Grounding in English and Arabic News Discourse
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Chapter 2

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.

![Diagram of text-level organization]

**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.
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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
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.

![Diagram of Types of Staging](image)

**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.

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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](image)

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) la 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: \textit{The minister told Parliament Thursday that...}, or in sentence-final position (that is, a parenthetical speech act clause) as \textit{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 (\textit{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 \textit{news upstage} and \textit{news downstage} are the slots for categories that subsume respectively \textit{foreground} and \textit{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.
Chapter 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. None of the 26 crew members aboard the 132,000-ton tanker was hurt. The attack followed a week of heavy land fighting in the Gulf war.

The Iraqi News Agency, 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, killing more than 1,500 men. He said the battlefield, in the central front, was "littered with Iranian dead soldiers."

Meanwhile, there were reports that a fresh diplomatic effort was underway to end the war. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sentence/constituent</th>
<th>FG-BG structure</th>
<th>Schema categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>FG</td>
<td>Main Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>Main Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>Main Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Previous Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>5a, 5b, 5c BG</td>
<td>Previous Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>6a, 6b BG</td>
<td>Previous Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 IsResolved**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sentence/constituent</th>
<th>FG-BG structure</th>
<th>Schema categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1 1a 1b</td>
<td>FG BG</td>
<td>Main Event Previous Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 2a 2b</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>Verbal Reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3 3a 3b</td>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4 4a 4b</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>Main Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
### 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. Categorial 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, categorial 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 upstage 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.