Grounding in English and Arabic News Discourse
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Chapter 4

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-anbāʾ (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
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)  
\[ \text{Itāliya tahtajiz tā'irat rukkāb kuwaytiyyah} \]
Italy detains plane passengers Kuwaiti

Al-Kuwayt (a.ś. a.) — (1) dakarat maṣādir saḥafīyyah kuwaytiyyah
said sources press Kuwaiti

\[ \text{ams anna al-suljāt al-ṭāliyyah ihtajazat} \]
yesterday that the-authorities the-Italian detained
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-
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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 jihatin uxrâ, 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' rûfî anna jamâ'atayy tâmil
and- among the-known [ things is] that faction-two Tamil
wa-al-singâl tatašâbakân mundu šahr yûlyû
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence-initial markers</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- qad (pre-verbal particle)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- kāna qad (past auxiliary verb to be+ particle)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- mimmā yudkaru anna &amp; variants (among things to be mentioned is that)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- fa- (so)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- min nāhiyatixijatin jihatin uxrā (from another side/aspect)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- min al-ma‘rufi anna (it is known that)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- fi + spatio/temporal entity (in + ...)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8- fi-al-waqti nafsih/ (at the same time) fi ḍūdīni dālika (meanwhile)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub-total</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other initial entities</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9- kamā (also)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10- adāfa (added)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11- verbs of saying (qiṣba) &amp; variants</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12- other verbs</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13- miscellaneous</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub-total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 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 yudkaru anna* (*among things to be mentioned is that*) and its stylistic variants (33). Their distribution is as follows: *mimmā yudkaru anna* (20), *yudkaru anna* (4), *jadīrun bi-al-dikri anna* (6), *tajduru al-iṣārāt (2)*, *mimmā tajduru al-iṣārāt 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, *fi* + spatio/temporal entity, is as follows: *fi* + location (4), and *fi* + 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 *adāfa (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), *dakara* (22), *a’lana* (2), *sarrahā* (2). Other verbs are substantive verbs that correspond to verbs that appear in the English texts. Under *miscellaneous* are entities such as *hasaba (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.
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.
Table 3 The distribution of individual markers in sample II

Table 3 shows two additional markers. The first, ‘ala sa’ ‘idin 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 hūda (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-fi (in) (5 instances) and fa-lan (not) (one instance).

The initial marker fi (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 yuḏkaru anna & variants (76):
   mimmā yuḏkaru anna (31), yuḏkaru anna (12), jādiru bi-al-dīkri anna (28), al-jādiru bi-al-dīkri anna (3), min al-jādiri bi-al-dīkri...
2- The distribution of \textit{min nāhiyat in uxrā} & variants (56): \textit{min nāhiyat in uxrā} (53), \textit{min jānibin āxar} (2), \textit{min jihatin uxrā} (1).

3- The distribution of \textit{min al-ma ’rūfi anna} & variants (12): \textit{min al-ma ’rūfi anna} (6), \textit{al-ma ’rūfu anna} (4), \textit{ma ’rūfun anna} (1), \textit{min al-ma ’lūmi anna} (1).

\section*{OTHER INITIAL ENTITIES IN THE RANDOM SAMPLE}

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

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1- & kamā (also) 91 \\
2- & adāfa (added) 82 \\
3- & verbs of saying (qāla) & variants* 471 \\
4- & other verbs** 216 \\
5- & miscellaneous*** 20 \\
\hline
Total & 880 \\
\end{tabular}

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

* They are distributed as follows:
qāla (212), ḍakara (94), a’lana (16), ṣarraha (23), aḏā’a (2), a’raba (5), ablağa (2), awḍaha (33), ašāra (52), akkada (32).

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

*** Examples are \textit{min al-muqarrar an} (it is scheduled that), fīmā yata’allaq bi- (what concerns).

\subsection*{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 kamâ (also) or verbs of addition such as adâja (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'
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...*).)
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.
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*):
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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-jumlah al-zarfiyyah (the circumstantial clause): it has a zarf (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. *sāribtu-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 stam+ 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-wāriz-a-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:...
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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 mudâri' (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 mädin (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 ("lugat al-wasl" (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 yudkaru 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)

tu'āni al-munazzamah min mašākil māliyyah xatīrāh... suffers the-organization 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 mimâ 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), wasalat 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:
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-munanamah_ 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 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 Dressier 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 (Güllich 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 (Mukařovský, 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.: 83). 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 (Koşir 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, läkin (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:

\[
\text{wa-‘indama wasala al-ra'is istaqbalahu al-malik.}
\]
and-when arrived the-president, received-him the-king
\[
\text{When the president arrived, the king received him.}
\]

Rather, we find:

\[
\text{wa-qad istaqbala al-malik al-ra'is ‘indama wasala}
\]
and-particle received the-king the-president when arrived-he
\[
\text{The king received the President when he arrived.}
\]

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Marker</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>l-qad</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāna qad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min jihatin uxrā</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min al-ma'rūfi anna</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fi + location</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fi nafsi al-waqt</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Entity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb-initial</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun-initial</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other (e.g. adverb, prepositional phrase)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Entity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb-initial</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun-initial</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>811</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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-ittišālāt allaāḥa ams al-duktūr ‘ismat’abd al-majid nā‘ib ra’īs al-wuzarā‘ wa-wazīr al-xārijīyyah fī niyyūyrk tumāṭil bidāyat al-taharruk 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.
The paper explains that sentence-initial markers have an important role in communicating the global structure of the text to the reader. Unlike English, which typically uses punctuation to mark sentence boundaries, Arabic news texts may not always signal the appropriate genre shifts.

We also explained how perpetuating connectivity patterns of English and the failure to employ sentence-initial markers would lead to a verb in initial position. This realization form arguments: a break in the sequence, creates an emphatic structure, and changes meaning. Creating news texts with PG-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 genre-shifting values is associated with an imbalance in the PG-BG structure and a failure to deliver the appropriate type of text. This means that the presence of sentence-initial markers has far reaching effects on the global structure of the text to news observers. In this regard, the analysis showed that accentuated endings in English news texts are not always signaled at initial position.

The Arabic news text refers to additional linguistic markers and tends to be subject to more generations than the English text, regarding signaling an introduction of our genre-switch.