf, it was reported here.

- (2) Greek officials in Athens confirmed that the Greek tanker Fairship-1 had been seriously damaged in an attack while en route to the Kharg Island oil terminal.
- (3) None of the 26 crew members aboard the 132,000-ton tanker was hurt.
- (4) The attack followed a week of heavy land fighting in the Gulf war.
- (5) **5a** The Iraqi News Agency, **5b** in a report monitored Monday in Kuwait, quoted an Iraqi general as saying that his brigade had destroyed two Iranian army units in a battle last week, **5c** killing more than 1,500 men.
- (6) **6a** He said the battlefield, **6b** in the central front, was "littered with Iranian dead soldiers."
- (7) **7a** Meanwhile, **7b** there were reports that a fresh diplomatic effort was underway to end the war.
- (8) In Kuwait, the newspaper Al-Seyassah said Sunday that France, Saudi Arabia and Algeria were working on a plan for talks with the support of the six-nation Gulf cooperation Council. (UPI, AFP)

Table 1 presents the FG-BG structure as well as the schema structure of the text.

sentence/ constituent	FG-BG structure	Schema categories
S1	FG	Main Event
S2	MG	Main Event
S3	MG	Main Event
S4	BG	Previous Event
S5 5a,5b,5c	BG	Previous Event
S6 6a,6b	BG	Previous Event
S7	BG	Association
S8	BG	Association

Table 1 The FG-BG structure and categorial organization in T20

The text manifests a canonical organization of schema categories from the most salient **Main Event** category that subsumes propositions of the first three sentences to a less salient **Previous Event** category that subsumes propositions of the next three sentences, and finally to the least salient **Association** category that subsumes propositions of the last two sentences. The text also manifests a gradual downward progression from FG to BG. The *foreground* proposition that refers to the main and most recent event

about the missile that hit a Greek tanker is expressed in S1. It is also the meaning (i.e. the macroproposition) that is expressed in the headline. Propositions expressed in sentences S2 and S3 provide a specification and reformulation of the main event referred to in the *foreground* proposition and hence they are *midground*. *Background* meanings in the text start with the proposition expressed in S4, which refers to an anterior event. The propositions expressed in sentences S5 and S6 also have a *background* interpretation, since they refer to details of the anterior event.

In the last paragraph (S7 and S8) propositions denote unrelated events, hence they represent a digression from what preceded, and hence they represent the *background end of the continuum*. They are assigned to an **Association** category. The proposition expressed in S7 maps general information about diplomatic efforts in the Gulf area, and that in S8 specifies these efforts. It relates only to the immediately preceding proposition.

It is significant to note that **T20** demonstrates that shifting between schema categories may, though not necessarily, denote a shift in topic, while a shift in topic always denotes a shift in schema categories, such as in the case of the **Association** category. Apart from that, the text shows that, while writers update their event model with new or recent developments (for reasons such as assumptions about readers' lack of knowledge), they may include in the semantic representation propositions that map relevant information to properties of the present context model. This information has a very low degree of importance, given other information about facts, events, situations, or objects, i.e. models, that writers know and that they have mapped before as *foreground*, *midground*, or other *background* propositions.

SALIENCE IN STAGING TYPE II

As we explained earlier, pragmatic considerations may constrain the organization of schema categories and lead to different— more 'drastic'— staging operations and hence influence the way FG-BG meanings are signaled in news texts. This is the case in staging type II, where the hierarchy of schema categories does not coincide in a decreasing fashion with the grounding-values assigned to propositions in the FG-BG structure. *News upstage* would be the slot for schema categories that subsume *background* propositions (that are *foregrounded*), and *news downstage* would be the slot for schema categories that subsume *midground* propositions (that are *backgrounded*). An example of the latter is when some components of a

recursive **Main Event** category are expressed as part of *news downstage* and the propositions assigned to them are *midground*.

An example of the first is when a **Context** category is realized as part of *news upstage*. This is evident in the lead sentence of T6.

T6

Soviet Union Cuts Prices on 2 Cars

MOSCOW (AP)— (1) **1a** The Soviet authorities cut prices Tuesday on cars, **1b** one of the most coveted consumer possessions here.

(2) Prices of two brands of automobile were slashed by up to 28 percent, effective immediately.

(3) But the cuts still left the lowest prices 14 times above the average monthly wage of 180 rubles (\$207).

(4) **4a** The cuts were made in prices of the Niva, **4b** a four-wheel-drive vehicle, and the Zaporozhets, **4c** the smallest Soviet passenger car with a rear engine.

(5) **5a** Neither kind of car is very popular, **5b** and can be purchased on demand, **5c** without the long waiting lists necessary to get the top-selling passenger car, **5d** the Zhiguli, **5e** which is based on the old Fiat 124.

The lead sentence is the locus for two different schema categories, namely **Main Event** and **Context**. The compactness of the news text may lead to the realization of two categories within one sentence. The propositions assigned to these two categories have different grounding-values: 1a is *foreground* (main event) and 1b is *background* (a comment statement). By realizing a **Context** category early in the schematic structure of the text, and prior to realizing other components of the **Main Event** category, the writer assigns the context function more salience than it usually has and in so doing shows the necessity that readers get the meaning (expressed) first and infer that it is also most relevant to the main goal at this point in text. It gets pragmatic focus, that is, it becomes 'the object speaker and hearer have foregrounded cognitively' (van Dijk 1981: 185) in this specific context. It is a case of *foregrounded background* meaning. Though mapping less important information, the proposition in 1b becomes more informative.

Pragmatic considerations may also constrain the organization of the **Main Event** category. Consider T9.

T9

Beijing Student Dispute Is Resolved

BEIJING (AFP)— (1) **1a** Authorities at a Beijing university have an-

nounced a compromise with students on a dispute over educational stipends **1b** that had led students to defy a ban on putting up wall posters.

(2) **2a** Observers said that the university's response to the protest was consistent with a slight loosening of controls on the freedom of expression **2b** that has followed recent economic reforms.

(3) **3a** The student protest centered on the University's carrying out of an Educational Ministry directive **3b** eliminating monthly stipends of 18 yuan (slightly more than \$ 6) during winter and summer breaks.

(4) **4a** Under the compromise, **4b** some of the money saved by the elimination of the stipends will go to needy students.

Table 2 displays the schema structure and the way the FG-BG structure is signaled in **T9**.

sentence/ constituent		FG-BG structure	Schema categories
S1	1a	FG	Main Event Previous Event
	1b	BG	
S2	2a	MG	Verbal Reaction
	2b		
S3	3a	BG	Context
	3b		
S4	4a	MG	Main Event
	4b		

Table 2 The FG-BG structure and categorial organization in **T9**

Two schema categories co-exist in the lead sentence of **T9**, namely **Main Event** and **Previous Event**. The latter category is realized immediately after the realization of the first component of a recursive **Main Event**. This demonstrates that some schema categories that are usually less salient compete 'for an early appearance in the text' (Duszak 1991: 518) and hence for more salience. One component of the **Main Event** category is expressed in the last sentence. The proposition expressed in S4 is *midground* since it is a specification of the main and most recent event referred to in the proposition of the lead sentence. It relates directly to the macroproposition (see van Dijk 1980) expressed early in the text. Organizing this component of the **Main Event** in the end of the text manifests the writer's perspective on *midground* meaning as being less infor-

mative (than it usually is). Expressed after expressing the *background* propositions of S3, *midground* meaning is tantamount to an *after thought* that eventually could be deleted. Realizing other schema categories more saliently intervenes between the expression of *foreground* meaning and *midground* meaning. This provides evidence for what we said before that pragmatic relevance may take precedence over semantic hierarchy. It also illustrates that categorial organization may bring about topic fragmentation. The meaning expressed in S4 of T9 does not denote a direct relation with the meaning expressed in S3. The last sentence, of course, could have been expressed immediately after the lead sentence—a change that would have shown a preference for a clustering of **Main Event** components and a continuity of reference (i.e. *the compromise*) in both sentences.

Pragmatic considerations may constrain the organization of schema categories other than the **Main Event**. This is evident in T57.

T57

India Rejected Union Carbide Offer

NEW DELHI (AFP)— (1) **1a** India's decision to sue Union Carbide was taken **1b** after it had spurned a "ridiculously low" company offer of compensation for the Bhopal gas disaster, a minister told Parliament here Tuesday.

(2) The lawsuit for unspecified damages and compensation was filed in a New York court Monday on behalf of the Indian government.

(3) **3a** However, Veerendra Patil, **3b** minister of chemicals and fertilizers, said that an out-of-court settlement was possible if the U.S. company agreed to pay an adequate amount to the victims of the world's worst industrial accident.

(4) **4a** An estimated 2,500 people died and more than 200,000 others were affected **4b** when poisonous methyl isocyanate gas leaked from a Union Carbide pesticides plant in the central Indian city on Dec. 3.

(5) **5a** There has been no official confirmation of the amount offered by Union Carbide, **5b** but the Indian Express newspaper reported last week that it amounted to about 3 billion rupees (\$ 250 million) to be paid out over 30 years.

Both the superstructure and the FG-BG structure of T57 are displayed in Table 3.

sentence/ constituent		FG-BG structure	schema categories
S1	1a	FG	Main Event
	1b	BG	Previous Event
S2		MG	Main Event
S3	3a	MG	Verbal Reaction
	3b		
S4	4a	BG	History Context
	4b		
S5	5a	BG	Previous Event
	5b		

Table 3 The FG-BG structure and categorial organization in T57

The lead sentence consists of two schema categories: A **Main Event** that subsumes a proposition about the lawsuit against *Union Carbide* and a **Previous Event** that subsumes a proposition about the rejection of the company's offer of compensation. A component of the **Main Event** category is realized in S2, and of the **Previous Event** in S5. In terms of grounding, a *background* proposition has been *foregrounded* in the semantic structure and expressed in the lead sentence. On the other hand, *background* propositions expressed in the last sentence are about details of the anterior event referred to in the *background* proposition in the lead sentence.

Given the structure of facts or events, the propositions in 4a and 4b are *background*: they refer to an anterior (cause) event. They are assigned respectively to **History** and **Context** categories. The anterior event is referred to prior to details of *background* meaning about the more recent event that is expressed in S5. This provides further evidence that pragmatic and cognitive constraints, i.e. relevance considerations, may determine the order in which schema categories appear in news texts. By giving priority to a **History** category and realizing it more saliently, the *background* proposition that is assigned to it is saliently signaled. Because of the manipulation of schema categories in the process of staging, a discontinuity occurs between meanings expressed in S4 and S5.

On the other hand, if we rearrange the order of categories and place the component of the **Previous Event** category in S5 immediately after the

lead sentence, we would change the perspective of the writer on the events reported. The change would *delay* the introduction of another component of the **Main Event** category that subsumes a proposition about the lawsuit (S2), which is presumably more important as well as relevant, and hence it gets an early position in the text.

The perspective that writers take towards events and the differentiation in salience that they make among categories may be apparent in the categories of **Headline** and **Main Event** of T57. Two propositions referring to highly important events (viz. the lawsuit and *India's* rejection of the offer) compete with each other for expression in the **Headline** category. The writer, however, shows a preference for the latter to be signaled most saliently in the **Headline**. The event that is referred to in a *background* proposition in the lead sentence is considered more newsworthy than the more recent event about the decision to sue the company that is referred to in a *foreground* proposition in the same sentence. The information about the *rejection event* is also considered more relevant— and hence the necessity that readers know it first— than other important information about the *lawsuit event*. The salient signaling of the proposition provides evidence that information relevance may sometimes take precedence over other considerations such as information recency.

Conclusion

In the foregoing sections we focussed on text-level organization features in terms of news schemata—the form that semantic structures take in short news texts. Categorical organization manifests how the FG-BG structure or distinction is signaled in terms of salience. We introduced *staging* as a key concept in the communicative strategy of signaling grounding. We made it clear that staging is not the *foreground(ing)* or *background(ing)* in semantic representations but the signaling thereof. We also distinguished between two types of staging that represent different strategies that writers apply in order to determine the signaling of grounding-values in short news texts. Being text-type specific, these organization-patterns need not characterize other types of text such as stories.

Although there is a gradual decrease in the salience of categories in the hierarchy, grounding-values need not always be signaled in a parallel fashion. Therefore, categorical organization and grounding-values need not coincide. For example, some top-level contextual meaning may have more importance—or rather relevance—in a specific communicative situation and hence the category to which the semantic representation is assigned will be saliently expressed, while some specifics of the main event are relegated to a later position.

Communicating grounding, then, has to do with the perspective of writers and the pragmatics of discourse where relevance plays an important role and may take precedence over semantic hierarchy and grounding-value. This explains why propositions that are expressed in the *news up-stage* slot may sometimes have a low grounding-value. Knowledge also plays a role in communicating grounding by means of schema categories and in determining the salience of these categories in the news text. For example in **T6** cited earlier, the fact or information about the *Zhiguli*—that it is a top-selling car—is important, yet in the particular communicative situation, the **Verbal Reaction** category that subsumes its semantic representation is presented from the writer's perspective or distance (based on his or her knowledge and assumptions) non-saliently.

Pragmatic constraints on the salience of schema categories and hence on the signaling of the FG-BG structure may also influence text coherence. This may be evident in topic organization (clustering/fragmentation) and the (absence of a) relation between adjacent textual propositions. It often

occurs 'that one schematic category subsumes topical meanings that are realized across discontinuous text segments' (Duszak 1991: 515). Our analysis of short news items shows that primarily the **Main Event** category tends to be discontinuously presented. It also shows that this category may coincide with the **Context** category at a very high level of salience, namely in the lead sentence. This provides evidence that *foreground* and *background* propositions may be selected for prominent expression in the lead sentence on the basis of different criteria: namely, high importance (semantic 'importance') as well as high relevance (pragmatic 'importance') of information. On the other hand, the analysis shows that a **History** schema category does not tend to coincide with the **Main Event** category in the same sentence.

It should be noted that the later position in text manifests— perhaps clearer than the earlier position— the manipulation of schema categories to produce stage effects. The later position, signaling a lower degree of salience, features the following three patterns of organizing grounding-values:

1. *background* meaning (subsumed under a category such as **History**).
2. *midground* meaning that is *backgrounded* (subsumed under a recursive category such as **Main Event**).
3. *background* meaning based on pragmatically relevant information in the present context. The inclusion of this information as textual propositions manifests the influence of the structure of knowledge on the structure of text. These propositions are assigned to an **Association** category. The analysis shows that that category is always realized in a separate sentence or paragraph in the end of the text.

So far we have seen the manipulation of global organizers of content, i.e. schemata, for grounding-signaling purposes. Since other levels of the actual production process are crucial in the production of stage effects in text, we examine in the next chapter certain surface structure features that pertain to communicative syntax, namely syntactic cues that have potential for signaling grounding at text-level in sentence-initial position.

Syntactic Manifestations of Text-Level Grounding

3.1 Introduction

The main thrust of this chapter is to examine a number of syntactic structures as far as the expression of meanings in terms of grounding is concerned. Since the ground is more frequent in text than the figure (Givón 1990), and given the assumption that in the Modern English system it is preferred to mark the *background* rather than the *foreground*, in the sense that it could be 'more difficult to point at an explicit foreground marker' (Wårvik 1990: 572), the main question to be addressed is *how background is signaled in the surface structure* of news texts. We will therefore examine constituents that tend to associate with *background* meanings in these texts and focus on those that occur as sentence-initial markers. They are part of text syntax and are assumed to serve crucial text-level grounding-signaling functions. Other possible manifestations of grounding at a local or lexical level will not be dealt with.

Our examination of sentence-initial markers corroborates that of schemata in the previous chapter. Although the syntactic manifestations that we examine represent a general tendency and not absolute rules, the assumption is that part of syntax is pragmatically motivated, that there is a relation between syntactic form and discourse function (see e.g. Green 1982; Gundel 1985), and that one important discourse function that syntax may serve is to signal distinctions in grounding-values. Text-level grounding, then, may be syntactically encoded and sentence-initial markers are an important manifestation of it.

The communicative strategy that employs syntax to encode grounding may also employ the location of the sentence in the sequence. It may therefore be said that text-level grounding is not only *syntactically* but also *locationally* encoded. Staging operations manipulate sentence structure as well as sentence order to express grounding. Constituents in sentence-initial position play an important role in these operations. Certain sentence-initial markers are expected to be indicative of staging operations and to

signal the FG-BG distinction.

In addition, sentence-initial markers provide readers with clues as to how writers package, segment, and re-construct facts or events. This raises the question of intentionality to signal relationships at that position. The news writer may be like a narrator who, at times, may not take an 'explicit responsibility' for causal connection and 'is merely a recorder of events and not of their relationship' (Prince 1982.:40). To interpret the relationships among propositions, the reader of course 'has only the final edited form of the text and is without access to the writer for further clarification' (Meyer 1985: 66). Indeed, the only access to the speaker's or writer's cognitive structuring is via the utterance or the text which is used to express that structuring (see Brown and Yule 1983). It is significant to note that the intentions of writers and the expectations of readers are issues that raise the question as to how far the FG-BG distinction might— or ought to— be signaled at sentence-initial position.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

The organization of this chapter will be as follows. In 3.2 we address the question of text-level features of grounding. Thus we examine the textual role of sentence structure as far as grounding-signaling is concerned. Subsequently, we discuss the importance of sentence-initial position, and present an overview of entities that appear in that position in the sample. We also distinguish between prominence in sentence and in text. In 3.3 we distinguish between two entities in initial position in terms of the two types of staging, namely *sequential descending* and *sequential ascending*. Then in section 3.4 we start to address the question of inter-sentential signaling of grounding in short news items by focussing first on entities that provide what we call weak signals of grounding. In 3.5 we explore the role of a certain class of initial markers in signaling *background* across sentence-boundaries, and in 3.6 we illustrate the functions that the different types of markers fulfil. Finally, in 3.7 we examine the markers that signal the *background end of the continuum* and their relation with other markers that may initiate subsequent sentences.

3.2 Text-Level Surface Structure Features of Grounding

3.2.1 The Textual Role of Sentence Structure in Signaling the FG-BG Structure

Communicating grounding— as part of communicating the intended meaning— depends on the way sentences and their constituents are organized in text: syntactically and locationally. Within the sentence— characterized by the orthographic boundaries of a capital letter and a period— several constituents may be available to signal how the FG-BG structure is intended to be received and interpreted. The following lead sentence of T35 gives an idea of the textual role that sentence structure may play in signaling the FG-BG distinction.

ATHENS (Reuters)— (1) **1a** Police defused a small bomb found outside the West German Embassy in Athens **1b** after telephone tipoffs to Greek newspapers.

In a typical news text, the lead sentence expresses *foreground* meaning (the main, most recent event) before *background* meaning (a preceding event). Though the information underlying *background* is less important than that about the action of the police and their success in defusing the bomb, it still has current relevance and immediate concern for readers, and hence its propositional mapping is prominently expressed in the lead sentence. In order to express meaning in that position, the writer uses the adverbial subordinator *after*, and nominalizes the clause *after Greek newspapers had been tipped off* (see Enkvist 1987a,b). This shows what may be referred to as a telescoped event or rather a *neutralized event*, where an action verb has been nominalized (see Comrie and Thompson 1985).

Subordination, of course, is 'a grammatical means by which to communicate different levels of thematicity' (Beekman et al. 1981: 25). It may be also employed in order to express semantic representations in terms of grounding, i.e. *background* meaning, relative to surrounding structures that may express other grounding-values. Cognitive constraints, for example taking readers' knowledge for granted, are a possible basis for the low degree of information importance. They may motivate expressing *background* meaning in subordinate structures— as distinct from asserted meaning expressed in a main clause (see Dillon 1981: 129ff). It should nevertheless be added that although subordinate or embedded clauses may

be presupposed (see Reinhart 1984), this need not necessarily be always the case (for various expressions of presupposed information, see Givón 1989: 132; see also Matthiessen and Thompson 1988). In terms of grounding, subordinate clauses such as the following one (Luraghi 1995: 365) may signal *foreground* meaning, mapping important information:

John was skiing, when he fell and broke his leg.

Although a postposed adverbial may express the most important piece of information in the sentence (see Levinsohn 1992), a subordinate structure in news discourse usually expresses meanings that are lower on the FG-BG continuum, as (1b) of **T35** shows. But since 'the sentence not only expresses its own meaning but also the multiple links it has with the whole text and communicative context' (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 285), the textual role of sentence structure in signaling the FG-BG distinction is apparent primarily across sentence-boundaries. These boundaries are the locus for powerful signals of how meanings are packaged, segmented and expressed in the whole text. Sentence-boundaries, then, are important indicators of text-level features of grounding. The assumption—and expectation—is that constituents that appear in initial position, such as adverbials, have the potential for providing crucial signals of text-level grounding (see 3.6).

3.2.2 The Importance of Sentence-Initial Position

Since constituents in sentence-initial position are assumed to have the potential for playing a crucial role in signaling the FG-BG distinction across sentence-boundaries, it would be useful to refer briefly to a few general features or factors—from different perspectives and levels of analysis—that account for the importance of initial position. Primary among these are the following ones.

1- Initial position in the sentence is associated with syntactic as well as semantic functional categories (syntactic roles, e.g. Subject; semantic roles, e.g. Agent). It is P1 placement in the order of constituents in functional grammar (see e.g. Dik 1978, 1980) and may be occupied by constituents that vary in discourse status: It is used in some languages for topic, but may in the same languages also be used for contrast (= focal) in

spoken discourse (See Mackenzie & Keizer 1991). Sentential topics, of course, may coincide with the grammatical subject (see e.g. Brown and Yule 1983).

2- Sentence-initial position is determined by the choice of what is given, old, or known information, as well as by the bipartition of the utterance into a Topic-Comment structure. The Topic, which is usually expressed first by a single lexical item namely the subject, tends to be associated with known information, and the Comment, which is usually expressed by the predicate, pertains to what is said about the Topic and is usually associated with new information. So an entity in initial position (e.g. a noun phrase) represents a choice of information as a point of departure of the message expressed in the sentence (Fries 1983). At the level of discourse topic, that entity may be occupied by important notions or participants (see van Dijk 1984). Therefore, Agents, Subjects, Sentence Topics tend to come first. They may denote a main participant contribution to the events referred to in several subsequent sentences. Apart from that, initial position or the earlier position in a string may be reserved for information that is less predictable and more important (Givón 1988). This, of course, depends on text-type and contextual constraints.

3- As part of a string, an entity in initial position contributes to the development of communication and has a low degree of communicative dynamism (CD) (see Firbas 1964). CD is one of the basic concepts of the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) (see Daněš 1987, 1989). This theory 'deals with how the semantic and syntactic structures of the sentence function in fulfilling the communicative purpose intended for the sentence' (Firbas 1986: 40).

4- Entities in initial position may vary in the degree of relation they express with other entities referred to in textual propositions and hence contribute in varying degrees to the expression of text coherence. While an initial entity may refer to an entity referred to elsewhere— denoting sub and resumed topics (Mackenzie & Keizer 1991: 179)— it may also be among 'discontinuity markers' (see Hustinx 1996), or it may lead to the production of less coherent texts, for example by obliterating many of the relations that exist among events, states and objects.

5- Sentence-initial position may play an important role in staging and in the strategy that employs the initial slot in order to distinguish among entities in the strength of signaling grounding at that position. In this respect, we suggest that there is resemblance or parallelism between what we call strong as well as weak signals of grounding and what has been referred to as marked (= non-subject) and unmarked (= subject) themes (for this, see Fries 1995). Fries (1995: 62-63) explains:

'Circumstances are very likely to be expressed either as subordinate clauses (of purpose, time, cause, etc.), or as Adverbials. In either case (whether expressed by subordinate clauses or Adverbials), when they occur initially, they are marked Themes. On the other hand, when one moves to elaboration, one usually finds that some item is introduced in an earlier clause, and that, in the elaboration, this item becomes the Subject of some following clause. When Subjects are Themes of statements, they are unmarked Themes.'

Weak signals of grounding at initial position include entities that are labelled as (unsigned) *theme* (see e.g. Halliday 1967). As will become apparent, marked themes coincide with constituents that we refer to as strong signals of the FG-BG articulation in text (see Table 1 below). They serve as sentence-initial markers and signal grounding across sentence-boundaries, that is, relative to other grounding-values expressed elsewhere in the text.

It may therefore be said that sentence-initial position may be occupied by markers that demonstrate the textual role of sentence structure in signalling the FG-BG distinction. As we will see in the next two chapters, sentence-initial position in Arabic news texts may be occupied by a particular class of markers. These markers manifest the influence of perspective on syntactic organization and hence on the establishment of a certain *grounding-angle* from which events and states of affairs referred to in propositions are seen. The use of these markers, then, may constrain the interpretation of the grounding-value a certain proposition has.

3.2.2.1 *The Distribution of Entities in Initial Position*

We surveyed all entities that occur in sentence-initial position in the *International Herald Tribune* (IHT) sample. Table 1 presents an overview of them.

Category	Number	percentage
1- NPs and other forms*	344}	} weak signals
2- Direct speech	16} = 360	86.1 % } of grounding
<hr/>		
3- Participles	2}	}
4- Adverbial clauses	4}	} strong signals
5- Adverbials **	35} = 41	9.8 % } of grounding
<hr/>		
6- Connectives and sentential adverbials***	17}	4.1 %
<hr/>		
Total number of entities	418	100.0 %

Table 1 The distribution of entities in sentence-initial position in the *IHT* sample

* Other forms that appear sentence-initially in this category are proper nouns, personal pronouns, possessor pronouns, adjectives as NP heads, quantifiers and numerals preceding the NP, a NP having a degree adverb or a prepositional complement (e.g. *At least 34 people*), a prepositional adverb (e.g. *About 70 people*), demonstratives.

** Included in this category are: time adverbs (2), adverbials of time (15), and adverbials of place (18).

*** They are: *meanwhile* (5), *but* (6), *however* (3), *also* (2), and *nonetheless* (1)

Table 1 presents three main categories of entities in sentence-initial position:

1- Entities that are part of the main clause such as noun phrases. They are the majority in the sample. The assumption is that they do not provide clear and strong signals of the FG-BG distinction. We refer to them as weak signals of grounding at initial position. Excluded from the count are entities that are text-initial, since the lead sentence does not usually contain special initial markers. In the *IHT* sample, entities that are text-initial are invariably of the main clause. The proposition expressed in that clause usually has *foreground* interpretation. Constituents that may express *background* meaning and that may occur in the lead sentence occupy non-ini-

tial position, as we saw before.

2- Entities that belong to a special class of markers such as adverbials. Their frequency is rather low. We refer to them as sentence-initial markers since they are assumed to be strong grounding-signaling devices. Included in the category of adverbials are entities that have the form of a prepositional phrase (a preposition and a noun phrase) and serve as adverbials: abstract and concrete locative prepositional phrases. This is similar to Virtanen (1992b), who found that the large majority of adverbials in her data were prepositional phrases, e.g. *In the morning*, *On Friday*, *On the wall*.

3- Entities that represent a few varied markers. Among significant features that they have in common is their occurrence in sentence-initial position and their having a close relationship with the clause they preface. It is the clause as a whole at the head of which they appear that expresses a certain grounding-value.

THE MARKERS WE EXAMINED

We examined the markers that appear in the second category (3-5) in Table 1. Though they may contribute to text cohesion and coherence, we focussed on their potential for signaling **text-level grounding**. So we examined them in terms of grounding-values and not in terms of old or new information expressed for example by an initial subordinate structure. Parenthetically, the news texts we examined do not manifest initial adverbial clauses that function in discourse to relate an upcoming event to the already established temporal line: an orienting (e.g. *when*) clause (see Thompson 1987). Although we focussed on the markers in the second category, reference will also be made to markers in the first category that provide weak signals of grounding. Comparison will be made in chapter 5 with the special category of markers in Arabic news texts.

3.2.3 Prominence in Sentence and Text

As surface structure mechanisms that have the potential for signaling text-level grounding, sentence-initial markers are related to prominence, which is a property of surface structure. Examining how the FG-BG articulation is signaled in surface structure prominence requires that we make a distinc-

tion between prominence in the sentence and in the text.

Sentence- (or below sentence-) level prominence is local and is defined in terms of individual lexical items. An entity may be preposed, hence it gets more attention and gains some 'topical prominence' because the information in context models is new or newsworthy. Therefore the writer wanted to emphasize it. In this case, emphasis is realized by grammatical (= syntactic) means (see Erdmann 1990). A preposed entity may also be for (contrastive) focus.

It should be added, however, that this is contrary to the general rule as to the usual organization of the sentence according to the Communicative Dynamism, manifesting a gradual increase in the contribution of a certain entity. The order of individual entities belonging to functional categories has to do with the 'patterning of the sentence into the theme and the rheme' (Mathesius 1975: 82) in terms of the theory of Functional Sentence Perspective.

The occurrence of a certain entity in sentence-initial position may also have to do with local, sequential coherence relations within the sentence. A prepositional phrase, for example, may be more appropriate in that position because it is a 'light' constituent that leads to a more 'heavy' one in a final position. This is in accordance with the Maxim of End-weight that operates on the syntactic level, namely that 'light' constituents precede 'heavy' ones (Leech 1983: 65).

These features of syntactic structure have less to do with prominence in text. They do not accommodate the way whole textual propositions— not even in a sequence— are prominently and non-prominently expressed. What is at issue in prominence that signals text-level grounding is not the 'weight' of the constituent but the distribution of text meanings that are assigned relative grounding-values and expressed in surface structure as *news upstage* and *news downstage*. In this regard, manipulating **sentence-(constituent) order** (viz. **text structure**) rather than **word-order** (viz. **sentence structure**) in terms of subject-predicate would manifest how grounding is signaled in surface structure prominence.

In organizing constituents, an adverbial may be placed in sentence-initial position. But even if the adverbial denotes a marked sentential structure, it may have an optimal textual fit and becomes textually unmarked (Virtanen 1992b: 28) because of other high-level constraints on signaling grounding. So the placement of the adverbial in initial position may not necessarily be because the underlying information is known— it may quite

well be new and unknown before—but because of the writer's *perspective*, that is the *grounding angle*, as to how *background* meaning in text is to be expressed. After all, the text-based *grounding angle* that readers capture pertains to whole events and states of affairs referred to in propositions and not to individual participants, for example.

In fact, the difference between prominence in sentence and in text echoes the difference between grounding in terms of single concepts and textual propositions. A participant may be held in high focus by continued reference, but this does not assign *foreground* interpretation to the proposition, since meaning about the referent may map less important information, and, accordingly, the proposition would be assigned *background* interpretation relative to other surrounding propositions. Thus, referential expressions that are in focus (Marslen-Wilson et al. 1982), that realize topic continuity (Givón 1983a), or that maintain reference within a particular episode (Tomlin 1987), may coincide with different degrees of information importance, different grounding-values, and eventually more or less prominence.

The preceding discussion makes it apparent that the prominence in sentence and in text are distinct from each other and that they are defined respectively for single *concepts* or *words* and for *propositions*. It should nevertheless be added that there may be links between both, and that for example an initial adverbial that is thematical (viz. topically important), may also often be locally or sententially prominent in that position in the sentence. It may, in addition, be textually prominent if the sentence that it prefaces is located early in the text.

SYNTACTIC PROMINENCE MAPPING RULES

Differences between prominence in sentence and in text raise the question of rules for mapping syntactic structures as to having greater or lesser prominence. At issue are three related features that show how grounding-values are expressed in surface structure prominence:

- 1- hierarchy within the sentence, that is, as high (main clause) or low (subordinate clause).
- 2- position within the sentence, that is, left-right in sentence structure, whereby syntactic manipulation may include constituent fronting.
- 3- location in text, that is, early (as part of *news upstage*) or late (as part of *news downstage*).

The three features are presented below in terms of sentential and textual prominence.

I. Sentential prominence

(1) Constituent hierarchy:

A main clause is hierarchically higher than a subordinate clause or any other constituent (e.g. a prepositional phrase).

(2) Constituent prominence:

A subordinate structure in sentence-initial position is more prominent relative to the following main clause.

II. Textual prominence

(3) Sentence-initial markers:

A sentence-initial marker, though locally or sententially is more prominent, may be globally or textually non-prominent, if it occurs later in text. The earlier its location in text (and of course the location of the host clause of the marker), the higher its textual prominence and vice versa.

3.3 Initial Position and Types of Staging

Our discussion of initial position in the sentence implied that there is a relation between the kind of entity or constituent that occurs in that position and the type of staging in text. In chapter 2 we examined schematic salience and introduced two major types of staging. Here we examine syntactic prominence and distinguish two initial constituents in terms of the two types of staging:

A. a noun phrase, part of the main clause that encodes the main event in which participants are engaged. This is staging type I that expresses meaning in a *sequential descending pattern*.

B. a sentence-initial marker, for example an adverbial that encodes the context of the main event in which participants operate. This is staging type II that expresses meaning in a *sequential ascending pattern*.

The two patterns are readers' access to the measure of surface structure prominence that is assigned to various grounding-values. This involves the choice and manipulation of:

1- the *constituent* (e.g. a main clause, adverbial clause) that is suitable to express certain meanings.

- 2- the *position* of the constituent in the sentence (e.g. sentence-initially).
- 3- the *location* of the sentence in the text (e.g. early or late).

Given the importance of the lead sentence in the news text, we will illustrate the two patterns with the lead sentence and S2.

A. THE SEQUENTIAL DESCENDING PATTERN

In the *sequential descending pattern*, the entity that occurs in initial position in S2 is usually part of the main clause. It signals the introduction of *midground* meaning. This inter-sentential signaling of grounding-values in a gradual descending fashion, i.e. from *foreground* to *midground*, is illustrated as follows:

S1 *The president said that...*

S2 *He explained that...*

S2 expresses specifics of the event referred to in S1 and hence denotes a *midground* proposition. Thus, the degree of prominence of S2 coincides with decreasing grounding-values. Schematically, the propositions expressed in both sentences are assigned to a **Main Event** category (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 The *sequential descending pattern* of signaling grounding-values

Focussing on initial constituents, Figure 1 does not show other non-initial constituents that both sentences may have. Given the special traits of the short news item discussed in chapter two, the lead sentence in particular may include a constituent that expresses *background* meaning (see T6 cited in chapter 2). In this case, the *sequential descending pattern* would be interrupted intra-sententially and, in addition to *foreground* meaning,

the sentence would signal *foregrounded background* meaning, since *background* is prominently expressed, that is, in the direct vicinity of *foreground*, early in the text as part of *news upstage*.

Apart from that, expressing *background* in non-initial constituents may be construed as an evidence of a communicative strategy that does not interrupt the *sequential descending pattern* inter-sententially. S2 of **T19** will make this clear.

BEIRUT (AP)— (1) **1a** Prime Minister Rashid Karami has blamed an unjustified "market fever" for the recent weakness of the Lebanese pound **1b** and pledged government efforts to strengthen the country.

(2) **2a** Mr. Karami, **2b** in a radio broadcast after an eight-hour cabinet meeting, also said that several battalions of Lebanese soldiers were ready and waiting to "move immediately" into southern Lebanon **2c** when the Israeli occupation force is withdrawn.

The noun phrase in initial position in 2a denotes a continued reference to the same event and participant referred to in S1. The main clause at the head of which it appears expresses a proposition that is *midground* (specification, addition to the main speech event). The noun phrase provides readers with an early evidence of that grounding-value. It also makes clear that the *midground* proposition is assigned to a **Main Event** schema category. The syntactic structure of S2, then, manifests a *sequential descending pattern*, where *midground* (or rather part of it) follows *foreground* and is followed by *background* (occasion of the main event) subsumed under a **Context** schema category and expressed in the parenthetical structure 2b. By expressing *background* in a non-initial constituent, the writer does not affect (i.e. interrupt) the *sequential descending pattern* inter-sententially, that is, at sentence-boundaries.

B. THE SEQUENTIAL ASCENDING PATTERN

In the *sequential ascending pattern*, the constituent that occurs in initial position in S2 is a sentence-initial marker. It expresses *background* meaning and supersedes other constituents in the sentence that express *midground* meaning. Thus syntactic prominence manifests an increase in grounding-values: from *background* to *midground*. This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 The *sequential ascending pattern* of signaling grounding-values

Figure 2 shows both inter-sentential and intra-sentential realization of grounding-values: a shift from *foreground* meaning in S1 to *background* meaning expressed in an initial constituent in S2, then a shift to *midground* meaning expressed in a main clause in the sentence. As a consequence of expressing *background* in initial position in S2, *midground* is relegated to a later position in the sentence. Hence, the *sequential ascending pattern* separates at sentence-boundaries the expression of *foreground* from *midground*. Schematically, sentence-boundaries manifest two different categories: **Main Event** and **Context**. This pattern is illustrated by the reverse order of 2a and 2b in **T19** above:

S1 Prime Minister Rashid Karami has blamed...

S2 **2a** In a radio broadcast after an eight-hour cabinet meeting, **2b** Mr. Karami also said...

The *sequential ascending pattern* provides evidence for communicative situation constraints on the FG-BG structure, namely the occurrence of *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* operations in underlying semantic representations. It also shows a communicative prominence strategy that is intended inter alia to:

1- signal as prominent— or assign more prominence to— some *background* meaning that maps less important information, for example about circumstances. Due perhaps to pragmatic newsworthiness, the information acquires greater contextual or pragmatic relevance, and hence it is mapped in the semantic structure as having immediate concern. Expressing *background* immediately after the expression of *foreground* shows the writer's perspective on how *background* should be signaled in a particular text: early in the sentence, that is, in initial position, and early in the text, that is,

as part of *news upstage*.

2- signal as less prominent— or assign less prominence to— some *midground* meaning that, although semantically higher, is considered pragmatically less relevant, and hence— as a signal of that— it is realized later in the sentence.

It is not unusual of course that *background* meaning is expressed in a main clause or an independent sentence. In the *sequential descending pattern*, *background* would be expressed subsequent to S2 that expresses *midground*. In the *sequential ascending pattern*, *background* may be expressed as in the following example:

S1 The president said that...

S2 He made the speech in a three-hour meeting...

S3 He explained that...

All three sentences have in initial position components of a main clause. They express respectively *foreground*, *background*, and *midground* meanings. *Background* meaning in S2 could have been expressed as an initial adverbial, as we saw earlier. Expressing it in an independent clause or sentence, prior to the expression of *midground* in S3, delays the expression of *midground* to a subsequent (i.e. the third) sentence, and, concomitantly, separates *foreground* from *midground* propositions.

3.4 Entities in Initial Position and Unsignaled Grounding Structure

The two patterns of staging show two distinct ways of organizing meaning and signaling grounding-values in surface structure prominence. They also differ in the strength of signaling. So they provide what we consider to be weak or *unsignaled* and strong or *signaled* grounding at sentence-initial position. We look now more closely at unsignaled grounding structure.

We have seen that main or independent clauses may express grounding-values that are higher than those expressed by dependent or parenthetical structures. In two syntactically independent sentences it may sometimes be difficult— judging solely by the syntactic structure— to determine which sentence expresses a higher or lower grounding-value on the FG-BG continuum. Of course, cognitive models provide the basis for greater or lesser

importance of information and consequently for manifestations of information in discourse meaning in terms of a FG-BG structure. But if subordinate clauses and other dependent structures express low grounding-values, the problem in inter-sentential signaling of grounding is that independent clauses do not always express parallel high grounding-values. We have seen that a main clause or an independent sentence may express propositions that have *foreground*, *midground*, or *background* interpretation, and that in all these cases the sentence may not signal in initial position the difference in grounding-values. Linguistic markers that indicate at that position the FG-BG distinction may at times be absent. As a result, it may sometimes be difficult—inter-sententially and at sentence-boundaries—to detect signals of grounding or rather of *background* meaning expressed in a main clause.

NOUN PHRASES IN INITIAL POSITION

The occurrence in initial position of noun phrases or other main clause entities is frequent in English news texts. The data analyzed exhibit an overwhelming majority of these entities (see Table 1).

Entities like nouns, of course, may denote participants and 'events or occurrences in the world of human activity' (Erdmann 1990: 98). They may also denote actions or movements 'carried out by people or other agents' (ibid.): *reply*, *inquiry*, *arrival*, *stampede*. They often function as sentential topics and may in the meantime signal discourse topic. Noun phrases, then, are a category that is commonly employed in organizing discourse. They may therefore be iterated from preceding sentences, such as when (discourse) participants are (re)introduced in sentence-initial position, for example in T3 examined in chapter 2 about *Mr. Cruz* backing rebels in Nicaragua. The text has the following entities in sentence-initial position:

S1: *Arturo José Cruz*

S2: *Mr. Cruz*

S3: *He*

S4: *His*

S5: *Mr. Cruz*

It manifests topic-continuity by means of a sentence-initial proper noun, a personal pronoun, a possessive pronoun, and again a proper noun (viz. renominalization). But apart from denoting co-referential identity for discourse referents (e.g. the topical *Mr. Cruz*), and sequential topic, the enti-

ties in initial position in **T3** do not show explicitly the way the FG-BG structure is signaled. Specifically, the text manifests a weak signal of *background* in sentence-initial position.

Other manifestations of unsigaled or weak signals of *background* may be provided by nouns that are derived by implication from some other entities referred to before, such as *demonstrations* in S2 below.

(1)

(1) People went to the streets to protest against the recent increase in food prices.

(2) The *demonstrations* were the largest since the government took power three years ago.

They may also be provided by general hypernyms, such as in the following example, where the lexical item *situation* in the second sentence is a more global, abstract noun that summarizes meanings expressed before and denotes the introduction of a state of affairs.

(2)

Thousands were out of work; there was hunger, anger, and unrest.
The *situation* required careful handling.

(Quirk et al. 1985: 1442)

Indeed, one common pattern of expression in news texts is placing in sentence-initial position entities that are derived from knowledge frames or scripts, such as the noun phrase *The Boeing 727* in S2 of the following short text that has been cited in chapter 2.

(3)

(1) **A team of Bolivian climbers** fighting high winds and snow reached the wreckage of an Eastern Airlines jet nearly 20,000 feet (6,000 meters) up Illimania Mountain on Saturday and reported finding no survivors of the crash, the airline said.

(2) The Boeing 727, carrying 29 people, crashed on Tuesday, minutes before it was to land at La Paz airport.

The initial noun phrase identifies the already referred to *Eastern Airlines jet*. In addition to identifying the jet, it reintroduces and specifies it. In terms of grounding, S2 expresses meaning that has *background* interpreta-

tion (a preceding event).

Of course, referential expressions (e.g. definite noun phrases) differ in lexical specificity and identificational explicitness (see Vonk et al. 1992). So 'a referring expression that is more specific than is needed for identification of the antecedent itself indicates a boundary' (ibid.: 303). It serves discourse structuring and thematic shift functions. Overspecified anaphoric expressions thus can be used as 'thematic structure indicators' (ibid.: 329). It should be added that initial noun phrases in news texts may sometimes identify boundaries and signal a genuine thematic switch that also 'marks the point at which a newly introduced participant deploys his first activity' (Bakker 1993: 284). In this case, noun phrases may mark a structural boundary point and realize a global shift. Similar functions may also be realized by other entities (see van Dijk 1982), though not necessarily in sentence-initial position, such as predicates that cannot be subsumed under the same macro-predicate, or change of perspective markers (e.g. by different 'observing' participants, or differences in time or aspect morphology of the verb).

THE STRENGTH OF SIGNALING GROUNDING

The occurrence in initial position of entities such as those examined above raises the question of the strength of signaling the FG-BG distinction. Although it has been mentioned that one of several pragmatic functions of noun phrases is *foreground* and *background* (see Andrews 1985: 77) (the others are given/non-given, topicality, definiteness, specificity, perspective, inherent salience properties of noun phrases), the question of their real contribution to signaling a *background* function remains uncertain.

What is sometimes absent in English news texts is the use of— borrowing the term of Buth (1994: 218)— a marked contextualizing constituent ('Topic'). The difference in the syntactic structure between the following two sentences (Buth 1994: 217) provides perhaps some evidence for the difference in the strength of signaling grounding:

(4)

- (1) In the early evening the wolf howled.
- (2) The wolf howled in the early evening.

In S1, *in the early evening* is pragmatically marked: 'it is not what the event is "about" but serves to relate the clause to its context' (ibid.). In S2,

'the time reference is not marked and is part of the salient information to be communicated' (ibid.).

We suggest that there is a close relation between initial markers that contextualize, segment, or shift, and the strength of signaling *background*. Accordingly, the syntactic structure in S1 may be employed in order to signal the introduction of *background* meaning, and that in S2 to signal either *foreground* or *midground* meaning. It is significant to note that one property of *midground* is continuation, and that lexicosyntactic devices such as coreference, definite articles, pronouns cannot perform the function of informing readers that continuity is not preserved, because it is only their lack that would signal a discontinuity (Bestgen 1997: 203). This task is performed by *segmentation markers* (ibid.). Thus, although sentence-initial entities like full noun phrases may be used to demarcate new structural units (see Fox 1987), they are not equal in the text functions that they perform. For shift functions, for example, speakers and writers may use different markers: adverbial phrases (e.g. *around two o'clock*) to highlight the most important shifts in their narratives; connectives (e.g. *then*) for intermediate breaks; and *and* for high continuity (Bestgen 1997: 202). We suggest that there are similar differences in the function of signaling grounding among entities that occur in initial position such as between noun-phrases and adverbials. The overspecified anaphoric reference, which 'is usually used when there are no other linguistic means to indicate a theme shift' (Vonk et al. 1992: 316), also suggests that it does not provide a sufficient signal of grounding, and that other (i.e. stronger) markers like adverbials, when present, may take over the grounding-signaling function and perform it better.

3.5 The Role of Sentence-Initial Markers in Signaling *Background* across Sentence-Boundaries

3.5.1 Initial Markers and Difference in the Grounding-Value

So far we have focussed on entities such as noun phrases that occur in sentence-initial position in independent clauses and we referred to them as providers of relatively weak signals of text-level grounding. We turn now to the markers in the second category in the sample. Representing initial subordination, the markers may also be considered the *margin* that is dis-

inct from, and independent of, the *nucleus* (see Longacre 1985), which is the most characteristic part of the sentence. Primary among these markers are spatio-temporal constituents that express the spatio-temporal context of an event or that denote time change (e.g. *In the meantime*) and location change (e.g. *In Amsterdam*) (see van Dijk 1982).

Before we examine in detail types of markers and their grounding-signaling functions (see 3.6), it would perhaps be useful to demonstrate how entities that occur in initial position may have implications for the interpretation of the grounding-value that propositions at issue have. With the discussion about the strength of signaling grounding in mind, consider the following example.

(5)

(1) A call to support the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories has brought life to a standstill in Lebanon yesterday.

(2a) Palestinian women and children carrying the Palestinian flag organized a protest march in the streets of West Beirut, chanting revolutionary slogans.

(2b) In the streets of West Beirut, Palestinian women and children carrying the Palestinian flag organized a protest march, chanting revolutionary slogans.

The proposition expressed in 2a that is introduced by the noun phrase specifies or exemplifies the proposition expressed in S1, hence it is *midground*. *Palestinian women and children*, being an instance of the main event, expresses a continuation of the same scene depicted in the proposition in S1 that is *foreground* (main event).

With the prepositional phrase functioning as an initial marker in 2b, it seems as if a shift has occurred to a new location and a totally different scene from the one expressed in S1—realizing perhaps a topic suspension (see Reichman 1981). As such, the initial marker denotes a new context, namely of the new participants in the event referred to in the rest of 2b, which ceases to continue the main event referred to in S1.

Discontinuity or the degree of shift has consequences for the interpretation of meaning expressed in 2b and for the relationship with what preceded. *Palestinian women and children* is no longer conceived of as specifying or giving an instance of the event referred to in S1. Rather, it is sup-

posed to refer to a different, separate and perhaps concurrent event that has its own participants as well as context. More importantly, 2b will also have consequences for the interpretation of the underlying FG-BG structure in the text. *In the streets of West Beirut* will signal a shift to a lower grounding-value, namely *background*, and the semantic representation of the entire sentence would be assigned to a **Context** schema category. Since we are supposed to be still with(in) the same scene or situation expressed in S1, 2b would provide a less appropriate continuation. Its inappropriateness is due to the high degree of shift (i.e. disconnection of the present scene) that occurs as a result of referring to context in initial position. The initial marker signals what is referred to as thematic discontinuity (Givón 1987, 1990) or the opening of new thematic paragraphs (Givón 1993: 313). It is perhaps a sudden, low grounding-value that the FG-BG structure in the text does not warrant. Apart from that, 2b manifests a crucial difference in grounding with sentences whose initial constituents may signal *background* while the main clause that follows signals *midground*, as we explained earlier. This feature will be examined later on.

Example (5) demonstrates that while the noun phrase tends to provide a *weak* signal of grounding, the occurrence of the locative adverbial as an initial marker tends to provide a *strong* signal of grounding. We conclude that there is a close relation between *the strength of signaling grounding* that a marker has and *the degree of shift* that the marker provides. We also conclude that 2b would be appropriate or warranted if and when the initial adverbial is meant to:

1- contextualize what follows and in the meantime realize a *context separation* with what preceded, that is, to signal a boundary point and (a relation of) discontinuity (or rather 'a discontinuity of space' (Levinsohn 1992:24)) with the main event expressed in S1. It guides readers 'across the discontinuity' (see Levinsohn 1994: 5).

2- signal the assignment of *background* to the proposition expressed in the sentence that it prefaces. This would enable readers to capture at once the writer's perspective on the distinction in grounding-values in the text.

3.5.2 Signaling Grounding-Relation

The preceding discussion introduces the question of the different functions

that sentence-initial markers may serve in news texts in respect of signaling relations between grounding-values expressed in the surrounding text. We look therefore at the markers and their environment.

The sentence at the head of which the marker appears usually expresses more than one proposition. It may express more than one grounding-value, for example, that of the ancillary constituent and that of the main clause. That initial markers may express meanings that have a place on the FG-BG continuum is particularly apparent in the case of some (complex) adverbials, as we will see later. This feature distinguishes them from some other markers that may also occur sentence-initially such as connectives, where it is the clause as a whole at the head of which the marker appears that expresses a certain grounding-value.

By dint of their initial position in the sentence, the markers we will examine in the next section are **potential grounding-signaling devices at text-level**. They signal *background* across sentence-boundaries but they may differ in the relation they signal with other grounding-values expressed in the text. In this respect, we identify two major and distinct functions of signaling grounding-relation that initial markers may serve. These functions would not be realized should the markers occur in non-initial position. The two functions are: *prefacing-connecting* (i.e. bi-directional), and *prefacing-disconnecting* (i.e. uni-directional). The *connecting* and *disconnecting* functions are inter-sentential. The *prefacing* function that coincides with both functions is intra-sentential. It obtains when the marker— as a subordinate structure, which is a form of clause linkage (Lehmann 1988: 182)— signals *background* relative to the grounding-value expressed in the main clause that follows it. As a point of departure for what follows, the marker serves a **scene-setting** or a **framing** function. In news texts, a typical *prefacing* function is performed by adverbials, which express 'the setting of the contents of the textual unit at the beginning of which they appear' (Virtanen 1992b: 270).

The *connecting* and *disconnecting* functions are briefly explained below.

1- *prefacing-connecting*

An initial marker denotes a relation not only with the immediate co-text, that is, the main clause that follows, but also with other, larger, segments of text, that is, the wider co-text. So the marker signals the establishment of a connection between the grounding-value expressed by the preceding

sentence(s) and that expressed by the following clause. The *connecting* function suggests that the underlying semantic representation maps usually **context-dependent** information, for example spatio-temporal, about the only or same event referred to before in the text. The marker may also realize a communicative strategy that signals the *introduction* of *background* meaning before other meanings that are usually higher on the FG-BG structure as we saw in the *sequential ascending pattern*.

2- prefacing-disconnecting

An initial marker signals the establishment of a *disconnection* relative to grounding-values expressed in all preceding sentences. This function suggests that the underlying semantic representation maps usually **context-independent** information about independent events and states of affairs. As will become apparent later on, one main function of entities that are recognized as initial markers in English news texts is to signal a global shift, namely to the *background end of the continuum* (see 3.7). In this case, the initial marker realizes a communicative strategy that signals the *initiation* of that level of *background*. The propositions are assigned to an **Association** schema category.

3.6 Types of Markers

The markers we examine below are participles and adverbials including adverbial clauses (see Table 1 presented earlier). They are considered as providers of strong signals of *background* meaning. One of the markers in the category of connectives and sentential adverbials, *meanwhile*, will be briefly examined. It is the only marker in that category that signals the *background end of the continuum*. Therefore, it has a grounding-signaling function that is similar to that served by some other markers that we will examine. Examining *meanwhile* is also important since the marker shows the interplay with other markers, and it will be relevant to Arabic markers that will be examined in chapter 5.

We looked into the distribution of markers as regards their *prefacing-connecting* and *prefacing-disconnecting* functions and found that 15 markers, including all five occurrences of *meanwhile*, serve a *prefacing-disconnecting* function. They signal the *background end of the continuum* (see 3.7). They are:

- 3 adverbials of time
- 6 adverbials of place
- 1 time adverb
- 5 *meanwhile*

We examine now the different markers.

3.6.1 Participles

There are only two occurrences of the *-ing* and the *-ed* participles as a sentence-initial marker in the sample.

THE *-ING* PARTICIPLE

The *-ing* verb form occurs in 2a of T1.

(1) Pope John Paul II strongly called on the United States and the Soviet Union Tuesday to "renounce egoistic and ideological interests" for the success of their arms limitation talks resuming in Geneva next week.

(2) **2a** Addressing thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square, **2b** the pope said the negotiators "cannot be guided simply by technical criteria but must be inspired above all by human and moral reasons."

The constituent 2a expresses *background* meaning about the spatial setting or the circumstance under which the main speech event of the pope holds. The meaning is more *at the occasion of addressing* than *while he was addressing*, which denotes an event or an activity as ongoing (i.e. the progressive aspect). In initial position, *background* is expressed prior to the expression of *midground* in 2b about specifics of the main speech event. The participle 2a serves a *prefacing-connecting* function (see Figure 3) and provides a bridge between two different grounding-values: *foreground* and *midground*.

Figure 3 The *prefacing-connecting* function of the *-ing* participle in T1

Schematically, the meaning expressed in 2a is assigned to a **Context** cate-

gory that separates two components of a **Main Event** category. In terms of staging, S2 manifests a *sequential ascending pattern* where *background* meaning, though mapping less important and less newsworthy information, is prominently realized, that is, early in the text as an instance of *news upstage*, manifesting *foregrounded background*. *Background* meaning seems to be pragmatically more relevant to the goals of the writer at this point than other semantic representations that are high on the FG-BG continuum. In fact, expressing *background* in that position serves also an anticipatory function vis-à-vis *midground* meaning.

The sentence, of course, could have started with 2b (*The pope said*) and the constituent 2a could have occurred in an independent subsequent sentence, signaling *background* less prominently:

S3 The pope made his speech to thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square.

This rendering would have manifested a *sequential descending pattern*, expressing *midground* immediately after *foreground* and before expressing *background*.

The *-ing* participle could also have occurred in non-initial position in S2 as follows:

The pope, addressing thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square, said...

Set off by pauses and marked by commas (see Thompson 1983), the participle would express *background* meaning and fulfil the same function as circumstance provider. However, in non-initial position it would be limited in scope and would not operate at text-level to signal an inter-sentential relation between two different grounding-values.

THE *-ED* PARTICIPLE

The *-ed* participle occurs in 4a of **T15**.

T15

Iranian-Sandinist Talks Concern U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP)— (1) **1a** A spokesman for the Reagan administration, **1b** which is seeking renewed aid to Nicaraguan rebels, said Friday there is reason to believe that Iran is arranging an arms deal with Nicaragua.

(2) He added that Iranian contacts with Nicaragua's leftist government are causing concern about an expansion of terrorism.

(3) President Ronald Reagan on Thursday told a group of legislators from Western Hemisphere nations that, "A new danger we see in Central America is the support being given to the Sandinists by Colonel Qadhafi's Libya, the PLO and most recently, the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran."

(4) **4a** Asked about the president's statement, **4b** Robert Sims, **4c** a White House spokesman, said the current visit to Nicaragua of the Iranian prime minister, **4d** Mir Hussein Moussavi, "is obviously evidence of political support" for the Sandinists.

(5) There is also reason to believe that Iran is in the process of arranging support in the form of oil supplies and funding for armaments.

(6) As to where it might lead, the potential for some expansion of terrorism in this hemisphere is always a concern."

Figure 4 shows the grounding-relation that the first four sentences of the text express and the *prefacing-connecting* function that the *-ed* participle serves.

Figure 4 The *prefacing-connecting* function of the *-ed* participle in T15

The meaning expressed by the *-ed* participle in 4a is *background* since it is about the circumstance and perhaps the moment of the event reported in 4b, viz. that the White House spokesman said what he said as an answer or a reaction to a question. Similar to the *-ing* form in T1, the *-ed* participle prefaces a clause that expresses *midground* meaning (specification of the main speech event). But the president's declaration has been referred to in S3 that expresses *background* meaning: It is a preceding event that provides the political context for *foreground* meaning expressed in 1a. The *-ed* participle serves a *prefacing-connecting* function with S3 and 4b. In non-initial position, of course, an *-ed* participle— similar in form to a reduced relative clause— serves a local function, namely to identify the immediately preceding entity, and hence it is limited in scope.

3.6.2 Adverbials

We will examine first adverbial clauses and then time and place adver-

bials.

ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

The most general function of initial adverbial clauses 'is that of creating and reflecting discourse structure by signaling shifts in time, place or orientation' (Cumming and Ono 1997: 123). The sample we examined has four initial adverbial clauses. In terms of grounding, all of them express *background* meaning. Consider **T19**.

T19

Lebanese Pound Falls to Record Low

BEIRUT (AP)— (1) **1a** Prime Minister Rashid Karami has blamed an unjustified "market fever" for the recent weakness of the Lebanese pound **1b** and pledged government efforts to strengthen the country.

(2) **2a** Mr. Karami, **2b** in a radio broadcast after an eight-hour cabinet meeting, also said that several battalions of Lebanese soldiers were ready and waiting to "move immediately" into southern Lebanon **2c** when the Israeli occupation force is withdrawn.

(3) He dismissed Israeli warnings of possible sectarian violence in the south.

(4) **4a** As the cabinet met Saturday, **4b** Lebanon's currency fell to a record low of 13.30 to the U.S. dollar.

(5) Economists have blamed the sharp drop in the value of the Lebanese pound in recent weeks on Lebanon's deepening recession and the government's inability to restore law and order.

The adverbial clause in 4a denotes the context of the event referred to in 4b, and hence defines the political setting of the world expressed in it. In other words, it contextualizes it and modifies the entire proposition expressed in the sentence (see Thompson and Longacre 1985). The constituent 4a expresses *background* to the meaning expressed in 4b about the drop in Lebanon's currency, which has a *background* interpretation (a preceding event). S4 provides the actual context for *foreground* (the most recent event) expressed in the lead sentence about the (subsequent) radio speech of the Lebanese premier.

The constituent 4a serves a *prefacing-connecting* function (see Figure 5), since it refers to entities referred to in 2b. (For the use of initial adverbial clauses in English (conversation) as *tying back* to the preceding discourse and *framing* the following discourse, see Ford 1993).

Figure 5 The *prefacing-connecting* function of the initial adverbial clause in T19

It is important to note that the adverbial clause introduces a clause that expresses *foregrounded background* meaning. The information about the drop in the Lebanese pound is considered so important that its semantic representation is *foregrounded* and signaled prominently in the headline. This provides further evidence for the influence of the writer's perspective on *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* and consequently on staging in expression (see the earlier discussion of the notion of perspective in chapter 1).

TIME AND PLACE ADVERBIALS

Adverbials 'tell us something extra about an action, happening, or state as described by the rest of the sentence' (Leech and Svartvik 1994: 225) such as the time, the place, or the manner: respectively, time, place, manner adverbials (*ibid.*). In news discourse, adverbials are primarily spatio-temporal constituents that express meaning about the setting of the main clause.

Adverbials have been traditionally approached from a sentence-perspective but they have been recently examined from the vantage point of their discourse function (e.g. Virtanen 1992a,b). However, unlike other studies of information structure in the sense of given and new (e.g. Virtanen 1992b), we focus on the *background* function that adverbials signal in text. Their occurrence in initial position may not be because of the pattern of 'old-information first' (for this, see Virtanen 1992b), but, as we saw already in other markers, because of the intention of the writer to express *background* meaning early in the sentence (and consequently realize a certain pattern of staging) and early in text, which means that *background* is prominently signaled. The adverbial thus fulfils a text-level grounding-signaling function. This function is evident from the fact that it may also express the setting of the main event referred to in the *fore-*

ground proposition.

That the adverbial signals *background* for meanings expressed in the following constituent(s)— hence it is the 'ground' or 'scene-setting' for what follows (Quirk et al. 1985: 491)— as well as for those expressed in preceding sentences is particularly evident in adverbials that express what is called 'a complete setting' (Geis 1987: 107). Event, place, and time adverbials occur together in the same constituent such as *in a speech to the nation in Amsterdam last night*. Complex adverbials such as this one in sentence-initial position occur often in news reporting (Geis 1987): They are *situation adverbials* [what Geis referred to as *situation adverbs*] and may consist of event, place, and time adverbials.

Given the *compact* structure of the short news text, there is a common journalistic practice to encode meaning about spatio-temporal aspects in a sentence-initial constituent. In this position, adverbials are not integrated into the predicate as a modifier, which is the case in non-initial adverbials. In addition, they provide the primary basis for relating the communication or what follows to the context (Levinsohn 1992). In initial position, adverbials are therefore instrumental for making clear the *connecting* or *disconnecting* function.

In non-initial position, adverbials would specify the event reported in the clause or sentence (Virtanen 1992b: 96) and hence their scope would be narrower. Similarly, a final adverbial clause 'does not serve a text-organizing function, but is local in scope' (Ford 1993: 18). So the scope of the adverbial— specifically the locative— depends on its sentential position (see Huumo 1995). For that matter, a sentence-initial locative describes 'the largest scope of the events' (Huumo 1995: 315). By describing the largest scope of the events, the initial adverbial that may also express a complete setting denotes clearly a crucial part of *background* meaning in text.

This is a distinct function of adverbials. It is different from the default segmenting or text-structuring function that they are associated with (on the text-structuring function of adverbials, see e.g. Thompson and Longacre 1985; Virtanen 1992a, 1992b). However, the two functions are perhaps related. The relation might be explained in terms of another function, namely that initial adverbials maintain discourse perspective. Maintaining discourse perspective is usually realized by initial adverbials that express spatio-temporal meanings for what is described. In a travel book on Mexico, for example, the author 'is constantly reminding the

reader of the you're-on-a-journey perspective of the entire discourse' (Thompson and Longacre 1985: 207). Similarly, time adverbials may maintain discourse perspective by denoting boundary points (e.g. temporal shifts) and hence they may structure or segment the text, such as when they express meanings about the career of individuals (see Brown and Yule 1983: 137ff) or about different landmarks in their lives. (For the role of temporal markers in the segmentation of narratives, see Bestgen 1997.) Consider **T24**.

T24

Ballonist Dies in Plane Crash in U.S.

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AP)— (1) **1a** Ben Abruzzo, **55**, **1b** who rode in the first balloons to cross the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, was killed Monday along with his wife and four other people **1c** when their twin-engine plane crashed near an airport.

(2) **2a** In August 1978, **2b** Mr. Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson and Larry Newman crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon **2c** named the Double Eagle-2.

(3) **3a** The helium-filled craft landed at Evreux, France, **3b** after a five-and-half-day flight of about 3.000 miles (4.848 kilometers) from Presque Isle, Maine.

(4) **4a** In November 1981, **4b** Mr. Abruzzo was captain of the helium-filled Double Eagle-5 **4c** when he, Mr. Newman and two other men made the first balloon crossing of the Pacific Ocean, **4d** flying from Nagashima, Japan, to northern California in four days.

The two adverbials: 2a and 4a introduce the temporal location of two different and earlier events (see Figure 6), and hence they denote boundary points in the career of *Mr. Abruzzo*. While maintaining discourse topic (by adding other aspects to it), they also maintain discourse perspective, which revolves around the history of certain events in which the main participant was engaged. Discourse perspective is therefore geared towards this pattern of presentation, constraining the way events are described in the sequence of sentences.

Figure 6 Grounding-signaling function of initial adverbials in **T24**

Apart from that, the function of signaling *background* that adverbials serve favours their occurrence in initial position, since they manifest the *grounding-angle* and make the reference to 'rode in the first balloons' in 1b *immediately* clear. This function would not be fulfilled had the noun phrase *Mr. Abruzzo* been placed in initial position in sentences S2 and S4. This realization-form, of course, would have signaled participant continuity, which pertains to cohesion, topicality, given and new information, and hierarchical structure (see e.g. Wårvik 1994). However, from the grounding-signaling function point of view, this rendering would first create the impression that the meaning is *midground*: that the proposition denotes specifics of the main event (i.e. the plane crash). Therefore, the occurrence of the adverbial markers sentence-initially in S2 and in S4 serves as an *early signal or warning* to readers that the writer at this point in text is **initiating** *background* meaning.

In fact, *background* meaning introduces other *background* meanings that map historical information. Therefore, adverbials 2a and 4a do not serve their *background* function relative to the current news event, i.e. the plane crash, and hence they do not contextualize that event but other past events (assigned to a **History** schema category). That the two initial adverbials do not disconnect is evident in their being anaphoric (as the majority of clause-initial adverbials of time and place are anaphoric (see Virtanen 1992b)): they co-refer with entities referred to in the lead sentence, namely the relative clause (1b).

That the sentence-initial adverbial initiates *background* meaning is also evident in 4a of **T12**.

T12

Israel Starts Withdrawal Preparations

TEL AVIV (Reuters)— (1) Israeli troops began dismantling equipment Sunday in preparation for the first stage of withdrawing from southern Lebanon, an Israeli military spokesman said.

(2) "We're not waiting," the spokesman said.

(3) "From today we begin taking apart and removing equipment so that on Feb. 19 there will not remain any Israeli soldier or equipment in the phase-one area."

(4) **4a** A week ago, **4b** the Israeli government decided to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon in three phases.

(5) Orders to begin dismantling medical centers, fuel depots, ammunition dumps and storage installations were sent to field units Friday.

(6) **6a** In Jerusalem, **6b** Brian E. Urquhart, **6c** a United Nations undersecretary for special political affairs, conveyed to Yitzhak Rabin, **6d** the Israeli defense minister, Lebanon's agreement to resume negotiations on deploying UN troops in the evacuated areas.

In initial position, the adverbial *a week ago* provides an early signal of the temporal shift from the current news event to a different 'span back to a point of time in the past' (Quirk et al. 1985: 688). In that position, it is a separate constituent that initiates *background* meaning, namely the context of the *background* proposition expressed in 4b about the earlier decision of troop withdrawal. This proposition is assigned to a **Previous Event** category. It illustrates one important function that initial adverbials may serve, namely signaling the introduction of a different schema category.

The initial adverbial, in addition, realizes a communicative strategy of showing that *background* meaning, where the time factor is important, is prominently expressed. The lead sentence refers already to *Sunday* and S3 refers to *today* and *February 19*. Therefore, the question of *when* events take place is here very essential and relevant. The initial adverbial signals clearly the connection between *background* and grounding-values expressed in the preceding sentences. The writer, of course, could have opted for other entities in initial position, such as *the Israeli government* in the following rendering:

The Israeli government decided a week ago to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon in three phases.

Like in T24, this realization-form would have limited the scope of the adverbial and made the shift to *background* less apparent. Also, it would

have made it less clear from the outset that the proposition is assigned to a **Previous Event** schema category.

INITIAL MARKERS AND SIGNALING THE DISTRIBUTION OF *BACKGROUND* *Background* may be assigned to meaning expressed in the initial constituent only; the main clause that follows may express a proposition that has a *midground* interpretation. This is evident in 2a and 3a of **T1**.

2a Addressing thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square, **2b** the pope said...

3a In a speech marking the Roman Catholic Church's day of peace, **3b** John Paul said...

Both initial markers preface clauses that express *midground* meaning about specifics of the main speech event. *Background* meaning expressed by the abstract locative 3a maps less important information about the high-level context or the setting of the pope's speech (i.e. that the pope said something in the form of a speech on a certain occasion). Expressed in initial position, *background* meaning serves as a prelude to *midground*. It also makes clear that *background* is relative to other textual propositions as well. The initial adverbial realizes a *separation* rather than a *break* (i.e. disconnection) and shows the writer's own way of *structuring and signaling meaning in the text in terms of grounding-values*. Schematically, 3a introduces a **Context** category that does not subsume all propositions in the sentence. Thus it connects the **Main Event** category, that subsumes propositions expressed in preceding sentences, to other components of that category in S3.

Apart from that, the expression of a complete setting by means of adverbials may sometimes be distributed in several sentences. In this case, the initial position in the sentence would be employed in order to distribute pieces of *background* meaning about the setting of the main event. This is illustrated by the two initial constituents of sentences S2 and S3 of **T1**. They provide respectively the spatial setting and the occasion of the main speech event. The text shows that a **Context** schema category to which these meanings are assigned may be recursive.

3.7 Signaling the *Background End of the Continuum*

We examine finally the use of some adverbials— including *meanwhile* which is a sentence-adverbial— to signal the *background end of the continuum*. It is the lowest position on the FG-BG continuum and it denotes meaning that is about a totally different kind of activity and hence it is not covered by the present topic. Markers that signal that position serve a *prefacing-disconnecting* function and draw a boundary line with all *foreground*, *midground*, and other *background* meanings expressed before in the text.

Two distinct features of the *background end of the continuum* are worth noting:

- 1- it is assigned to all propositions that are expressed in the sentence.
- 2- it is invariably expressed in or towards the end of the text (see below), that is non-prominently, as part of *news downstage*. Propositions in the *background end of the continuum* are assigned to an **Association** schema category that is always realized as the last category in the text.

We explained in chapter 2 that an **Association** category is realized in the end of the text in order not to block (any) further development of— or return to— propositions that are covered by the topic. As a consequence, a proposition in the *background end of the continuum* would not be *foregrounded*. This distinguishes functionally the markers that signal the *background end of the continuum* from those that signal the introduction of other *background* meanings.

Apart from that, propositions in the *background end of the continuum* map information that is contextually or pragmatically relevant and is of interest for people, hence it is included in the semantic representation (see chapter 1). Their inclusion fulfils a pragmatic function of informing readers about certain properties of other events and states of affairs. Their non-prominent expression manifests the writer's perspective, given the properties of the present context, namely that they have a *delayed or indirect concern*.

The *background end of the continuum* manifests itself in a rather few texts of the *IHT* sample: 10 texts, or 10%. As expected, most occurrences are in paragraph-initial position and in the last paragraph of the text. There is only one adverbial phrase and one adverb that occur sentence-initially

within the last paragraph. All occurrences of *meanwhile* are in paragraph-initial position. With the exception of one occurrence, they appear in the last paragraph of the text. We look now at a few illustrative examples.

In 6a of **T12** cited earlier, *in Jerusalem* realizes a location-shift from the source of the news item, which is *Tel Aviv*. In addition, it draws a boundary line between text meanings expressed before and after (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Signaling the *background end of the continuum* in **T12**

It is evident that the initial marker in 6a serves a grounding-signaling function that is different from the functions we examined so far. It realizes a global shift and *disconnects* with what preceded by **initiating background** meanings that are contextually independent of other meanings expressed before. These meanings are assigned to an **Association** schema category.

MEANWHILE AND OTHER MARKERS WITHIN THE *BACKGROUND END*

We examine below three texts that include *meanwhile*. This marker performs various textual functions. It refers to the time of the event reported before, 'up to the present' (Quirk et al. 1985: 1453). It also denotes temporal overlap, i.e. *at the same time*, and signals usually the introduction of an event that is (locationally) different from the current one(s). When used in narratives, the function of *meanwhile* is to link a temporally concurrent activity. But its use for example in television news—which is the news of the day and is ipso facto connected—is to mark boundaries (Glasgow University Media Group 1980: 147) between different events or scenes.

In news discourse, not only does *meanwhile* function as a boundary marker, but it also signals the *initiation* of a proposition or a series of propositions that are independent of what preceded, hence it performs a *prefacing-disconnecting* (that is, a global shift) function. All occurrences of *meanwhile* in the *IHT* sample demonstrate that it performs that grounding-signaling function.

That *meanwhile* tends to occur towards the end of the short news text in an environment of a typical **Association** schema category demonstrates that it is a wide range marker: It occurs after the introduction of several sentences or a long stretch of text. Consider **T20** cited in chapter 2 and repeated below.

T20

Greek Tanker Hit by Iraqi Missile

KUWAIT (Combined Dispatches)— (1) A missile fired by an Iraqi warplane damaged a Greek oil tanker Monday near Iran's main oil export facility in the Gulf, it was reported here.

(2) Greek officials in Athens confirmed that the Greek tanker Fairship-1 had been seriously damaged in an attack while en route to the Kharg Island oil terminal.

(3) None of the 26 crew members aboard the 132,000-ton tanker was hurt.

(4) The attack followed a week of heavy land fighting in the Gulf war.

(5) **5a** The Iraqi News Agency, **5b** in a report monitored Monday in Kuwait, quoted an Iraqi general as saying that his brigade had destroyed two Iranian army units in a battle last week, **5c** killing more than 1,500 men.

(6) **6a** He said the battlefield, **6b** in the central front, was "littered with Iranian dead soldiers."

(7) **7a** Meanwhile, **7b** there were reports that a fresh diplomatic effort was underway to end the war.

(8) **8a** In Kuwait, **8b** the newspaper Al-Seyassah said Sunday that France, Saudi Arabia and Algeria were working on a plan for talks with the support of the six-nation Gulf Co-operation Council. (UPI, AFP)

Sentences S7 and S8 form the last paragraph that is introduced by *meanwhile*. They express propositions that are not covered by the main event referred to before in other textual propositions, hence they are assigned to the *background end of the continuum* position. Schematically, the propositions are assigned to an **Association** category. The marker that prefaces S8, *in Kuwait*, expresses meaning about details of the reports about diplomatic efforts referred to in S7. It serves a local grounding shift function since the global shift to the *background end of the continuum* is performed by *meanwhile* in S7. In fact, without S7, a change in the function of *in Kuwait* would occur, namely that it fulfils a global grounding function right away. It would be the first signal in the text of the shift to the *back-*

ground end of the continuum. In this regard, *in Kuwait* would serve a function that is similar to the function of *in Jerusalem* in **T12** cited earlier.

Similarly, the propositions expressed in S3 at the head of which *meanwhile* appears in **T28** are severed from propositions that have other grounding-values in the first two sentences of the text.

T28

IRA Leader Is Denied Visa by U.S.

WASHINGTON (from combined Dispatches)— (1) **1a** The U.S. State Department has denied a visa to Gerry Adams, **1b** president of the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, because of his "advocacy of violence in Northern Ireland," a department spokeswoman said Saturday.

(2) Mr. Adams had been invited by 10 congressmen to join protests against Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain during her visit this week.

(3) **3a** Meanwhile, **3b** in Armagh, Northern Ireland, **3c** a senior prison officer, **3d** Pat Kerr, was shot to death on Sunday **3e** as he left church **3f** after attending Mass on his 37th birthday.

(4) **4a** The IRA, **4b** later claiming responsibility, said Mr. Kerr, **4c** the security chief at the Maze prison outside Belfast, had been killed for harassing prisoners.

(5) **5a** In Dublin, **5b** the jailed IRA kidnapper, **5c** Eddie Gallagher, suspended a hunger strike on Sunday after 39 days to allow talks to go ahead on his demands for improved prison conditions, his lawyers said. (*AP, Reuters*)

The propositions expressed in S3 as well as in subsequent sentences occupy the *background end of the continuum* (unrelated event or development). All of them are subsumed under an **Association** schema category. The other initial marker, *in Dublin*, signals the same grounding-value (details of the event referred to in a proposition that is the *background end of the continuum*). This grounding-value is constrained by the FG-BG articulation in the text and the location of the sentence at the head of which the marker appears. *In Dublin* serves a local grounding-signaling function that is different from the function performed for example by *in Jerusalem* in **T12**. The locative phrase *in Dublin*, of course, denotes the place where the event referred to in the rest of S5 took place. In fact, it sets the stage for the specific activity being reported in the sentence (Geis 1987: 106-107). Although it denotes a location shift, it is not a straight one from the location referred to in the *foreground* proposition, namely *Washington*.

The shift from *Washington* has already been made in S3, to *Armagh* in Northern Ireland, which prepares the way for the (further) shift in S5. Thus, although *in Dublin* signals a shift from *Armagh*, it does not disconnect. Rather, it expresses meaning about context that is interpreted in terms of the immediately preceding meaning encoded in the second paragraph starting with S3, and hence the function of *in Dublin* is in terms of the meaning expressed in the immediately preceding sentence. This suggests that the marker performs here the function of signaling *background to background*.

It should be noted that from the perspective of *foreground* meaning expressed in the lead sentence, *in Dublin* introduces context-independent meaning and disconnects, though it does not itself introduce that disconnection. Disconnection has already been introduced in S3 by *meanwhile*. Thus *in Dublin* is not the first signal in the text of the global shift to the *background end of the continuum*.

In the third example, *meanwhile* introduces the last paragraph (S5 and S6) of T22. We presented part of the propositional structure of this text in chapter 1.

T22

Nicaragua Increases Price of Food

MANAGUA (Reuters)— (1) Nicaragua's Ministry of Internal Trade has raised the price of meat and milk about 100 percent.

(2) An announcement Wednesday listed an increase of 110 percent for eggs and more than 50 percent for chicken.

(3) **3a** Officials said the price of basic grains and sugar, **3b** not listed in the announcement, might be increased later.

(4) **4a** Diplomats said the move spotlighted economic troubles **4b** caused partly by the widening war the Nicaraguan Army is fighting against insurgent forces **4c** armed, trained and financed by the United States.

(5) **5a** Meanwhile, **5b** Nicaragua's vice president, **5c** Sergio Ramirez, **5d** visiting London on Wednesday, asked Britain to urge Washington to exercise its influence by reaffirming backing for the Contadora regional peace plan and by encouraging the United States to resume the dialogue with Nicaragua it suspended three weeks ago.

(6) **6a** Mr. Ramirez met for talks with the British foreign secretary, **6b** Sir Geoffrey Howe.

Meanwhile does not only signal a shift to a locationally different activity, but it also initiates the *background end of the continuum* position: It is not *background to foreground* meaning about the event of increasing the

prices of food.

We would like finally to refer to the strength of signaling grounding in propositions subsumed under an **Association** category. S6 has a noun phrase in initial position. The underlying proposition denotes details of the event referred to in the proposition expressed in S5 and is therefore in the *background end of the continuum*. The noun phrase does not introduce that level of *background*. Presumably, weak signals of grounding are less capable of introducing contextually unbound propositions. This provides evidence that the grounding-value may determine the choice of the marker that has a certain strength of signaling on the FG-BG continuum.

Conclusion

In this chapter we examined a number of text-level features that pertain to the syntactic signaling of grounding in short news items. We focussed on the grounding functions of entities that occur in sentence-initial position. The assumption is that initial position is a potential locus for differences in signaling grounding, and that syntactic choices in that position are associated with different staging patterns that manifest or rather communicate variant FG-BG structures. The implication is that not all staging operations that affect sentence structure signal also text-level grounding. We examined two major patterns of staging that realize the intended communicative strategy—the *sequential descending* and the *sequential ascending*—and related them to what we called *unsignaled* (or weak signals of) grounding and *signaled* (or strong signals of) grounding at sentence-initial position.

Distinct from initial main clause entities that we associated with weak signals of grounding are certain markers—primarily spatio-temporal and circumstantial—that we consider potential grounding-signaling devices. We examined these markers at length and found that they tend to be associated with *background* meaning in news texts. They are also strong indicators of the influence of *perspective* on the realization of grounding. We discerned two main functions of these markers: *prefacing-connecting* and *prefacing-disconnecting*. Both functions are determined by the grounding-value that a certain marker signals in text. For example, a marker that signals the introduction of *background* to *foreground* as well as *midground* meanings would be expected to serve a *prefacing-connecting* function.

By dint of their initial position in the sentence, markers may be locally or sententially prominent. This has to do with **constituent-order**. They may be also globally or textually prominent, which has to do with **sentence-order**, when the markers occur at the head of sentences that are staged early in the text and hence become instances of *news upstage*—mapping *foregrounded background* meaning. On the other hand, the later location in text of an initial marker provides an important indication of low prominence.

One important finding is that sentence-initial markers vary in the *background* value they signal. Thus, while they usually signal *background* that connects, and that may be prominently expressed as part of *news upstage*, a few of them, including *meanwhile*, disconnect and are non-prominently expressed as part of *news downstage*, mapping very low information im-

portance. We identified this important function as signaling the *background end of the continuum*. Initial markers would be expected in this case to serve a *prefacing-disconnecting* function. Underlying propositions are usually assigned to an **Association** schema category—the least prominent category of the news schema.

We have seen the interplay among different markers that signal the *background end of the continuum*. *Meanwhile* signals thematic discontinuity (for a study of how readers recognize thematic units on the basis of thematic discontinuity and linguistic devices that mark thematic shift, see Hustinx 1996). It also constrains the interpretation of the grounding-signaling function that other (adverbial) markers get (mapping low informativeness in the present context). This may lead to differences in *background* values. Some markers that we examined (such as *in Kuwait* and *in Dublin*) may express more or less *background*. Depending on the co-text, they may signal meanings about a specification or exemplification of what preceded. But the analysis revealed that they may also signal the introduction of a major shift, namely to the *background end of the continuum*.

Though not widespread, sentence-initial markers perform important grounding-signaling functions. That is, they manifest text-level distinctions in the FG-BG structure in news texts. However, the degree of importance of these mechanisms in signaling variation in (*background*) meanings is not the same in all languages. Therefore, we will examine in the next chapters the phenomenon of sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts in order to show how that language attaches much more importance to initial markers primarily for grounding-signaling purposes. We will examine the ramifications of this phenomenon and differences with English news texts.

Initial Position Marking of Grounding: The Case of Arabic News

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter we have seen that sentence-initial position is important for grounding-signaling functions. Entities in that position showed differences in their contribution to the FG-BG distinction at text-level. Apart from the language system that may favour the use of certain entities, individual authors choose certain pattern of signaling grounding hence they may also determine the relation among different grounding-values. But in many languages, of course, texts 'often contain sections where writers have not clearly specified their plans and leave ambiguous relationships among ideas' (Meyer 1985: 66). This is not peculiar to written texts; some stories in broadcast news fail to tell how different events are related (Findahl and Höijer 1981: 401). The absence of clear relationships among ideas becomes apparent in surface structure expression and particularly in sentence-initial position. Sentences may manifest an absence from the initial slot of certain markers that signal relationships between various components of the FG-BG structure. This may have serious consequences for the interpretation of the importance as well as the relevance of information. It may also affect the interpretation of grounding-values. This is suggested to be the case for Arabic, a Semitic language, where the sentence-initial slot manifests the crucial role that markers play.

Examination of Arabic short news items—both translated and originally written in Arabic—reveals significant differences with English in patterns of connectivity in sentence-initial position. Writers of these texts use frequently a particular type of prefatory devices. A close examination of these devices shows that they are distinct from other markers and that they perform text-level functions that are different from those performed by most connectives.

These devices seem to be obligatory in (the production of) Arabic news texts. Ostensibly, they are required in order to make up for diminished co-

herence and ensuing miscomprehension of relationships, but essentially and more importantly, in order to signal clearly the FG-BG distinction. As they are subject to language and text-specific constraints, the markers represent one crucial manifestation of the strategy of signaling grounding in Arabic news. Since they are assumed to be sensitive to shifts in grounding-values, they may be called **grounding structure signaling markers**. However, we will refer to them as **sentence-initial markers**. We will limit the analysis of manifestations of grounding in news texts to these markers and to what we consider to be their main function, namely signaling distinctions among propositions in grounding-values. Features such as functional relations, word-order, sentence-ordering, tense and aspect will be examined in so far as they are relevant to that function.

Examining the Arabic markers will fit in with the markers that we examined in the last chapter. The present chapter, however, is only an introduction to— and a preparation for— the analysis of individual markers in chapter 5. After specifying the goal, material, and method, in 4.2 we introduce the phenomenon of sentence-initial markers, examine its spread by presenting text counts on translated news texts as well as a random sample of Arabic items, and describe its significance. We also describe briefly the Arabic language. Then in 4.3 we start to address the question of why Arabic news texts fail when these markers are absent. And in order to capture the various elements involved in the answer, we first point out briefly differences with English in patterns of connectivity at initial position. After that, we analyze what we consider to be a grounding structure problem that becomes apparent in expression (i.e. *background meaning signaled as foreground*). Then we explain the use of initial markers in terms of a communicative strategy that attempts to signal the appropriate grounding-value (i.e. *de-foregrounding*). Finally, in order to demonstrate the significance as well as the ramification of the phenomenon in Arabic news texts, we present empirical evidence of sentence-initial entities that occur in a different type of text, namely the editorial.

4.1.1 Goal, Material and Method

GOAL

The main goal is to account for a surface structure phenomenon of a certain class of markers that occur sentence-initially in Arabic news texts, and to explain why they are necessarily used in these texts. It subsumes the

following sub-goals:

a) To provide a detailed account of the linguistic and functional properties of these markers: their kinds, characteristic features and meaning.

b) To examine the environment of the markers and the conditions that must hold for them to be used. In order to determine their behaviour and their pattern of occurrence, we will discern the factors that govern their selection and identify those that discourage their use in certain news texts. In addition, we will see why the omission of these markers when they should be present (i.e. what we call forced (or intentional) zero initial marker) will be inappropriate for the news type of text.

c) To establish a hierarchy of the markers as regards the grounding-values that they are assumed to signal, and to ascertain whether each marker encodes almost invariably the same grounding-value. The hierarchy will provide insight into the context in which the markers occur or are expected to occur. It will also reveal whatever discrepancies might be there with English news texts.

MATERIAL

Three samples of Arabic news texts are used to investigate the phenomenon: The first is a translation of the *International Herald Tribune* sample; the second and the third are respectively a random sample and a purposive one. Both form empirical Arabic data obtained from the international edition of *Al-Ahram* newspaper. A short description of each sample follows.

Sample I: The Arabic version of the *IHT* sample

An Arabic translation has been provided for the *IHT* sample. Given our previous analysis of entities that appear in initial position in the *IHT* sample, sample I serves primarily a comparative function. It identifies the Arabic markers that appear sentence-initially and shows their frequency. It also provides insight into discourse constraints on their use in particular locations in the texts.

Sample II: A random sample

A random sample of 500 short items provided empirical evidence for the spread of the phenomenon in Arabic news texts. The instruction was to se-

lect short news items that vary in size between 2 and 5 short paragraphs—where a paragraph may sometimes consist of one sentence—from *Al-Ahram's* front page (for home and foreign/international news) and from page 4 (for foreign/international news). The instruction was also to vary the location on the page of the selected items.

The random sample includes items originally written in Arabic (they have as a source *MENA* (the Middle East News Agency), the editorial staff, and correspondents of *Al-Ahram*), and Arabic translations from international news agencies, denoted by the term *wikālāt al-anbā'* (news agencies). In order to evenly select 500 items, 125 issues of *Al-Ahram* have been selected from one period (from August 27 to 31 December 1986), and four items have been randomly selected from each issue as described above.

Sample III: A purposive sample

A sample of 376 short items from *Al-Ahram* newspaper has been chosen from the period January 1 to 30 June 1986. While the selection of texts has been guided by the same rules, the purpose was to include texts that manifest the phenomenon as well as those where it is absent. Markers have been selected on the basis of those identified in the other two samples.

In sample III, the frequency of occurrence was not at issue: The goal was not to select as many or as few of certain initial markers, nor as many or as few of either originally Arabic or translated items. Rather, the goal was to provide some additional data in order to examine or control the function as well as the behaviour of each marker in its environment, and to compare these with findings based on the other two samples—a complementary check that corroborates insights gained elsewhere.

METHOD

The method followed in the empirical investigation of the observed phenomenon pertains to two main aspects: markers' identification and markers' environment.

A. Markers' identification

The analysis approach to markers began with identifying, isolating, defining and categorizing the most significant and recurrent Arabic sentence-initial markers. The markers are typical in the sense that they are relatively frequent in the samples. Sample I helped to pinpoint (similarities as well

as) differences at initial position with English texts. The identification process has been aided by the fact that translated texts maintained the same sequence of sentences and the same organizational framework as the original English texts in the sense that no special editing (e.g. telescoping of sentences) has been applied in translating. The markers that are identified in sample I are checked against those identified in the random sample as regards their variety, frequency, and function. The random sample has been surveyed for the presence as well as the absence of sentence-initial markers.

The following two criteria helped to guarantee that the identification of markers has been neither intuitive nor arbitrary:

1- Word class

Entities other than nouns (as in English) or verbs (as in Arabic) that occupy the sentence-initial slot in the Arabic (translated) text have been noted as potential markers (e.g. time and place adverbials). Exception has been made for the imperfective passive form *yudkaru anna* (*it is to be mentioned that*), which has been identified as one variant of a potential sentence-initial marker. It does not simply add or continue referring to a certain speech event as is the case in its simple past form *dakara anna* (*he said that*), which encodes a speech act by a participant in the event referred to. Exception has also been made for the auxiliary verb *kāna* (*to be*) which is aspectual.

2- Extra introductory words or phrases

Extra words or prefatory expressions that do not appear in the English sentence have been noted as potential markers in Arabic news texts. Most of them do not form part of— but rather introduce— the propositional content that is expressed in the main clause. Entities that qualify as sentence-initial markers are presented in 4.2.1.

B. Markers' environment

After selecting the markers and performing text counts, each marker has been examined in all the texts it appeared in. The goal has been to ascertain its distinctive features and determine its particular behaviour. We wanted to know the circumstances under which the marker is used, given certain text developmental patterns. Similarities and differences among markers in grounding function have been noted. Illustrative examples are

drawn from all three samples.

The theoretical framework outlined in the beginning and applied to the analysis of English news texts has provided insight into the environment of the Arabic markers, since the markers occur in sentences whose propositions have already been assigned certain grounding-values. The criteria for the assignment of grounding-values have also guided the analysis of (markers in) texts from the other samples. Analysis along these lines captures constraints on the production of this type of text in general, and on the occurrence of sentence-initial markers in particular.

In examining the environment of markers, we focussed on the following main features:

1- Word-order and grounding-value

Since word-order is a crucial feature of the immediate environment of markers, we examined the influence of initial markers on main clause word-order, and the possible relation to the underlying grounding-value that the marker introduces. In this regard, we also examined the discourse function that noun-initial and verb-initial sentences serve.

2- Discontinuity

The wider environment of markers has to do with (dis)continuity. In order to prove the claim that the FG-BG structure is a crucial factor that determines the presence of— as well as the choice between— initial markers in Arabic news texts, we wanted to eliminate discontinuity as an influential parameter in the environment. Therefore we examined in sample I (dis)continuity, measured relative to the immediately preceding sentence. One of its manifestations is participant discontinuity by which we mean the initial entity that is a noun phrase in subject position and that is different from that in the preceding sentence (see Bakker 1993). One may also talk about topic discontinuity, since 'the most interesting and functionally important topic-*discontinuity* in language is obviously that of *subject switching*' (Givón 1983b: 68). Another feature is event discontinuity—which may coincide with participant discontinuity—that denotes a shift to a different event, such as in counter-sequential reporting (i.e. 'anterior' reporting (see Givón 1977: 198)), or to a state (i.e. non-event), such as referring to a quality or general belief. The change of participants and the discontinuity in action constitute 'a thematic break in the discourse' (Bakker 1993: 284) or they bring about a change in theme (see Cooreman 1992).

3- Interchangeability

A third feature of the environment of markers is markers' interchangeability and the preference for a particular marker. To test constraints on interchangeability, we varied the location of the sentence at the head of which the marker appears and observed possible effects on the selection of markers.

4- Zero initial markers

For the analysis to be adequate and complete, we explained why certain developmental patterns of news discourse do not manifest initial markers. Therefore, instances of sequences of sentences— and even of whole news texts— that manifest zero markers have been noted for further investigation and comparison.

4.2 The Observed Phenomenon in Arabic News Texts

Examination of Arabic data from news reveals significant differences with English in patterns of connectivity. Unlike English news texts, which usually juxtapose sentences without using special words, Arabic news texts use certain expressions in sentence-initial position. These prefatory expressions are frequently used by writers of Arabic news both in translated texts and in texts originally written in Arabic. When they occur, they are invariably in sentence-initial position, and in various sentences of the text, with the exception of the lead sentence.

The following two short news items illustrate the phenomenon. The first is an Arabic text, and the second is an English one with its Arabic translation. The text in (1) is reported by *Al-Ahram*, based on a report from Kuwait by the Middle East News Agency (*MENA*). Transliteration is followed by literal and free translation. Sentences are numbered.

(1)

Itāliya tahtajiz t̄a'irat rukkāb kuwaytiyyah
Italy detains plane passengers Kuwaiti

Al-Kuwayt (a.š. a.) — (1) dakarat mašādir šaḥaḥiyyah kuwaytiyyah
said sources press Kuwaiti
ams anna al-sultāt al-īṭāliyyah ihtajazat
yesterday that the-authorities the -Italian detained

ṭā'irat rukkāb kuwaytiyyah fī maṭār rūmā
 plane passengers Kuwaiti in airport Rome
wa-hiya qādimah min madrīd fī ṭarīqihā
 and-it[ie. while] arriving from Madrid in way-its
ila al-Kuwayt.
 to Kuwait.

(2) *wa-qad arsalat al-sultāt al-kuwaytiyyah ṭā'irat*
 and-particle sent the-authorities the-Kuwaiti plane
"air bāš" 'alayhā mumattilān li-wizārat al-xārijīyyah
 "airbus" on-it representative-two for-ministry the-foreign
ila rūmā li-istiṭlā' asbāb ihtijāz al-ṭā'irah
 to Rome to-[the]investigation reasons detaining the-plane
wa-iḥḍār al-rukkāb.
 and-bringing the-passengers.

(3) *wa-min jihatīn uxrā a' lana al-šayx nawwāf*
 and-from side another announced the-sheikh Nawaaf
al-aḥmad waẓīr al-dāxiliyyah al-kuwaytī annahu
 al-Ahmad minister the-interior the-Kuwaiti that-it
sa-yatim fī šahr mārīs al-qādim ḥudūt
 shall-be completed in month March the-coming occurrence
tagyīrāt wa-ta'dīlāt fī al-qiyādāt al-amniyyah bi-al-kuwayt
 changes and-reshuffle in the-top the-security in-Kuwait
ba'da ḥawādiṭ al-taffīr allatī waqa'at hunāka fī
 after incidents the-explosion that took place there in
al-'ām al-māḍī.
 the-year the-past.

(Al-Ahram 9/1/1986)

Italy detains a Kuwaiti passenger plane
 Kuwait (MENA)— (1) Press sources in Kuwait said yesterday* that Italian authorities have detained a Kuwaiti passenger plane in Rome airport, on its way from Madrid to Kuwait.

(2) Kuwaiti authorities sent an "airbus" to Rome with two representatives of the foreign ministry on board, in order to investigate the reasons for detaining the plane, and to fetch the passengers.

(3) Sheikh Nawaaf Al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti minister of interior, announced that next March changes will be made in Kuwaiti security top management, following the bomb incidents of last year.

*The reporting clause has been left sentence-initially. In English news texts it may also occur in sentence-final position.

The text consists of three sentences or paragraphs and has in initial posi-

tion of sentences S2 and S3 two markers (in bold) that do not occur in the equivalent English text. The first marker, *qad*, is an aspectual pre-verbal particle that denotes, in its sentential function, the completion of action. The second marker, *wa-min jihatīn uxrā*, is a prepositional phrase glossed in English as *on the other side/hand*. A detailed analysis of these two markers and their discourse functions will be made in the next chapter. Suffice it here to note that they:

- 1- do not occur in the first sentence of the text.
- 2- occur only in sentence-initial position, thus they precede the account of what happened, expressed in the main clause.
- 3- do not occur in (equivalent) English texts. Professional translators usually omit these markers, should they render news texts into English.

Example (2) is an English short news item that has been examined in chapter 2. It is characterized by the absence of any referential links or discourse markers.

(2)

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (Reuters)— (1) The Sri Lankan Parliament voted Thursday to extend a nation-wide state of emergency for a further month.

(2) Tamil and Sinhalese factions have clashed since July.

Let us now look at the Arabic equivalent of S2, which is our main concern, since it shows in initial position the difference with the sentence in the English text. The Arabic sentence would necessarily be preceded by an initial marker such as the following one and rendered as in (2a).

(2a) *wa-min al-ma' rūfī anna jamā'atayy tāmīl*
 and- among the-known [things is] that faction-two Tamil
wa-al-singāl tatašābakān mundu šahr yūlyū
 and-Singhal are clashing since month July.

The constituent in bold preceding the noun phrase may be glossed as *it is known that*.

Examples (1) and (2) show that Arabic news texts make use of additional markers that do not appear in the same type of text in English. For that matter, one of the changes that would have to be made in translating

the Arabic text into English— as (1)— or in re-translating it into English— as (2a)— is to delete these additional markers.

4.2.1 *Spread of the Phenomenon*

Before explaining the significance of the phenomenon, it is perhaps useful to know something about its spread. We do that by making text counts on the translated texts (sample I) and the random sample of Arabic news texts (sample II).

4.2.1.1 *The Distribution of Markers in Translated Texts*

Table 1 gives an overview of sentence-initial markers that we analyzed and other initial entities not included in the study (in total 418). The markers do not appear in the lead sentence, which is usually verb-initial.

Sentence-initial markers	number	%
1- <i>qad</i> (pre-verbal particle)	77	18.4
2- <i>kāna qad</i> (past auxiliary verb to be+ particle)	45	10.8
3- <i>mimmā yuḍkaru anna</i> & variants (among things to be mentioned is that)	33	7.9
4- <i>fa-</i> (so)	23	5.5
5- <i>min nāḥiyatin/jihatin uxrā</i> (from another side/aspect)	15	3.6
6- <i>min al-ma 'rūfī anna</i> (it is known that)	13	3.1
7- <i>fī</i> + spatio/temporal entity (in +...)	5	1.2
8- <i>fī-al-waḡti nafsih/</i> (at the same time)	4	1.0
<i>fī ḡuḍūni ḡālika</i> (meanwhile)		
sub-total	215	51.5
<hr/>		
Other initial entities		
9- <i>kamā</i> (also)	24	5.7
10- <i>aḡāfa</i> (added)	17	4.1
11- verbs of saying (<i>qāla</i>) & variants	62	14.8
12- other verbs	76	18.2
13- miscellaneous	24	5.7
sub-total	203	48.5
<hr/>		
Total	418	100.0

Table 1 Sentence-initial markers and other initial entities in sample I

A short description of entities in Table 1 follows.

SENTENCE-INITIAL MARKERS

The first 8 entities in Table 1 are the markers that we analyzed. They constitute more than half (51.5 %) of all entities that appear in initial position in sample I. The markers are also widespread: They appear in 95 texts, or 95%.

The most frequent marker in sample I is *qad*, followed by *kāna qad*. Both of them account for more than half (56.7%) of the analyzed markers, and for 29.2% of the total number of entities in the sample.

The third most frequent marker in this sample is *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) and its stylistic variants (33). Their distribution is as follows:

mimmā yuḍkaru anna (20), *yuḍkaru anna* (4), *jadīrun bi-al-ḍikri anna* (6), *tajduru al-iṣāratu* (2), *mimmā tajduru al-iṣāratu ilayhi* (1).

The fourth most frequent marker, *fa-*, is followed by the particle *qad*, with the exception of one instance in which it is followed by the future marker *sawfa*.

The distribution of the seventh marker, *fī* + spatio/temporal entity, is as follows: *fī* + location (4), and *fī* + time (1).

OTHER INITIAL ENTITIES

The other five entities that appear in the sample include two additives: the conjunctive *kamā* (*also*) and the perfective verb *aḍāfa* (*added*). The following two entities (both form 33 % of all entities in the sample) consist of verbs. The distribution of verbs of saying (*qāla* (*declare, announce*) and variants is as follows: *qāla* (36), *ḍakara* (22), *a'lana* (2), *ṣarraḥa* (2). Other verbs are substantive verbs that correspond to verbs that appear in the English texts. Under *miscellaneous* are entities such as *ḥasaba* (*according to*) and *min al-muqarrari an* (*it is scheduled/established that*).

4.2.1.2 The Distribution of Markers in the Random Sample

We looked at the occurrence of initial markers in the random sample of 500 short news items. Table 2 summarizes the spread of markers in these texts.

Texts	Markers	Other entities	Total entities in initial position
348 (with markers)	536 (50.5%)	525 (59.6%) (49.5%)	1061 (100.0%)
152 (without markers) -	-	355 (40.4%) (100.0%)	355 (100.0%)
500	536 (37.8%)	880 (62.2%)	1416 (100.0%)

Table 2 The spread of markers in sample II

Table 2 shows that sentence-initial markers are present in 348 texts (69.6%). This demonstrates that the phenomenon is widespread in Arabic news texts. The Table also shows that, of the 1416 initial entities, 1061 occur in the 348 texts. More than half of these entities (536, or 50.5%) are markers.

We present below the distribution of the individual markers and other entities in the random sample.

MARKERS IN THE RANDOM SAMPLE

Table 3 shows the distribution of individual markers in the random sample.

Sentence-initial markers	Number	%
1- <i>qad</i>	163	30.4
2- <i>kāna qad</i>	102	19.0
3- <i>mimmā yuḍkaru anna</i> & variants	76	10.7
4- <i>fa-</i>	27	5.0
5- <i>min nāḥiyatin uxrā</i> & variants	56	10.5
6- <i>min al-ma' rūfi anna</i> & variants	12	2.2
7- <i>fī</i> + spatio/temporal entity	39	7.3
8- <i>fī al-waḡti nafsih/</i> <i>fī nafsi al-waḡt</i>	51	9.5
9- <i>'alā ṣa' īdin āxar/</i> <i>fī ḥādītin āxar</i>	7	1.3
10- <i>hādā</i>	3	0.6
Total markers	536	100.0

Table 3 The distribution of individual markers in sample II

Table 3 shows two additional markers. The first, *'ala ṣa' īdin āxar* (*in another field/domain*), which appears 6 times, as well as its variant, which appears one time, will be referred to in the next chapter. The second is the demonstrative *hādā* (*this*) which is not included in the present study.

It is apparent from the Table that *qad* is the most frequent marker, followed by *kāna qad*. As in sample I, *fa-* is followed in most occurrences by *qad* (21 instances). Other manifestations of *fa-* are: *fa-fī* (*in*) (5 instances) and *fa-lan* (*not*) (one instance).

The initial marker *fī* (*in*) is followed in 38 instances by an entity that denotes location, and in one occurrence by an entity that denotes time.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MARKERS WITH STYLISTIC VARIANTS

Three markers in the random sample, namely 3, 5, and 6, have stylistic variants. Their distribution is as follows:

1- The distribution of *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* & variants (76):

mimmā yuḍkaru anna (31), *yuḍkaru anna* (12), *jadīrun bi-al-ḍikri anna* (28), *al-jadīru bi-al-ḍikri anna* (3), *min al-jadīri bi-al-ḍikri*

anna (2).

2- The distribution of *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* & variants (56):

min nāḥiyatin uxrā (53), *min jānibin āxar* (2), *min jihatīn uxrā* (1).

3- The distribution of *min al-ma 'rūfī anna* & variants (12):

min al-ma 'rūfī anna (6), *al-ma 'rūfu anna* (4), *ma 'rūfun anna* (1),

min al-ma 'lūmi anna (1).

OTHER INITIAL ENTITIES IN THE RANDOM SAMPLE

The distribution of other entities in initial position in the random sample is as follows:

1- <i>kamā</i> (also)	91
2- <i>aḍāfa</i> (added)	82
3- verbs of saying (<i>qāla</i>) & variants*	471
4- other verbs**	216
5- miscellaneous***	20
Total	880

Table 4 The distribution of other initial entities in the random sample

* They are distributed as follows:

qā la (212), *ḍakara* (94), *a' lana* (16), *ṣarraḥa* (23), *aḍā 'a* (2), *a' raba* (5), *ablaḡa* (2), *awḍaḥa* (33), *aṣāra* (52), *akkada* (32).

** They consist of substantive verbs (e.g. *invite*, *refuse*, *meet*, *conclude*, *include*).

*** Examples are *min al-muqarrar an* (it is scheduled that), *fīm ā yata'allaq bi-* (what concerns).

4.2.2 Significance of the Phenomenon

The phenomenon of sentence-initial markers raises several important research questions and merits a thorough analysis. Most of the questions it raises have remained not only unanswered but, more importantly, unasked. Among these questions are the following: why do these markers occur in Arabic news texts? What are the constraints on their occurrence? In what sort of environment do they obtain or are expected? What are precisely the functions they perform in these texts? Are there markers that serve a local

function and others that serve a global one? Are some markers functionally equivalent? What is the nature of the propositions that are expressed in the clauses that follow them? What is the nature of the propositions that are expressed in the clauses that precede them? What are the consequences of their absence? Why the way English news texts signal the FG-BG distinction seems to be neither sufficient nor appropriate for (equivalent) Arabic news texts? What are the factors that determine the selection of one particular marker and not another? Are there situations in which the markers are not obligatory?

These are some of the questions that we will try to provide answers for in this and the next chapter. In what follows we shed some light on a number of features that explain the significance of the phenomenon and put it in perspective.

1- Markers that appear in Arabic news texts, as those illustrated earlier, are different from much-studied sentence conjunctions such as those for *and* or *but*— the usual cohesion markers— and other connectives such as *kamā* (*also*) or verbs of addition such as *adāfa* (*added*). Not only are the markers non-additive but they are also non-sequential. In addition, their presence does not seem to be an expression of semantic (coherence) relations that exist between propositions such as causality or consequentiality. On the contrary, some of the markers seem to neglect or even obliterate whatever semantic relations propositions have. This feature distinguishes them from other markers and shows that they serve different functions.

2- These markers are indispensable even if the intended semantic relation is sufficiently clear from the context, which is the case in conjunctions (Allerton 1969: 37). Being obligatory in text, they challenge the claim that markers are never obligatory but optional and that a zero marker is always possible (Schiffrin 1982: 17). Even if the markers examined here are considered part of discourse markers, and the analysis of discourse markers 'is part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence' (Schiffrin 1987:49), it seems that what is important in Arabic 'is not only the presence of the underlying semantic relationships but also the proper presentation, through connectives, of these relationships' (Al-Batal 1990: 253). Arabic, thus 'imposes a "connecting" constraint that requires the writer to signal to the readers, through the frequent use of explicit connectives, the types of relationships holding among the various constituents of the text'

(Al-Batal 1994: 92).

If the absence of connectives in Arabic jeopardizes the coherence as well as the acceptability of the text (Al-Batal 1985), the absence of this class of initial markers seems to have further-reaching effects on texts. The markers are not just formulaic phrases whose presence is a matter of a stylistic choice or predilection on the part of Arabic news writers or translators. In this sense, they are like 'mystery' particles that are not 'simply salt-and-peppered through a text to give it flavour' (Longacre 1976: 468).

3- As will become apparent in chapter 5, sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts operate far and beyond coherence relations. The markers in Arabic news texts seem to signal to readers the writer's perspective on textual propositions and the relevance of the information. As we will see in the next chapter, the discourse behaviour of these markers provides evidence that they are enmeshed in high-level properties of texts, namely the FG-BG structure and that they have a fundamental role in signaling the assignment of that structure. The fact that their presence is not governed by participant discontinuity (see 4.2.2.1)—and that the markers appear while the same subject is maintained—supports the claim that their presence is not a matter of signaling coherence, and that the requirement to signal distinctions in grounding-values determines their use. The markers account for a fundamental part of the strategy that news writers apply in *communicating news* in Arabic. It may therefore be said that they are crucial for the processes of discourse production, comprehension, and interpretation.

4- The markers are typical properties of news texts. In varying degrees, however, they may occur in other written types of informative discourse. They do not occur in spoken Arabic discourse. As we will see later, the phenomenon represents one salient feature that distinguishes news reporting (i.e. text-type rhetoric) in Arabic from other types of text such as editorials (see 4.3.4).

5- Though functionally different, there is perhaps similarity between a number of these markers and initial lexical markers of prominence, importance (e.g. *it is important*), or relevance—what van Dijk (1980: 103) calls 'relevance indicators', e.g.: *primarily, crucially, especially, it should be stressed that*. There is also similarity with a marker that occurs in spontaneous discourse, namely *incidentally* (see Reichman 1981).

6- Studying this phenomenon in written Arabic news in terms of grounding is unique. Though radio news has received some attention in Arabic, it has been examined from a sociolinguistic perspective. For example, a number of syntactic and semantic features of news style have been studied, using the language of news broadcasts in Modern Standard Arabic on Moroccan radio and television (Ennaji 1995). Another example is the study of the role of formulaic greetings and terms of address of radio news in English and Arabic on the basis of material from Radio Damascus and BBC Radio 4, as well as translated material from Radio Damascus English Service and the BBC Arabic Service (Al-Shabbab and Swales 1986). The study is concerned with editorial assumptions about world knowledge of different audiences. It talks about meta-textual comments which are called text organizing elements that are 'principally designed either to assist the listeners in orienting themselves towards what they are hearing or to establish direct contact between the newsreader and the audience' (op.cit. 34). These entities are general organizers of the whole news bulletin, which is multi-textual: announcements for opening, developing and terminating the bulletin. Sentence-initial markers in the present study are treated within a framework of a theory of grounding, namely as part of surface structure manifestations of the FG-BG structure and distinction in Arabic news discourse. They serve a different function from that served by the 'meta-textual comments'. Besides, the markers function *within* the news text and not *between* different news texts, and they do not aim at establishing contact between a sender and a receiver. As will become apparent in the course of the analysis, sentence-initial markers govern the interpretation of the grounding-value assigned to propositions on the FG-BG continuum.

7- The phenomenon of sentence-initial markers plays an important role in the area of foreign language learning where translation is one particular manifestation of inter-cultural communication and exchanges of messages between different speech communities. The markers are part of intersentential syntactic choices (see Kaplan 1983), where connections are contextually and culturally determined (Loveday 1983). An insufficient understanding of (communicative situation) constraints in translating beyond the sentence-boundaries would create a potential problem for learners of Arabic. It would represent a gap in the acquisition of particular rhetorical patterns. As will become apparent later on (see 4.3), it is one area of cross-cultural communication where 'pragmatic failure' (see Thomas 1983) may

occur. This would require 'certain adjustments in the form of the message if the content is to be accurately and faithfully transmitted...' (Nida and Reyburn 1981:1). A literal translation of the form 'would often change the **meaning**, or at least result in a form which is unnatural in the second language' (Larson 1984: 10).

4.2.2.1 Markers and Continuity

We examined sentence-initial markers in relation to the occurrence of the same/different subject or participant in the host sentence of the marker. The entity with Subject function in Arabic is most likely to be Topic (Moutaouakil 1985: 80). Although the subject is a structural notion and topic is a discourse-functional notion, both topic continuity and thematic continuity 'generally lead to the same choice of referent as the syntactic subject in the sentence' (Cooreman 1987: 191). In fact, subjects are 'the most topical participants in events' (Givón 1977: 247). Subjects, too, 'tend to be agents, agents tend to be human, and humans tend to be discourse topics' (Cumming and Ono 1997: 122).

SAMPLE I

Table 5 shows the distribution of sentence-initial markers in sample I as regards their co-occurrence with the same subject (SS) and a different subject (DS).

(Due to changes in word-order or sentence structure in the translated Arabic text, a change may occur in the entity that occupies the subject position and a similar or a dissimilar subject to that in the preceding sentence may result. This is the case for example when a passive clause would be rendered active (e.g. *The police questioned the woman* instead of *The woman was questioned by the police*), or when the Arabic sentence starts with the reporting clause (e.g. *The minister said that...*).

Sentence-initial markers	SS	%	DS	%
1- <i>qad</i> (77)	12	15.6	65	84.4
2- <i>kāna qad</i> (45)	10	22.2	35	77.8
3- <i>mimmā yuḍkaru anna</i> & variants (33):				
<i>mimmā yuḍkaru anna</i> (20)	4	20.0	16	80.0
<i>jadīrun bi-al-ḡikri anna</i> (6)	-		6	100.0
<i>yuḍkaru anna</i> (4)	2	50.0	2	50.0
<i>tajḍuru al-iṣāratu</i> (2)	-		2	100.0
<i>mimmā tajḍuru</i> <i>al-iṣāratu ilayhi</i> (1)	-		1	100.0
4- <i>fa-</i> (23)	5	21.7	18	78.3
5- <i>min nāhiyatin/jihatin</i> <i>uxrā</i> (15)	-		15	100.0
6- <i>min al-ma' rūfi anna</i> (13)	1	7.7	12	92.3
7- <i>fī</i> + spatio/ temporal entity (5)	-		5	100.0
8- <i>fī al-waḡti nafsih</i> (4)	-		4	100.0

Table 5 Co-occurrence of markers and same/different subject in sample I

Table 5 shows that several sentence-initial markers appear in the text regardless of maintaining the same subject. Although the frequency of their occurrence with a different subject is high, the fact that the markers also occur when the same subject is maintained demonstrates that this shift is neither necessary nor sufficient for their use, and that discontinuity is perhaps an ancillary manifestation of meanings that vary in grounding-values. It should be noted that, by dint of their meaning, the last two markers in Table 5 signal the introduction of different participants.

SAMPLE II

We made text counts of the co-occurrence of sentence-initial markers in the random sample with the same subject and a different subject. These are shown in Table 6.

SIM	SS	%	DS	%
1- <i>qad</i> (163)	33	20.2	130	79.8
2- <i>kāna qad</i> (102)	21	20.6	81	79.4
3- <i>mimmā yuḍkaru anna</i> & variants (76)	10	13.2	66	86.8
4- <i>fa-</i> (27)	8	29.6	19	70.4
5- <i>min nāhiyatin uxrā</i> & variants (56)	4	7.1	52	92.9
6- <i>min al-ma'rūfi anna</i> & variants (12)	2	16.7	10	83.3
7- <i>fī+</i> spatio/temporal entity (39)	-		39	100.0
8- <i>fī al-waḡti naṣsih/</i> <i>fī naṣsi al-waḡt</i> (51)	1	2.0	50	98.0
9- <i>'alā ṣa' idin āxar &</i> <i>variant</i> (7)	-		7	100.0
10- <i>hādā</i> (3)	-		3	100.0

Table 6 Co-occurrence of markers and same/different subject in sample II

Table 6 shows a similar pattern to that in Table 5. Most markers appear in the text regardless of maintaining the same subject in the sentence.

ZERO INITIAL MARKERS AND CONTINUITY

After displaying the co-occurrence of sentence-initial markers and participant (dis)continuity, a few words about news texts that manifest zero initial markers would be necessary. Two main features of continuity characterize a sequence sentence (e.g. S2) that manifests an absence of initial markers:

1- an addition to a speech event (e.g. an announcement). In this case, a verb would occupy the initial position in the sentence, such as the verb *emphasized* in the following rendering:

He said... And-emphasized that ...

2- reference to a sequent event that is usually in the future. This pattern may occur in news texts, as shown by the following example where the sequence sentence in Arabic is verb-initial (i.e. *And-meets*):

The U.S. minister of state Madeleine Albright arrives today to Cairo in a four-day official visit.
And-meets in the evening Egyptian officials to discuss bilateral relations.

4.2.3 *The Arabic Language*

Before we explain why Arabic news texts fail when sentence-initial markers are absent, it would be useful to describe first the language we are engaged with. This language is referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Like Classical Arabic, it is the standard language that is written and understood by the various countries in the Arab world. It is used in newspapers, magazines, books and various sorts of publications (Monteil, 1960: 27) including literary works, for example novels and short stories. Though overwhelmingly written, there are a few instances of oral manifestation of MSA such as in radio news bulletins and commentaries (Abdul-Aziz 1978: 11), as well as in sermons and many university lectures.

Classical Arabic is basically a VSO language (see e.g. El-Yasin 1985). Its dominant unmarked word-order is VSO (see Dik 1980, for different language types). (For a short introduction to the position of Arabic in the Semitic family, see e.g. Haak 1996.) Though VSO in MSA also is considered to be the basic, stylistically neutral or unmarked word-order, the alternate SVO occurs in certain situations (see later). (On the notions of basic, dominant, and unmarked order, see e.g. Siewierska 1988.) Together with SVO word-order, VOS and OVS are also possible patterns, though they are not so frequent as VSO (see Parkinson 1981; see also Hetzron 1987).

THE ARABIC SENTENCE

The Arabic sentence is basically divided into two types: nominal, where only nominal elements are used, and verbal, which includes a verb (Cantarino 1974: 2). Traditional Arab grammarians associated sentence-type with word-order variant, and distinguished between both types of sentence on the basis of the word that appears in initial position. Accordingly, a nominal sentence begins with a noun and a verbal sentence begins with a verb (see e.g. Wright 1975: 250 ff.). In addition to the nominal and verbal sentences, there is *al-jumlaḥ al-ẓarfīyyah* (the circumstantial clause): it has a *ẓarf* (an adverb) or *jārr wa-majrūr* (a prepositional phrase) in initial position (see Abu Al-Makarem 1985).

A noun-initial sentence in Arabic consists of *mubtada'* (subject) or rather the entity that the sentence *begins with*, and *xabar* (predicate) or rather the *news* or *comment* of the sentence (Wright 1975: 250; Al-Kufi 1978: 23). This structure has also been called a thematic structure: a theme followed by a predicate (Beeston 1970: 108), as distinct from a verbal sentence: a verb followed by an agent. The nominal sentence, which usually comprises two nouns, is also referred to as an equational sentence (Kaye 1987: 683-684; see also Owens 1984). Arabic nouns are inflected for case, determination, gender, and number (singular, collective, dual, plural).

In a verb-initial sentence, medieval Arab grammarians distinguished two basic components: *fi'l* (verb) and *fā'il* (agent, actor, doer). The term *fā'il* thus is usually reserved for the subject that occurs in a verbal sentence. (On the distinction between *mubtada'* in a noun-initial sentence and *fā'il* in a verb-initial sentence, see Levin 1985).

THE VERB

By itself, the Arabic verb can constitute a complete (verbal) sentence (i.e. one-word sentence), since it includes a subject within its morphological structure, e.g. *šaribtu-hu* (*drank-I-it*) (see Bateson 1967: 44; Beeston 1970: 71). It is built up from a root that consists of three consonants called radicals. It is inflected (i.e. verb stem+ prefixed and/or suffixed morphemes) according to person (first, second, third), number (singular, dual, plural), gender (masculine, feminine), tense (present, past, future), and mood (indicative, jussive, subjunctive, imperative). When it precedes a subject, the verb does not agree with it; for example a singular verb will be followed by a plural subject. It is however congruent or marked as regards the gender, for example: *istaqbala-t al-wazīra-tu* (*received-fem. the-minister-fem*): *The minister received*. The verb does agree with the subject when it follows it. The perfect indicates person, gender, and number by means of suffixes (or suffix conjugation); the imperfect distinguishes person, gender, and number by means of prefixes (or prefix conjugation).

TENSE AND ASPECT

In Classical Arabic, tense, which locates events in time, has three forms: past, present, and future; and aspect, which denotes the mood of the action as complete or incomplete (or rather it has to do with 'different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation' (Comrie 1976:

3)), has 16 forms (Hassaan 1973: 256) (see chapter 5). The future tense is imperfective in form, with the prefix future markers *sa*, indicating a near future, and *sawfa*, indicating a far future. The imperfective denotes a still-to-come event, even if it does not have a marker that modifies its meaning. Of course, the imperfective form refers to the future if it is accompanied by a temporal adverb that indicates futurity (Mohammad 1982: 54). Thus, among ways of expressing tense in Arabic are the form of the verb alone, or the form of the verb plus: an auxiliary verb, a temporal adverbial, a particle, as well as other lexical and contextual means (*ibid.*: 150). (For a detailed discussion of tense in Arabic, see Al-Muttalibi 1986.)

The imperfective— called *mudāriʿ* (present)— expresses an incomplete action. For example, the verb *yadhab* (*he-goes*) denotes present tense. It has present time reference by default (Al-Tarouti 1991:2).

The perfective— called *māḍi* (past)— expresses a complete(d) action, i.e. that elapsed before the present moment. It 'combines the (simple) past and the present perfect, as opposed to other languages, such as English, that have both forms separate' (Al-Tarouti 1991: 117). The perfective combines perfective meaning and relative past time reference (Comrie 1976: 9), i.e. it combines both tense and aspect. 'The difference between the Arabic Perfective and Imperfective is a difference of relative tense (*ibid.*: 79). In other words, Arabic makes a morphological dichotomy between two tense-aspect paradigms: Perfect and Imperfect. The Perfect encodes past tense and perfective aspect, while the Imperfect encodes present tense and imperfective aspect (Comrie 1991).

4.3 Why Arabic News Texts Fail

In order to understand why Arabic news texts fail when sentence-initial markers are absent (4.3.2), it is necessary to describe first differences in patterns of initial connectivity with English news texts (4.3.1). Then we analyze the process leading to pragmatic failure in terms of a grounding structure problem where meaning that is supposed to be *background* acquires in surface structure expression *foreground* properties that are in the meantime characteristic of a different type of text, namely the editorial. In order to remedy the problem, we suggest that a process of *de-foregrounding* has to be applied as part of a communicative strategy for news (4.3.3). For a better understanding of this strategy, we look at entities that occur

sentence-initially in a sample of editorials and pinpoint the main and relevant differences with news discourse.

4.3.1 Initial Connectivity Patterns: Differences with English News Texts

Since the markers we examine manifest themselves as a special class of entities for initial connectivity in Arabic news texts, it would be useful to examine differences with English in patterns of connectivity. We have seen in chapter 3 that noun phrases and several other entities form the majority of what we described as providers of weak signals of grounding at initial position. These entities, nevertheless, play an important role in expressing the coherence of the text, and they are often the entities that the text depends on in signaling for example changes of scene or structural organization.

Evidently, this pattern of sentence connectivity is intrinsic to the text-forming process in English. After all, the text is assumed to be globally coherent and, as it is known, 'global coherence does not necessarily imply intersentential coherence (connectivity between juxtaposed sentences)...' (Hendricks 1976: 37). Therefore, the mere adjacency of sentences is a common pattern of making clear that separate or independent events and states of affairs are in some way related. There might be, of course, certain grammatical (temporal/aspectual) cues that mark the boundaries as well as the relation between events (e.g. *earlier* for a preceding event; *later* for a subsequent event), and hence 'support' inter-sentential signaling of coherence.

As they are no exception to this pattern of sentence-connectivity, English news texts are not often explicitly marked by devices such as connectives. News stories lack devices that express linkages between sentences (see Bell 1998). Consequently, paragraph-initial sentences may lack connective markers or even referential connectivity. In fact, the lack of back reference is indicative of paragraph boundary (Longacre 1979b: 118), and sentences may denote events and states of affairs whose relation with those denoted in preceding sentences or paragraphs is not necessarily explicitly marked.

In general, contextually independent sentences lack connectives (Hendricks 1976: 59), and words like 'then', 'because', 'but', 'as a result', 'in particular' which make the relevance of one fact to the other explicit, are not so much used in news reports (see Green 1979). Newspaper accounts

rely on the reader to infer temporal and logical connections among facts. Green (op.cit.: 32) explains:

' Obviously, if paragraphs are going to be written so that they can be deleted from the story without its requiring further alteration, they cannot contain temporal or logical connectives such as meanwhile, later, therefore, however, which relate their content to something preceding them which an editor might want to cut'.

She adds (ibid.: 33):

'Editorial pressure for short articles, and for the freedom to delete paragraphs at will, generated pressure against explicit anaphoric connection between sentences or other units of text. What might in another type of writing come out as: " X. The reason why X is significant is Y " gets written as: " X.Y." '.

EXPLICITNESS OF SIGNALING THE FG-BG DISTINCTION

The "X.Y" pattern— though restricted here to conditional and temporal relations— touches on one main difference in linguistic expression between English and Arabic news discourse, namely the explicitness of expression in sentence-initial position of relations between participants, events, and states of affairs. Arabic is a language that depends greatly on connectives— conjunctive conjunctions in particular. It has been described as a language of connection or junction ('*luġat al-waṣl*' (Anis 1975: 327)). Unlike in English, conjunction in Arabic 'is explicit, performing disjunctive and conjunctive functions...' (Sa'adeddin 1987: 185). In general, Semitic rhetoric is characterized by fluidity, i.e. a preference for serial clause-connection symbolized by connectors of continuation (Bar-Lev 1986).

Though they are not typical of news, the following sentences (Enkvist 1978: 116) provide a good illustration of the "X.Y" pattern that typically lacks connectives or special markers at initial position. They also provide a good starting point to a close examination of Arabic news texts, whose explicitness of expression is also realized by means of markers that serve the function of signaling the FG-BG structure.

(3)

- (a) A cat has four legs. My cat is called Peckie.
- (b) My cat is called Peckie. A cat has four legs.
- (c) The cat has four legs. My cat is called Peckie.
- (d) My cat is called Peckie. The cat has four legs.

According to Enkvist, in (d) 'my cat' and 'the cat' can be understood to be coreferential, and 'the cat' readily has a non-generic reading; but in (a-c) the interpretation of the 'four-legs'-sentence is primarily generic, and the inter-sentential tie is therefore weaker. Shifts from generic to specific or from specific to generic noun phrases affect cross referential ties and make inter-sentential ties weaker (*ibid.*).

The analysis of the sentences in (3) touches on an important feature of the grounding-signaling function of initial markers in Arabic and the grounding-relation that holds between propositions expressed in (a pair of) sentences. In (d) a functional shift occurs to a specific trait of the cat. Sentences (a-c) manifest a change in the level of description. They are interesting for our examination of news texts since it would be necessary for the sentences of each pair in Arabic to mark the distinction in grounding-values. An Arabic rendering of the sequence sentence in (b) for example would not be appropriate if the noun phrase, *a cat*, appears in initial position. A prefatory expression would therefore be required in order to make explicit that it is *background* (a comment statement), and hence signal the distinction in grounding-values.

In like fashion, the following three discourse fragments from van Dijk and Kintsch (1983:154) show varying developmental patterns after the first sentence, which is the same in all of them. They also shed more light on functional shifts and, more importantly, on differences with Arabic in signaling the FG-BG distinction.

(4)

(a) John went for a hike in the mountains last weekend. He came back with a broken leg.

(b) John went for a hike in the mountains last weekend. He left early on Friday morning.

(c) John went for a hike in the mountains last weekend. He is crazy about the fresh air and the beautiful views.

Though S2 has the same initial pronoun that denotes the same person referred to in S1 and signals the sentence topic, the three discourse fragments vary in the type of activity each encodes: So in (a) it is a sequential event; in (b) it is a counter-sequential event; and in (c) it is a non-event that interrupts the event referred to in the proposition of the first sentence in order to reflect on the participant and provide some general characteristics of him.

Though the referent remains constant across proposition boundaries (van

Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 156), the sequence sentence in (b) and (c) discourses manifests a shift to a different grounding-value that the Arabic equivalent— as typical news sentences— will signal. Discourse (b) has a typical news structure: the proposition expressed in the sequence sentence refers to an earlier event. It will have an initial marker such as *wa* (and)+ the past of the auxiliary verb to be+ the verbal particle *qad* as follows: *wa-kāna John qad left*. Discourse (c) manifests a shift in the level of description and, concomitantly, an event discontinuity. It will have a marker such as *wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna John is crazy about...* (*And among things to be mentioned is that John is crazy about...*). Discourse (a) will not require an initial marker, since it expresses sequential events. As such, it does not manifest a grounding structure typical of news.

Examples (3) and (4) discussed above demonstrate that:

1- entities in initial position that many types of English texts use (e.g. lexical repetition, pronominalization, renominalization) are sufficient to make clear that texts are coherent and cohesive. They are also the surface structure expression of propositions that have different grounding-values.

2- holding discourse referents constant across sentence-boundaries does not preclude the use of additional prefatory expressions in Arabic as strong signals of the FG-BG distinction. The earlier examination of samples of Arabic news texts has also demonstrated that feature.

4.3.2 Grounding Structure Problem: Background Realized as Foreground

We will explain why Arabic news texts fail in terms of what we posit to be essentially a grounding structure problem that the absence of strong signals of that structure creates for these texts in expression. It is characterized as a problem of *background meaning that acquires foreground properties*— mapping more important information than the information that *background* meaning usually maps. Pragmatic and cognitive marking would create a conflict with the already assigned *foreground* meaning in the semantic representation. This would manifest a discrepancy between the assumed *background* and the realized and apprehended as *foreground* meaning. Expression, then, manifests a serious imbalance in signaling the FG-BG structure in the news text, and the absence of initial markers becomes a crucial factor that affects the intelligibility as well as the interpretation of

the FG-BG structure in the whole text. The problem is essentially a **problem of recasting** the appropriate, namely the same, grounding-value or function of the textual proposition. Consider (5).

(5)

(1) The U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright meets today Israeli government officials to discuss the peace process in the Middle East.

(2) Mrs. Albright arrived in Tel Aviv yesterday.

The topic, which is also the syntactic subject, is the same in both sentences. To render S2 in Arabic by means of a noun (i.e. *Mrs. Albright*) or a verb (i.e. *arrived*) in initial position would mean that the Arabic text has failed to recast an appropriate and equivalent news message (see below). The Arabic equivalent of S2 would necessarily use in initial position a marker such as the perfective of the auxiliary verb *kāna* (*to be*) and the pre-verbal particle *qad*, preceding the perfective of the main verb in the sentence as follows: *wa-kānat* (fem.) *Mrs. Albright qad arrived*.

Before we explain why this text—and news texts in general—may fail to recast an appropriate and equivalent news message when these markers are absent, it is perhaps useful to show how Arabic news texts look without the markers. For this, we examine example (6), which is taken from students' translation into Arabic. (The text is an English translation from Dutch.)

(6)

(1) The U.N. organization for refugees, UNRWA, has requested the European Union to exchange the food help which has been allotted to Palestinian refugees with financial assistance for educating Palestinian children.

(2) The organization suffers from serious financial problems, and 600 schools, having 35 000 children and 10 000 teachers are threatened by closure this summer if 25 million dollars are not made immediately available.

The following two variants are common in Arabic translations of S2:

? (2a)

<i>tu 'ānī</i>	<i>al-munazzamah</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>mašākil</i>	<i>māliyyah</i>	<i>xaṭīrah...</i>
suffers	the-organization	from	problems	financial	serious...

? (2b)

al-munazzamah tu 'ānī min mašākil māliyyah xaṭīrah...
the-organization suffers from problems financial serious...

The two variants manifest two patterns of word-order in Arabic: verb-initial or verb preceding the subject (2a), and subject-initial or subject preceding the verb (2b). They perpetuate patterns of connectivity that fail to employ initial markers. The fact that no initial marker such as *mimmā yudkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) has been employed (which means in this case changing the word-order of 2a to put the subject before the verb as 2b), makes both variants look pragmatically odd and hence unacceptable. They manifest a pragmalinguistic failure which 'is basically a *linguistic* problem, caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force' (Thomas 1983: 99). This pragmalinguistic failure 'occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by S onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2' (ibid.).

We will explain the failure of the Arabic text (i.e. the problem of recasting) in terms of two distinct but related features that pertain to the interpretation of surface structure realization (as in A), and in terms of the apprehended FG-BG structure (as in B). Our explanation of the two features thus starts with surface structure and moves to the underlying semantic structure.

A. The interpretation of surface structure realization:

- 1- Sequential discontinuity/break.
- 2- Emphatic structure.

B. The apprehended FG-BG structure:

- 3- Shift in sentence- and text-function: implications for text typology.

The first feature means how zero-initial markers are usually interpreted in Arabic, and how does that differ from the intended interpretation (by the original writer).

The second feature means that *background* is usually marked in Arabic by a sentence-initial marker as opposed to English.

Since syntactic realization will turn out to be fundamental in explaining the

two features, and indeed the need for sentence-initial markers, it will be necessary to look at the discourse function of word-order variants. The question to be asked when there are in a language different word-order variants is about the communicative function of one rather than another (Payne 1992: 1). In this respect, it is recalled that word-order is among 'illocutionary force indicating devices' (Bierwisch 1980:1; see Searle 1970: 30). Unlike English, which is a grammatical word-order language, requiring the subject to be in a pre-verbal position (see Thompson 1978), Modern Standard Arabic manifests a pragmatically motivated functional difference between VS and SV word-order. (For a discussion of the pragmatic function of VS and SV word-order in Chamorro narratives, see Cooreman 1987.)

A. The interpretation of surface structure realization

1- Sequential discontinuity/break

One way of characterizing the functional difference between VS/SV word-order is in terms of the activity that is referred to. Depending upon the type of activity at issue, word-order may code continuity or discontinuity (see e.g. Givón 1983b).

VS SYNTAX AND (DIS)CONTINUITY

In a Semitic language like Arabic, VS word-order— or VS syntax (the term Givón used for the verb preceding the subject, see e.g. Givón 1977)— is the neutral, unmarked structure. It is best suited to describe or encode (a sequence of) events or (a rapid succession of) actions. VS clauses, then, report or narrate (see Hopper 1986). Similarly, Biblical Hebrew employs VS syntax in narrative structure (Longacre 1982; see also Givón 1977). This is also the case for Chamorro (see Cooreman 1982), and Tagalog (see Fox 1985). Thus, predominantly verb-initial languages manifest a correlation of VS syntax and event-line or event-sequences (see Longacre 1995; Payne 1995; Myhill 1992). It is the syntax that codes continuity: It maintains both *referential* and *thematic* continuities where clauses contribute to the thematic development (Cooreman 1992: 243- 244). This is typically the case in the description of past events where perfective verbs express a sequence of actions (Forsyth 1970: 9). It should be added that VS syntax in Arabic is also appropriate to describe temporal sequence where tenses may differ. This is illustrated by the following example, where the second sen-

tence is verb-initial:

Arrived the minister yesterday. And-meets today....

Apart from the lead sentence which is usually verb-initial, the occurrence of a verb sentence-initially in news discourse would not be appropriate in other sentences that manifest neither the pattern illustrated above nor speech act addition as we explained earlier. Reverting to S2 of (5), a verb (i.e. *arrived*) initiating the sentence would be inappropriate, since the sentence is neither a lead sentence nor does it denote temporal sequence. This would create discontinuity or a break between the two sentences of the text. Similarly, 2a of (6), having a VS syntax in initial position (i.e. *suffers the organization*), would signal discontinuity with the event referred to in the preceding sentence. This is the case whether the verb is perfective, that is eventive, or imperfective, that is descriptive.

SV SYNTAX AND DISCONTINUITY

Unlike VS syntax, SV syntax in Arabic is associated with description, for example of participants or states of affairs. One would expect 2b of (6), *the organization suffers*, to be appropriate for the expression of *background* meaning. The problem is that the occurrence of the SV word-order in sentence-initial position is also associated with discontinuity in text. The SV clause is discontinuous with respect to the discourse topic (see Hopper 1986), and the use of SV syntax in VS languages constitutes a very strong discontinuity strategy (Givón 1983a). It denotes a marked theme shift. That is why inversion into SV is used when features of discontinuity are present (see Fox 1983 for a similar conclusion for Tagalog). Therefore, although a pre-verbal subject seems to be motivated in 2b of (6), since it denotes a shift to certain qualities of the *organization*, it would be inappropriate in sentence-initial position since it would signal the occurrence of an interruption or a disconnection between the two sentences of the text, and the introduction of a new structural unit (see Fox 1985; Cooreman 1992) or boundaries of discourse spans (see Khan 1988).

2- Emphatic structure

We look now at the emphatic structure as a result of syntactic marking, first in a verb-initial sentence then in a subject-initial sentence.

VS SYNTAX AND EMPHASIS

In general, VS syntax is pragmatically unmarked word-order, i.e. the default word-order (see Dryer 1995), and— similar to Chamorro's VS basic word-order— it has neutral stress (Cooreman 1992: 244). Being pragmatically neutral, a typical verb-initial lead sentence in Arabic news expresses *foreground* meaning— answering a general question of what happened (see Taglicht 1993). It represents what has been referred to as a 'neutral description' (Kuno 1972: 269). As such, the lead sentence is perhaps tantamount to 'writing degree zero' (Barthes 1967), since it also manifests unmarked focus or normal stress.

In discourse-pragmatic terms, there is perhaps a correlation between VS syntax in the lead sentence and *thetic* statements, that is, undivided reporting of an event, where there is wide focus (*viz.* whole clause all focus) (see Sasse 1987; Rosengren 1997). *Thetic* clauses manifest one accent. They are different from *categorical* sentences or statements. '[T]he *thetic* type of statement is used whenever the speaker assumes that the hearer expects unitary information to be given about the whole situation in question, and the *categorical* [topic-comment] type of expression is used whenever he assumes that the hearer expects information units about the constituent parts of the situation to be built up successively' (Sasse 1987: 568-569). The *thetic/categorical* distinction is extralinguistic, conceptual distinction between two ways of perspectivizing an event (Rosengren 1997: 439).

However, non-initial sentences that exhibit VS syntax would signal high-pitch, i.e. prosodic markedness. Accordingly, the occurrence of a verb-initial S2 in (5), *waṣalat al-sayyidah Albright (arrived Mrs Albright)* would mean that the information underlying the proposition that refers to the act of arriving has been assigned greater importance, hence it gains emphasis and becomes focal. As an utterance, S2 would be syntactically as well as intonationally marked (Taglicht 1993: 998). Intonation would interact with word-order to accentuate the verb phonologically by a high pitch or extra loudness (see Bolinger 1986: 6).

VS syntax in text non-initial sentences would be suitable for reporting events that have just happened (i.e. hot news)— mapping highly important information— as for example by an eye witness who describes events that have surprise elements. The events are unexpected in the scene (for Hebrew, see Givón 1976a: 158-159), and may even be unpredictable (see Kuno 1972). Being in sentence-initial position, the verb 'sets the perspective for the whole clause' (Khan 1988: 31). So in verb-initial narrative forms action is focal and participants in postverbal noun phrases are iden-

tified relative to the action (Longacre 1996: 264).

The verb *tu'ānī* (*suffers*) in initial position in 2a of (6) would denote the state of *suffering* on the part of the *organization* as focal, mapping highly important information. Several additional factors may contribute to produce assertion or emphasis. Primary among these are the occurrence of tense-shift, such as from past to present, and the type of activity that is referred to (see *foreground comment* below). It is to be noted that the grammatical category of 'verb' in strongly VS languages differs pragmatically from its counterpart in SV languages (see Myhill 1985). In Verb-initial languages, verb forms in initial position are non-presuppositional and *foreground*, while verb forms in non-initial position are presuppositional and *background* (Myhill 1985: 181). This is unlike in SV languages such as English where the same verbal forms may be used in presuppositional and non-presuppositional environments (*ibid.*: 182).

SV SYNTAX AND EMPHASIS

SV syntax in Arabic is the marked (inverted), emphatic and non-neutral word-order (see Parkinson 1981) that is typically used in description (e.g. of participants). It is used in topicalization, where the noun phrase is the topic and the clause that follows it is the comment. In noun-initial clauses, a participant is focal and an action is identified relative to that participant (Longacre 1996: 264). Since the sentence does not occur in isolation, SV syntax may be employed *inter alia* to express contrast and a marked focus that 'may supply a piece of information that is required at a given point in the discourse, or substitute a correct piece of information for an incorrect one' (Taglicht 1993: 999). (For a typology of focus, see Dik 1997.)

The marked word-order in Arabic is the neutral word-order in English (see e.g. Bratton 1968). Equality of the sentence *Mrs. Albright arrived in Tel Aviv yesterday* in Arabic and English is only formal. The underlying question for the Arabic sentence is *who* (i.e. to identify the person who has arrived in *Tel Aviv* yesterday), whereas in the English sentence it is a question about *what* happened (see Bratton 1968: 108). That is why, on the other hand, the answer to a *what-happened-question* is conveyed in Arabic by a VS syntax, which, as we said earlier, is the syntax that describes events (and their sequential developments) and which obtains, too, in the lead sentence of the news text. It is to be noted that, in Semitic word-order, 'a noun in sentence-initial position has a much more drastic effect than a verb in sentence-initial position in Romance or Bulgarian (Sasse 1987:

543).

In addition, the occurrence of SV syntax is associated with the expression of meaning that has a high grounding-value, namely *foreground*, and that maps very important information. It is to be observed that there is perhaps a relation between the SV syntax of the headline and its function to express 'semantically important' information. The initial subject would provide the 'relatively most important or salient information in the given context or situation' (Dik 1978: 93). Therefore, the placement of the subject in a pre-verbal position 'constitutes a very strong figure-producing strategy' (Fox 1982: 175).

As a strong *foreground* signaling mechanism, SV syntax in S2 of (5) would express an emphatic meaning, pronounced with high pitch and strong stress, as in a cleft sentence: *It is MRS ALBRIGHT who arrived...* The whole proposition becomes the object that the writer assigns *foreground* properties. Similarly, the word *al-munazzamah* in 2b of (6) bears the tonic and receives the focus of the newly expressed meaning: *It is THE ORGANIZATION that suffers...* The sentence may also get categorical (i.e. a topic-comment) reading or perspective, which 'stands for a perspective where an event is divided into two parts, one of which is viewed as an entity to which something happens or which does something' (Rosengren 1997: 439). The impact on readers would be: I (writer) emphatically state that+ SV syntax, such as: *It is certain that THE ORGANIZATION suffers from serious financial problems.*

B. The apprehended FG-BG structure

3- Shift in sentence- and text-function: implications for text typology

We have seen that the absence of sentence-initial markers may lead to discontinuity in Arabic news texts and may bring about emphatic structures that are typical of signaling underlying *foreground* meaning. We examine now a further effect of a zero marker, namely a pragmalinguistic failure to recast an appropriate pragmatic force in the news message, and the failure to apprehend and interpret the appropriate or intended grounding-value of the proposition. We explain this feature of pragmalinguistic failure in terms of shift in the function of the sentence as well as of what is supposed to be a news type of text. At the core of the pragmalinguistic failure is the assumption by the writer, viz. translator, that the sentence in Arabic would have the same illocutionary force as in English and that it would express

an equal grounding-value.

FOREGROUND COMMENT

We look again at example (6) cited earlier. As a news text, the meaning expressed in S2 is *background*. It is about the context of the event referred to in S1 that expresses *foreground* meaning. The occurrence of VS and SV syntax in sentence-initial position leads to a shift in the function of the proposition expressed in the sentence. Thus, the verb *suffers* in initial position in 2a of (6) would denote a comment on a current event or a state of affairs. This is aided by the fact that the verb is imperfect. In commentary or argumentation, it is recalled, sentences 'typically contain verb groups in the present tense...' (Werlich 1976: 74). The verb is also stative and describes an inner state (see Givón 1977). Imperfective verbs do not present dynamic changes, but rather facts relating to the background (Forsyth 1970: 10). They 'predicate some quality or attribute of a referent' (Khan 1988: 31; see also Al-Tarouti 1991: 112-113). The proposition underlying 2a of (6) acquires properties of meaning that is typical of a commentary text. It may also be considered as denoting high grounding-value: The event that the verb lexicalizes maps information of immediate concern for language users. VS word-order, then, would suggest *foreground* status which is not intended. It would not be appropriate for signaling *background* meaning in news discourse.

Similarly, SV syntax in 2b of (6) correlates very strongly with the description of participants or states of affairs, and it is one important feature of Arabic argumentative discourse (see Hatim 1989). Such syntax encodes comment on what preceded (see Khan 1988). Therefore, the meaning expressed in the news sentence receives an interpretation typical of a commentary or an argumentative text. It becomes also persuasive, for argumentation is part of persuasion (Connor and Lauer 1985). In addition, 2b betrays emotional involvement by the writer in the propositional content, and hence the sentence denotes involved communication—a comment on what preceded in what is typical of non-objective reporting on, or evaluation of, *the organization*. (Over involvement in written communication, see e.g. Chafe 1982; Lakoff 1982.)

SHIFT OF PERSPECTIVE

Subjective presentation manifests a shift of perspective on the part of the news writer. This would imply a change in the relation between the under-

lying structures of the two sentences of (6). It becomes a relation between a fact (in S1) and the writer's interpretation of that fact (in S2). The interpretation of the fact would suggest *foreground* meaning— equal to or perhaps more *foreground* than the meaning expressed in S1. In other words, S2 expresses *unintended foreground* value that is apprehended as such from the way the sentence is expressed. The illocutionary force— or the pragmatic meaning— of the sentence becomes different from its semantic representation: **(plain) background news is signaled as (involved) foreground comment**. This causes an imbalance in, and a distortion of, the FG-BG structure of the news text (viz. grounding-relation) and may lead to communication breakdown.

That the proposition expressed in S2 becomes *foreground* comment has also consequences for the grounding-value of the proposition in S1, namely that it becomes *background*— a preparatory statement or an auxiliary act that sets the frame for the *main point* in S2, which then expresses the conclusion, i.e. the main goal of the reasoning process that the writer wants to realize in the process of convincing the reader of a certain state of affairs (see Kummer 1972). In the hierarchy of argumentative discourse, a conclusion is more important than a preparatory statement. The news text, then, acquires a structure typical of commentary, and the **global function** of the text ceases to be that of news.

It may be argued that S2 expresses a *background* proposition, and that SV syntax, as we have seen, expresses also *background*. Assuming this to be true, the sentence expresses *background* to views and not to news. This syntactic feature is accepted in editorials, where sentences may express a comment on— or an evaluation of— what preceded.

VS and SV structures in initial position, then, produce Arabic news texts whose grounding-values are inappropriate and, in the case of translation, are dissimilar to those in the English text. In effect, they reverse the 'figure/ground alignment' (see Tabakowska 1993: 49) and hence change the type of text as well as its function.

SUBTLETY OF SHIFT IN FUNCTION AND RHETORICAL SYNTAX

The shift that takes place from the **news text-type** to the **views text-type** is rather subtle because the propositional content or subject matter does not in itself indicate the type to which a text belongs. The subject matter 'represents a possible abstraction from the habitual co-occurrence of certain linguistic items with certain situational features; it does not indicate

what are the situational features involved' (Gregory 1967:186). In addition, surface structure expression does not manifest any *overt* signals of the (personal) involvement of writers such as evaluative modifiers (e.g. negative connotations or 'loaded lexical choices' (Weizman 1984:42)). The subtlety of shift lies in the manipulation of inter-sentential syntax by omitting initial markers, which adds a rhetorical dimension to relations between underlying propositions. The rhetorical dimension is the outcome of a rhetorical syntax that aims at influencing readers' perception of what is described. In a language such as Arabic, typological differences between news and commentary at sentence-initial position are perhaps far much more than in English (see 4.3.4). Although some markers seem to express judgement (e.g. about readers' knowledge), they are different from 'modal adjuncts' (see Halliday 1985:50) which give *inter alia* probability and personal opinion of the speaker, e.g. *probably, certainly, in my opinion*.

DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The changes that transpire in the type as well as the function of text have to do with context, which readers predict from text (see Halliday and Hasan 1985: 34ff.). Readers reconstruct certain features of the tenor, which is the most important feature of the context. The news writer is seen as an omniscient reporter, addressing an unseen audience, giving factual information and updating knowledge about newsworthy events in an impersonal way. Readers are aware that they are engaged in a news-reading process and that the news context does not warrant an emphatic presentation, since that would represent a deviation from the usual way of imparting news. But surface structure realization of the sequence of sentences does not help readers predict the appropriate context for the text they read. The question, in fact, has to do with two different contexts and texts. A discrepancy would then exist between the context for the intended **news (plain reporting)** and the context readers predict, that is, the apprehended **views (commentary)**. The discrepancy creates a crucial problem that accounts for the failure, namely that a *context for commentary* vitiates the *context for news*. This severs the relationship between the **news text** and the **news context**.

The discrepancy as well as the severance between both would make it difficult for readers—based on their knowledge and assumptions—to recognize the text as well as the context as typical of news. This would lead to misunderstanding. Misunderstanding may also occur when there is a

'mismatch' (Blakemore 1987: 31) between the context envisaged by the writer and the one selected by the reader. This discrepancy is between writer's context and reader's built up context, or rather between intended or sender's content and apprehended or receiver's content (Allwood 1976). Eventually, then, the discrepancy is between writer's text and reader's text.

What is at issue is in fact the question of determining *who is speaking*: a news writer or a commentator. Readers experience (a mixture of) both in the same text, and witness *a change in the communication behaviour* of the news writer who, during a process of objective reporting, introduced a subjective point of view and endorsed the state of affairs referred to in the news item.

It is to be noted that context is built up gradually. In an early stage of news communication, context is more or less neutral. This explains perhaps the appropriateness of the use of (the neutral) VS syntax in initial position in the lead sentence, but not in subsequent sentences whose context has already been built up and hence the need to use sentence-initial markers (see 4.3.3).

KNOWLEDGE OF HIGH-LEVEL STRUCTURE AND TEXT ORGANIZATION

The various ways in which texts express relations among people and events are of course subject to the types to which these texts belong. As 'global frameworks controlling the range of options likely to be utilized' (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 149), text-types have discerning (linguistic) features that account for text differentiation. They are in fact indices of text-type or function (see Smith 1985). The presence or absence of a number of these features can be crucial for the global function that each text is expected to fulfil. It is assumed (Gülich and Raible 1972:5) that there is a correlation between the configuration of internal and external markers of text and the function it has. Internal markers include certain stylistic devices and the choice of illocutionary indicators. External markers are, for example, the expectations of readers. We have seen that the discrepancy between the expectations of readers and surface structure expression in terms of certain syntactic structures may result in communication failure.

Evidently, readers would eventually assign a text to a certain type (e.g. expository, narrative) according to their knowledge of high-level structure. Thus, text-organization is an important parameter in text-type classification (see Faigley and Meyer 1983), since it determines its global function.

It also determines its success or failure. Among high-level structures is text-type schema (see our earlier discussion of news schema in chapter 2). Readers may realize that a text is deviant in terms of news schematic structure, and that it does not fit the stored schema, and hence it fails as a news text. What may impede comprehension is that readers infer, instead, properties of a news commentary schema, and build in their knowledge about text typology an evaluative message from a commentator who forwards an opinion and urges them to uphold something, and not from a news writer who presents factual information.

In interpretation, then, it is necessary to take into account knowledge about discourse-structure and discourse-type (see Caenepeel and Moens 1994). This includes knowledge of various patterns of relationships expressed in text. For example, temporal and causal links in the case of narrative forms (see McCutchen and Perfetti 1982) are important in interpreting the type to which a text belongs. Implied in all this is knowledge of text-type specific FG-BG structure and of how that structure ought to be signaled. Consider the following two examples (Caenepeel and Moens 1994: 10), which are also similar to other examples we examined before:

- a. *Annie fell off her bicycle. She broke her leg.*
- b. *Annie broke her leg. She fell off her bicycle.*

Similar in semantic content and causality relationship, (a) and (b) differ in their high-level (typological) structure and in their grounding structure: (a) has a narrative structure or context and the relation between the two sentences is co-ordination; (b) does not have a narrative structure or context and the relation is between a main and subsidiary proposition. In terms of grounding, the sequence sentence in (a) expresses *foreground* meaning, since the proposition denotes a time-advancing event, and the sequence sentence in (b) expresses *background* meaning, since the proposition refers to an earlier event.

As we saw earlier, knowledge of text-type specific FG-BG structure also involves knowledge of markers that are required for the appropriate interpretation of certain grounding-values. Part of the task of writers of Arabic news texts is to see to it that the strategy they apply maintains text typology by structures where underlying propositions would map the proper degree of information importance and hence the appropriate grounding-values. As we will see in the next chapter, several sentence-initial markers help maintain the news type of text.

4.3.3 Sentence-Initial Markers and Communicative Strategy: De-Foregrounding

We have seen that syntax has a fundamental role in communicating— and interpreting— meanings in the Arabic news text. The occurrence of VS or SV syntax— and the alternation between both under discourse conditions (Myhill 1985)— would be unacceptable in sentence-initial position, if Arabic news texts are to be produced. What is required, then, is to neutralize the effect of that syntax. We describe this requirement as a communicative strategy of *de-foregrounding* in which sentence-initial markers are employed in order to cope with the two features discussed earlier and that are common in editorials. The strategy of *de-foregrounding* aims at neutralizing *foreground* properties and signaling textual propositions as *background*. Specifically, it realizes two goals:

1- signaling the coherence of the FG-BG structure

Employing the appropriate markers prior to either a VS or SV syntax embeds the main clause within the marker. As we will see in the next chapter, each marker (co-)operates with a certain word-order variant in order to signal text meaning in terms of grounding. Consequently, the way the proposition is expressed in the sentence would signal a grounding-value that conforms with the typical FG-BG structure of news. In so doing, the text signals the coherence of the FG-BG structure. This involves modifying the illocutionary force of the speech act such as to mitigate or weaken it (see Holmes 1984). In a sense, the writer 'avoids foregrounding' or rather the 'deautomatized' form of language that uses devices to obtain audience's attention (Mukářovsky, 1964:10). Among mechanisms serving that purpose are those that de-emphasize or play down the importance of the speech act. 'Often this effect is achieved by suggesting that the content of the speech act is not of major relevance to the discourse as a whole' (Holmes 1984: 362), e.g. *by the way, incidentally* (see chapter 5).

2- maintaining the news type of text

An ancillary goal, distinct yet related to the goal of signaling the coherence of the FG-BG structure, is to maintain the news type of text. Sentence-initial markers realize *the syntax of plain reporting*. We have made it clear that the absence of an introductory phrase signals a shift to a personal and expressive level of communication. The syntax of plain reporting guards

against deviations in news (bulletins) from the(ir) 'styleless' style such as when an opening subordinate clause spoils the established order (Roeh 1982: 82). 'A subordinate clause at the beginning of a sentence, an opening adjective, etc., suggests tension, implies drama, calls for more participation, than an opening main clause' (ibid.: 83).

Recasting the intended message as *news* means preventing the shift to other types that convey point of view, such as news commentaries or editorials. Again, this involves modifying discourse force (see Brewer 1980)—analogous to sentence force in speech act theory—which means 'an interaction of the communicative intent of the author and the perception of the reader' (ibid.: 224). We may speak of a *syntactic strategy* that aims at communicating a certain *grounding angle* in the text as a news text. The proposition expressed in the sentence would be interpreted as part of the context and hence text, namely as *background* to news and not as *foreground* to views. Readers are like listeners who 'come to expect certain patterns in the linguistic code, and associate these patterns with language/culture-specific conventionalized interpretations' (Tyler 1994: 245).

Before we examine sentence-initial markers in the next chapter, it would be useful to look at sentence-initial position in editorials.

4.3.4 News and Editorials: Typological Differences and Sentence-Initial Position

In terms of goal, short news items are assumed to inform—to *register* phenomena and not to *respond* to them (see Werlich 1976). Writers of these texts, then, are supposed to have a 'non-engaged and non-evaluative' attitude (Kořir 1988: 354). Newspapers, of course, have ideologies that influence their choice of news items, of main events, and (the amount of) relevant details. But what is meant here is a level of objectivity that transcends the well-known subjectivity in lexical choices, selection of events and formulation. The propositional content of news texts excludes markers that (explicitly) convey writers' personal opinion or attitude towards that content. These markers may be found in longer news items, or in what is called the interpretative news story (see Werlich 1976: 64ff). In addition, short news texts do not attempt to interpret facts, assert or influence readers' perception of these facts. In other words, they do not have a persuasive intent. They make neither a first-person reference to writers nor a second-person reference to readers. That both are excluded from the news text

means that declarative sentences do not manifest any interaction between both— conforming to the way both writers and readers look at this type of text.

THE EDITORIAL

We take the editorial, the leading article, or the news commentary as an example of a type of text that not only recounts but also explains and interprets facts, criticizes and advocates certain points of view. There are, of course, other types of text that are similar in intent, such as columns and opinion articles. In fact the editorial is a blend of arguing, narrating and exposing. Consisting of 'pseudo-informative messages', the editorial may be said to be 'a persuasive message presented in an apparently informative format' (McCroskey 1978: 207). It may also be called an interpretive news story, which is 'a kind of a newspaper article that has become one of the more recently favoured conventions in Britain and the U.S. for communicating in the news media' (Werlich 1986:80). 'It presents within the scope of one and the same article what is usually separated into two: facts and evaluative views' (ibid.). This means that although different genres of writing are distinguished, such as deliberative, informative, performative, and reflective/explanatory (see Beale 1987), there is sometimes an overlap of genres within the same text, and 'persuasive elements may be found in varying degrees in various discourse types' (Schmidt and Kess 1985: 293).

In general, editorials do not map information in a decreasing importance fashion. Writers usually keep the main point, e.g. an evaluation, to a later stage in the text or even to the very last sentence. This is similar to what is described as 'PEAK' sentence, which is a sentence of a particular semantic importance (Hinds 1979: 155). Therefore, earlier propositions in an editorial merely set the frame of reference for the still-to-come main goal or point of the whole text, namely the writer's response to what preceded.

TEXT-TYPE VARIABILITY AT INITIAL POSITION

Text-type variability may be detected at sentence-initial position. It is a slot that contributes to the realization of the function of the text. We posit that short news texts differ from editorials or news commentaries at that position. So they do not have for example sentences beginning with what Callow (1974: 16) calls 'attitudinal' particles. The presentative particle *inna* would be absent in short news texts. It is a device that expresses modality and means 'certainly', 'truly'. It affirms the truth value of the sen-

tence (Bratton 1968: 113). It also carries the rhetorical function of impressing or convincing. Since *inna* has an emphatic function, it signals the involvement of the writer in the meaning expressed in the sentence that it prefaces. In fact, the use of this particle has to do with the linguistic feature of *intensity* that is 'the emotional expression of social orientation toward the linguistic expression: the commitment of the self to the proposition' (Labov 1984: 43), and that is encoded in text by means of syntax as well as entities such as adverbs: *really, so, very*.

Similarly, *lākin* (*but*)—a particle that does not occur in sentence-initial position in short news texts—introduces an opposition and belongs to what is referred to as 'argumentative morphemes' (see Ducrot et al. 1980: 14). It may occur in editorials as part of an illocutionary act that 'communicates speaker's beliefs, feelings, attitudes, or opinions with respect to a specific event or state of affairs' (Edmondson 1981:137).

Nor does the short news text include sentences beginning with temporal markers such as '*indama* (*when*)' in the following adverbial clause:

wa- 'indama waṣala al-raʿīs istaqbalahu al-malik.
and-when arrived the-president, received-him the-king
When the president arrived, the king received him.

Rather, we find:

wa-qad istaqbala al-malik al-raʿīs 'indama waṣala
and-particle received the-king the-president when arrived-he
The king received the President when he arrived.

In the same vein, a temporal adverb (e.g. *amsi* (*yesterday*)) would be relegated to a (syntactically less prominent) far-inside-the-sentence position—thus losing any discourse argumentative function.

Since entities in sentence-initial position such as these illustrated above serve a rhetorical function and represent potential text-type switchers, news texts in general would make marginal use of them.

A SAMPLE OF EDITORIALS

On the basis of the preceding discussion and observations, we hypothesize that in Arabic argumentative discourse exemplified by editorials:

1. Sentence-initial markers are not so frequent as they are in news texts.

2. SV/VS syntax is more likely to manifest itself in sentence-initial position for reasons explained earlier, namely communicative syntax.

In order to test the hypotheses, a sample of 100 editorials has been selected from *Al-Ahram* newspaper from the period 21/9/1986 to 31/12/1986. The editorials are from the rubric *ra'y al-ahrām* (*the opinion of Al-Ahram*), an unsigned daily article. The 100 editorials include 911 sentences. All entities that appear in sentence-initial position have been isolated and categorized. A short description of them follows.

INITIAL MARKERS IN EDITORIALS

A very few number of sentence-initial markers appear in the sample of editorials. In total they are 37, or 4.5 % of all entities that appear sentence-initially in it. Table 7 presents their distribution.

1- <i>qad</i>	16
2- <i>kāna qad</i>	1
3- <i>fa-</i>	14
4- <i>min jihatin uxrā</i>	1
5- <i>min al-ma'rūfi anna</i>	3
6- <i>fī</i> + location	1
7- <i>fī nafsi al-waqt</i>	1

37

Table 7 The distribution of initial markers in a sample of editorials

Table 7 shows that not all categories of initial markers that appear in news texts also appear in editorials. Those that are frequent in news texts, such as *qad* and *kāna qad*, are scarce in editorials. Even conjunctions are not so frequent in editorials. In the present sample there are only 6 instances of the additive *kamā* (*also*) in sentence-initial position.

On the other hand, the sample of editorials shows that some markers, such as *fa-*, may occur in disparate constructions that are absent in news, since they have argumentative or emphatic morphemes (e.g. *fa-inna*, *fa-+NP*, *fa-la-qad*, *fa-huwa/hiya*, *fa-hādā*)

SV/VS IN INITIAL POSITION

The lead sentence in editorials— unlike in news texts where it is almost

always verb-initial— shows other entities as well. The distribution of entities in 100 lead sentences is presented in Table 8.

verb-initial	54
noun-initial	11
other (e.g. adverb, prepositional phrase)	35
<hr/>	
Total	100

Table 8 Other sentence-initial entities in the lead sentence of editorials

The distribution of entities in initial position in other sentences of the editorials (811 sentence-initial entities) is presented in Table 9.

verb-initial	204
noun-initial	117
other	490
<hr/>	
Total	811

Table 9 Other sentence-initial entities in other sentences of editorials

Several entities under *other* are argumentative markers. They are typical of evaluation.

The sample of editorials shows that SV syntax occurs in initial position. This is in line with the function of SV syntax that we explained earlier. (It is relevant to mention that 'the language of news analysis... contains a higher proportion of noun phrases and a lower one of finite verb phrases' (Holes 1995: 260).) That (the choice of) SV/VS syntax in initial position shows the difference between news and editorials is illustrated by the lead sentence of the following editorial from the sample.

al-ittiṣālāt allafī bada'aha ams al-duktūr 'iṣmat 'abd al-majīd nā'ib ra'īs al-wuzarā' wa-wazīr al-xārijīyyah fī niyuyurk tumattīl bidāyat al-taḥarruk al-diblūmāsī al-jadīd.

(The contacts that Dr. ismat abdel-majid vice premier and minister of foreign affairs started in New york yesterday represent the beginning of the new diplomatic move).

Starting with a noun phrase, the lead sentence relegates the verb (viz. *represent*) to a later position. In a typical news text, the verb will be placed in initial position in the lead sentence that expresses *foreground* meaning. The sentence above shows the relation between SV syntax and the function of the imperfect, namely that SV 'is more common in independent main clauses with imperfect verbs, which are characteristic of expository and descriptive texts, than in those with perfect verbs, which express events in a narrative' (Khan 1988: 30-31).

Conclusion

We focussed in this chapter on the phenomenon of a special class of sentence-initial markers that occur in Arabic news texts. Observable data showed that the phenomenon is widespread, and that its occurrence is a consistent feature of these texts. The analysis of the markers in the Arabic version of the *International Herald Tribune* sample as well as in a random sample of *Al-Ahram* has demonstrated that several markers are present when sequences of sentences manifest various kinds of lexico-grammatical relations such as participant continuity or grammatical-role continuity (see Reichman 1981). The markers are also employed when sentences do not express relations among propositions.

It seems therefore that these features do not determine the occurrence of sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts nor do they make them redundant. It also seems that the markers are insensitive to the presence—or absence—of entities that express connectivity patterns usually found in English (news texts). It has been found that the usual initial entities in that language are neither sufficient nor appropriate for (the production of equivalent) Arabic news texts, and that they create for these texts a problem that we described as a problem of signaling the FG-BG structure. We explained the phenomenon of initial markers as a response to a grounding coherence problem which requires signaling the appropriate grounding-values on the FG-BG continuum.

We also explained how perpetuating connectivity patterns of English, and the failure to employ sentence-initial markers would leave a subject or a verb in initial position. This realization form engenders a break or disruption in the sequence, creates an emphatic structure, and changes meaning. Creating news texts with FG-BG structures that are different from what news texts typically have, leads to text-type shift. In this regard, we explained how the failure to communicate appropriate grounding-values is associated with an imbalance in the FG-BG structure and a failure to deliver the appropriate type of text. This means that the absence of sentence-initial markers has far reaching effects on the global structure of the text as news discourse. In this regard, the analysis showed that *background* meanings in English news texts are not always signaled at initial position. The Arabic news text resorts to additional linguistic markers and seems to be subject to more constraints than the English text as regards signaling the introduction of *background* propositions.

The chapter explained that sentence-initial position is a major indicator of text-type differentiation, and that syntactic structure is one important determinant of text type. It also made clear that the presence or absence of initial markers is one crucial discerning feature of the context as belonging to a particular type of text. This means that an interpretive function is assigned to zero initial markers. A zero marker is in effect tantamount to a text-marker of a relation between the writer and the situation as well as readers. An analysis of a sample of editorials provided evidence for the low percentage of sentence-initial markers that customarily appear in news discourse. It showed, on the other hand, the occurrence of nominal structures in initial position. This confirms our claim about typological differences and about the syntax of news discourse that does not tolerate these structures.

Sentence-Initial Markers

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we examine manifestations of grounding at sentence-initial position in Arabic news texts. We present a detailed analysis of each marker in that position by:

- 1- describing its grammatical features and the syntactic constraints it imposes on the sentence in which it appears.
2. explaining its semantic properties; describing and illustrating the main or distinctive grounding-signaling function it serves.
3. ascertaining whether it signals almost invariably the same grounding-value. In other words, we address the question of whether Arabic news texts have preferred devices for signaling certain grounding-values. A preferred device obtains when the association of an initial marker with a level of grounding 'is so frequent as to provide a reliable signal for that level' (see Jones and Jones 1979: 23).
4. exploring the necessary conditions that must hold for its occurrence, that is, factors that encourage its presence or disfavour its use in a particular sentence. We look therefore into the properties of the context in which the marker would (not) occur.

We will present evidence that sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts differ in the grounding-values they signal. This is consistent with the requirement that news texts signal distinctions in (semantic) grounding, mapping information that has greater or lesser importance and relevance in event and context models. It is also consistent with the strategies that writers apply *inter alia* to manage the context models of readers in written communication and eventually help readers to interpret meaning from the same perspective.

After analyzing in 5.2 each marker and illustrating its main grounding-signaling function, in 5.3 we extend the analysis by looking more closely at constraints on the interchangeability of markers and recasting options

that writers may have. Then we focus on cases of markers that neutralize an initial marker in the English news text.

5.2 Types of Sentence-Initial Markers

Sentence-initial markers that have been examined fall into two broad categories:

1- Grammatical: two tense-aspect entities, the pre-verbal particle *qad* and the auxiliary verb *kāna* (*to be*), as well as the particle *fa-* (*so, thus*) and the preposition *fī* (*in*). Operating in units larger than the sentence, these entities perform functions that are distinct from their parallel functions in sentence grammar. They are sensitive to pragmatic factors and discourse context which play a crucial role in the interpretation of the meaning of grammatical categories (Fleischman and Waugh 1991:1).

2- Lexical: several expressions and constituents some of which have stylistic variants. They are peripheral to the main clause.

Table 1 displays the markers, their grounding-signaling functions, and main features.

Marker	Grounding Function	Main Features
1- <i>qad</i> (pre-verbal particle)	<i>midground</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a high grounding-value: typical <i>midground</i> - serves a local shift function (i.e. within the same main event) - sustains VS syntax which is typical of events and text-initial sentences
2- <i>kāna qad</i> (past auxiliary verb to be + particle)	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a low grounding-value: typical <i>background</i> - may serve a global shift function - sustains SV syntax which is typical of description
3- <i>mimmā yuḏkaru anna</i> (among things to be mentioned is that)	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals significant <i>background</i> meaning - underlying information about a side feature that is rather important - may serve a global shift function - sustains SV syntax
4- <i>fa- (qad)</i> (so)	<i>midground</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a high grounding-value: explicates specifics of the main event - serves a local shift function (i.e. within the same main event) - sustains VS syntax
5- <i>min nāḥiyatin/ jihatīn uxrā</i> (from another side/ aspect)	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a low grounding-value: underlying information is insignificant - serves a global shift function and hence may be digressive - sustains VS syntax
6- <i>min al-ma' rufī anna</i> (it is known that)	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a low grounding-value: peripheral <i>background</i> - underlying information is assumed to be known - sustains SV syntax
7- <i>fī (in)+</i> spatio/temporal entity	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals a low grounding-value - the event referred to may express a global (spatio/temporal) shift - sustains VS syntax
8- <i>fī nafsi al-waqt</i> (at the same time)	<i>background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signals the <i>background end of the continuum</i> - serves a global shift function - sustains VS syntax

Table 1 Sentence-initial markers : grounding-signaling function and main features

Table 1 presents the general pattern of the markers and their tendency to serve certain grounding functions on the FG-BG continuum. It shows that the markers are used in an environment of grounding-values that are lower than *foreground*. Several markers may appear in one and the same text, signaling grounding-values that are close to either *midground* or *background*, or far from them at the *background end of the continuum*. Thus, although *qad* occupies the top and *fī nafsi al-waqt* the bottom of the Table, we do not imply that other *background* markers in the Table are presented in an order of decreasing grounding-values. Besides, since their positions are not absolute, a marker such as *qad* may also appear in a sentence that expresses *background* (see below).

All eight markers imply a preceding proposition and serve an anticipatory function. They also seem to denote that a boundary point in the text has been reached. The nature of this boundary point depends on the particular function the marker serves and the way it displays the unfolding of the FG-BG structure of the news text. In addition, the markers are assumed to be part of stage manipulation, governed by communicative situation constraints and the need to cope with (consequences of) shifts in grounding-values. It may also be said that some of the markers— that establish relations among text segments— operate on a *presentational* level of discourse (see Kroon 1995), and that by using them the writer performs different steps in a communicative act.

SENTENCE-INITIAL MARKERS AND GROUNDING-VALUES

Before we examine the individual markers, it is perhaps useful to get a general picture of their distribution as regards *midground* and *background* functions. Table 2 presents the distribution of the markers in sample I.

	<i>Midground</i>	<i>Background</i>
1- <i>qad</i> (77)	53 (68.8%)	24 (31.2%)
2- <i>kāna qad</i> (45)	4 (8.9%)	41 (91.1%)
3- <i>mimmā yudkaru anna</i> & variants (33)	2 (6.1%)	31 (93.9%)
4- <i>fa-</i> (23)	17 (73.9%)	6 (26.1%)
5- <i>min nāhiyatin/jihatīn uxrā</i> (15)	2 (13.3%)	13 (86.7%)
6- <i>min al-ma 'rūfī anna</i> (13)	1 (7.7%)	12 (92.3%)
7- <i>fī</i> + spatio/temporal entity (5)		5 (100.0%)
8- <i>fī nafsi al-waqt</i> (4)		4 (100.0%)

Table 2 Markers and the distribution of grounding-values in sample I

Table 2 shows the frequency of each marker that occurs in the translated texts and that coincides with a *midground* or a *background* value. These values have already been assigned to the underlying propositions of the English texts. The pattern that emerges shows a correspondence with the grounding-signaling functions that we suggested for the markers. This is supported by similar grounding functions that the markers serve in the other two samples. However, we do not suggest that the markers are redundant and that they have no influence on the grounding-value at issue. As will become apparent later on (see 5.3), using a different marker, where possible, may sometimes signal a different (i.e. a higher or lower) grounding-value on the continuum.

That Table 2 shows some occurrences of *qad* signaling also *background* is due to the fact that the sentence containing this marker occurs after a global shift to the *background end of the continuum* has already been made in a preceding sentence, and hence the host sentence of *qad* expresses also the same *background* meaning (see e.g. S6 of T22 below). This however does not invalidate the general tendency of the pre-verbal particle to signal a relatively high grounding-value as will become evident later. Apart from that, it may be argued that since the sentences that follow a global shift may constitute an independent news text, *qad* may be conceived of as signaling *midground* meaning: The host sentence of *qad* expresses specifics of the (newly introduced) event. In other words, what is at issue is perhaps a locally high grounding-value.

We examined the second sentence of each news text in sample I for the occurrence of initial markers and found that only four markers appear in it. They are distributed as follows:

- 1- *qad* (20).
- 2- *kāna qad* (7).
- 3- *fa-qad* (18).
- 4- *min al-ma'rūfi anna* (1).

This shows that a large number of *qad* and *fa-qad* obtains early in the news text. It is an interesting finding since both are *midground* markers and their early occurrence manifests— and coincides with— a typical news structure where high grounding-values are (expected to be) expressed before low ones.

WA-

Since all markers— with the exception of *fa-* — may be prefaced with *wa-* (*and*), a few words about this inseparable co-ordinate/conjunctive conjunction are in order. *Wa-* is the basic and most frequent conjunction in Arabic: Sentences and even paragraphs frequently begin with it (Beeston 1970). It occurs at all levels in text (see Al-Batal 1990). In its intra-sentential function, *wa-* denotes an additive relation (e.g. logical, temporal simultaneity) and connects nominal sentences as well verbal ones (e.g. a series of verbs denoting a sequence of events). In its discourse function, *wa-* does not denote a strong relation between propositions. Thus, it connects sentences without implying any closer, more logical relationships (Cantarino 1975: 11). Its occurrence sentence-initially may signal a continuative relation— an addition of certain events that are loosely related to preceding ones. In this respect, *wa-* has a low semantic value or specificity and may be called a neutral connective. In translating into other languages such as English, it is often neglected.

5.2.1 *Qad*

The marker *qad* preceded by the particle *fa-* serves a different function from the one we examine here, and hence will be treated separately (see 5.2.4). We examine here the occurrence of *qad* preceding the perfective verb form in the sentence, thus denoting a past event. This is also the pattern that *kāna qad* (see 5.2.2) manifests in news discourse. (For some syntactic constraints on the occurrence of *qad* preceding the suffix-tense verb (i.e. past verb form) in classical Arabic, see Kinberg 1989). We do not deal with the use of *qad* in combination with the imperfective of the

main verb, which denotes probability, nor with the use of the imperfective of *kāna* in combination with *qad*, which denotes future perfect.

The simple past, which encodes a past event, is considered to have a zero aspect. Its occurrence with *qad* and *kāna qad* is relevant to our analysis (for various aspect forms in Classical Arabic, see Hassaan 1973: 256). This is exemplified below by verb *to do* in the past tense form (*fa'ala*) :

1- *qad fa'ala*, which denotes *al-muntahī bi-al-ḥāḍir* (cessation with the present).

2- *kāna qad fa'ala*, which denotes *al-qarīb al-munqaṭi'* (near/recent disconnected past).

The first aspect form will be discussed below and the second in the next section.

CLAUSAL PROPERTIES OF *qad*

The functions that *qad* and *kāna qad* perform in (news) texts, or even in units larger than the sentence, are different from those performed within the sentence (for details, see Khalil 1985). In order to understand the discourse function of *qad*, we first look at its clausal properties.

Arabic grammar has traditionally referred to *qad* as a particle that denotes either perfectivity or emphasis. So the grammatical form *qad* + perfective in a sentence such as *qad šaribat al-qahwah* (*drank-she the-coffee*) would mean *she drank the coffee*, denoting the completion of action, or rather a terminated-before-the-present-moment past. (*Qad kataba* (*wrote-he*) is glossed in English as 'he has written' (Comrie 1976: 81).) Most grammarians, old and new, consider *qad* as a particle that denotes a close to the present time action ('proximate past' (see Holes 1995: 190) *just did something*): a terminated before speech time action. *Qad* may also serve an affirmative function. So it may imply certainty about an action, such as when someone announces: *qad šaribt al-qahwah* (*drank-I the-coffee*), that is, *I did indeed drink coffee*.

A related clausal property of *qad* is its occurrence in non-initial position prior to a circumstantial clause (what in Arabic is called a *ḥāl sentence*) in a sequence of clauses whose verbs encode past events. In this case, *qad* denotes temporal anteriority and signals *background* meaning to the meaning expressed in the preceding clause (see Al-Tarouti 1991) such as in:

Jalasa 'ala al-kursiyy wa-qad badā 'alayhi al-surūr
 sat-he on the-chair and-particle appeared on him the-joy
He sat on the chair as joy appeared on his face

Without *qad*, the second clause would be temporally sequent to the first, so the presence of *qad* 'reverses the sequential relation between the two events' (Al-Tarouti 1991: 146).

THE DISCOURSE FUNCTION OF *qad*

It has been suggested that the different uses of *qad* in combination with the past verb form make it difficult to characterize its specific function (Haak 1996: 129). What may partly account for the difficulty is the fact that *qad* performs other, i.e. text(-grammatical) functions that are distinct from its sentential (temporal or circumstantial) ones. In sentence-initial position, that is, introducing an independent clause, *qad* does not temporally locate the event that the verb encodes prior to whatever events preceding sentences have referred to. Of course, the event may be anterior, but in such a case a temporal adverb (e.g. *before*) denoting a preceding activity would be used in order to make this clear. More importantly, in its discourse function, *qad* looks forward in the past, denoting a further development. It may however neutralize temporal successivity (Khalil 1985: 636), and although the temporal location of the event may, though not necessarily, be interpreted as subsequent to what preceded (see Khalil 1985), temporal adverbs or other lexical items are usually present in the sentence in order to explain the temporal feature.

THE HIGH GROUNDING-VALUE THAT *qad* SIGNALS

The pre-verbal particle signals the organization of meaning in terms of grounding. Two main properties of *qad* support the suggestion that it signals a relatively high grounding-value:

- 1- The syntactic property that it prefaces VS syntax, which is also the syntax that expresses proper *foreground* meaning in the lead sentence (see chapter 4).
- 2- The (sentential) semantic/temporal property that it denotes a just terminated event, which coincides with one feature of news discourse, namely reporting recent past events that have current relevance to language users. In other words, host clauses of *qad* denote current relevance. The propositions are about specifics of the main event referred to in the *foreground*

proposition and hence are *midground*.

All things being equal, the particle frequently appears early in the text as part of *news upstage* (see chapter 2). Constraints on its occurrence have to do with writers' assessment of the relative grounding-value that they want to signal (see 5.3). That *qad* signals *midground* meaning is evident in S2 of T20 below.

(For ease of reading, we provide the sentences in English and initial markers in Arabic (in bold). Where necessary, word-order would be changed to reflect the order in the Arabic sentence. Since all host sentences of *qad* have VS word-order, S2 of T20 manifests that order, i.e. instead of *Greek officials in Athens confirmed*. Other (minor) changes that might be made in the Arabic sentence and that pertain for example to lexical choices are not reflected in the provided English sentence, since they are immaterial to our purposes.)

KUWAIT (Combined Dispatches)

(1) A missile fired by an Iraqi warplane damaged a Greek oil tanker Monday near Iran's main oil export facility in the Gulf, it was reported here.

(2) **wa-qad** confirmed Greek officials in Athens that the Greek tanker Fairship-1 had been seriously damaged in an attack while en route to the Kharg Island oil terminal.

The host sentence of *qad* expresses *midground* meaning. That meaning reformulates the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1 that denotes the main event about the missile attack. *Qad* heralds a shift to a scene within the same main and current event, namely from what was announced in Kuwait to the confirmation by Greek authorities in Athens. This property of *qad* is also evident in text (1) presented in chapter 4 about the Kuwaiti passenger plane. *Qad* thus is non-digressive: it tends to appear in a sentence whose underlying propositions refer to events that are closely related to those referred to in the *foreground* proposition. It also has a narrow scope of signaling *grounding*. All things being equal, the *midground* proposition is expressed immediately after the expression of the *foreground* proposition.

STAGING AND *qad*

As we saw in earlier chapters, the realization of *midground* in surface structure may not be immediately after the realization of *foreground* in the

lead sentence. *Background* propositions may be expressed in sentences that are staged early in the text. In this case, they intervene between both grounding-values, and sentence-initial *qad* may in this case signal a return-to-before the interruption high grounding-value. This is illustrated by S4 of text **TR41** (**TR** refers to texts cited from the random sample). The source of the news item is Cairo, and it is originally written in Arabic.

TR41

Murphey leaves Cairo to Israel

(1) Mr. Richard Murphey, assistant secretary of state, left Cairo yesterday morning to Israel after a two-day visit during which he held talks with Dr. Ismat Abdel Majid, vice premier and minister of foreign affairs.

(2) President Mubarak is scheduled to receive him after his return from Israel today.

(3) *wa-kāna* Murphey *qad* held talks at Cairo airport yesterday with Dr. Nabil Al-Arabi, director of the African department at the ministry of foreign affairs and the head of Egypt's delegation to Taba talks.

(4) *wa-qad* left Murphey Cairo accompanied by David Qimhi, the Israeli negotiator in these talks, to inform Shimon Perez, the Israeli premier, of the results that have been reached.

S4 that *qad* introduces expresses a *midground* proposition about specifics of the main event of leaving Cairo referred to in the lead sentence. The *midground* proposition is realized non-prominently, that is, late in the text as *news downstage* (see chapter 2). It has been preceded by *background* propositions expressed in sentences S2 (a forthcoming event) and S3 (a preceding event). The latter has *kāna qad* as an initial marker (see 5.2.2).

NEUTRALIZING TEMPORAL SUCCESSIVITY AND DISAMBIGUATING

We have seen in the last chapter that sentence-initial markers examined here do not occur in cases of event continuity or speech act addition. This means that the presence of a marker like *qad* would be warranted only if what is at issue is neither temporally sequent nor speech act additive. In other words, its presence would neutralize such a reading. Consider S6 of **T22** presented in chapter 3.

(5) **5a** Meanwhile, Nicaragua's vice president, **5b** Sergio Ramirez, **5c** visiting London on Wednesday, asked Britain to urge Washington to exercise its influence by reaffirming backing for the Contadora regional peace plan and by encouraging the United States to resume the

dialogue with Nicaragua it suspended three weeks ago.

(6) **6a** *wa-qad* met Mr. Ramirez for talks with the British foreign secretary, **6b** Sir Geoffrey Howe.

Although the event referred to in S6 may in effect be subsequent to the one referred to in S5, the presence of *qad* neutralizes any interpretation of temporal sequentiality and makes it clear that the meeting of *Mr. Ramirez* with the British foreign secretary is a different event from the one during which the request to Britain has been made.

This function of *qad* is perhaps more evident in **TR62**. The first two sentences begin as follows:

(1) Arrested security men in the harbour of Alexandria two Arab passengers...

(2) *wa-qad* started the interrogation of the two...

Although it is apparent that the event referred to in the proposition expressed in S2 is temporally sequent, the Arabic text employed *qad*. In so doing, the writer neutralizes— or marginalizes perhaps— the interpretation of temporal sequentiality by focussing on the feature of organizing textual meaning and signaling the distinction in grounding-values, that is, between *foreground* in S1 (main event) and *midground* in S2 (specification).

The particle *qad* may fulfil an ancillary function to the grounding-signaling function, namely to disambiguate. Consider the first two sentences of **T47**.

JERUSALEM (AP)— (1) The Israeli government has agreed to allow Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to broadcast to the Soviet bloc from a transmitter in Israel, U.S. and Israeli officials said here Sunday.

(2) The officials asked not to be identified.

In Arabic, the two sentences are as follows:

(1) Said U.S. and Israeli officials here Sunday that the Israeli government has agreed to allow Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to broadcast to the Soviet bloc from a transmitter in Israel.

(2) *wa-qad* asked the officials not to be identified.

Qad has been employed in spite of the fact that S2 denotes a speech act of

addition by the same participants in agent position. This is due to text-level grounding constraints, namely disambiguating the sequence and signaling the shift to *midground*. The marker makes it clear that what the officials *asked* is not on the same level as what they *said*. Specifically, the presence of *qad* arrests the progress of the main (speech) event and signals the introduction of a change of perspective on the underlying information mapped as a *midground* proposition. In other words, *qad* explicates the grounding-relation between the propositions of the two sentences.

5.2.2 *Kāna qad*

Kāna qad differs in essential ways from *qad* in the constraints to which it is subject and in the kind of meaning that it encodes (Khalil 1985). It signals typical *background* meaning. Most of its occurrences in sample I show this (see Table 2).

This marker consists of the perfective of the auxiliary verb *kāna* (*to be*), that is inflected for person and gender, and the particle *qad*. A noun phrase or a subject is usually inserted between *kāna* and *qad*.

Kāna + NP + *qad* + perfective of the main verb, e.g.:

wa- kāna the president qad arrived...

Kāna modifies the subsequent verb in its modal or temporal aspects (Cantarino 1974: 67). Thus the event referred to denotes anterior past: a temporal relation of antecedence between two past and completed events. In this regard, *kāna qad* is like an English pluperfect (see Holes 1995: 190; Al-Muttalibi 1986). Or rather, *kāna* establishes a reference point in the past, and the perfective verb locates the event even further back in the past, thus creating a time reference anterior to a reference point in the past, corresponding to the pluperfect in English (see Comrie 1991: 8).

An important constraint on the use of *kāna qad* is that the propositions expressed in the sentence that it introduces manifest what is referred to as 'non-sequenced states and actions' (Hopper 1982: 6). The anterior event that

kāna qad encodes may also be relative to a future one such as in:

- (1) The minister arrives tonight...
- (2) *wa-kāna qad* visited-he yesterday...

Background propositions that refer to earlier events are expressed later in the text as is typically the case in news discourse.

No conformity of opinion has existed as regards the function of *qad* in the construction *kāna qad*. Some (Cowan 1958; Comrie 1976) maintain that it is optionally used, and that in classical Arabic a pluperfect meaning could be expressed without *qad*. Accordingly, *kāna* + perfective (e.g. *ar-rived*) would denote a disconnected past event. Though optionally used in Classical Arabic, the particle *qad* is virtually obligatory in Modern Standard Arabic (Comrie 1991: 8).

THE MEANING OF THE MARKER

In news discourse *kāna qad background*s meanings (Khalil 1985). There are syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic explanations for the *background(ing)* function that it fulfils.

Syntactically, *kāna qad* always realizes SV order: it places the subject between the auxiliary verb and the particle, prior the main verb. A discourse function of this syntactic structure, where the verb is placed in a *far-inside-the-sentence position* is to present description and signal *background* meaning. (Holes (1995: 190) refers to the 'backgrounding' function of *kāna qad* occurring in a relative clause to provide explanation.) Semantically, the fact that *kāna qad* denotes a past that is severed from the present means that the event referred to has no current relevance. This property contributes to the function of signaling *background* that the marker serves in news discourse. That *kāna qad* also denotes a near past corresponds with—and explains—its usual function in this type of discourse to encode (very) recent events in *background* propositions. So the decision to express *background* meaning is perhaps independent of the temporal remoteness of the event referred to. Pragmatically, *kāna qad* shows that the phenomenon at issue is looked at from a distance—that it is pragmatically subordinate and that the information underlying the proposition has been relegated to beyond the immediate concern (which is with the here-and-now) of readers as well as writers.

THE TYPICAL GROUNDING-SIGNALING FUNCTION OF *kāna qad*

Signaling *background* by means of *kāna qad* denotes a change of perspective to what is called an 'embedded story' (Polanyi and Scha 1983: 152) or a new embedded event (Sanders and Redeker 1993). *Kāna qad* is therefore conceived of as being a flashback marker. The proposition that refers to the earlier event—usually expressed in an abridged form—serves as a reminder to readers. This is illustrated by the last sentence, S5,

of **T3** cited in chapter 2. The first and the last sentences of the text are presented below for convenience.

(1)**1a** Arturo José Cruz, **1b** leader of the democratic opposition to the Nicaraguan government, has shifted his position to endorse continued U.S. funding for the rebels fighting the Sandinist government.

:

(5) *wa-kāna* Mr. Cruz *qad* [had] said previously that the rebels provided the Sandinists with an excuse to tighten repression.

The event referred to in S5 is an earlier event relative to the new event referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in the lead sentence, which is the main concern of language users. Expressing *background* meaning (viz. about the earlier declaration) provides the historical context of *foreground* meaning (viz. about the recent declaration) and puts it in perspective.

The typical grounding-signaling function of *kāna qad* is also evident in S3 of **T29**.

T29

Basques Suspected in Madrid Killing

MADRID (Reuters)— (1) Ricardo Tejero, a director of Banco Central, Spain's leading bank, was shot to death on Tuesday in the garage of his Madrid home by suspected Basque guerrillas posing as police officers, police said.

(2) Mr. Tejero, 58, regarded as the bank's second-ranking executive, was shot twice in the head by four men.

(3) *wa-kāna* the men *qad* [had] produced security credentials of a type seized by French police in recent raids on hideouts of the Basque separatist guerrilla group ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom).

(4) Nine-millimeter cartridges found at the scene were also of the type used by ETA.

(5) *wa-mimma yuḍkaru anna* the rebel group has carried out hundreds of bomb attacks against Spanish banks during its 17-year fight for an independent Basque state.

The sentence expresses meaning about what the assassins did before shooting the bank director. The underlying proposition has *background* interpretation since it provides the circumstance of the main event referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1. *Background* meaning that *kāna qad* expresses is directly related to *foreground*.

STAGING AND *kāna qad*

The expression of a *background* proposition in a sentence at the head of which *kāna qad* appears in initial position may precede the expression of a *midground* proposition in a sentence that has *qad* in initial position. In this case, the sentence is staged more prominently, that is, as part of *news upstage*. **TR41** cited earlier illustrates this feature. It is also evident in **TC49** below (TC refers to texts cited from the sample I chose, i.e. sample III). The item is reported from Washington by the newspaper-correspondent.

- (1) The Jordanian government expressed its regret and dissatisfaction with the American Administration because it refrained from pleading for the American weapons deal with Jordan, which exceeded 1,9 billion dollars.
- (2) *wa-kānat* Washington *qad* informed King Hussain of Jordan of its decision before it has been announced.
- (3) *wa-qad* declared Mohamamd Kamal, the Jordanian ambassador to Washington that the announcement did not come as a surprise to Jordan and that the surprise was because of the inability of the American administration to fulfil its commitments.

:

Although S3 expresses meaning that is *midground* (verbal reaction to the main event), mapping more important information, it has been staged less prominently. *Background* meaning expressed in S2 (circumstance of the main event) has been staged more prominently, though mapping less important information. Both news items employ the two sentence-initial markers that we examined so far and manifest the way their respective grounding-values may be expressed in surface structure prominence.

DIFFERENCES WITH ENGLISH

In the examples examined above, we have seen that *kāna qad* expresses *background* meaning while the equivalent English sentence employs the past perfect. (For a discussion of the past perfect in narrative fictional texts and newspaper reports, see Caenepeel 1995.) But while the simple past may occur in English sentences that express both *foreground* and *background* meanings, *kāna qad* is employed to signal *background*. It is significant to note that most occurrences of *kāna qad* (37 out of 45) in sample I coincide with the simple past in the English sentence. There are 5 occurrences that coincide with the past perfect and 3 with the present per-

fect.

5.2.3 *Mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (among things to be mentioned is that)

The first word in the expression *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* is an assimilation of *min* (from/among) and *mā* (what). It denotes partition or division into parts (*al-tabʿīd*) (see Hasan 1975 (Vol. 2): 458-459; see also Wright 1975: 137). *Yuḍkaru* (is mentioned) is the imperfective passive form of verb *ḍakara* (mention). It is one of the few verbs of saying, mentioning, reporting, or telling. The particle *anna* (that) introduces the subject. It may also be followed by an attached pronoun (see S5 of T5 below). Thus, the clause that this expression introduces has SV syntax that is typical of description.

One trait of *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* is that it prefaces entire or independent sentences, hence it does not connect clauses into a composite sentence such as:

The president arrived at Cairo airport, *wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna-hu* (and it is worth mentioning that he) visited earlier a number of European capitals.

THE MEANING OF THE MARKER AND ITS VARIANTS

The expression *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* implies that someone— not specified— mentions something. The fact that it denotes a speech act of informing where the agent is deleted distinguishes it from the form *ḍakarat al-anbāʾ* (news said/mentioned), where *al-anbāʾ* is a specific agent. The expression also implies that someone has judged certain information in context and event models to be relevant and important enough to be mapped as a textual proposition that has *background* interpretation. The meaning expressed in the sentence that the marker introduces is tangential and marginally related to other meanings expressed before. In addition, it is not necessarily related temporally to other propositions. So the event or state of affairs that the marker encodes is not restricted in its temporal location. The *background* proposition maps some recalled and occasional information that would increase the knowledge of readers as regards other events and states of affairs.

One variant of this marker is without *mimmā*, namely *yuḍkaru anna*. Other variants are very similar in meaning but include the word for *worthy*, whether nominal or prepositional structures such as *jaḍīrun bi-al-*

ḍikr, min al-jadīri bi-al-ḍikr, mimḡā huwa jadīrun bi-al-ḍikr (among that which is worth mentioning), or those that include a verb such as *mimḡā tajduru al-iṣāratu ilayhi, mimḡā yajduru ḍikruhu, tajduru al-iṣāratu ila* (it merits to be referred to that).

Mimḡā yuḍkaru anna fulfils the function of pushing to an embedded level, hence it does not denote thematic expansion of what preceded (e.g. the current event), but its termination. From the discourse-topic point of view, it signals a shift— something similar perhaps to what has been referred to as an 'associated topic shift' (van Kuppevelt 1995a) where elements of the current topic are associated with the newly introduced one. In pragmatic terms, *mimḡā yuḍkaru anna* expresses parenthetic meaning such as *by the way, incidentally*. In this sense, it introduces what is called 'incidental background' (Thorndyke 1979: 109). It may, of course, signal the introduction of a new schematic category. The sentence that *mimḡā yuḍkaru anna* prefaces is usually expressed less prominently as part of *news downstage*.

Mimḡā yuḍkaru anna and its variants serve a number of text-level functions:

- 1- Referring to the informing— or news imparting— process in which writers are engaged and in which they play an authoritative role, not personally as individuals but collectively as a newspaper. The assumption is that readers do not possess certain information.
- 2- Denoting the relative importance and relevance of the underlying information at a particular point in text and context, namely that it deserves to be mentioned (i.e. mapped as a textual proposition) and to be attended to.
- 3- Signaling a shift from the current semantic representation.
- 4- Indicating the position of the proposition on the FG-BG continuum, thus helping readers comprehend its relative grounding-value.

THE NATURE OF *BACKGROUND* THAT *mimḡā yuḍkaru anna* SIGNALS

Two seemingly contradictory reasons account for the use of *mimḡā yuḍkaru anna*. On the one hand, the writer wants to draw the attention of readers to the importance as well as the relevance of the underlying information and, on the other hand, to make evident the incidental nature of the information, namely that the semantic representation is tangential, given other textual propositions that are higher on the FG-BG continuum. This is

evident in S5 of **T29** cited earlier.

- (5) *wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna* the rebel group has carried out hundreds of bomb attacks against Spanish banks during its 17-year fight for an independent Basque state.

The *background* proposition (historical survey)— mapping information about previous *Basque* attacks— increases the knowledge of readers and puts the *foreground* proposition that refers to the present major event (viz. the *Madrid* killing) in perspective. It shows that the *background* proposition is not the main goal of the writer in the news imparting process.

The incidental nature of the underlying information mapped as a *background* proposition and expressed in a sentence that has *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* is evident also in S5 of **T6** cited in chapter 2:

- (6) *wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna* neither kind of car is very popular...

The *background* proposition (a comment statement, social context) is about the present situation of the two cars whose price has been reduced. The initial marker shows that the underlying information deserves to be mapped in order to increase the knowledge of readers about the main event referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

The *background* proposition underlying the sentence that *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* prefaces may nevertheless complement other *background* propositions that have been expressed before. This is illustrated by S5 of **T5** cited in chapter 1. The last two sentences are repeated below for convenience.

- (4) *wa-kānat* rumors *qad* circulated in South Africa in mid-December that Mr. Savimbi had been captured by Angolan troops.
 (5) *wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna-hu* [that-[He]] has not appeared in public for several weeks, and did not make his usual address at Christmas.

The information underlying the semantic representation in S5 provides evidence for what has been reported in S4 (i.e. rumors that *Savimbi* has been captured). The initial marker shows the nature of meaning expressed in the sentence: that including the *background* proposition would increase the knowledge of readers, given the proposition in S4. It also shows that

the information is tangential, given the information mapped as *foreground* meaning about *Savimbi* being wounded.

VARIANTS OF *mimmā yuḍkaru anna*

Before we leave this marker we will illustrate its variants. Two of them appear in sentences S4 and S6 of T84.

T84

Portuguese Leader Is Visiting Macao

MACAO (Reuters)— (1) **1a** President António Ramalho Eanes of Portugal arrived Monday in Macao at the end of a visit to China, **1b** where he held talks on the future of the Portuguese-administered territory.

(2) **2a** The Chinese leader, **2b** Deng Xiaoping, told Mr. Eanes that the future of Macao would be settled easily through friendly consultation.

(3) **3a** Mr. Eanes, **3b** the first Portuguese president to visit Macao, was handed the keys to the territory, **3c** which was founded 428 years ago.

(4) *wa-yuḍkaru anna-ha* [...that-[It]] was the first European settlement on the south China coast.

(5) China and Portugal announced in Beijing last week that they would soon open talks on the transfer of Macao to Chinese rule.

(6) *wa-mimmā tajduru al-iṣāratu ilayhi anna* Lisbon conceded sovereignty in 1975.

The initial marker in S4 (*It is to be mentioned that*) signals *background* meaning (a remote past historical fact) about the settlement, and that in S6 (*what is worth referring to is that*) signals *background* meaning (historical context of the main event). The use of the two variants makes it clear that the writer considers the underlying historical information to be significant, and hence it *merits to be referred to* so that readers acquire it or be reminded of it. The markers, as it were, justify the inclusion of this information and mapping it as low grounding-value propositions. The worthiness of the information is, of course, relative to the worthiness of the information that is mapped as *foreground* meaning and expressed in the beginning of the text.

5.2.4 *Fa-* (so, thus, therefore)

The particle *fa-*, described by Arab grammarians as a co-ordinating conjunction, denotes temporal ordering and succession (*al-tartīb al-*

ma 'nawī) Hasan 1975 (vol. 3): 573). As a particle of classification (*ḥarf tarīb*), *fa-* indicates co-ordination together with the idea of development in the narrative (Cantarino 1975 (vol. 3): 20). It denotes, in addition, cause or effect (see Wright 1975: 290f). In this respect, *fa-* resembles the English 'so', giving a cause or a justification (Beeston 1970: 97) as well as a rational explanation. Accordingly, *fa-* signals different relationships (Al-Batal 1990: 246): causal, conclusive (therefore), consequential (accordingly), successive, and discourse movement-shifting.

Under the function of *fa-* to denote the order of mentioning in the text (*at-tarīb ad-dikrī*) is '*aṭf al-mufaṣṣal 'ala al-mujmal*' (Hasan 1975 (Vol. 3): 573) which means conjoining the detailed with the summarized. This is another way of saying that the proposition has a functional relation of detail or explanation with what has been referred to before in general terms, i.e. as a macroproposition. As we will see below, this function of *fa-* coincides with its function in news texts to explain or specify what preceded. Fulfilling this function in news texts, however, requires that *fa-* prefixes the particle *qad* or the preposition *fī*. In news texts, *fa-qad* occurs in sentence-initial position and maintains VS syntax. It should be noted that traditional Arabic grammar did not refer to the use of *fa-* prefixing the particle *qad*.

Without *qad*, *fa-* prefixing the verb would denote temporal successive-ness, namely that the event the verb encodes would be consequent to the event referred to before. The presence of *qad*, then, organizes the relationship between meanings expressed in the two sentences.

Since *fa-qad* occupies the initial position in a sentence that expresses specifics of the preceding proposition that is usually *foreground*, it signals a shift to *midground*. Most occurrences of *fa-* in sample I demonstrate that (see Table 2). Most of them too occur in S2, which means that *midground* meaning is prominently expressed.

That *fa-qad* accounts to the same event or situation referred to in the immediately preceding proposition shows that it signals a local shift. This is evident in S2 of T29 cited earlier. The first two sentences are repeated below for convenience.

- (1) Ricardo Tejero, a director of Banco Central, Spain's leading bank, was shot to death on Tuesday in the garage of his Madrid home by suspected Basque guerrillas posing as police officers, police said.
- (2) *fa-qad* shot four men twice in the head Mr. Tejero, 58, regarded as the bank's second-ranking executive.

The marker prefaces a sentence that expresses *midground* meaning about specifics of the main event referred to in S1. It is tantamount to saying: *The situation described in the preceding sentence obtains since four men shot the director.* *Fa-qad* thus arrests the progress of the main event in order to provide a *close-up* of it. This feature may also be illustrated by the first two sentences of **T34**.

- (1) Lebanon appealed Thursday to the United Nations Security Council to call on Israel to end immediately its "military onslaught" in southern Lebanon and immediately withdraw its forces.
- (2) *Fa-qad* told Rachid Fakhoury, the Lebanese representative, the opening session of a council meeting on the situation in southern Lebanon that "fast action" was needed to end attacks by the "Israeli military machine" on towns and villages in his country.

S2 at the head of which *fa-qad* appears expresses *midground* meaning. The marker initiates a speech event about specifics of the main event referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1. Of course, preceding textual propositions may constrain the interpretation of the grounding-value of the proposition expressed in the sentence that contains *fa-qad*. This is the case in S8 of **T20** cited in chapter 3. The last two sentences of the text are repeated below.

- (7) Meanwhile, there were reports that a fresh diplomatic effort was underway to end the war.
- (8) *fa-qad* said the newspaper Al-Seyassah in Kuwait Sunday that France, Saudi Arabia and Algeria were working on a plan for talks with the support of the six-nation Gulf Co-operation Council.

The text is about what happened to a Greek tanker. The propositional content of sentences S7 and S8 is assigned to the *background end of the continuum*, since it is about an unrelated development. It is also subsumed under an **Association** schema category. The proposition expressed in S8 specifies the proposition in S7, hence it is assigned the same grounding-value. It may be argued, however, that *fa-qad* here signals a *midground* proposition— a locally high grounding-value (see our earlier discussion about *qad*).

A similar grounding-signaling function is served by *fa-* followed by the preposition *fi+* location. The difference with *fa-qad* is that it denotes a location shift. This is evident in S2 of **TC254**.

(1) At least 35 people died, tens were injured and thousands became homeless as a result of a series of earthquakes and inundations that swept Turkey and Iran yesterday.

(2) *fa-fi* Turkey were hit south east areas by an earthquake...

(3) *wa-fi* Iran were hit five villages...

:

Fa-fi is followed by a location specification of the main event referred to in S1. It prefaces a sentence that expresses *midground* (exemplification).

5.2.5 *Min nāḥiyatin/jihatin uxrā* (from another side/aspect)

This sentence-initial marker is composed of the directional preposition *min* (from), the noun *nāḥiyatin* (side, aspect, angle)— or its synonym *jihatin*— in the genitive case, and the adjective *uxrā* (another/different). It introduces VS syntax, characteristic of the lead sentence in news texts. This underscores its grounding function of signaling a global shift, since it looks as if a new news text starts with the sentence that contains this marker. In this respect, *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* signals some kind of (semantic) discontinuity (see Zammuner 1982) with what preceded— a gap or a shift from the presently described events or states of affairs. The reader needs to be aware of— i.e. get a signal for— the introduction of a semantic discontinuity, otherwise 'he/she would not understand properly what is the relationship between the present and a preceding text unit' (Zammuner 1982: 142).

Unlike the adverbial compound *on the other hand*, where conditional coherence seems to predominate the functional type (van Dijk 1985c: 111), *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* does not necessarily denote a contrast in the subject matter between events. The shift is created by writers in their organization of— and interpretation of relations among— components of semantic representations. As such, the initial marker signals a shift to a new attention field. Consider T39.

T39

Accident May Delay Shuttle Mission

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP)— (1) **1a** A falling bucket injured a workman **1b** and imbedded itself in the cargo bay door of the space shuttle Discovery on Friday, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration reported.

(2) **2a** The agency said it was too early to assess the extent of the damage or the possible effect on Discovery's mission **2b** scheduled

for March 28, **2c** when Senator Jake Garn of Utah is to be a member of the crew.

(3) But officials said the flight almost certainly would be postponed.

(4) They said the metal bucket penetrated the top of the shuttle and probably caused extensive damage to heat protection tiles and structure.

(5) NASA said it had no idea why the bucket fell.

(6) A board of experts began an investigation.

(7) *wa-min nāḥiyatin uxrā* was the workman being treated at a hospital for two fractures of his left leg.

(8) **8a** He is an employee of Lockheed Space Operations Co., **8b** which handles shuttle servicing under a contract with NASA.

The meaning expressed in S7 is *midground* (specification of main event). It is non-prominently realized, namely what we call *news downstage*, relative to other *midground* meanings about the accident and the damage to *Discovery*. The use of the sentence-initial marker signals a shift from what happened to the *shuttle* to a different attention field, namely what happened to the *workman*.

It should be added that though *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* in this text signals a proposition that has been assigned *midground* interpretation, the marker influences the grounding-value and locates it close to *background*. It is significant to note that most other occurrences of this marker signal *background*. The function of signaling *background* is illustrated by S3 of (1) presented in chapter 4. It is repeated below.

(3) *wa-min jihatīn uxrā* announced Sheikh Nawaaf Al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti minister of interior, that next March changes will be made in Kuwaiti security top management, following the bomb incidents of last year.

The main event that is referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1 is about a *Kuwaiti* plane. The meaning expressed in S3 is about unrelated developments, hence it is assigned to the *background end of the continuum*, and hence the need for the introductory marker.

It is apparent that there are no constraints on meanings expressed in sentences at the head of which *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* appears. This is illustrated by S4 of **TR350**.

(1) Clashes between Amal militias and Palestinians intensified in Southern Lebanon...

(2) Security sources said that four people were killed and 65 injured...

(3) In the South, Israeli occupation troops shelled yesterday a number of villages...

(4) *wa-min nāhiyatin uxrā* attacked unidentified militants a bank and two store houses in Beirut while three thousand women and children demonstrated in front of the Central Bank in West Beirut yesterday protesting against the high costs of living...

The writer of this text employs the initial marker in order to signal a shift to a proposition that is in the *background end of the continuum*: It refers to an event that is unrelated to what has been expressed in the preceding three sentences. The marker signals the distinction between the very low grounding-value from higher grounding-values expressed before.

5.2.6 *Min al-ma'rūfi anna* (It is known that)

This sentence-initial marker consists of the partitive preposition *min*, the participle *al-ma'rūfi* in the genitive case) of the verb '*arafa* (to know, to be acquainted with); and the particle *anna*. Other variants are *ma'rūfun anna*, that is, without the preposition and the definite article, and *min al-ma'lūmi anna*, which is the participle of the synonymous verb '*alima* (to know). Both verbs belong to cognition verbs that encode mental attitude (see Givón 1984b).

The presence of *min al-ma'rūfi anna* allows the sentence to retain SV syntax. It also defers the introduction of the subject, hence defocusses or de-emphasizes it. In other words, the marker neutralizes the effect of markedness produced by SV syntax in initial position in the sentence and hence the sentence realizes a function typical of news discourse.

The proposition expressed in the sentence maps information that is *anonymized*. The marker does not explicitly say or identify the person(s) by whom the information is known. Usually the statement that follows the marker has a general truth character. It reflects a generally and widely acknowledged view of popular and known facts and hence it is taken for granted. Accordingly, *min al-ma'rūfi anna* expresses the assumption by the writer that what is (about to be) reported is known, for example from earlier news reports. By assuming or claiming that the information is known, the writer eliminates the possibility or interpretation that it is also new.

Min al-ma'rūfi anna has a wide scope of signaling grounding-relation, namely with propositions expressed in preceding paragraphs. Several fac-

tors warrant the use of this sentence-initial marker. Among these are the following ones:

- 1- The amount of information that is available in models about events and states of affairs.
- 2- The writer's evaluation of the knowledge of readers: the assumption that they know, are supposed to know, or have known that information in event models.
- 3- The writer's wish—in view of new developments—to remind readers of certain previous events and states of affairs in the real world, should they have forgotten them.
- 4- The writer's evaluation of the relative importance of that (known) information vis-à-vis other (new) information that is mapped as textual propositions. That is to say, the evaluation of the necessity to make use of the information because it will for example increase readers' understanding of other textual propositions.
- 5- The writer's wish to map this information (that is, to organize manifestations of information) in discourse meaning as *background* relative to already expressed meanings.
- 6- The writer's intention to help readers perceive the grounding-value of the proposition from the same perspective he or she sees it.

TYPICAL GROUNDING-SIGNALING FUNCTION OF *min al-ma' rūfi anna*

Typical *background* meaning expressed in the host sentence of *min al-ma' rūfi anna* may map general, popular, or supposed to be known information about how things are. This may be a statement of fact about the present situation as S4 of T7 shows.

T7

Zia Sets Date for Assembly Elections

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)— (1) **1a** President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq has announced that elections will be held Feb. 25 to replace the parliament disbanded in July 1977 with the imposition of martial law, **1b** which is still in force.

(2) General Zia said Saturday that, although the elections for the National Assembly are expected to start a process of power-sharing between the armed forces and elected civilian representatives, political parties will not be allowed to take part in the campaign.

(3) He said Moslems will vote for Moslem candidates, and non-Moslems will elect non-Moslem candidates.

(4) *wa-min al-ma' rūfi anna* **4a** Pakistan is an overwhelmingly

Islamic country, **4b** and General Zia has been enforcing the religion's code of law.

The propositions expressed in S4 about Pakistan are *background* (political and social context). The initial marker makes this clear and provides the frame for understanding the significance of the main event referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in the lead sentence. This function of signaling grounding is also evident in S4 of **T17**.

T17

Botha Sets Terms for Mandela Release

CAPE TOWN (AP)— (1) President P.W. Botha told Parliament Thursday that South Africa was prepared to consider the release of the black nationalist leader, Nelson Mandela, the South African Press Association reported.

(2) **2a** The news agency said Mr. Botha's government would require only that Mr. Mandela, **2b** imprisoned for life for sabotage, divorce himself from the violence carried out by the African National congress, **2c** which he heads.

(3) Mr. Botha's remarks appeared to be the farthest any government official has gone in suggesting that Mr. Mandela, 66, might be freed.

(4) *wa-min al-ma 'rūfi anna-hu* [...that- [He] was (*kāna qad*) sentenced in 1964.

Though marginal, the underlying information is important enough to be mapped as a *background* proposition (political or historical context of the main event). The marker signals the *background* interpretation and hence the distinction with other grounding-values.

5.2.7 *Fi* (in)+ spatio/temporal entity

The preposition *fi* (in) is followed by a temporal or spatial lexical item in which a certain activity takes place. It governs the genitive case (see Lentzner 1977). The prepositional phrase is followed by VS syntax.

All occurrences of *fi*+ spatio/temporal entity in sample I have their equivalent in the English news text. But as we will see later (5.3.1), not all occurrences of the adverbial in the English text are rendered in Arabic by an equivalent marker in initial position.

An example of *fi* followed by a temporal lexical item is S4 of **T24** cited in chapter 3.

(4) In November 1981, Mr. Abruzzo was captain of the helium-filled Double Eagle-5 when he, Mr. Newman and two other men made the first balloon crossing of the Pacific Ocean, flying from Nagashima, Japan, to northern California in four days.

The initial marker *wa-fi* + *November* signals a boundary point and realizes a shift to a different time span during which certain events have taken place. The temporal shift introduced by the initial marker is about a historical survey of events. The events are referred to in propositions that have *background* interpretation.

Fronted locatives in news texts realize a shift of scene or episode to *background* meaning. They mark a section of the text such as in guidelines (see Enkvist 1987b), following a strategy 'of first guiding the readers to a certain definite place and position, and then telling them what they are supposed to see' (Enkvist 1987b: 209). Fronted locatives, of course, maintain discourse-perspective (for this, see Thompson and Longacre 1985). But what is important is their function in Arabic to signal a global shift in grounding to the *background end of the continuum*. All four locative markers in sample I manifest that they fulfil that function. This is illustrated by T59.

T59

5th Patient Receives Artificial Heart

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (AP)— (1) A retired railroad engineer became the fifth person in the world to receive a permanent artificial heart in an operation here Sunday, a spokesman at Humana Hospital-Audubon announced.

(2) **2a** Three hours into the operation on Jack C. Burcham, **2b** the mechanical heart was working and "everything is going according to the surgical plan," said George Atkins, **2c** Humana's director of public affairs.

(3) Doctors had encountered no complications, he said.

(4) **4a** Mr. Burcham, 62, **4b** who doctors said was near death because of heart disease, was the fifth person to receive the plastic-and-metal Jarvik-7 device and the third at Humana.

(5) **5a** *wa-fi* Sweden, **5b** said the fourth recipient and Europe's first in a statement on Sunday that he was "filled with a sense of great relief" after receiving the device a week ago at Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm.

(6) Hospital officials have refused to disclose the patient's name, at his request.

(7) **7a** But Swedish and other Scandinavian news media say he is Leif Stenberg, 53, **7b** a Stockholm businessman under indictment for tax

evasion.

Textual propositions expressed in sentences S1-S4 are about the heart operation of the world's fifth artificial heart patient. Those in sentences S5-S7 are about the world's fourth artificial heart recipient in another country, namely Sweden. Since the meaning expressed in these sentences is not covered by the current main event or topic, *wa-fi Sweden* in initial position in S5 signals a global shift in grounding to the *background end of the continuum*.

That the locative *fi* in initial position is usually used to fulfil that function, and not for example to specify, is evident in **TR430**. The beginning of each sentence is given below.

(1) The separatist government in South African imposed yesterday new measures for further restrictions on media coverage of the national revolt...

(2) The measures included...

(3) The new measures give the minister of interior the authority...

(4) *wa-min nāhiyatin uxrā* the West German opposition managed yesterday to secure the approval of the Parliament to conduct an investigation about reports of the government's approval to sell German designs of building submarines to South Africa.

(5) *wa-fi* Johannesburg held hundreds of parents prayers the day before yesterday in order to secure the release of their children...

:

A locative adverbial initiates S5 that expresses the *background end of the continuum*. It signals a shift of scene to an activity that is not covered by other textual propositions. It maps information that has a low degree of importance, given other information mapped as textual propositions.

5.2.8 *Fī nafsi al-waqt* (at the same time, in the meantime, simultaneously, meanwhile)

This prepositional phrase consists of the preposition *fi* (in), the noun *nafsi* (same) in the genitive case, and *al-waqt* (the-time). Other variants are *fi xilāli/guḍūni dālika* (during that). This initial marker (or its equivalent *fi al-waqtī nafsih*) is always followed by VS syntax. The event referred to in the propositional content of the sentence has a relation of simultaneity with the event(s) referred to before. But apart from that, the events are

usually widely divergent and may be referred to in propositions of two independent news items. *Fī nafsi al-waqt* is therefore employed by writers in order to organize the presentation of propositional content that is about other events. Usually the propositions are not related to *foreground* or even other *background* meanings that are expressed before. All other grounding-values are *terminated* before the introduction of *fī nafsi al-waqt*. Being contextually or pragmatically relevant, the underlying information is mapped as a proposition that occupies the *background end of the continuum*. In other words, the mapping of information that has low importance as part of model macrostructures does not interfere with the realization of other components of the FG-BG structure. *Fī nafsi al-waqt* occurs in the last segment or paragraph of the news text. This coincides with the low grounding-value that it signals.

Although the adverbial *meanwhile* is used in the English text, which suggests a temporal relation of simultaneity in the semantic/external reality: 'thesis time' (see Halliday and Hasan 1976), *fī nafsi al-waqt* performs a pragmatic function of expressing a different step in the process of reporting: internal time or 'situation time' (see Halliday and Hasan 1976). Neither writers nor readers attach much significance to the temporal meaning of the initial marker. In other words, the pragmatic meaning overrides the meaning of temporal organization of events and states of affairs.

We have seen examples of this marker in chapter 3: T20, where S7 is about diplomatic efforts to end the Gulf war. Similarly, in the last paragraph of T22, S5 expresses meaning about the visit by the Nicaraguan vice president to London. Preceding textual propositions are about increasing food prices in Nicaragua.

(5) **5a** *wa-fī al-waqtī nafsih* asked Nicaragua's vice president, **5b** Sergio Ramirez, **5c** visiting London on Wednesday, Britain to urge Washington to exercise its influence by reaffirming backing for the Contadora regional peace plan and by encouraging the United States to resume the dialogue with Nicaragua it suspended three weeks ago.

It is to be noted that there is similarity between this marker and another initial marker that appears in the random sample, namely '*ala ṣa'īdin āḫar* (on another level, plane, field). It is also similar to *fī taṭawwurin jadīd* (in a new development). Other initial markers that occur in similar

environments are: *fī taṭawwurin āḫar* (in another/related/separate development) and *fī ḥādīṭin āḫar* (in a different event). Meanings expressed in the sentences containing *fī nafsi al-waqt* are unrelated to what preceded. It would be appropriate to express them in a separate news item.

That the markers are suitable to initiate a new topic is illustrated by S4 of TR300.

- (1) Businessmen in South Africa requested President Pieter Botha to relinquish the racial discrimination policies against African nationals and said that a better economy could not be realized without political reform.
 - (2) Two hundred leading businessmen called in their meeting with Botha for...
 - (3) *wa-qad* approved the meeting a plan ...
 - (4) *wa-'ala ṣa'īdin āḫar* ended hundreds of gold mine workers in Pretoria their strike yesterday.
- :

The event referred to in the proposition expressed in S4 is not covered by the main event. It is nevertheless considered contextually or pragmatically relevant to readers and/or writers hence it is included in the semantic representation of the text as meaning that has the lowest grounding-value and that should be realized as an instance of *news downstage*.

5.3 Constraints on the Interchangeability of Markers: Recasting Options

After having analyzed each individual sentence-initial marker, we address the question of marker interchangeability, that is, the possibilities and limitations of choosing among markers. This dimension complements the preceding analysis by providing more insight into the behaviour of each marker.

Marker interchangeability is assumed to be governed by cognitive and pragmatic constraints on the writer's evaluation of the importance as well as the relevance of the information. For example, that the writer may consider the information to be known or not, worth mentioning or not may determine the selection of the marker that serves a specific grounding-signal-function. This selection shows that the writer favours the assignment of a certain grounding-value to a particular proposition. It also has conse-

quences for the interpretation of the FG-BG structure in the entire text. It should be added that apart from cognitive and pragmatic constraints, tense and aspect may limit recasting options. An evident example is the anteriority constraint which limits the interchangeability of *qad* and *kāna qad*. We will examine below recasting options in nine combinations of markers.

i. *Qad* and *kāna qad*

We have seen that the two grammatical entities *qad* and *kāna qad* perform non-temporal discourse-pragmatic functions (see Khalil 1985). That is, their occurrence correlates with difference in (signaling the expression of) meaning in terms of a FG-BG structure. This is consistent with the suggestion that 'different kinds of information [our *meaning*] tend to be communicated by grammatically distinctive forms in surface structure' (Grimes 1975: 35), and that sentence particles, with or without other devices, are used to realize aspect in discourse: to mark *foreground* and *background* sentences (Hopper 1979).

Thus, not only is the presence of *qad* and *kāna qad* in news texts pragmatically motivated, but so also is the choice that might be made between them. Where applicable, the choice is between signaling *midground* meaning by means of *qad* or *background* meaning by means of *kāna qad*. That *qad* signals the assignment of a higher grounding-value than the value that *kāna qad* signals is evident in **TR41** that we examined earlier. It is also evident in **T60**.

T60

Heart Recipient Given Transfusions

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (AP)— (1) **1a** Jack C. Burcham, **1b** the world's fifth recipient of a permanent artificial heart, bled throughout the night **1c** after his surgery **1d** and had to have approximately 21 pints of blood replaced, **1e** but one of his doctors said Monday the problem was not considered life-threatening.

(2) Nonetheless, doctors were concerned enough that they said they would decide later Monday whether to reopen the chest cavity and stem the bleeding, as they did with previous implant patients.

(3) *wa kāna* Mr. Burcham, 62, of Le Roy, Illinois, *qad* received the Jarvik-7 heart in a difficult, six-hour operation Sunday at Humana Hospital-Audubon.

(4) **4a wa-qad** remained Mr. Burcham, **4b** a retired railroad engineer, in critical condition one day after the implant, **4c** but Dr. Allan M. Lansing, **4d** chairman of Humana Heart Institute

International, said he personally considered Mr. Burcham's condition to be satisfactory.

(5) *wa-qad* said Dr. William C. DeVries, who implanted the heart, the mechanical pump was "a tight fit".

Kāna qad in S3 signals typical *background* meaning (a preceding event) about the heart operation itself. *Qad* in sentences S4 and S5 signals *midground* meaning (respectively, specification of the main event and verbal reaction to the main event). It signals a shift from *background* meaning that has been expressed more prominently as S3 and re-introduces the present situation.

We look now at the interchangeability of the two sentence-initial markers. Since the proposition expressed in S3 satisfies the general condition of anteriority, *kāna qad* is more appropriate here than *qad* which, as we explained before, has a forward looking signaling-function. That is to say, *qad* denotes the more recent event, whereas the event referred to here is about the surgery itself and not about what followed it. Apart from that, using *qad* as an initial marker in S3 would unwarrantably signal a higher grounding-value that maps a higher degree of information importance.

Alternatively, *kāna qad* would be less appropriate in S4, since the event referred to in the proposition is not anterior. In addition, it would signal *background(ed)* meaning and consequently produce anomalousness since the proposition maps highly important information.

T60 manifests *foregrounding* and *backgrounding* operations in semantic representations: *background* meaning is expressed earlier than *midground* meaning. In the absence of these operations, signaling grounding-values in surface structure would be according to the typical news pattern, namely that *midground* signaled by *qad* would be expressed earlier than *background* signaled by *kāna qad*. This is illustrated by **T57** presented in chapter 2. The first four sentences of the text are repeated below for convenience.

T57

India Rejected Union Carbide Offer

NEW DELHI (AFP)— (1) **1a** India's decision to sue Union Carbide was taken **1b** after it had spurned a "ridiculously low" company offer of compensation for the Bhopal gas disaster, a minister told Parliament here Tuesday.

(2) *wa-qad* was filed the lawsuit for unspecified damages and compensation in a New York court Monday on behalf of the Indian

government.

(3) **3a** However, Veerendra Patil, **3b** minister of chemicals and fertilizers, said that an out-of-court settlement was possible if the U.S. company agreed to pay an adequate amount to the victims of the world's worst industrial accident.

(4) **4a** *wa-kāna* an estimated 2,500 people *qad* died and more than 200,000 others were affected **4b** when poisonous methyl isocyanate gas leaked from a Union Carbide pesticides plant in the central Indian city on Dec. 3.

Apart from expressing grounding-values according to the typical news pattern, the text also shows constraints on the interchangeability of the two markers. The proposition expressed in S2 that contains *qad* is *midground* (specification of the main event). It maps information that has immediate concern and high importance as well as relevance to readers and/or writers. Though *kāna qad* would be a possible substitute, its use would signal *backgrounded* meaning. It would also signal a change in the function of the textual proposition, namely from specification of the main event to a context of that event.

Alternatively, inserting *qad* in initial position in S4 would be problematic, since the underlying proposition denotes an earlier event and hence it is assigned *background* interpretation, given the FG-BG structure in the whole text. Since *qad* looks forward in the past, using it in S4 would create the impression and the expectation that what is at issue is a more recent event and, more importantly, that the event is subsumed under the event referred to in the *foreground* proposition.

Constraints on the interchangeability of *qad* and *kāna qad* are more evident in the following two-sentence text.

TC82

BAGHDAD (MENA)— (1) Mr. Yaser Arafat, Chairman of the executive committee of the PLO, arrived in Baghdad yesterday for a few days visit.

(2) *wa-kāna* Arafat *qad* left Cairo yesterday after a six-day visit to Egypt.

Employing *qad* instead of *kāna qad* as an initial marker in S2 would be less appropriate since *qad* signals typically a specification of the main event, and hence *midground* meaning. The event referred to in the proposition of S2 is not a specification of the main event which is about the visit to Iraq, but it is a preceding event and hence it is *background*. Apart from

that, using *qad* would raise the expectation that the event is subsequent to the visit to Iraq such as: *wa-qad left Arafat Baghdad* (instead of *Cairo*). Therefore, it is more appropriate that S2 expresses meaning as *background* signaled by *kāna qad*.

In fact, the appropriate use of *qad* and *kāna qad*, and consequently the appropriate signaling of grounding-values, may be crucial for the correct interpretation of the intended meaning. Consider **TC92**.

TC92

(1) The Nigerian government categorically denied yesterday what has been reported about resuming diplomatic relations with Israel.

(2) The spokesman explained that...

(3) *wa-kāna* radio Israel *qad* said that the resumption of relations between Nigeria and Israel will be soon.

:

S3 has *kāna qad* in initial position in order to express *background* meaning about the earlier event that has prompted the main event denoted in the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1. The underlying information provides the context of that event. Substituting *kāna qad* with *qad* would signal a proposition that has a higher grounding-value, namely the interpretation of what the *Israeli radio* announced as a specification or an explanation of the main event referred to before. More importantly, employing *qad* would create the impression that the event of announcing the resumption of diplomatic relations is subsequent to the event of the denial by the Nigerian government. This reading would be contrary to the (order of) facts, since the denial was subsequent to the announcement by the *Israeli radio*. By expressing meaning as *midground*, an initial *qad* would misrepresent the meaning of the entire text.

ii. *Qad* and *mimmā yudkaru anna*

The choice between *qad* and *mimmā yudkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) is between the centrality or marginality of the proposition on the FG-BG gradient. Consider S3 of **T2**.

T2

Sri Lanka says Rebels Blew Up Bridge

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)— (1) Tamil guerrillas have blown up a railroad bridge near Jaffna, disrupting deliveries of food and fuel sup-

plies to the northern capital, the government has announced.

(2) The government said Tuesday that the guerrillas, who seek a separate minority Tamil state in northern Sri Lanka, blew up a 40-foot (12-meter) bridge situated between Kobikanam and Pallai on the Jaffna Peninsula.

(3) *wa-qad* estimated a Defense Ministry official it would take at least a week to repair the bridge.

(4) Another official said supplies needed for security forces could be flown in but other residents of the area would face shortages.

The proposition expressed in S3 is *midground* (verbal reaction to the main event). It maps rather important information about the time needed to repair the bridge. Although it is possible to use *mimmā yudkaru anna* instead of *qad*, it would be less appropriate because the meaning maps less important information. In other words, this marker would show that the underlying proposition has been relegated to a lower position on the FG-BG continuum.

To get a closer picture of the environment of the two markers and hence of their interchangeability, we examine **TR8** that includes both markers.

TR8

(1) The Iranian news agency said yesterday that the revolutionary guard defused a new bomb that has been placed under a car, north of the capital Tehran.

(2) The agency said...

(3) *wa-mimmā yudkaru anna* five bombs *qad* exploded in Tehran since the beginning of the year.

(4) *wa-qad* led the explosion that occurred last week to the death of 20 persons and the injury of more than 80.

The proposition expressed in S3 containing *mimmā yudkaru anna* has *background* interpretation (historical survey of the main event). It maps less important information about prior bomb explosions. The proposition expressed in S4 containing *qad* has *midground* interpretation (specification of the main event). It maps more important information about the consequences of the recent bomb explosion. *Qad*, then, would be less appropriate as an initial marker in S3, given the nature of the underlying information: namely, a reminder of a series of past events. It is unlikely that *qad* would perform this *background(ing)* function. The alternative that the writer has is to express the *background* proposition before expressing the *midground* proposition.

On the other hand, *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* could replace *qad* in S4, signaling the *backgrounding* of *midground* meaning and showing that the writer marginalizes important information by mapping it as *background* meaning.

iii. *Qad* and *fī*+ spatio/temporal entity

Qad and *fī* (*in*)+ spatio/temporal entity differ greatly in their grounding-signaling function and may not be interchangeable. Consider **TC225**.

TC225

Inundations Sweep Iran and Argentine

TEHRAN (News Agencies)— (1) Five people were killed in south west Iran yesterday because of inundations that swept the area as a result of heavy rain in the last two days.

(2) *wa-fī* Argentine, evacuated authorities yesterday about 190 thousand people in the north east of the country in the worst inundation this century.

The locative *fī* that the writer used in S2 signals a shift of scene from *Iran* to *Argentine*. This shift function that *fī* serves would not be realized by *qad*, since the meaning expressed in the sentence is not a specification of the event referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in S1 about inundations in Iran, and hence S2 does not express *midground* meaning relative to the meaning expressed in S1.

It may be argued, however, that both sentences express propositions that are subsumed under the macroproposition expressed in the headline where reference is made to events in the two countries. Though true, the locative adverbial is an appropriate marker for signaling in initial position the shift from the events in the first country to those in the second. *Qad* would not signal that shift on the basis of a global macroproposition in the headline. The difficulty of using *qad* here demonstrates, on the other hand, its appropriateness for a further specification of the *foreground* proposition about *Iran*.

iv. *Kāna qad* and *mimmā yuḍkaru anna*

Unlike *kāna qad*, which encodes events in a past tense verb, *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) is not subject to constraints pertaining to the temporal location of events. As will become

apparent below, this marker is more free than *kāna qad* in signaling *background* meaning.

Though both markers signal *background* meaning, *mimmā yudkaru anna* seems to signal a lower proposition on the FG-BG gradient. Consider S4 of **T57** cited earlier.

(4) **4a** *wa-kāna* an estimated 2,500 people *qad* died and more than 200,000 others were affected **4b** when poisonous methyl isocyanate gas leaked from a Union Carbide pesticides plant in the central Indian city on Dec. 3.

The sentence at the head of which *kāna qad* appears expresses typical *background* meaning about a previous event that triggered the current main event (i.e. *Union Carbide offer/rejection*) referred to in the *foreground* proposition expressed in the lead sentence. Replacing this initial marker with *mimmā yudkaru anna* would block this interpretation and signal meaning that maps information that has a very low degree of importance (i.e. as an afterthought) in the event model.

The typical grounding-signaling function that *mimmā yudkaru anna* fulfils is illustrated by S5 of **T29** cited earlier about previous *Basque* attacks.

(5) *wa-mimmā yudkaru anna* the rebel group has carried out hundreds of bomb attacks against Spanish banks during its 17-year fight for an independent *Basque* state.

The marker signals the incidental nature of the underlying information. It does not signal a *background* proposition about the specific event referred to in the *foreground* proposition (i.e. *shooting a bank director*). In other words, the meaning that *mimmā yudkaru anna* expresses is rather diffuse.

That *mimmā yudkaru anna* prepares readers for the introduction of a grounding-value that is lower than that signaled by *kāna qad* is evident in S3 of **T70**.

T70

Legionnaire's Disease Kills 27 in U.K.

STAFFORD, England (Reuters)— (1) **1a** The first major outbreak of Legionnaire's disease in Britain was confirmed Friday **1b** after 27 people died **1c** in what doctors had been treating as an influenza epidemic.

(2) A spokesman for Mid-Staffordshire Health Authority in central England said that 12 cases of the disease had been identified among the 27 people who died and 70 who have been infected.

(3) *wa-mimmā yuḏkaru anna* **3a** Legionnaire's disease, **3b** a form of pneumonia, was first recognized in 1976 in the United States **3c** when 29 persons died from an outbreak at an American Legion convention in Philadelphia.

The meaning expressed in S3 is *background* (historical fact). Though it is quite possible and appropriate to use *kāna qad* in initial position, the writer opted for *mimmā yuḏkaru anna* in order to show the expression of meaning that maps a less relevant piece of information. By employing this initial marker, the writer presents the textual proposition embodying this information from more distance than *kāna qad* would typically do.

In order to get a closer look at the discourse behaviour of both markers, and the distinction in the grounding-value that each signals, consider S5 of T35.

T35

Bomb Defused at Embassy in Athens

ATHENS (Reuters)— (1) Police defused a small bomb found outside the West German Embassy in Athens after telephone tip-offs to Greek newspapers.

(2) The half-pound (250-gram) device, found Saturday, was packed into a cardboard box.

(3) A statement found in Athens claimed responsibility for the bomb on behalf of a hitherto unknown group named after Christos Kassimis, a Greek shot dead by police during a raid in 1977 on installations belonging to the West German company AEG.

(4) The statement said the group had links with the West German Red Army Faction, the French group Direct Action and Belgium's Fighting Communist Cells, which have been responsible for a series of attacks this year in Europe.

(5) *wa-mimmā yuḏkaru anna* governments of the European Community *kānat qad* agreed to cooperate in efforts to combat what they say is a coordinated campaign by leftist guerrillas.

The sentence expresses meaning that is assigned to the *background end of the continuum* (unrelated event: digression). The underlying information is considered relevant for readers, and hence worth including in the semantic representation. By stating that *what follows is among things to be mentioned within the framework of what has already been reported*, the marker

signals the incidental nature of the underlying information. *Kāna qad*, on the other hand, does not provide such an introductory statement, since it usually signals higher *background*, mapping more important information in event models. Besides, it usually encodes meaning that is covered by the (main) topic. This is demonstrated by the fact that the writer opted for *mimmā yudkaru anna* as the marker that signals in initial position the low level of *background* and did not depend on *kāna qad*, which in fact appears also in the sentence in non-initial position, to fulfil that grounding-signaling function.

v. *Kāna qad* and *min al-ma'rūfi anna*

The information that is mapped as *background* meaning and expressed in a sentence containing *kāna qad* may not be known before. For example, S4 of T5 about rumors of capturing Mr. Savimbi is introduced by *kāna qad*. Had *min al-ma'rūfi anna* (*it is known that*) been used instead, a change in the status of the underlying information would have been assumed, namely that it is known, hence the writer's explicit expression of that assumption.

The choice between both markers is not random, but is determined by cognitive and pragmatic constraints as is illustrated by the last sentence of T17 cited earlier about Mr. Mandela.

(4) *wa-min al-ma'rūfi anna-hu kāna qad* sentenced in 1964.

Though *kāna qad*, which occurs in non-initial position in S4, could have been used as an initial marker, signaling *background* meaning (a remote past event), the writer preferred the more appropriate marker *min al-ma'rūfi anna* because the underlying information is part of general knowledge about a prominent figure and is supposed to be known or has been known before. In addition, there is the writer's intention to recast this piece of information as a proposition that has a lower grounding-value than what *kāna qad* usually signals. The sentence also demonstrates that *kāna qad* is not automatically used as an initial marker to encode anterior events, and that *min al-ma'rūfi anna* may sometimes be preferred to signal *background* propositions, mapping information about historical, widely acknowledged and established facts.

vi. *Kāna qad* and *fī-* + spatio/temporal entity

Unlike *kāna qad* that usually prefaces a sentence whose underlying proposition has a *background* value relative to the *foreground* proposition, *fī-* + spatio/temporal entity may signal a global shift and hence a lesser grounding-value. Consider S5 of T55.

T55

Germans Protest at U.S. Missile Base

MUTLANGEN, West Germany (UPI)— (1) **1a** Police detained Friday six anti-nuclear protesters who climbed a fence at a U.S. missile base, **1b** erected a six-foot wooden cross and lit a small "peace" candle.

(2) **2a** On the first of four days of planned national peace demonstrations, **2b** six persons threw a piece of carpet over the barbed wire on top of an eight foot fence at the Mutlangen military base **2c** and climbed into a security zone in front of an inner fence of the base, police said.

(3) **3a** Eight other demonstrators, **3b** wearing masks, escaped **3c** after stoning a police car near the base, **cd** which is 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of Stuttgart.

(4) No one was injured.

(5) *wa-fī* Britain, marched hundreds of anti-nuclear demonstrators toward a planned U.S. cruise missile site north of London to begin an Easter weekend rally expected to attract 20,000 protesters.

(6) **6a** Three groups of demonstrators, **6b** organized to protest the basing of nuclear missiles in Britain, left the towns of Leicester, Stevenage and Cambridge to converge on a base at Molesworth, **6c** which is scheduled to house 64 cruise missiles by the end of 1988.

We mentioned earlier that a locative adverbial may not always be appropriate as an initial marker in Arabic. Its potential for signaling a global shift from what has been reported before makes it appropriate to introduce the setting of a different type of activity as in T55. The *background* proposition expressed in S5 is assigned to an **Association** schema category that is usually the least prominent category.

Suppose now that the locative marker would be replaced by *kāna qad* as follows:

(5) *wa-kāna* hundreds of anti-nuclear demonstrators in Britain *qad* marched toward...

The change would make it evident that the proposition is intended as *background* to *foreground* meaning expressed in the lead sentence, which is not

the case.

vii. *Mimmā yuḍkaru anna* and *min nāḥiyatin uxrā*

Although both markers express meanings that are *background*, there is a rather subtle difference between their grounding-signaling behaviour. Both *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) and *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* (*from another side/aspect*) may be distinguished in the scope of grounding-signaling. Consider the last two sentences (S7 and S8) of T39 examined earlier.

(7) *wa-min nāḥiyatin uxrā* the workman was being treated at a hospital for two fractures of his left leg.

(8) *8a wa-mimmā yuḍkaru anna-hu* [...that-[He]] is an employee of Lockheed Space Operations Co., *8b* which handles shuttle servicing under a contract with NASA.

The last sentence introduced by *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* refers to the entity, viz. *the workman*, referred to in the immediately preceding sentence. It has a suffix pronoun. The marker, which usually signals *background* meaning, signals here a *midground* proposition (identification of participant: social role). Similarly, *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* signals in this example *midground*, namely specification of the main event. It also signals a shift from meanings expressed in the preceding sentences about what NASA has announced, and reintroduces *the workman* referred to in the lead sentence. It may therefore be said that *min nāḥiyatin uxrā* has a wide scope of signaling grounding. For that matter, it would be rather difficult to replace it with *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* since the meaning expressed in S7 is not about the shuttle accident. In other words, *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* has a narrower scope of signaling grounding and the shift to a new attention field.

viii. *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* and *min al-ma'rūfī anna*

The difference is rather big between meanings expressed by *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) and those expressed by *min al-ma'rūfī anna* (*it is known that*). The interchangeability of the two sentence-initial markers is governed by writers' assessment of the availability as well as the importance and relevance of the information in their (and their readers') event and context models. Consider again S4 of T17.

- (4) *wa-min al-ma'rūfī anna-hu kāna qad* sentenced in 1964.

As we said earlier, the writer considers the information about *Mr. Mandela* to be part of general knowledge that language users (should) have. *Mimmā yuḍkaru anna* would be used if the writer does not share this perspective and consequently would like to bring this information to the attention of other language users as an extra piece of useful information.

That the two markers are not always interchangeable, and hence one of them would be more appropriate than the other, is evident in S8 of T39 cited above. The underlying information is about an unknown person, and neither he nor the fact that he is employed by *Lockheed Space Operations Company* is supposed to be known. Aware of these constraints, the writer uses *mimmā yuḍkaru anna*.

ix- *Min nāḥiyatin/jihatin uxrā* and *fī nafsi al-waqt*

As examples showed, no conformity exists in the use of *min nāḥiyatin/jihatin uxrā* (from another side/aspect): It may denote meaning about a side feature that is covered by the main topic. *Fī nafsi al-waqt*, on the other hand, expresses meaning about a distantly related topic. Its presence breaks all relations with what preceded and justifies the introduction of (participants in) events that are eligible to be referred to in propositions of sentences in an independent news text. Consider TC103.

- (1) The first American transport plane arrived the day before yesterday to Chad to deliver the first consignment of military equipment ...
- (2) The Voice of America said the weapons consist of...
- :
- (4) *wa-fī al-waḡti nafsih* began in Addis Ababa the ministerial council of the organization of African Unity during which the Chad problem will be discussed as well as the problem of the debts of African countries.

The information mapped as a proposition in S4 is about a distantly related topic and may be mapped as textual propositions of a separate news item. The marker, however, may signal a shift in grounding that is less drastic than it usually does. In this case, it signals a proposition that is *background* to the *foreground* proposition. Denoting a parallel event, the temporal property of *at the same time* is at issue:

- (1) A bomb exploded in Jerusalem...

- (2) *wa fi nafsi al-waqt* exploded a bomb in ...

That the two initial markers are not always interchangeable is evident in the following illustration:

- (1) The president met yesterday evening with the queen.
 (2) *wa-min nāḥiyatin uxrā* met the president with the premier.

It would be inappropriate to use *fi nafsi al-waqt*, signaling simultaneous acts by the same participant.

5.3.1 Neutralizing an Initial Marker in English

We examined in chapter 3 a number of sentence-initial markers in English news texts. These markers may not occur in that position in the (equivalent) Arabic news text and hence they would lose their text-level grounding-signaling function. This means that the Arabic text may sometimes neutralize that function by placing the markers in sentence-medial position, and manifest instead either a zero initial marker or a different marker. This has consequences for the pattern of grounding that the surface structure of the text expresses. We examine below the two manifestations of neutralizing initial markers in English.

A. NEUTRALIZING BY A ZERO INITIAL MARKER

The Arabic news text may neutralize an initial marker that signals *background* meaning in English by means of a zero initial marker. Zero initial markers may characterize a whole text or part of it. This process involves signaling (the assignment of) a grounding-value that differs from the one assigned to the same proposition in the English text. In chapter 3 we have seen that S2 of T1

- (2) Addressing thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square, the pope said...

expresses *background* meaning (the spatial setting of the main event) prior to *midground* meaning. The Arabic text uses instead a verb: ***and-said the Pope addressing...*** This makes it clear to readers from the beginning that it is an addition to the main speech event and hence *midground*: a sequential descending pattern (see chapter 3). Similarly, S3 of the same text also ex-

presses *background* meaning (the occasion of the main event):

(3) *In a speech marking the Roman Catholic Church's day of peace...*

It is rendered in Arabic by a verb of addition in sentence-initial position: *wa-aḍāfa* (and-added) *the pope in his speech...*

In fact, the Arabic sentence uses a possessive pronoun, which is an extra signal to readers that no shift of scene or occasion takes place. It dissipates any doubt that it is the same speech (event) referred to in the preceding sentences. This example provides evidence that the occurrence of an adverbial in sentence-initial position in the Arabic news text may not always be appropriate, since it introduces discontinuity and serves a global shift signaling function, as we have seen before. (Ennaji (1995) notes that an initial prepositional phrase is used to start a new story.) Since the sentences introduced by the markers in **T1** do not express propositions that denote a different event, the Arabic text neutralizes them in initial position.

B. NEUTRALIZING BY A DIFFERENT MARKER

The Arabic news text may neutralize an initial marker in English by employing a different marker. A few manifestations are examined below.

1- neutralizing by *qad*

The pre-verbal particle *qad* may neutralize an initial adverbial in English. Consider the first two sentences of **T18**.

(1) **1a** Pope John Paul II visited a bambo-and-tin shantytown of 350.000 inhabitants Friday **1b** [and] urged the rich to show solidarity with the poor by sharing their wealth with them.

(2) **2a** On the second leg of his 12-day, four-nation Latin American tour, **2b** the pope visited the squalid neighborhood of El Guasmo on the outskirts of the western port city of Guayaquil and addressed 50.000 people, **2c** who cheered him.

2a expresses *background* meaning (context of the main event) and **2b** *midground* meaning (specification of the main event). In Arabic **S2** reads as follows:

(2) *wa-qad* visited the pope, on the second leg of his 12-day, four-nation Latin American tour, the squalid neighborhood...

By employing *qad*, the sentence expresses *midground* meaning in initial position and hence manifests a gradual shift from *foreground* in S1. In addition, the initial marker neutralizes a reading that what is at issue is an event or occasion that is different from the one referred to in the lead sentence.

2- neutralizing by *kāna qad*

Kāna qad may neutralize a temporal adverbial that denotes a point in the past in order to realize continuity and express *background* meaning. S2 of T24 is an example.

- (2) **2a** In August 1978, **2b** Mr. Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson and Larry Newman crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon **2c** named the Double Eagle-2.

In Arabic, the sentence has *kāna qad* in initial position in order to manifest the perspective of the writer, namely that the meaning is *background* to *foreground* meaning about the plane crash.

- (2) *wa-kāna* Mr. Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson and Larry Newman *qad* crossed in August 1978 the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon named the Double Eagle-2.

3- neutralizing by *jadīrun bi-al-dikri anna*

An initial adverbial clause may also be neutralized by *jadīrun bi-al-dikri anna* (*it is worth mentioning that*). This is the case in S3 of T85.

T85

Brazil Sugar Workers' Strike Ends

SAO PAULO (WP)— (1) **1a** Representatives of the Brazilian sugar cane industry and rural workers have ended their strike **1b** after signing an agreement mediated by the labor minister, Almir Pazzianotto.

- (2) **2a** The accord, **2b** signed Monday, signaled an important shift toward free collective bargaining between labor and employers **2c** as the new civilian government struggles to restore industrial democracy.

- (3) **3a** Since the military left power in March, **3b** airline employees, postal workers, teachers, subway and busdrivers, car assembly workers and members of other trades have held about 40 strikes in an effort to restore living standards **3c** cut by a two-year recession **3d** that has been deepened by an austerity program.

The Arabic sentence begins as follows:

- (3) *wa-jadīrun bi-al-ḡikri anna-hu* since left the military power in March...

In other words, the initial marker makes it clear that the underlying information is worth mentioning within the framework of ending the strike.

4- neutralizing by *fa-qad*

The initial marker *fa-* followed by *qad* is preferred to a locative adverbial in order to signal an explanation of the preceding proposition. This is illustrated by S8 of **T20** cited earlier.

- (7) Meanwhile, there were reports that a fresh diplomatic effort was underway to end the war.
 (8) In Kuwait, the newspaper *Al-Seyassah* said Sunday that France, Saudi Arabia and Algeria were working on a plan for talks with the support of the six-nation Gulf Co-operation Council.

The sentence in Arabic reads:

- (8) *fa-qad* said the newspaper *Al-Seyassah* in Kuwait Sunday that...

The proposition expressed in S7 is about diplomatic efforts and *fa-qad* in S8 signals an explanation of these efforts. By neutralizing the effect of the shift in location (*in Kuwait*), *fa-qad* makes clear the grounding function of the proposition.

5- neutralizing by *min nāḥiyatin/jihatin uxrā*

The use of *min jihatīn uxrā* (*from another side/aspect*) instead of a locative adverbial is illustrated by S6 of **T12** examined in chapter 3 and repeated here.

- (6) In Jerusalem, Brian E. Urquhart, a United Nations undersecretary for special political affairs, conveyed to Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli defense minister, Lebanon's agreement to resume negotiations on deploying UN troops in the evacuated areas.

In the Arabic version, *min jihatīn uxrā* signals a shift from the meaning expressed in preceding sentences about preparations for the Israeli with-

drawal to the *background end of the continuum* about the U.N. political efforts.

Conclusion

This chapter presented empirical evidence of sentence-initial markers as text-level manifestations of grounding in Arabic news texts. It showed that the markers are sensitive to grounding-values and that they are employed in these texts primarily in order to distinguish among these values on the FG-BG continuum. The markers are also indicative of importance as well as relevance assignment to the underlying information.

The analysis showed that considerations of contextual and pragmatic relevance lead to *maximizing* the signaling of the FG-BG structure and that writers make sure that news texts contain the necessary and sufficient markers, honouring what we call—à la Clark and Haviland (1977)—*the foreground-background contract*. The *foreground* proposition is always in the mind of writers as well as readers, in the hierarchical realization of the top-down FG-BG structure. The absence of these markers in contexts where markers should be present creates incoherent news texts. Unlike other connectives (in other types of text and other languages), these sentence-initial markers are obligatory in Arabic news texts.

The chapter provided a close analysis of the grounding-signaling behaviour of each marker and the environment in which it is more likely to appear. It also showed the influence that markers exert on different levels. Syntactically, they influence word-order. This demonstrates how crucial it is to study the discourse uses of various word-order types (Hopper 1986) and the interplay with the FG-BG distinction. Semantically, the markers signal the relative grounding-value of propositions and establish (the absence of) a relation with preceding as well as following propositions. We have seen that replacing a marker, where possible, may change meaning and influence the interpretation of grounding-values. Pragmatically, sentence-initial markers add certain interpretations by the writer of the relative grounding-value that is assigned to incoming propositions.

News upstage and *news downstage* indicate how grounding-values and their signaling by means of sentence-initial markers are expressed in surface structure prominence. Certain meanings—signaled by a *background(ing)* marker such as *kāna qad*—may be prominently expressed, that is, as *news upstage*, and certain other meanings—signaled by a *foregrounding* mechanism such as *qad*—may be relegated to a later and hence lower position in surface structure, that is, as *news downstage*.

It became apparent that the problem of signaling grounding comes to the

fore in grounding-values other than *foreground*. We presented evidence that the markers are employed in an environment of lower grounding-values and that they realize a **strategy of backgrounding**. They restructure the (expression of the) FG-BG hierarchy of the news text, i.e. make it less 'figured', or rather background otherwise *foreground* meaning. In addition, the requirement to maintain the Arabic news type of text is more evident in the case of expressing *background* meaning, which discourages the use of VS/SV syntax in initial position. Therefore, in order to create or realize functional equivalence, Arabic news texts have to adapt syntax at sentence-initial position.

We examined combinations of markers and explored constraints on—as well as consequences of—their interchangeability. The fact that writers sometimes (have to) choose between two or more appropriate sentence-initial markers demonstrates that the choice is not random but is subject to cognitive and discourse pragmatic constraints to recast a certain grounding-value. The grounding-value may differ from the English equivalent.

By examining the phenomenon of sentence-initial markers in (translated into) Arabic news texts we have spelled out some basic differences with English news texts. In English, the FG-BG distinction is not necessarily marked at sentence-initial position. We have shown that Arabic news texts are more explicit in signaling in initial position the FG-BG structure. (Hatim (1997: 67) refers to the fact that a background function in English is not usually marked in any conspicuous way and that Arabic background information is 'frequently introduced by one of a number of conventional phrases...'.)

We noted the infrequent occurrence in Arabic news texts of temporal and spatial adverbials (i.e. involved reporting) in sentence-initial position. We also noted cases where Arabic news texts neutralize adverbials that the English news text uses in that position.

Finally, a few words about the shift to the *background end of the continuum* position. Ten texts in sample I signal that level. They include 11 sentences: Ten of them (5 adverbials and 5 *Meanwhile*) are expressed in Arabic news texts by means of the same marker, respectively *fī* + location and *fī nafsi al-waqt* (*at the same time*). The last sentence that expresses the *background end of the continuum* is not signaled in English. The equivalent Arabic sentence has *mimmā yuḍkaru anna* (*it is to be mentioned that*). A sentence-initial marker seems to be indispensable to signal a global shift to a very low grounding-value.

We also looked at environments that discourage the use of markers. We found that markers are most likely to be discouraged if the sentence denotes a speech act of addition or temporal sequentiality. In these cases, sequences of sentences will manifest zero initial markers, that is to say, entities such as verbs and markers of addition or continuation. These are presentative devices that achieve what is referred to as the '*link onto the scene*' (Givón 1976b : 155).

Discussion

The following discussion looks at the foregoing theoretical framework and empirical investigation in the light of some main issues within a number of areas that engage current linguistic research.

THEORY

Taking *grounding*, or the organization of meaning in terms of a FG-BG structure, as the main discourse notion, the study outlined a theory that accounts for the data and predicts the nature of any other data that might be gathered from similar sources. The theory, in a nutshell, suggests that, based on information having greater or lesser importance (in a cognitive sense) and relevance (in a pragmatic sense), a grounding-scale of text meanings indicates higher or lower grounding-values (in a semantic sense) that are prominently or less prominently realized (in a syntactic, surface structure organizational sense).

Explaining the FG-BG structure in terms of semantic representations has distinguished it from several other textual as well as non-textual structures and levels. From the semantic level downward, we distinguished the FG-BG structure from the non-textual, cognitive level of information and knowledge in mental models. Upward, we distinguished it from the level of schemata that subsume the propositional content, and the surface structure level. Both structures are in the meantime text-level manifestations of the FG-BG structure. Basic concepts that pertain to the different structures and levels have been examined in terms of constraints on grounding and/or its various manifestations. A brief description of the major concepts—including a distinction among several types of importance—is presented in the end.

At the semantic level, distinction has been made between the FG-BG structure and the macro-micro structure. *Foreground* is not necessarily the summary or the macro-topic that is derived from lower level propositions in the text. Although a macroproposition is usually semantically important and may sometimes be used as one of the ways *foreground* is coded in text, semantic importance is neither necessary nor sufficient to characterize

foreground meaning. For cognitive and pragmatic reasons, macrostructures (topics) may be *backgrounded* (viz. assigned a lower degree of pragmatic importance) in order to *foreground* some low-level details because of a high(er) degree of information-relevance in the underlying context model. It may even occur that a lower level detail occupies the *foreground* position on the FG-BG continuum. It is to be noted in this regard that we distinguish terminology that has shown confusion in use, namely that *foreground* and *background* describe a different phenomenon from *foregrounding* and *backgrounding*. It should be noted that the phenomenon of *foregrounding/backgrounding* is of course apparent in surface structure, when some *background* propositions are *foregrounded* and expressed early in text as instances of *news upstage*, and some other propositions are *backgrounded* and expressed late in text as instances of *news downstage*, manifesting respectively greater and lesser prominence.

The theoretical description that accounts for schematic and syntactic manifestations of grounding in news texts demonstrates that linguistic phenomena such as sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts can hardly be sufficiently explained by recourse to either sentence-level approach or one level of analysis. This is also in line with approaches that emphasize the importance of the cognitive level in expression. Alternatively, by accounting for the phenomenon of sentence-initial markers and confirming our theory about it, we are in the meantime hoping that the study contributes to broadening the empirical basis of this topic.

THE FG-BG STRUCTURE

The study demonstrated the need for the FG-BG structure— which exhibits a gradual distinction among grounding-values— as a distinct structure on the semantic level. It is part of writers' strategy to realize the intended meaning in text. It may be mapped onto the semantic (i.e. hierarchical meaning) structure, for example when *foreground* meaning is selected as the main topic, and *background* as detail. It may be manifest in the schematic structure such as when *foreground* propositions are assigned to the **Main Event** category and *background* propositions are assigned to a **Previous Event** or a **History** category. In the surface structure, the FG-BG distinction determines inter alia the choice of sentence-initial markers, as Arabic news texts demonstrate.

The multi-level approach allowed better conceptual distinctions between grounding and the criteria in terms of which it is defined. The scalar

FG-BG structure is defined in terms of the cognitive information that is selected in event models (in terms of importance criteria/assignment) and in context models (in terms of relevance criteria/assignment). The criteria for the FG-BG distinction are therefore syntax-independent, that is, in terms of knowledge, communicative goals, and pragmatic relevance. Put differently, the FG-BG structure captures the grounding-values of propositions independent of their surface structure realization anywhere in text.

In the typical FG-BG structure of news discourse, *midground* follows *foreground* and it is followed by *background*—reflecting a gradual decrease in *propositional importance* that coincides usually with the underlying *information importance*. Text surface structure reflects this typical structure when for example *background* meaning is expressed towards the end of the text.

MANIFESTATIONS OF GROUNDING: INITIAL MARKERS AND PROMINENCE

Examining schematic manifestations of grounding has shown that news categories may be (non)saliently organized and hence make the functions of meanings or propositions more or less 'important'. For example, the occurrence of an **Association** category in the end of the text means that it is less 'important' than for example a **Main Event** category, and provides a clue to the way it is intended to be 'received'.

Turning to syntactic manifestations of grounding, and before examining the special markers that appear sentence-initially in Arabic news texts (see below), we examined entities that appear in that position in English news texts. We distinguished between what we consider to be weak signals of grounding (e.g. an initial noun phrase) and strong ones (e.g. an initial adverbial) that express text-level *background* in English—a language which 'seems to lack the specific morphosyntactic marking of foreground identified in other languages' (Dry 1985: 492). It is significant to note that strong signals of grounding—whether in English or in Arabic news texts—provided empirical evidence for the existence of news schemata.

As surface structure manifestation of the FG-BG distinction, sentence-initial markers are manipulated in surface structure as part of determining the position of constituents and sentences. Both of markers and prominence may be determined by the perspective of writers on the (presentation of the) subject matter. They may be considered as writers' means to make explicit communicative intentions in regard to how the FG-BG structure should be interpreted in text. However, the analysis suggested that signal-

ing the relative grounding-value by means of sentence-initial markers is different from showing how the grounding-value is realized in surface structure prominence. Certain *background* meanings may be expressed in an initial marker prior to expressing *midground* meanings. They may denote a global setting or state, and hence they are placed earlier in the text as part of *news upstage*.

INITIAL MARKERS IN ARABIC NEWS TEXTS

The analysis of sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts illustrated the need to approach linguistic phenomena in terms of discourse function. It showed that the markers pertain to high-level discourse properties, that they are the linguistic correlates of (distinctions in) grounding-values, and that they perform text grounding-signaling functions. These functions have to do with constraints that lie beyond the sentence-boundaries and with the requirement that writers cope with the occurrence of shifts in grounding-values and hence with expressing meaning in subsequent sentences. Accounting for this surface structure linguistic phenomenon showed its contribution to the organization of meaning in terms of grounding. It also answered the question of how do Arabic news texts distinguish and signal grounding-values at sentence-initial position.

That the markers pertain to high-level discourse properties means that the requirement to use them is not a sentence-syntactic/grammatical one. The texts in which they appear— translated or originally written in Arabic— are grammatically well-formed and semantically meaningful: they have coherent underlying semantic structures. The initial markers are neither a mere manifestation of underlying semantic relations (that is, coherence-signaling) nor of a segmenting function. In fact the segmenting function may be considered a prerequisite for the distinct grounding-signaling function that has to do with communicative intentions to maximize the signaling of grounding at sentence-initial position. In this respect, the markers keep track of the grounding-strategy that writers apply and help signal the integration of the meaning expressed in the (incoming) sentence within the FG-BG structure of the text, and hence signal the coherence of that structure (see later). In this regard, the study takes a grounding-based approach to text coherence. The use of sentence-initial markers is conceived of as being part of the writer's attempt to realize the coherence of the communicative situation, i.e. his/her interaction with what is communicated in a certain situation.

Sentence-initial markers manifest the influence of perspective taking. They reveal/express the cognitive processes and mental models that writers have. Therefore, the role that several of these markers play in texts is to be sought in the underlying cognitive level of information and its importance as well as relevance to language users. Some initial markers may be regarded as textual devices that express importance and relevance of the information (see van Dijk 1995). The choice of the appropriate marker is determined by the intended grounding-value. It may be said that the *foreground* proposition is always present throughout the text in the minds of writers (and readers). Knowledge that writers have and assumptions about the knowledge of readers play an important role in the selection of several of these markers. Some markers signal that knowledge, for example that the writer takes it for granted that readers are already familiar with the underlying information.

The markers, in addition, may help readers derive the semantic representations of writers in terms of grounding. The markers may also influence the hierarchical structure of mental models that readers build about events referred to by textual propositions and eventually help in constructing their mental representation of the text. In other words, the markers may expand the interpretation of context models within which readers (should) interpret certain information, and determine or modify the interpretation of the underlying FG-BG articulation. (For a view of connectives as *model building* in narratives, see Segal and Duchan 1997.) This is part of the writer's influence on readers' perception of the events that are referred to. It should be added that readers may not share the writer's interpretation of grounding-relations or assumptions about certain information (e.g. that it is known).

Contrasting pairs of markers has extended our exploration of grounding-signaling functions and manifested constraints on the interchangeability of markers. It also showed that the markers modify the semantic representation of information that is expressed in the sentence. There is, then, a reciprocal influence: The influence of grounding-values on surface structure exemplified by (the choice of) markers, and of markers on grounding-values. Contrasting pairs of markers provided evidence that they are important for the process of interpretation that pertains to assigning or establishing grounding-values. In addition, it showed how crucial context is to the understanding of the behaviour of markers in text.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY OF ARABIC INITIAL MARKERS

The study of sentence-initial markers in Arabic has highlighted the issue of how rhetorical patterns of languages diverge. Given empirically-based observations about differences between English and Arabic in patterns of connectedness and ways of signaling grounding-relations at sentence-initial position, it is assumed that Arabic news texts are more explicit than their English counterpart in marking at that position the relative grounding-value of text meaning.

Explicitness has another implication, namely for the distinction in terminology that we made between *foreground/background* and *foregrounding/backgrounding*. While we examined in chapter 3 manifestations of grounding in terms of sentence-initial markers we could only assume—on the basis of prominent or non-prominent realization—that some propositions have been *foregrounded* or *backgrounded*. In contradistinction to manifestations in English, our exploration of initial markers in Arabic texts has made it clear that the markers may modify the grounding-value of the propositions. Looking at markers' interchangeability showed that what may transpire is not only a question of *foregrounding* or *backgrounding* (i.e. pragmatic assignment of higher or lower grounding-values) but in fact a change in the location of the proposition (i.e. semantic assignment of higher or lower grounding-values). This, of course, is independent of how the proposition is (non)prominently expressed in surface structure.

Apart from that, sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts seem to fulfil a more crucial role than markers in English news texts do, namely **text-type identification**. Accordingly, they are a crucial means by which news writers distinguish their role as **news (story) tellers** and remind readers that they are engaged with different phases of a news text. This feature demonstrates that meaning constrains form and that form determines the interpretation of meaning. It may therefore be said that the study identified an interpretive function (i.e. involved reporting) for the absence of these markers. Their absence where they should be present creates a problem of recasting—as well as interpreting—the appropriate grounding structure that is typical of news. Thus, the way propositions are formulated may show the writer's attitude towards them (see e.g. Fowler et al. 1979; Halliday 1978). (The phenomenon of the speaker's attitude to the propositional content and the emotional modality of utterances has also been investigated by Czechoslovak and East German linguists (Prucha 1983).)

By accounting for this linguistic phenomenon, we brought to the front one crucial mechanism for signaling the distinction in grounding-values in Arabic news discourse. It is, of course, among the numerous mechanisms that languages have 'for tagging both the more relevant and the less relevant information' (Grimes 1982: 399), or, more specifically, 'for tagging certain clauses ('sentences', 'propositions') as old, presupposed, or shared background (Givón 1984b: 251).

Though not dealing with coherence, which, as we explained, is a different notion/dimension of text-structure, the study showed that Arabic news texts are coherent only if and when news writers distinguish in surface structure appropriate grounding-values and mark shifts among them as typical of news. That is to say, the texts are coherent when they realize grounding-coherence and hence realize the goals of writers in signaling (i.e. communicating) the intended grounding-values.

Within standard Arabic, the linguistic phenomenon studied here has as yet not been accounted for within the framework of a theory of grounding (i.e. the discourse grounding function of initial markers) and the strategy to express text meanings along a FG-BG graded continuum. It is a relatively untapped area of investigation that underscores the importance of a hitherto unrecognized feature in Arabic linguistics.

It is perhaps relevant to note that sentence-initial markers that we examined may be conceived of as *discourse markers*, which is a cover term for a wide range of devices that languages possess. There is, however, little agreement on the term *discourse marker* and the concept is fuzzy (see Jucker and Ziv 1998). Though many markers in Arabic are hardly explained from a discourse perspective, a begin has recently been made to consider some entities in contemporary written Arabic such as *wa-qad* and *fa-qad* as discourse markers (see Sarig 1995). A begin has also been made to examine grounding-signaling or what has been referred to as 'syntactic foregrounding devices' (Fareh 1995), which have been discussed sporadically in grammar books as syntactic processes (ibid.: 124). Among these devices are using a VOS structure instead of a VSO; topicalization; and preposing adverbials of time, place, and manner such as (ibid.: 128):

<i>mubakkiran</i>	<i>kharajtu</i>	<i>ila</i>	<i>'amali</i>
early	went-I	to	my work

Entities in sentence-initial position are also identified with three levels of

narration (see Hatim 1997): The first is introduced by the simple past and it indicates that the narrative is progressing; the second and third are introduced respectively by *qad* and *kāna qad*. *Qad* introduces the sequences as one aspect of the same set and 'at the same time pushes the narration back slightly from the basic level...' (op.cit.: 70). *Kāna qad* 'pushes the narration even further back' (op.cit.: 71). This is consonant with our earlier analysis (Khalil 1985) of the functional differences between these two discourse markers.

DISCOURSE AND GRAMMAR

The traditional concern of Arab linguists was with the (behaviour of the) single word or the constituent part of the sentence rather than with the sentence as a whole. Rhetoricians, on the other hand, focussed on certain features of the sentence such as its structure, inter alia inversion, ellipsis, junction and disjunction (see Tarzi 1969). Their concern however was with isolated sentences and lexical features therein (Eid 1974: 234), rather than with the text as a unit. Consequently, the Arabic sentence in connected discourse has received little attention in linguistic as well as rhetorical thought. Relations holding between sentences and the role certain entities play in text have been hardly studied. Arabic, of course, is not unique in this. Many languages, indeed, possess a large number of adverbs, adverbials and interjections 'whose status as pragmatic connectives is completely obliterated by traditional descriptions' (Roulet 1984: 46).

It may however be argued that 'all systems for signaling relations are rooted in the grammar of the clause' (Hoey 1983: 18) and that several studies have dealt with grammatical phenomena in written texts (e.g. Fox 1987; Halliday 1985; Thompson 1985; Matthiessen and Thompson 1988). But while the present study also dealt with grammatical phenomena, it examined functions that are different from those described in traditional sentence grammars. It has perhaps demonstrated the need 'to create text-level structures from sentence-level resources' (Downing 1995:9) and provided evidence that 'grammar creates and reflects the higher-level organization of text in several ways' (Cumming and Ono 1997: 122). As such, the study belongs to a field that investigates the relation between discourse and grammar or what has been called 'discourse functional approach' (see Cumming and Ono 1997), where the use of grammar is manifest.

The discourse approach to grammar was particularly evident in the

treatment of the particle *qad* that serves several functions among which is a grounding-signaling function at text-level. This is similar to the use of the particle *dé*—traditionally a connective particle in Ancient Greek—for various functions (semantic, cognitive and local switch-reference function as well as a global text-organization function (see Bakker 1993). This is also consistent with the claim that pragmatic particles (see Östman 1995)—or rather pragmatic markers—serve a wide range of functions among which is the grounding-signaling function (see Foolen 1996, also for various definitions, terminology, and survey of literature on particles). The discourse approach to grammar was also evident in the treatment of other sentence-initial markers such as the aspectual *kāna qad*, which provides evidence that in VSO languages, entities that are placed in P1 position include tense and aspect markers (Dik 1980: 155).

Apart from that, the discourse approach to grammar was evident in the expression of text-functional distinctions between VS/SV word-order variants. The study showed that they are used subject to discourse conditions. Examining factors that influence word-order in discourse answers part of the inquiry about the extent to which word-order is determined by text context, situational context, text type, and style (Enkvist 1985). We have seen that VS syntax, or the main clause verb, is inadmissible in sentence-initial position in Arabic news texts in other than addition and temporal sequence. Similarly, SV syntax does not occupy initial position in news texts. (News texts show very low percentage of SV sentences (Bubenik 1979).) What shows an invariably SV syntax in news is the headline. (The study of Ennaji (1995) shows that 95 percent of headlines display that pattern.) Among significant findings is that while SV syntax (which encodes discontinuous topics) typically signals or contributes to signaling *background* meaning (for a discussion of SV syntax and *background* in Hebrew, see e.g. Givón 1976a), VS syntax (which encodes continuous topics) is not restricted to *foreground* meaning. In this respect, the study complements other recent studies (e.g. Longacre 1995; Payne 1995) that dealt with the use of non-verb initial clauses/structures in basically verb-initial languages.

Furthermore, the study made apparent the influence of the phenomenon of sentence-initial markers on the pragmatics of word-order variation. An essential trait of these markers is that they influence the syntax of the main clause they precede. The study provided an answer to the question of 'when to place the circumstance first, and when to place the main proposi-

tion first' (Fries 1995: 55). (See the study of Geluykens (1992) on left dislocation in English spontaneous conversation.) In this regard, sentence-initial markers are part of what is referred to as intersentential syntactic choices (see Kaplan 1983).

TEXT-TYPOLOGY: NEWS AND VIEWS

While focussing on news discourse, the study shed some light on the issue of rhetorical or persuasive Arabic discourse and provided some evidence that Arabic is a language that makes a very clear distinction between news and views types of text. An analysis of a sample of editorials showed that editorials differ considerably from news texts in entities that appear in sentence-initial position. That position may be a potential locus for commentary such as in the case of zero initial markers. (Most devices marking commentary sentences in Japanese newspaper columns appear in sentence-final position (Maynard 1996).) The absence of markers creates in news texts syntactic structures that are typical of/appropriate for editorials or involved communication, and represents an example of what is referred to as rhetorics that 'contaminates' information (see Roeh 1982). Therefore, employing the markers in news texts satisfies the requirement to avoid deviant rhetorical patterns that may cause communication failure or, at best, misunderstanding (viz. text-type shift).

This supports the claim that the syntactic choices that are made convey the writer's attitude (Maynard 1996.: 397). And, if 'form follows function' (Nystrand 1982: 8), the use of sentence-initial markers in Arabic news texts is intended to realize a certain form that conforms with a certain function: a detached, factual or plain news reporting. The rhetoric of news should then be constrained by the intended functions of news discourse (van Dijk 1984). Readers would then interpret in a similar fashion the (meaning or function of the) message form. In this regard, the study made clear that the failure to signal appropriate grounding-values (by the appropriate markers) is associated with the failure to deliver the appropriate type of text. Put differently, surface structure signaling of grounding is part of the strategy to realize the intended function of the text at issue. A by-product of maintaining the news-type of text is the establishment of what is called 'the institutional voice' (Lerman 1983) by which the speaker distances himself/herself from personal responsibility for a given topic.

The news and views discussion is reminiscent of the *'récit'*-*'discours'* dichotomy (following Benveniste) discussed by Moutaouakil (1998): A

'récit' text is an objective report that, unlike 'discours', does not contain certain types of subjective epistemic modality (see also Jadir 1998).

In fact, the markers in short news items do not establish contact between writers and readers such as certain markers in radio news do (for this, see Al-Shabbab and Swales 1986). Nor do they include modal terms such as 'certainly' or 'surely', which give explicit comment. This leads us to another feature of these texts namely that, unlike editorials, they do not tolerate emphasis. In this respect, the study showed a rather subtle manifestation of emphasis, not by repetition, juxtaposition, or reinforcers but by deleting sentence-initial markers.

While the study put emphasis on the influence of markers' deletion or absence, it also made clear that the presence of certain markers—such as those that the English news text customarily employs (e.g. locative adverbials)—may be avoided in initial position in Arabic news texts. For one thing, they are potential text type switchers and may create an explicit comment. Besides, they may signal a more radical shift in grounding than the writer of the Arabic news text considers warranted. We examined this feature when we looked into the circumstances under which Arabic texts may neutralize certain initial adverbials in English by recourse either to a zero initial marker (e.g. a speech verb or a verb of addition) or to a special marker (e.g. about things being known or worthy of mentioning).

In fact, underlying writing news or views is the mastery of genre, where '[T]he creativity which is permitted to the individual exists in deciding in which type of sentence or genre to encode the idea or the larger world-view' (Kress 1982: 99). Mastery of genre, then, presupposes knowledge of text-type specific features such as different text-structures including the FG-BG structure, and the ability to produce coherent texts that accommodate these features or rather cast them in the appropriate text-form.

CROSS LINGUISTIC/CULTURAL DISCOURSE STUDIES

The study contributes to cross linguistic/cultural discourse comparison where news texts are at issue (see e.g. Duszak 1995). It fits within the broader framework of intercultural or interlingual communication and the imperative for an adequate understanding of it. Such an understanding would consider not only the context of situation but also the context of culture (see Leckie-Tarry 1995).

A comparison of English news texts and their translations into Arabic has revealed that Arabic and English vary in ways of communicating

news: in expressing interpropositional relations and in interpreting the meaning of these relations. Different values are assigned to the same formal realization in English and Arabic news texts. And in order to realize functional equivalence and map on the sentence the same pragmatic force or grounding-value of the English sentence, initial markers would be required in the Arabic text. They are an essential property of these texts for signaling the FG-BG structure, since they reconstruct the way meaning (viz. the grounding function) in the English news discourse has been expressed and controls—eventually—the way it is to be retrieved and interpreted by receivers of the Arabic discourse. Their use follows some definite rules, just like the uses of utterances are rule-governed, constraining what may be said and when it may be said (see Kress 1982).

It should be noted that Arabic is a language that largely manifests connection, and that in that system it is particularly the absence of sentence-initial markers that would be remarkable. In the news type of text, their absence represents a violation of receivers' expectations regarding the way meaning is to be expressed, in accordance with text-type conventions. As a consequence of marker-omission, readers of the Arabic text receive what is referred to as 'a zero signal when they are expecting an overt one' (Callow 1992: 359). Creating discourse-deficient Arabic sentences that fail to communicate a coherent news text in terms of the FG-BG structure may lead to problems in interpretation and in text-type acceptability as we saw earlier. This raises the question of what languages may omit at the discourse level. (For a collection of papers dealing with pragmatic issues involved in interlanguage studies, second language acquisition and cross-cultural studies, see Oleksy, ed. 1989.)

TRANSLATION AND CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

The study has underlined textual problems in the process of translation and showed that, indeed, problems of translation 'are, to a large extent, genuine linguistic problems' (Doherty 1996: 441). Underlying these linguistic problems are different strategies of recasting for English and Arabic news texts in order to communicate the (different perspectives on the) FG-BG structure. The study uncovered what 'the mediating translator does to bring about communication' (Hartmann 1980: 52). While coping with textual and contextual constraints, the translator is left with the most difficult task which is 'to think of the message in terms of the receptor-language frame of interpretation based on the presuppositions and values of the culture'

(Nida and Reyburn 1981 : 21). (For a collection of papers on translation and intercultural studies, see e.g. Tirkkonen-Condit, ed. 1991.) Translation thus involves 'a reformulation of a text under pragmatic constraints determined by the target culture, target language included' (Enkvist 1995: 50).

It is important to note that, strategically, writers or translators of the news text are assumed to have a similar intent to the intent of the writer of the source language text, and to perform translation acts that would conform to this sort of universal strategy. On the other hand, tactically, they may introduce whatever changes deemed necessary in the process of pragmatic reconstruction of the way meanings have been expressed in the source language text. So they would respond to syntactic, semantic, and cognitive constraints on translating beyond the sentence. Tactical steps, then, assume that writers or translators are engaged in a language or text-type specific communicative strategy.

The study drew attention to the need in comparative studies of translation to consider the macrostructure of the text (see Van den Broeck 1986) that may be altered and hence violates the global function of the text as a news text. (In her discussion of argumentative texts, Trikkonen-Condit (1986) drew attention to the global structural features of text types which might be altered in translation.) There may also be violations of text-type production pattern in terms of shifts in cohesion (see Blum Kulka 1986), that is, types of cohesive ties, as a result of the process of translation. These shifts may lead to shifts in levels of explicitness and/or shifts in text meaning(s): for example, a move which is a simple request for clarification would imply wonder or doubt. The present study explained parallel consequences for text-type meaning.

Comparative studies of translation have much in common with contrastive rhetoric, which is an area of research in second language acquisition (see Connor 1996). In this regard, the present study made several claims about one type of discourse in two languages in which rhetorical patterns diverge. Moreover, it is relevant to an area of investigation in contrastive student writing that examines 'metadiscourse strategies' (Connor 1996: 94): linguistic material in text that does not add anything to the propositional content but helps the reader to organize, interpret, and evaluate the information. In contrastive rhetoric or contrastive discourse analysis there are, of course, several aspects of communication that vary from culture to culture: cohesion and coherence, when to talk, what to say, pacing and pausing, listenership, intonation, formulaicity, and indirectness

(Tannen 1984).

REMAINING ISSUES AND FUTURE AVENUES

The study leaves some questions unanswered or without a conclusive answer. They pertain to important theoretical as well as analytical difficulty in the approach to grounding in discourse. Further theoretical characterization and empirical verification are therefore required. We identify below some of the issues and point a few useful avenues for future research.

1- The characterization of grounding in terms of a continuum: *foreground*, *midground*, and *background* is cogent as well as practical. It accounts for the FG-BG structure of the short news items analyzed. The analysis however suggests that more distinctions in grounding-values, particularly within *background*, might be made and accounted for in terms of a more rigorous characterization. This may be combined with a comparison of the FG-BG structure in these texts with that in longer news texts.

2- We distinguished between *foreground/background* and *foregrounding/backgrounding* as denoting two different phenomena. This distinction however raises a theoretical problem. We know that a proposition is assigned a *midground* interpretation from the presence of a *foreground* proposition that is usually expressed before it in a lead sentence. But when a *midground* proposition (referring to a sub-event) is expressed in the lead sentence, that is, in the place usually occupied by the *foreground* proposition that refers to a main event, it might be difficult to talk about it as *midground* or to refer to it as being *foregrounded*. The proposition could be assigned *foreground* interpretation and the subsequent sentence that expresses the proposition that refers to a main event could in this case serve a *background* function, for example because it provides a wider context and frames the *foreground* proposition that is expressed in the lead sentence.

3- The study has indicated the influence on the FG-BG structure of functional relations—the main source of coherence in news stories (see van Dijk 1986)—that are created as a result of the organization of local and global text meanings. So grounding may make use of functional relations in order to organize or distribute grounding-values in text meaning. The relationship, interplay, and mutual influence between the two semantic properties may deserve a separate, thorough and extensive study.

4- A separate study may examine the relationship between shifts in grounding-values and shifts in topic in the macrostructural sense to sub-topics or side topics. Both may, though not necessarily, coincide. The present study has implied that there might be a parallelism between grounding-values— as well as their signaling— and the distinction that has been made between discourse units: main, sub and side structures (see van Kuppevelt 1995a,b): sub-structures are part of the main structure, that is, continue the main topic, and side structures shift from or discontinue the main structure, that is, digress. On the grounding-gradient, *midground* may coincide with a sub-structure, and the *background end of the continuum* may coincide with a side structure.

5- The relationships between the use of markers in production and their role in comprehension is assumed to be one of the most difficult questions to envisage (Costermans and Fayol 1997: ix). The present study made an attempt in that direction. Also relations between surface structure expression and event and context models as well as meaning (semantic representations) could be explored in depth.

6- The study has been exclusively concerned with a special set of sentence-initial markers. Examination of other markers, including those in non-initial position, for their contribution to the grounding-signaling function would be a fruitful endeavour.

7- It is to be seen how far markers in other types of text that manifest all or some of the markers examined in this study have the same, similar, or dissimilar grounding-signaling functions. Other types of text, English or Arabic, are assumed to have different FG-BG structures, and hence the (required) markers may vary. We have obtained an idea about the occurrence as well as the frequency of sentence-initial markers in another type of text, namely the editorial. But markers in other types of text may be different and function still differently.

8- The study of sentence-initial markers raises the issue of the criteria for the identification of textual boundaries in genre studies (for this, see Paltridge 1994). The suggestion (op.cit.) is that there are non-linguistic, rather than linguistic, reasons for generic structure in texts; that structural boundaries are defined in terms of semantic properties (or content) rather

than in terms of linguistic expression. We have examined the level of schematic organization of propositional content in typical categories. In surface structure expression, sentence-initial markers could be strong linguistic means of signaling or perhaps determining textual boundaries.

9- The contribution of tense and aspect, which express point of view or perspective, to signaling (shift in) grounding-values needs to be examined in detail. We have identified and illustrated one manifestation of aspect shift namely from past to pluperfect by means of *kāna qad*. It is assumed that signaling grounding in Arabic news, as well as in other types of text, is possibly realized by several other tenses or tense-aspect combinations such as the past progressive.

Major Concepts Used in the Study

A number of concepts that are used in the study are briefly explained below after indicating the domain to which each belongs. The order in which concepts are presented manifests an upward movement: from underlying non-textual structures to textual structures including surface structure expression.

Figure-Ground

Visual perception

Objects are perceptually organized relative to each other so that some are near, above, and/or in the front, and others are far, below, and/or behind.

Fact importance

Real world

The significance of facts in the world as defined in terms of the seriousness of consequences for all people, i.e. context-free. The structure of facts in the world is the basis of other representations.

Information importance

Cognition. Event models

One way in which knowledge is (hierarchically) organized in models.

The subjective assignment of an estimate of the relative value or meaningfulness to items of knowledge, that is, information about facts in the world and properties of events, in terms of the number or magnitude of implications.

It constrains the assignment of grounding-values to propositions in the FG-BG structure.

Perspective

Text semantics; cognitively-based

It is a property of information or knowledge that writers have about events, that is, part of event models which have a primarily semantic role. It determines the angle from which writers 'see' textual propositions, inter alia as regards their grounding-values.

	It constrains the organization in surface structure of events referred to in textual propositions.
Grounding	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>The organization of text meaning or propositional structure in terms of a FG-BG structure, based on what part of that structure represents what information of the model that has greater or lesser importance in the present (con)text.</p>
FG-BG structure	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>One dimension of semantic representations that organizes textual propositions and distinguishes their grounding-values on a continuum or a three-level scale: <i>foreground</i>, <i>midground</i>, and <i>background</i>.</p>
Grounding-value	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>A measure of the relative worth of a textual proposition, i.e. propositional importance, on the FG-BG gradient.</p>
Propositional importance	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>Hierarchically-based measure of propositional value.</p> <p>It is the mapping on semantic representations of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the interpretation of facts (e.g. their weight) by specific language users (e.g. journalists, newspapers), that is, the importance of information. 2. context models (e.g. goals, genre). It is signaled as: <p>A. Hierarchy: a macro-micro structure that maps the structure of events in modes.</p> <p>B. FG-BG structure: that maps the importance of information in event models as well as its relevance in context models. Thus, it is a function of both information and communicative (pragmatic) importance.</p>

Macrostructure	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>One dimension of semantic representations that organizes meaning as a measure of text global coherence. It accounts for coherence relations in terms of the top-most proposition that is derived from propositions of the (whole) text and from propositions evoked by the text in knowledge of language users.</p>
Microstructure	<p>Text semantics</p> <p>One dimension of semantic representations that organizes meaning as a measure of text local coherence. It accounts for conditional and functional coherence relations.</p>
Schemata	<p>Text syntax</p> <p>They are manifestations of textual organization of propositions.</p> <p>Representation of textual/semantic functions of macropropositions or sequences of propositions. As textual organizers, schemata are the (global) form that organizes textual propositions (and defines the function of meaning). They pertain to the actual production process. Text-type schema categories fulfil a grounding-signaling function (viz. schematic salience).</p>
Relevance	<p>Text pragmatics; contextually-based</p> <p>One way in which knowledge is organized in context models.</p> <p>It is a measure of context-dependent and group related usefulness or newsworthiness of information. Relevance-degrees are assigned to information in context models which have a primarily pragmatic role. Pragmatic or contextual relevance is defined in terms of informativeness and personal implications of the information for language users in the present communicative situation. Relevance constrains the selection, viz. the inclusion or mapping, of certain information as propositions.</p>

Foregrounding and backgrounding	Text pragmatics; semantically-based Operations that influence the interpretation of text meaning in terms of grounding-values that have already been assigned to propositions. The invariable grounding-value acquires greater or lesser relevance (irrespective of its greater or lesser importance), becomes more informative, and the proposition to which it is assigned is expressed more or less prominently.
Communicative importance	Text pragmatics It is contextual or personal importance, that is relevance: what is now important for speaker, writer, medium, genre, social situation. It is defined in context models of language users: how important information is for their lives and interests. It varies per context and per language user in that context.
Salience	Text strategy The relative conspicuousness of schema categories as the result of their hierarchical location in text. It is a measure of how the FG-BG structure is signaled.
Prominence	Text strategy; surface structure organization The relative conspicuousness of sentences and their constituents as a result of their linear organization in surface structure. It is a surface structure property of texts. Its aim is to communicate 'prominence in the mind'. It may be pragmatically motivated or contextually determined: Prominent or non-prominent expression of the proposition may not coincide with high or low grounding-values.
Expression 'importance'	Text strategy Surface structure organization, i.e. prominence. It may coincide with information importance, a high grounding-value, or other contextual and pragmatic constraints. It expresses both macro-micro and FG-BG structures.

Staging

Text strategy

Manipulation during the actual production process of schematic and surface structure syntactic means. Organization shows how the FG-BG distinction is signaled in terms of (schematic) salience and (syntactic) prominence. It is a function of text-type specific constraints as well as other cognitive and pragmatic context constraints.

News upstage

Text strategy; surface structure organization

Surface structure slot in which textual propositions are prominently expressed, that is, early in the text and hence they acquire high communicative value in the given communicative situation, irrespective of possible inherent information unimportance and low grounding-value.

News downstage

Text strategy; surface structure organization

Surface structure slot in which textual propositions are less prominently expressed, that is, late in the text and hence they acquire low communicative value in the given communicative situation, irrespective of possible inherent information importance and high grounding-value.

Transliteration System

The transliteration of Arabic in this study has been done according to the following system.

Arabic consonants:

Arabic letter	transliteration	Arabic letter	transliteration
أ	'	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	ṭ	ع	‘
ج	j	غ	ġ
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	x	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	ḏ	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	š	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Arabic vowels:

short vowels	ا	a	و	u	ي	i
long vowels	آ	ā	و	ū	ي	ī
doubled vowels	و	ww	ي	yy		

- the definite article *al-* has not been assimilated.
- the hamza (') has not been indicated in word-initial position.
- illustrative examples do not show the last phonetic segment(s) of words.
- Arabic names in text and in references have not been indicated by long vowels. They have been represented as sequences of two identical vowels.

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Samenvatting

De studie behandelt *grounding*, een elusieve *discourse* notie, meer bekend als de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur. We beschrijven deze structuur als een semantische eigenschap van *discourse* en onderzoeken manifestaties daarvan op twee verschillende niveaus: schematisch (d.w.z. de globale organisatie van de semantische inhoud in categorieën) en syntactisch (d.w.z. de structuur van de zin). We passen deze theoretische studie van *grounding* toe op een analyse van korte Engelse en Arabische nieuwsteksten. Deze behoren tot een specifiek type van het nieuwsartikel dat een prominente positie inneemt tussen andere typen van media *discourse*.

De talrijke studies die het fenomeen van voorgrond-achtergrond behandelen richten zich grotendeels op narratieve en dialoog-teksttypen. Naast deze beperking tonen de studies een gebrek aan expliciete en onafhankelijke criteria voor het onderscheid in de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur. Ze zijn evenmin systematisch: verschillende niveaus van beschrijving worden door elkaar gehaald. *Grounding* wordt geanalyseerd in termen van uitdrukking (men spreekt van voorgrond- of achtergrondwoorden of -zinnen), of in termen van het cognitieve niveau van informatie (men spreekt van voorgrond- of achtergrondinformatie). *Grounding* wordt ook verward met *coherentie*—een andere semantische notie van *discourse*.

De hoofdthese van onze studie is dat *grounding* gedefinieerd moet worden in termen van hiërarchische relaties van semantische belangrijkheid tussen de proposities in de tekst en zich dus onderscheidt van andere noties en niveaus van beschrijving. We maken het verschil duidelijk tussen de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur en lokale en globale coherentie. We onderscheiden *grounding* ook van de manifestaties van *grounding* in zinnen. Daarnaast leggen we het verschil uit tussen *grounding* en de *belangrijkheid* van informatie (de nieuwswaarde) en van de *relevantie* van informatie (het nut) voor taalgebruikers. Dat betekent dat er verschillende bronnen zijn voor de wijze waarop de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur als prominent of non-prominent wordt uitgedrukt. We leggen ook het verschil uit tussen *grounding* en *prominency* die een eigenschap is van de oppervlakte van de tekst en vaak dooreengeschoven wordt met *voorgond*.

Conceptuele onderscheidingen maken het mogelijk *grounding* waarden toe te kennen aan proposities, onafhankelijk van de uitdrukking. Dat onze

benadering van *grounding* in termen van proposities is, betekent dat deze op tekstniveau is en niet in termen van het individuele concept of de lexicale eenheid. De tekstniveau-benadering geldt ook voor de manifestaties van *grounding* die worden onderzocht in termen van nieuwscategorieën en van expressies die in zinsinitiele positie voorkomen.

De hoofdthese van onze studie wat betreft de syntaktische manifestaties van *grounding* is dat talen onder andere verschillen in de (expliciteit van) markering van de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur in zinsinitiele positie. Deze positie is een potentiële plaats voor het markeren van het onderscheid binnen de *grounding* structuur. Arabische teksten bewijzen het belang van een bijzonder soort expressies in zinsinitiele positie voor deze functie. Ze bewijzen ook hun rol in de handhaving van (de coherentie van) de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur en vervolgens in de juiste interpretatie daarvan in een gegeven communicatieve situatie.

Het eerste hoofdstuk begint met een beschrijving van het fenomeen *grounding* in de tekst. Een onderscheid wordt gemaakt tussen de *informatiestructuur* die cognitief is en de *grounding-structuur* die semantisch is. Informatie wordt georganiseerd naar *belangrijkheid* en/of *relevantie* in modellen en (een deel daarvan) wordt uitgedrukt/geselecteerd als proposities in de semantische structuur van de tekst. Deze structuur is een continuum van relatieve *grounding* waarden. Het verschil wordt uitgelegd tussen *grounding* en *coherentie* of samenhang die is gebaseerd op globale (of macro) en lokale (of micro) relaties tussen proposities. De verschillende functies die *grounding* en *coherentie* dienen in de tekst worden geïllustreerd. Het wordt duidelijk hoe de schrijver een propositie naar de *voorgond* of de *achtergrond* verschuift op basis van de *belangrijkheid* of de *relevantie* van de informatie ongeacht de plaats van de propositie in de macro-microstructuur. Naast algemene regels van de *belangrijkheid* van informatie stellen we voor een aantal specifieke criteria voor de toekenning van *grounding* waarden in nieuwsteksten. De criteria zijn syntaxis onafhankelijk, dat wil zeggen dat de *grounding* waarden van de proposities niet zijn gebonden aan uitdrukking in zinnen en aan de plaats (van de zinnen) in de tekst. Twee noties die een grote invloed hebben op *grounding* en de verschillende manifestaties ervan in de tekst, te weten *perspectief* en *relevantie*, worden uitgelegd. Het hoofdstuk eindigt met een overzicht van en kritiek op de studies over de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur. De bijdrage van onze studie wordt uiteengezet.

In het tweede en derde hoofdstuk richten we onze aandacht op manifes-

taties van *grounding* in termen van *schematische* en *syntactische* organisatie van de tekst. Hoofdstuk twee is gewijd aan *schemata*— de globale vorm van de semantische structuren of de inhoud. Voorgesteld wordt dat de voorgrond-achtergrond structuur manifest is in de schematische structuur. Eerst worden de specifieke eigenschappen van de korte nieuwstekst uiteengezet. Deze bepalen de schemacategorieën die in dit soort tekst verschijnen en beïnvloeden de uitdrukking van *grounding* in zinnen. We introduceren *staging* als een cruciaal concept in de communicatieve strategie voor het signaleren van *grounding* en leggen de *staging* van nieuws-categorieën uit. We onderscheiden twee typen van *staging* die twee verschillende patronen van het signaleren van *grounding* vertonen. De eerste heeft een kanonieke basis en de tweede een communicatieve basis. Vereisten die specifiek zijn voor een teksttype bepalen de hiërarchische volgorde van *schema* categorieën. Zo neemt een categorie als de Titel of de Openingszin van de nieuwstekst een saillante positie in. Deze categorieën bevatten meestal voorgrondproposities. Aan de andere kant wordt een categorie als Geschiedenis die achtergrondproposities bevat in non-saillante positie geplaatst. We laten ook zien hoe, onder invloed van communicatieve strategieën, bepaalde categorieën meer of minder *saliencies* krijgen. Dat bepaalt de manier waarop de *grounding* waarden van de proposities gesignaleerd worden. Een aantal nieuwsteksten wordt geanalyseerd om te zien hoe categorieën in de hiërarchische structuur zijn gemanipuleerd voor *stage effecten* door er meer of minder *saliencies* aan te geven. We tonen aan dat overwegingen van relevantie de volgorde van de categorieën in de tekst kunnen bepalen.

Het derde hoofdstuk behandelt de manifestaties van *grounding* in zinnen of delen ervan en richt zich op expressies in zinsinitiële positie. Het belang van deze positie wordt uitgelegd. We stellen voor dat *grounding* op tekstniveau uitdrukking vindt in expressies die in zinsinitiële positie komen te staan. Daarna onderzoeken we de bijdrage van elementen in deze positie tot het signaleren van *grounding*. We maken onderscheid tussen wat we noemen zwakke en sterke markeerders van *grounding* en concentreren ons op temporele en lokationele expressies. We leggen uit hoe deze cruciaal zijn voor het manifesteren van de tekstuele rol van de structuur van de zin in het signaleren van *grounding*. Vervolgens presenteren we een overzicht van deze zinsinitiële markeerders in de Engelse nieuwsteksten en illustreren de *grounding* signaleringsfunctie ervan.

Hoofdstuk vier is een inleiding tot de analyse in hoofdstuk vijf van de

markeerders die in de Arabische nieuwstekst voorschijnen. Het betreft het fenomeen van additionele woorden en frases die in zinsinitiële positie voorkomen. Het type markeerders en de frekwentie ervan in een corpus van Arabische nieuwsteksten wordt uitgelegd. De significantie van het fenomeen wordt aangetoond. We stellen voor dat deze markeerders een belangrijke manifestatie zijn van *grounding* op tekstniveau. Om hun belang uit te leggen, bediscussiëren we de gevolgen van het ontbreken van deze zinsinitiële markeerders waar zij nodig zouden zijn en analyseren wat we noemen een probleem van voorgrond-achtergrond structuur waarin de achtergrond proposities uitgedrukt zijn als voorgrond. Ook maken we duidelijk hoe het gebruik van markeerders een communicatieve strategie is om de juiste/geschikte *grounding* waarde uit te drukken.

Om de vertakking van het fenomeen in Arabische nieuwsteksten verder toe te lichten, analyseren we de zinsinitiële expressies die in een ander teksttype voorkomen, te weten het hoofdartikel. De analyse maakt duidelijk dat dit teksttype een zeer gering aantal markeerders bevat die gewoonlijk in het teksttype nieuws voorkomen. De analyse maakt ook duidelijk dat de zinsinitiële positie een kardinale indicator is van teksttype differentiatie.

Ons baserend op authentieke teksten van zowel in het Arabisch geschreven als naar het Arabisch vertaalde teksten, presenteren we in hoofdstuk vijf een gedetailleerde beschrijving van zinsinitiële markeerders en hun functionele eigenschappen. De *grounding* functie van iedere markeerder wordt geïllustreerd. De kwestie van de uitwisselbaarheid ervan wordt aan de orde gesteld. De analyse maakt duidelijk dat de markeerders verschillen in hun *grounding* waarden en dat de keuze van één markeerder niet willekeurig is, maar beïnvloed wordt door cognitieve en pragmatische bepalingen. Ook wordt duidelijk hoe het vervangen van de ene markeerder, waar het mogelijk is, de interpretatie van de *grounding* waarde van de propositie kan beïnvloeden.

De analyse bewijst dat de Arabische nieuwsteksten veel belang hechten aan deze markeerders vanwege overwegingen van *grounding* en dat deze teksten meer expliciet zijn dan Engelse (equivalente) teksten in het signaleren van verschillen in *grounding* waarden in zinsinitiële positie.

Een van de conclusies is dat de markeerders noodzakelijk zijn voor het handhaven van de juiste voorgrond-achtergrond structuur van Arabische nieuwsteksten en dat hun functie verdere implicaties heeft voor de identificatie van het teksttype.

De theoretische beschrijving die wordt toegepast op verschillende manifestaties van *grounding* in nieuwsteksten bewijst dat linguïstische fenomenen zoals zinsinitiële markeerders nauwelijks voldoende verklaard kunnen worden door toevlucht te nemen tot een zinsniveau-benadering of één niveau van analyse.

Hoofdstuk zes vat de bevindingen van de studie samen en toont het verband aan met enkele hoofd issues die het linguïstisch onderzoek momenteel bezig houdt. Het eindigt met een aantal suggesties voor nader onderzoek. Aan het einde worden enkele belangrijke concepten die gebruikt worden in deze studie in het kort uitgelegd.

Curriculum Vitae

Esam Nazmi Khalil was born August 4, 1941 in Assiout, Egypt. He studied English language and literature at Cairo University (B.A. 1961). He joined the foreign office and worked as a diplomat in the embassies of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Washington, D.C., Stockholm and The Hague. He studied mass communication at the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands (Master's 1975). For many years he worked as translator-announcer for news bulletins at the Arabic Department of Radio Nederland Wereldomroep in Hilversum, till it went off the air in the summer of 1994. Since 1975 he has worked as a lecturer in Arabic at the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East, University of Nijmegen. Teaching courses include translation, essay writing, and stylistics. He has participated in congresses including those relating to teaching Arabic as a foreign language, and has published in the *Arab Journal of Language Studies* and the *Journal of Pragmatics*.