

Discourse Markers at the Global Level in Arabic Newspaper Opinion Articles

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the function of discourse markers, henceforth DMs, at the global level in Arabic newspaper opinion articles. DMs are expressions such as *fā* 'since, for,' *hākadhā* 'thus, and so,' *ghayra 'anna* 'however, but' that come from different grammatical classes and mostly occur sentence-initially. These expressions are key elements in text production and perception because of their crucial role in connecting textual units above the sentence as well as guiding and influencing the text-receivers' interpretation throughout the text. The study analyzes 50 Arabic newspaper opinion articles in order to identify DMs that are used at the global level of text structure, i.e. the paragraph, and describe their function. It employs a three-step analytical model: segmenting the texts into paragraphs, describing the functional relations that connect the paragraphs, and identifying DMs at the paragraph boundaries. Two descriptive tools are employed in this analysis: El-Shiyab's (1990) organizational pattern of Arabic editorials' text structure to describe the global relations between paragraphs, and Halliday's (2004) thematic structure analysis to identify the DMs at paragraph boundaries. Based on the description of the DMs' environment as well as the contribution of these items to their environment, the study suggests functional classifications for DMs at the paragraph level.

Key Words: AFL writing, Arabic text, discourse markers, communicative tools, connectors, opinion articles.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the present study is to identify DMs, i.e. words such as 'amma... *fā* (ف - ا - م - آ - ف) 'as for,' 'inna (إ - ن - ن) 'certainly, indeed,' *hākadhā* (ه - ك - د - ه) 'thus, and so,' at the global level of text structure in Arabic newspaper opinion articles, and examine how these items function in their natural environment. To this end, the study approaches DMs from a discourse perspective taking the text as its point of departure for examining the role performed by these linguistic devices at the text level.

Underlying this descriptive text-base approach, is the assumption that DMs function across sentence boundaries not only to connect textual units above the sentence, but also to guide and influence the text-receivers' interpretation throughout the text. This is an approach which views text as a communicative cohesive structure not a static one, and DMs as an essential communicative system that text-producers use to signal to text-receivers, independently of content, what is happening in the text, where the text is going, and what their

intentions, plans, attitudes, and viewpoints are. The information encoded in these linguistic devices guides the text-receivers' interpretation of texts according to the text-producers' communicative intentions. This creates a successful communicative situation in which the text achieves its intended communicative goals.

Because of their crucial role in achieving a successful communicative act in text, DMs are key elements in text production and perception. However, as communicative tools, these expressions are closely tied in their use to the communicative norms that govern text production and perception in the language in which they operate. The type, frequency, and distribution of DMs that render texts acceptable and natural differ among languages. Identifying and describing the functions of DMs in Arabic newspaper opinion articles in this study, therefore, is an important step in studying Arabic texts. On the one hand, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role that these items play in the production and perception of Arabic texts in general; and on the other hand it determines the type,

frequency and distribution of DMs that render one type of Arabic text in particular, i.e. newspaper opinion articles, acceptable and natural.

The present study is divided into the following six main sections: an overview of DMs, DMs in Arabic linguistic literature, data and methodology, analysis, DMs at the global level in Arabic newspaper opinion articles, and conclusion.

An overview of DMs

Despite the extensive body of research that deals with DMs, researchers still disagree on the very basic issue of defining this linguistic group. While it is widely agreed that such expressions play different important roles in the message interpretation, there is a great disagreement on the features and functions that define the members of this group as well as the terms used to refer to them.

However, it is possible, as Schourup (1999) argues, “to identify a small set of characteristics most commonly attributed to discourse markers and to items referred to by other closely associated terms.” The most common features that he realizes in these expressions from numerous studies in English DMs literature are: multi-categoriality, non-truth conditionality, weak clause association, connectivity, and initiality (230).

Multi-Categoriality

Items that are usually included in this linguistic set are not structurally unified. Rather, they derive from a variety of traditional grammatical word classes that range from single words like: adverbs (e.g. now, then), verbs (e.g. say, look), coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, because), interjections (e.g. oh, gosh); and extend to include entire phrases and clauses, which are “typically viewed as formulaic or fixed,” such as: you know, I mean, for example, in other words, it must be noted that, it is fair to guess that, this is because, to sum up (Brinton, 1996: 34,16; see also: Hansen, 1997:155; Schourup, 1999: 234; Schiffrin, 2001: 57; and Siepmann,

2005: 36, 44).

Nontruth Conditionality and Weak Clause Association

Nontruth conditionality and weak clause association are also considered two criterial features of DMs by most researchers in the DMs literature (Brinton, 1996: 34). Both features concern the detachment of DMs from their host sentences; however, nontruth conditionality refers to their detachment from the propositional meaning of the sentences whereas weak clause association refers to their detachment from the sentences’ structure. These items that are outside the propositional content as well as the syntactic structure of their host sentence function as “instructions” to the addressee on how to process the sentences that contain them within a given context (Hansen, 1997: 156).

Connectivity

Most studies in the DMs’ literature consider the connectivity characteristic criterial for determining the DM status of any element (Andersen, 2001; Brinton, 1996; Halliday, 2004; and Hasselgård, 2004). It has been realized, however, that the nature of the connection these items express in text may vary. While some members of the DMs group connect units of text by marking relationships between them, other members establish other kinds of relations that create connectivity between the author and text on the one hand, and between the author and reader on the other hand.

Based on the two different types of connectivity created in text by DMs, the members of this group are divided into two categories: textual markers and interpersonal markers. While textual markers connect segments of text by marking the relationships between them, interpersonal markers express messages that establish relations between the participants in the communicative act, i.e. the writer, the reader and the text. It should be noted, however, that this difference between the textual and the interpersonal markers is not decisive. This is because the members of each category actually perform, as Brinton

(1996) points out, “two-fold” function in “the textual and interpersonal domains” simultaneously (39). The distinction between the two categories, however, is based on the predominant function that the members of each category serve.

Initiality

The tendency of DMs to appear at the onset of their host sentences is one of the most noticeable features that the members of this group display, as many DMs' studies indicate (Hansen, 1997; see also: Lenk, 1998: 51). Although some of these expressions may occasionally appear in other positions in the sentence with functions similar to those they serve initially, it is, however, the initial position of the sentence that these items favor.

Because DMs are utilized to “restrict the contextual interpretation of an utterance,” as Schourup (1999: 233) puts it, the sentence onset, which is a significant point in the organization of text structure, is the most appropriate place where these expressions can fulfill their role. Being located at this strategically important position gives them wide scope over the whole sentence or paragraph, thereby allowing them to influence and guide the hearer/reader interpretation of everything that follows. Moreover, the tendency of DMs to cluster sentence-initially is also another indication that this is the position that they favor. Whenever more than one of these items is present in the sentence, they frequently cluster at the sentence onset (Schourup, 1999: 233).

To sum up, the above generally agreed upon features of DMs suggest that these expressions are not just a random group of expressions, but rather members of a coherent group. However, because they derive from different grammatical categories, it is difficult to place them within a traditional word class. Instead, they are regarded as a functionally related class that is “independent of syntactic categorization” (Schourup, 1999: 234).

DMs in Arabic linguistic literature

The study of DMs, as a discourse

phenomenon, was not within the range of traditional Arabic grammarians interest. While the expressions investigated in this study, such as 'ammā ..fā ‘as for,’ *min hunā* (u - ُ) ‘thus, therefore,’ 'idhan ‘thus, therefore, so’ *yuDhāf-u 'ilā dhālika 'anna* (y ي - Dhض) ‘in addition to, moreover,’ function at the discourse level, the domain of Arabic linguistic studies did not exceed the sentence limits. Just like traditional linguists in English, traditional Arabic grammarians confined their work to the sentence level and lower when investigating different language phenomena (Hatim, 1997: 77; Kammensjö, 2005: 23). On the other hand, it has been argued that many of the DMs used in Modern Written Arabic today did not exist in old writing but developed lately in the language. The increase of the use of intersentential markers, Holes (1995) points out, is usually ascribed to the influence of foreign textual models (216).

However, particles, which are the source forms of many DMs, were treated extensively in Arabic traditional grammar. In their early studies, Arab grammarians provided comprehensive description of these linguistic devices classifying them according to the grammatical function they perform in relation to adjacent elements in the sentence. For instance, the particle *wa* ‘and’ is classified as *Harf-up 'aThf* (Hح -rر - 'ع - Thط) ‘coordinating conjunction,’ and the particle *kay* ‘in order that’ is *Harf-u naSb* (S ص - bب) ‘subjunctive particle.’

In most modern linguistic studies of Arabic, whether conducted by Arab or Western linguists, the treatment of particles continues to be syntactically-oriented and restricted to the sentence limits. Studying DMs as a discourse phenomenon, therefore, is also almost absent in modern Arabic linguistic studies. Although these linguistic expressions that function at the discourse level have attracted the attention of some researches, such as Blau (1977), Johnstone (1990), Khalil (2000), and Ryding (2005), none of them focused on these items as the

object of his/her study. What most of them produce are intuitive descriptions that have no theoretical or methodological framework.

Only three studies in modern Arabic linguistic literature are found to focus on examining DMs as a distinctive linguistic group that functions at the discourse level, namely Al-Batal's (1985, 1990), Sarig's (1995) and Kammensjö's (2005).

In his study, Al-Batal (1985, 1990) examines the function of linguistic items, which he calls "connectives," in one modern expository Arabic text. In order to examine these items, Al-Batal (1985) draws on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) definition of cohesion in text, using this concept "as a general framework" for his analysis. However, while Halliday and Hasan (1976) differentiate between the cohesive system of conjunctions and intrasentential conjunctions, treating only the former as cohesive devices that operate above the sentence level, Al-Batal (1985, 1990) analyzes "connectives" at all levels of text, above and below the sentence, as being part of the cohesive system. Therefore, cohesion as Al-Batal (1985, 1990) employs it in his study is not anymore a discourse strategy but rather a step back to the traditional sentence-bond treatment of these items of which he criticizes traditional grammarians.

Al-Batal's (1985, 1990) interest in Arabic "connectives" as important devices that require great attention and his awareness of the importance of approaching them from a discourse perspective makes his work pioneering in this area of research. However, just as any leading study in its research area, his investigation of "connectives" has its limitations.

The second study in modern Arabic linguistics that focuses on DMs as a discourse phenomenon is Sarig's (1995). In her article, Sarig (1995) examines the function of some "initial position functionals," such as *wa* (و), *fa*, *wa-qad* (ق - د), *fa-qad*, *la-qad* (ل - ل), *wa-la-qad*, and *fa la-qad*, in "Contemporary Written Arabic." Her investigation of

examples taken from the press shows that while these "initial position functionals" are semantically void and syntactically inactive, they do play an important role in marking "the text rhetorical structure" (8).

Despite the informative analysis that Sarig provides in her study, she does not base her analysis on any theoretical assumptions or analytical methods. The significance of her work, however, could be attributed to the discourse perspective which the author takes to approach the items examined in the study.

Kammensjö's (2005) study is the last of the three works devoted to DMs as a linguistic phenomenon in the Arabic linguistic literature. The study examines the distribution and functions of "utterance-initial" items, referred to as "discourse connectives," in about 10 hours of audio-recorded university lectures, referred to as Arabic lecturing monologue (ALM).

Kammensjö (2005) approaches discourse connectives from a discourse perspective taking a coherence-based approach to the analysis of her data. She proposes a three-step analytical model of description that serves to examine discourse connectives within their natural environment. Among the three studies that focus on DMs as a discourse phenomenon, Kammensjö's study is the only one that examines these items from a discourse perspective and operates within a theoretical and methodological framework.

However, while Kammensjö's (2005) treatment of discourse connectives is a significant contribution to DMs research in Formal Spoken Arabic, DMs in Modern Written Arabic (MWA), have not yet been investigated thoroughly from a discourse perspective. In order to fill this gap in the Arabic linguistic research, the present study examines DMs from a discourse perspective at the global level in one style of Modern Written Arabic, i.e. newspaper opinion articles.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

The corpus of approximately 30,000

words that is examined in the present study consists of 50 Arabic newspaper opinion articles, which are also known as comment columns and opinion columns. The articles were drawn from the *al-ra'y* 'opinion' section in the online editions of two major international daily newspapers: *al-Sharq al-Awsat* الشرق الأوسط and *al-Hayat* الحياة during a time period of three months, from 1 January to 31 March, 2007. Of the 50 texts examined in this study, 25 were taken from *al-Sharq al-Awsat* الشرق الأوسط while the other 25 came from *al-Hayat* الحياة.

The two newspapers are chosen for their high circulation, international distribution, and comprehensive coverage of various issues concerning the entire Arab World. This reflects their importance in the world of media as well as their influential role on language use across the Arab region. The articles analysed are written by 28 different professional Arab writers and are of varying length, ranging from a 350-word text to a 1350-word text. The topics discussed in these articles are mainly political and social issues that are important to the Arab readers because of the effects these issues have on their lives.

The data examined in this study is selected from the written mode of the Arabic language (MWA) because, as has been mentioned, discourse markers have not yet been investigated thoroughly from a discourse perspective in this form of the language. Selecting the data from the newspaper opinion article genre in this study has its legitimate reason. In this genre, the writers express their views and opinions on current events or issues in order to influence the readers' perceptions. Therefore, these texts usually employ argumentative text-type in their structure, and their style is characterized as being evaluative and involved. The argumentative and evaluative nature of opinion articles requires frequent use of DMs in order to construct arguments and express the writers' points of view. Because of the highlighted role of DMs in

this genre, opinion articles provide important data for investigating the functions of these linguistic devices. Focusing on the function of DMs in one text-type only is essential for the consistency of the result of the analysis.

Methodology

The analytical model employed for examining the data in this study takes the texts rather than the DMs themselves as its point of departure. It starts with analyzing the texts in order to identify DMs in the data and describe the textual environment in which they occur. Identifying DMs and examining their natural environment provide the means for describing how these items operate in this environment.

This model consists of three steps: segmenting the texts into paragraphs, describing the functional relations among these paragraphs, and finally identifying the DMs at paragraph boundaries. The analytical model in this study draws on the model that Kammensjö (2005) uses for analyzing DMs in her study. It is, however, modified to better serve the goals and data of this study.

An essential assumption underlying the analysis process is that texts are communicative events that are interactively produced and processed. They are hierarchically structured and hence can be chunked into units of different levels. The different units of text structures are connected by a network of underlying functional relations that reflect the text-producers' intentions, plans, and goals.

ANALYSIS

Text Segmentation

Since the goal of this study is to identify DMs and describe their function at the global level of text structure, only one level of the text hierarchical structure, i.e. the paragraph, is taken into consideration. The first step in the analytical model is segmenting the text into paragraphs. This is important for determining paragraph boundaries where DMs occur.

The notion of the paragraph as a level

of text organization that is below the text and above the sentence has been attested and discussed by many linguists in the field of discourse analysis (see: Van Dijk, 1982; Hatim 1997; Callow 1998; and Halliday 2004). This unit of text structure, they point out, displays a conceptual unity in both its content and function. The conceptual unity that the paragraph displays is the means by which this study determines paragraph boundaries. Whenever two sequences of texts are perceived to have two different topics, and perform two different functions, there is a boundary. Consider, for instance, the following example:

(1)

[P1] [1a] تشكل مدينة دبي حالة حلم عربي بامتياز. [1b] فهي قصة نجاح بحاجة لأن تروى وتسرد تفاصيلها بإسهاب وتواصل واستمرار. [1c] ولم يعد سرّاً أن دبي ونجاحها بنيا على أسس إستراتيجية وإرادة صلبة وإدارة نافذة. [1d] وكان هذا المناخ الساحر فرصة جذب هائلة لجلب الاستثمارات وبناء الخيال والسياحة والترفيه. [1e] وجاءت إلى هذه المدينة المستقبلية أرتال من الشركات العالمية العملاقة، والآلاف من الطامحين لفرص الثراء والعيش الكريم، والراغبين في بناء مستقبل عصامي ومغامر. [1f] وخصصت لأجل ذلك المدن المتخصصة في مجالات المال والإنترنت والإعلام وغيرها داخل دبي نفسها. [1g] وكان التخصص المطلوب بالقيمة المضافة المفتاح لانطلاق اقتصادية كبرى.

[P2] [1h] ولكن شيئاً قبيحاً حصل مؤخراً يعكس جمال هذه الصورة الرائعة. [1i] شيء غير مقبول. [1j] فلقد أعلن مؤخراً عن نقل شركة هاليبرتون الأمريكية من مقرها الرئيسي بمدينة هيوستن بولاية تكساس الأمريكية إلى مدينة دبي بالإمارات العربية المتحدة. [1k] ويجيء هذا القرار بعد معاناة مرة للشركة مع الكونغرس بسبب الاتهامات القوية الموجهة ضدها والمركزة في تهرّبها من الضرائب ومعاملتها غير العادية والخاصة وحصولها على عديد من الصفقات

بالعراق عبر التكاليف المباشر من دون المرور بالمناقصات والمنافسات التقليدية. [1l] ويعيد الكثيرون أسباب تلك العلاقة «الخاصة» للشركة بالمشاريع العملاقة مع الجيش الأمريكي، وشركات النفط الكبرى، إلى نفوذ نائب الرئيس الأمريكي المثير للجدل ديك تشيني، والذي كان رئيساً للشركة قبل أن يترشح مع الرئيس بوش في انتخابات عام 2000.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 419)

[P1] [1a] The city of Dubai represents an Arab dream. [1b] It is a success story that needs to be told in detail continually. [1c] It is no longer a secret that Dubai and its success were built upon strategic foundations, a strong will, and an effective leadership. [1d] This wonderful atmosphere has been a great opportunity that attracts investments, tourism, and recreation. [1e] Multitudes of giant international companies, therefore, came to this flourishing city, as well as thousands of ambitious people seeking wealth and a comfortable lifestyle and wanting to build a bright future for themselves. [1f] To enable this, specialized cities within Dubai were established in the fields of finance, internet, media, and so on. [1g] The required specialization of added value is the key to a great economical surge.

[P2] [1h] However, recently, something terrible took place that changed this beautiful picture-- [1i] something really unacceptable. [1j] The announcement was made that the headquarters of the American company, Halliburton, would move from Houston, Texas in the USA to Dubai in the UAE. [1k] This decision came after the company suffered at the hands of Congress because of the strong accusations of tax evasion made against it and for receiving "special" and "unusual" treatment and acquiring a number of deals in Iraq through direct commissioning without going

through the usual competition. [11] Many people attribute the reasons behind the company's special relations with gigantic projects with the US army and large oil companies to the influence of the controversial American Vice President Dick Cheney who was the Chairman of Halliburton before running in the US elections with President Bush in 2000.

It is clear in this example that there is a topic shift at sentence [1h]. Notice the continuity in topic in sentences [1a] to [1g]. These 7 sentences describe Dubai as a model of success for the Arab world, pointing out the reasons behind this achievement and admiring its outcomes. However, in sentence [1h] the author changes the topic from admiring Dubai's successful steps towards developing the country to criticizing one unacceptable step, in his opinion, that recently took place in this city, namely the hosting of the American company, Halliburton. This point of topic-shift is an indication of paragraph boundary.

Discontinuity in text is also realized by discontinuity of function. Thus, a paragraph continues as long as it needs in order to achieve the function it is intended to serve in the text as a whole; and only when its rhetorical purpose has been fulfilled, Hatim and Mason (1990) point out, does it come to its end (76). In example (1), the paragraph boundary realized by the break in topic continuity at sentence [1h], for instance, is also indicated by the fulfillment of the paragraph's function. While sentences [1a] to [1g] serve as background information that provide a context for the arguments in the text, sentences [1h] to [11] state the point of the argument, serving as the thesis which the author wants to argue for. A paragraph boundary occurs at this point, therefore, because there is a break in the continuity of topic, and a certain point in the argument has been fulfilled.

Describing Functional Relations

The second step after identifying paragraphs in text is describing the functional

relations that bring these units together as a coherent whole. Each segment in a coherent text, whether a sentence or a paragraph, serves a certain function following from the writer's organizational plan. The function which a given segment performs defines the kind of relation it has with respect to other segments, and contributes to the realization of the overall communicative goal of the text.

Therefore, the organizational plan employed by the writer in order to achieve his goal in the text determines the global relations that connect the text's paragraphs. The global relations of text structure, in turn, provide a framework by which local relations that hold between sentences are organized. In this study, the functional relations connecting paragraphs at the global level of text structure are described by means of El-Shiyab's (1990) organizational pattern of Arabic editorials' text structure.

As a genre, newspaper opinion articles have rarely been investigated. No specific definition or description of the structure or features of this media genre are found in the literature of Arabic linguistics. However, based on the analysis of opinion articles in the present study, it has been realized that many of the features they display resemble the ones usually attributed to editorials. On the one hand, both writers of editorials and opinion articles are expected to express their opinions and views on current issues and argue for them. On the other hand, the style of the two media genres is generally characterized as being evaluative with a persuasive intent because they aim at influencing the readers' attitudes and beliefs. These similarities in goal, content, and organizational structure, are also reflected in the syntactic structures and linguistic choices that both genres employ.

Because of the resemblance between editorials and opinion articles in their purpose, language, and structure, the organizational model of Arabic editorials' text structure proposed by El-Shiyab (1990) is employed in this study to describe the texts' global relations. The lack of material that has been

produced on the structure of opinion articles, as well as the striking similarities that this genre displays with editorials justify this decision.

In his model, El-Shiyab (1990) presents the main pattern that he identifies in the structure of Arabic editorial text in four stages: Background information that serves as an introduction, thesis and its evaluation, substantiation to support the thesis, and conclusion. Here is an example to illustrate these stages of text structure:

(2)

[P1] هذه الشركة تعرضت لانتقادات بسوء الاستغلال. فلقد كسبت مشاريع في العراق وحدها بأكثر من عشرين بليوناً من الدولارات، معظمها كان من دون مناقصات. وفي كتاب أمريكي فاضح بعنوان «أجندة هالبرتون» تطرق مؤلفه للعديد من الجدليات والأساليب التي تدار بها الشركة، وتورطها في فضائح ورشاوى. وهي كانت بحسب تشبيهه أقرب لأساليب أباطرة الجريمة المنظمة، منها إلى شركة عالمية محترمة. وكان لصدى أفعال شركة هالبرتون ومآسيها أن تفاعل معها أحد مطربي الريف الشعبي الأمريكي، وأصدر أسطوانة موسيقية بعنوان مجزرة غرفة اجتماعات هالبرتون. وكانت تحمل أغاني بعناوين عن مخالفات الشركة وأعضاء مجلس إدارتها ومعاونيهم من الساسة الأمريكيين. حتى الملصقات التي توضع على صدامات السيارات من الخلف كان لها نصيب مع هالبرتون، فلقد انتشر ملصق مكتوب عليه «صوت للجريمة المنظمة، صوت لهالبرتون».

[P2] إن هالبرتون هي الوجه القبيح لعالم الأعمال في أمريكا تماماً، كما تشكل مجموعة المحافظين الجدد ذات الشيء بالنسبة لعالم السياسة. هالبرتون شركة قديمة تأسست عام 1919، وكان نشاطها مركزاً في مجال النفط بشكل أساسي، ومن ثم توسعت لتنتشر في أكثر من 70 دولة حول العالم. ولكنها في السنوات الأخيرة تحولت لوحش هائج وبات نهجها الإداري خالياً من الأخلاق.

[P3] في طريقها لتشكيل بديل إداري محترم ونهج مستقبلي بديع يفخر به العرب تخطى دبي إذا اعتقدت أنها بقبولها بأن تكون مقراً لهالبرتون ستضيف أي شيء محترم لمسيرتها المبهرة.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 419)

[P1] This company was subject to criticisms of misuse. This is because it was awarded projects in Iraq alone that are worth over 20 billion US dollars, most of which are without tenders. In a controversial American book entitled 'The Halliburton Agenda', the author discussed a number of controversial issues concerning the methods of running the company and its implication in scandals and bribes. This, according to the author, is more the style of criminal organizations rather than the way of a respectable international company. The conduct of Halliburton led one American country musician to record an album naming it 'Halliburton Boardroom Massacre'. This album consists of songs named after the company's violations, members of the board of directors, and their American politician accomplices. Even bumper stickers appearing on cars took part in the anti-Halliburton theme. One of these stickers reading "Support organized crime: vote Halliburton" has become popular.

[P2] Halliburton is the ugly face of the American world of business just as the group of neo-conservatives represents the ugly face of the world of politics. Halliburton is an old company, established in 1919. It focuses primarily on the oil trade. Therefore, it expanded to spread to over 70 countries around the world. But in recent years it transformed into a raging monster. And its management approach has become devoid of any morals.

[P3] On its way to form a respectable organizational alternative, and a

futuristic approach that Arabs can be proud of, Dubai is making a huge mistake if it believes that by hosting Halliburton's headquarters, it will add anything "reputable" to its astounding journey.

The three paragraphs in example (2) form the rest of the text whose first two paragraphs were presented in example (1). The two examples, (1) and (2), therefore, constitute the body of an opinion article that consists of five paragraphs.

As we have seen in example (1), the author opens the text with an introductory paragraph that provides background information for his topic. After introducing the text in [P1] by admiring Dubai's successful steps towards developing the country, the author presents his thesis in [P2] arguing against one unacceptable step, in his opinion, that recently took place in this city, namely the hosting of the American company, Halliburton.

In order to support his opposition of this step, the author criticizes the company's performance and presents evidence of its misbehavior in the first paragraph of example (2). Then, in the second paragraph he evaluates the validity of his point again, but now in view of the evidence that he has already presented. This negative evaluation of the company in [P2] leads to the conclusion in the last paragraph of example (2) where the author restates his opinion that hosting this company in Dubai is a huge mistake that should be reconsidered.

Identifying DMs

Identifying DMs in the data is the final step in the analytical model. The identification of paragraph boundaries in the first step of the analysis process determines the initial position of the paragraphs where DMs usually occur; however, it does not indicate which elements in the initial slot qualify as DMs. Following Kammensjö (2005), this study employs Halliday's (2004) thematic structure analysis in order to distinguish DMs, which do not form part of the meaning and structure of the units they introduce,

from other elements that occur at the onset of paragraphs but constitute part of the structure and core meaning of these units.

According to Halliday's (2004) model of thematic structure, theme, the point of departure of the clause or sentence as a message, should be seen as a slot that starts from the first element in the clause or sentence up to and including the topical theme. Topical theme is defined as the first element in the clause or sentence that contributes to its propositional meaning. The main clause/sentence constituents that contribute to this meaning are: subject, predicator (lexical verb), object, complement, conjunctive adjunct. Elements preceding topical theme in the thematic slot, therefore, lie outside the propositional content of the clause/sentence. However, though not forming part of the propositional meaning, these elements serve either textual or interpersonal functions that introduce this meaning. The most frequent order of these pre-topical elements that may precede the topical theme, as Halliday (2004) indicates, is: textual- interpersonal.

Halliday's (2004) model of thematic structure analysis provides the analytical tool needed for identifying DMs at the paragraph onset because it determines what elements in this position are part of the core meaning of the paragraph's first sentence and what elements lie outside this domain. The first element in the paragraph's initial position that contributes to the propositional meaning of its first sentence is the topical theme whereas elements preceding the topical theme are identified as DMs. This is because DMs, as mentioned before, are semantically and structurally detached from the units they introduce. The following example illustrates this point.

(3)

لا ريب في أن (lā rayb-a fi 'anna) الخط
الفاصل بين الكوميديا والواقع رفيع. إلا أن
الترفيه والفكاهة قد يكونان إحدى القنوات
التي يمكن أن تعتمد لإنشاء صلة إيجابية
بين الجماعات المختلفة.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 412)

(*lā rayb-a fī 'anna*) Undoubtedly, the line between comedy and reality is thin. However, entertainment and humor can act as a channel to establish a positive connection between various groups.

According to the syntactic analysis, the expression, *lā rayb-a fī 'anna* (لَا رَيْبَ أَفِيْ أَنْنَا) 'undoubtedly, there is no doubt that,' that appears at the head of the sentence in example (3) forms part of this sentence's meaning and structure. Syntactically, this expression does not qualify as a DM because it represents the main clause of the sentence it introduces; and hence is considered part of the dependency relation that forms the structure of the complex sentence.

However, the thematic structure analysis, which provides a means for determining what is inside or outside the propositional core of the sentence, shows that this initial clause is not the theme of the sentence it introduces. According to this analysis, the theme in example (3), is *al-khaThTh-a al-fāSil-a bayna al-kūmīdiyā wa-l-wāqī-i* (الخطثه الفاصلة بين الكوميديا والواقعي) 'the line between comedy and reality.' The expression *lā rayb-a fī 'anna* 'undoubtedly, there is no doubt that,' that introduces the sentence, however, occupies the pre-topical theme position which is the place where DMs usually occur.

It is noteworthy here to mention that Arabic sometimes signals its topical theme in the initial position by means of two particles framing the theme, such as 'ammā ...fā 'as for.' This special case of theme in Arabic in which the topicalized theme is framed between two particles deviates from Halliday's (2004) description of the thematic slot where all the markers precede the topical Theme.

DMs at the global level in Arabic newspaper opinion articles

While the previous section discussed the analytical model undertaken for analyzing the data as well as the analytical tools employed for this reason, this section presents the

outcome of the analysis. It introduces the DMs that are identified at paragraph boundaries in the data and describes how they function in their natural environment.

DM in the Data: General Description

The analysis of the data shows that out of the 359 paragraph boundaries that are identified in the data of this study 194 are introduced with DMs. All the DMs found in the data are sentence-initial constituents. These linguistic devices, the analysis indicates, not only favor the sentence initial position, but they also have a strong tendency to cluster at this place. Most of the multiple DMs in the data consist of a combination of two elements, like *wa-lākin* 'and however, but,' *wa-bi-l-tālī* (ت) 'and consequently, therefore,' and *wa-la'alla* 'and perhaps,' however, some of them include a cluster of three DMs, such as *wa-min hunā-fā* 'and thus, therefore.'

DMs identified in this study, moreover, are not structurally unified. Rather, they come from different grammatical word classes that include: coordinating conjunctions, e.g. *wa* 'and,' *fā* 'since, for,' and *thumma* (ث) 'then,' particles, e.g. 'ammā ...fā 'as for,' 'inna 'certainly, indeed,' and *Hattā* 'in order to,' adverbs, e.g. *hākadhā* 'thus, and so' adverbial phrases, e.g. *bi-l-tālī*, and *wa min hunā* 'thus, therefore,' and clauses, e.g. *lā shakk-a fī 'anna* (ش) 'there is no doubt that, undoubtedly,' *min al-wāDhiH-i 'anna* 'it is evident that, it is clear that.'

Another feature of the DMs found in the data is their occurrence outside the propositional content as well as the syntactic structure of the sentences that they introduce. This feature differentiates DMs from items that occur sentence-initially but constitute part of the sentence's propositional content and grammatical structure. Therefore, particles such as *baynamā* 'while,' *indamā* 'when,' *ma'a 'anna* 'despite the fact that, although,' *raghma* ('anna) (غ) 'despite the fact, nevertheless' and *'idhā* and *law* both meaning 'if' that introduce proposed

adverbial clauses or conditional clauses are not included in the DMs group. Because these particles link the dependent clauses that they introduce to the main clauses in complex sentences, they constitute part of the complex sentences' structure and meaning.

Fronted adverbial clauses and phrases are also excluded from the DMs group in this study because they constitute part of the meaning and structure of their host sentences. When thematized, such adverbials become similar to DMs because of their textual function in marking shifts between segments of text (Holes, 1995: 208; Givón, 2001: 330; and Thompson, *et al.*, 2007: 295). However, unlike DMs, fronted adverbials contribute to the propositional meaning of the sentences that they introduce by setting them in a certain time, place, or manner.

On the other hand, these two criterial features of DMs, nontruth-conditionality and loose clause association, also explain the inclusion of some items that do not seem to be DMs into the DMs group. Sentence initial expressions such as *lā shakk-a 'anna* 'there is no doubt that, undoubtedly' *wa- min al-wāDhiH-i* 'anna 'it is evident that' and 'alaynā al-i' tirāf-u 'anna 'we should admit that,' that seem to be in a dependency relation with the rest of their sentences are included in the DMs group in this study because, as illustrated previously in example (3), they are outside their sentences' propositional content and structure.

It should be noted, however, that some DMs, though are semantically and grammatically detached from their host sentences, impose structural restriction on the linguistic environment in which they occur. For example, 'inna 'certainly, indeed' and *lākin (na)* 'however, but,' must be followed by a noun or pronoun, while *fa-qad* 'since, for' requires that the following item be a perfect verb.

Finally, DMs that are identified in the data of this study are found to fall into two main categories: textual and interpersonal markers. The analysis shows that textual DMs, such as

lākin/ lākinna 'however, but,' *fa* 'since, for,' *min hunā* 'thus, therefore,' predominantly signal relations between segments of texts although they are also indicators of the text-producer's intentions and plans. However, interpersonal DMs, such as *lā shakk-a fī 'anna* and *lā rayb-a fī 'anna* 'there is no doubt that, undoubtedly,' display two main functions at the same time; expressing messages that establish relations between the writer, the reader, and the text, and marking relations between units of text. In this study, therefore, interpersonal DMs are found to perform important textual function in addition to their crucial interpersonal role.

It has been noticed, moreover, that when textual and interpersonal DMs cluster at paragraph onset in the data, they follow a fixed order: textual- interpersonal markers. The thematic slot is then closed by the topical theme, which is the first element in the sentence that has propositional meaning. Textual DMs that cluster at the onset of the paragraph are also restricted by a typical order. According to the data examined in this study, this order is as follows: coordinating conjunctions, e.g. *wa* 'and,' and *fa* 'since, for,' particles, e.g. *lākin (na)* 'however, but,' adverbials, e.g. *bi-l-tālī* and *min hunā* 'thus, therefore,' and clauses, e.g. *lā shakk-a fī 'anna* 'there is no doubt that, undoubtedly,' *min al-wāDhiH-i 'anna* 'it is evident that, it is clear that.' This means that the order in which textual DMs cluster sentence-initially is based on the structural form of these elements.

The Functions of DMs at Paragraph Boundaries

After providing a general description of the DMs identified at the paragraph boundaries in the data of this study, this section moves to describe how these expressions operate in their natural environment. The description is based on associating DMs with the functional relations realized in their environment as well as the contribution of these items to this environment.

The functional relations connecting paragraphs are described in this study, as mentioned previously, by means of El-Shiyab's (1990) model of Arabic editorials' text structure. The analysis shows that the structure of Arabic newspaper opinion articles follows the same pattern of organization identified by El-Shiyab (1990) in his model, i.e. background/ introduction, thesis and its evaluation, substantiation/ support, and conclusion. However, two organizational stages that are not found in El-Shiyab's (1990) model are identified in the structure of these texts: Elaboration and evaluation of the substantiation. This means that the organizational pattern employed to describe the functional relations connecting paragraphs in Arabic opinion articles' structure is as follows: Background/introduction, thesis, evaluation, substantiation/support, evaluation, elaboration, and conclusion.

In order to present a coherent description of the functions served by DMs, a functional

classification of these items is suggested; and DMs that are found to perform similar functions are grouped under one functional category. Because these categories are based on the functions served by DMs at the text level, neither the structural forms of these markers nor their grammatical description given in grammar references are discussed here. The functions served by textual and interpersonal DMs are described separately.

1-Textual DMs

Textual DMs that occur at the onset of paragraphs in texts signal how the texts move from one stage of the organizational structure to the next stage. In this study, paragraph-initial textual DMs are found to perform three main functions: signal continuity, refocus attention, and mark topic-change. Table 1 lists paragraph-initial textual DMs that are found in the data of this study along with the structural stages that they signal and the textual functions they perform.

Table (1): Textual DMs that Occur Paragraph-initial

DMs & variable(s)	Meaning	No. of occurrences	Textual function	Textual stage
<i>wa</i>	and	79	DMs of continuity	Thesis evaluation/ substantiation/ elaboration/ conclusion
<i>'iDhāfatan 'ilā dhālika kull-i-hi/ yuDhāf-u' ilā dhālika 'anna</i>	In addition to all that, moreover	2		Substantiation
<i>fāDhlan 'an 'anna</i>	Besides	2		
<i>Hattā</i>	Even	1		
<i>thumma</i>	Moreover	1		
<i>lidhā</i>	Thus, therefore	1		Evaluation
<i>min hunā</i>		1		
<i>bi-l-tālī</i>		1		
<i>hākadhā</i>	Thus, and so	1		
<i>lākin/ lākinna</i>	However, but	6	DMs that refocus attention	Thesis/ evaluation
<i>ghayra 'anna</i>		2		
<i>'ammā ... fā</i>	As for	14		Evaluation/ Substantiation
<i>fā</i>	Since, for	15	DMs of topic change	Substantiation

Table (1) Continued:

DMs & variable(s)	Meaning	No. of occurrences	Textual function	Textual stage
' <i>idhan</i>	Thus, therefore, so	3		Conclusion
<i>al-khulāSat-u 'anna / khulāSat-u -l-qawl-i 'inna / khulāSat-u -l-'amr-i 'inna</i>	To sum up, in summary	3		
<i>bi-kalām-in 'ākhar-a</i>	In other words	1		

In Table 1, *wa* 'and,' '*iDhāfatan 'ilā dhālika kull-i-hi/ yuDhāf-u 'ilā dhālika 'anna* 'in addition to all that, moreover,' *faDhlan 'an 'anna* 'besides,' *Hattā* 'even,' *thumma* 'moreover,' *lidhā*, *min hunā*, *bi-l-tālī* all meaning 'thus, therefore' and *hākadhā* 'thus, and so' are paragraph-initial textual DMs that denote continuity. While the 79 occurrences of *wa* 'and' in the data are associated with various functional relations, the six occurrences of the four DMs '*iDhāfatan 'ilā dhālika kull-i-hi/ yuDhāf-u 'ilā dhālika 'anna* 'in addition to all that, moreover,' *faDhlan 'an 'anna* 'besides,' *Hattā* 'even' and *thumma* 'moreover' mark only a substantiation stage, and the four occurrences of the four DMs *lidhā*, *min hunā*, *bi-l-tālī* all meaning 'thus, therefore' and *hākadhā* 'thus, and so' signal only an evaluation stage.

The fact that many functional relations are realized in the environment in which *wa* 'and' occurs in the data does not indicate that this DM has the widest variety of functions. Rather, it suggests that *wa* functions as a DM that indicates continuity of ideas; and hence maintains the flow of the text. An indication of the continuity function of *wa* at the global level of text structure is the fact that this DM rarely opens paragraphs that serve as conclusions. In the data, only two of the 79 paragraph-initial occurrences of *wa* introduce concluding paragraphs. This is because *wa* is used to smooth transition between stages of text structure whereas conclusion, i.e. the final stage in the texts' organizational structure, is usually clearly marked off from the rest of the text in order to highlight the last thoughts of the author.

On the other hand, the analysis shows that

the six occurrences of the DMs of continuity '*iDhāfatan 'ilā dhālika kull-i-hi/ yuDhāf-u 'ilā dhālika 'anna* 'in addition to all that, moreover,' *faDhlan 'an 'anna* 'besides,' *Hattā* 'even' and *thumma* 'moreover,' mark either the second or the third substantiation stage in the text's organizational structure. Occurring at these points of text structure where the writer's argument continues to develop means that these DMs denote the continuation of an ongoing topic. They signal that the substantiation stage that they introduce is an additional step in the development of the writer's argument.

The analysis of the data also shows that in the four occurrences of the continuity DMs *lidhā*, *min hunā*, *bi-l-tālī* all meaning 'thus, therefore' and *hākadhā* 'thus, and so' they introduce paragraphs that evaluate evidence presented in previous paragraphs. The function of these DMs that occur at the boundary between a point and its evaluation, therefore, is to signal continuity by showing the logical relevance of the following paragraph to the previous one.

Other textual DMs that appear paragraph-initially, as illustrated in Table 1, are *lākin/ lākinna*, *ghayra 'anna* both meaning 'however, but' and '*ammā ...fa* 'as for.' The analysis indicates that the main function of these three DMs is to refocus attention from one aspect of a topic to another aspect of the same topic. On the one hand, *lākin/ lākinna* and *ghayra 'anna* both meaning 'however, but' open either a thesis or an evaluation stage in the text organizational structure. When introducing a thesis, they mark a boundary between an introductory stage where agreed-upon information is presented and a thesis

stage where the writer presents his counter-claim. This means that these two markers signal a point where the writer refocuses the reader's attention from one aspect of the topic which is generally agreed upon to another aspect of the same topic which the writer adopts. When *lākin/ lākinna* and *ghayra 'anna* introduce an evaluation stage, their function is also to refocus attention to a new aspect of the topic discussed. However, in these cases, these DMs signal a boundary between two evaluation stages in which the writer evaluates two different aspects of the same topic.

On the other hand, the textual DM *'ammā ...fā* 'as for' that occurs 14 times paragraph-initially in the data is found to introduce either a substantiation or an evaluation stage of text structure. In both cases, *'ammā ...fā* signals that there is a turn to a new aspect of the same topic being discussed. It marks a boundary either between two substantiation stages in which the writer discusses two different aspects of the same evidence, or two evaluation stages where two aspects of the same topic are evaluated. The following example illustrates how *'ammā ...fā* refocuses the reader's attention to another aspect of the topic being evaluated.

(4)

[P1] تحبب في الأولويات أم قناعات جديدة وتغيير؟ سؤال لم يحن وقت الإجابة عنه بعد. ولكن المنطقة وأحداثها المحمومة والمتسارعة لن تنتظر الإجابة طويلا. السنة والعرب بحاجة لأخذ قرار أليم ولكن حاسم، ومطلوب منهما أمام خيار «تحرك» إستراتيجي خطير على الساحة العراقية؛ خيار ما بين التحرك على أساس مذهبي أو أساس عرقي.

[P2] إذا كان الحراك على أساس مذهبي ومحاولة إيجاد توازن مع الحراك الشيعي، المدعوم بهوس من قبل إيران، لن يكون هناك من خيار سوى فتح باب التعاون وبقوة مع تركيا، والاستفادة من ثقلها السني وعلاقتها الجيدة مع الأردن والسعودية ومصر وامتدادها القوي في دول آسيا

الوسطى ذات الأعراق التركية في غالبيتها والتي تقترب حدودها مع إيران نفسها. وهذا النوع من الحراك يقتضي إغفال قضية «العروبة» لوقت ما، بل ويقتضي أيضا إدخال الأكراد في المعادلة. وهذا سيكون تحديا غير بسيط نظرا لحالة الريبة والشك الهائل بين الأكراد والأتراك.

[P3] أما إذا بقيت القضية في منظور صراع ما بين العرب والفرس - فالرهان (... *'ammā* *fā*) يجب أن يكون قائما على ضرورة احتواء عقلاء الشيعة العرب، والعراقيين منهم تحديدا، والذين لا يتبعون «المد» الإيراني بالضرورة. وهناك أصوات متزايدة في لبنان والعراق منهم تشير إلى فجوة ما بين شيعة إيران وسائر الشيعة مطلوب استغلالها بشكل إيجابي.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 417)

[P1] Is this a state of confused priorities or new and changing convictions? This question is yet to be answered. However, this region with all its chaotic events will not wait much longer for an answer. The Sunnis and the Arabs need to make a painful but crucial decision vis-à-vis strategic and dangerous “movements” on the Iraqi scene. The decision is between movement based on sectarianism or ethnicity.

[P2] If it is based upon the former, and upon attempting to create a balance with the Shia activity that is backed by the Iranian infatuation, there will be no other choice but to open the door to cooperation with Turkey. This will result in benefiting from its Sunni magnitude and sound relations with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt as well as its expansion in Central Asian countries, a large part of which are of Turkish ethnicity, yet it shares its borders with Iran. Such “movement” requires overlooking the issue of “Arabism.” It also requires introducing the Kurds into the equation. This will be no easy challenge owing to mistrust between Kurds and Turks.

[P3] (*'ammā ...fa*) If the issue remains in perspective of a conflict between Arabs and Persians, then the game must be based on including rational Shia Arabs, specifically Iraqis, who do not follow the Iranian “wave”. There are rising Shia voices in Lebanon and Iraq that demonstrate that there is a widening gap between the Shia of Iran and the rest of the Shia, a factor that should be used positively.

The three paragraphs in example (4) represent the thesis and its evaluation. In [P1], the writer introduces his viewpoint stating that a strategic step should be taken in order to end the chaotic situation in the region. This step, however, could be based either on sectarianism or ethnicity. Then, in the following two paragraphs, i.e. [P2] and [P3], the writer evaluates the two choices. The boundary between [P2] and [P3] is marked by *'ammā ...fa* to distinguish between two stages of evaluation in which two aspects of the same topic are evaluated.

fa ‘since, for,’ *'idhan* ‘thus, therefore, so,’ *al-khulāSat-u 'anna/ khulāSat-u -l-qawl-i 'inna/ khulāSat-u -l-'amr-i 'inna* ‘to sum up, in summary’ *bi-kalām-in 'ākhar-a* ‘in other words’ are also textual DMs that occur paragraph initial, as Table 1 demonstrates. These four DMs are found to mark topic-shift in the text organizational structure. The analysis shows that the 15 occurrences of *fa* at paragraph boundaries in the data introduce a substantiation stage of text structure that follows either a thesis stage or its evaluation. This means that *fa* marks the opening of the argumentation part in the text structure. It indicates that the text is moving from the part in which the writer presents his opinion to a different part in which he starts supporting this opinion. This paragraph-initial marker, however, not only marks a point of topic change in the text development, but it also indicates how the new topic relates to the previous one. It signals that the upcoming stage provides a rationale that supports the claim presented in the previous stage. The following example illustrates this textual

function of *fa*.

(5)

[P1] ثلاث قضايا عربية ملتهبة ستكون على جدول أعمال القمة، وهي تحريك مسار السلام المعطل بين الفلسطينيين والإسرائيليين، وخلق حالة من التوافق بين الأطراف الفاعلة في العراق وإخراج لبنان من أزمتة الخانقة. يخطئ العرب إذا اعتقدوا أن ليس في يدهم حل لهذه القضايا الملتهبة. [P2] فهناك (*fa*) قاعدة أساسية ينطلق منها العرب تجاه عملية السلام في الشرق الأوسط؛ وهي المبادرة العربية التي هي قاعدة تمنع الاختلاف والتباين. والذي يحتاجه العرب هو الترويج لهذه المبادرة والقيام بحملة دبلوماسية واسعة على أعلى المستويات، ومنها تشكيل وفد من عدد من القادة العرب لزيارة العواصم الكبرى في واشنطن وموسكو ولندن وبكين وغيرها من أجل إيجاد زخم دولي لحل القضية على قاعدة المبادرة العربية ودفع الإسرائيليين للاعتراف بهذه المبادرة.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 422)

[P1] The following three burning issues will be on the agenda of the upcoming Arab summit: bringing the interrupted peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis back on course, creating a state of conformity between effective parties in Iraq, and helping Lebanon emerge from the crisis that is gripping it. Arabs would be making a mistake if they assume that there is nothing they can do to solve these issues.

[P2] (*fa*) The Arab initiative serves as a fundamental base for Arab action toward peace in the Middle East and prevents disagreement or discrepancy. Arabs need to promote this initiative and to launch a broad diplomatic campaign at the highest echelons. This includes the formation of a delegation of Arab leaders to visit major world capitals such as Washington, Moscow, London, Beijing, and others, in an effort to build international momentum

toward resolving the Palestinian-Israeli issue based on the Arab initiative, and making the Israelis recognize this initiative.

In example (5), the writer presents the thesis in [P1] and then starts arguing for his point of view in [P2] that follows. This means that *fā* marks a boundary point in the text structure where the topic changes from stating an opinion to supporting this opinion. *fā*, however, not only marks a shift to a new topic, but it also provides information on how the new topic relates to the previous one. It indicates that the upcoming paragraph provides the rationale for the opinion stated in the thesis.

Unlike *fā* that introduces a substantiation stage of text structure, the other three topic-shift textual DMs, i.e. *'idhan* 'thus, therefore, so,' *al-khulāSat-u 'anna/ khulāSat-u -l-qawl-i 'inna/ khulāSat-u -l-'amr-i 'inna* 'to sum up, in summary' *bi-kalām-in 'ākhar-a* 'in other words,' open paragraphs that function as a conclusion in the text organizational structure. Conclusion is an important organizational stage that indicates that a text is reaching its final point of discussion. This means that these markers signal a point in the text structure where there is a shift from the stages in which the writer develops his arguments and evaluates them to a stage where he places his final thoughts.

2-Interpersonal DMs.

The main function of interpersonal

DMs, as mentioned previously, is to encode messages that create relations between the writer, the reader and the text. However, the data analysis shows that these expressions also display an essential role in signaling relations between units of texts in addition to their main interpersonal role. Because of the dual interpersonal/textual function performed by paragraph-initial interpersonal DMs in this study, both the conceptual meaning that these items convey and the stages of text structure that they signal are examined to describe how they operate in text.

Based on the conceptual meaning expressed by the interpersonal DMs identified in the data, these items are found to perform two main interpersonal functions: subjective and interactive. While subjective DMs are writer-oriented because they express the writer's attitudes and evaluations of the message, interactive DMs are reader-oriented because they establish intimacy between the writer and the reader. On the other hand, based on the functional relations realized in their environment, interpersonal DMs in the data are found to perform two main textual functions: mark topic-change and refocus attention.

Tables 2 and 3 list paragraph-initial interpersonal DMs that are found in the data of this study along with the structural stages that they signal, the interpersonal relations they establish, and the textual functions they perform.

Table (2): Interpersonal/ Subjective DMs that Occur Paragraph-initial

DMs & variable(s)	Meaning	No. of occurrences	Textual function	Textual stage
<i>lā shakk-a 'anna/ l lā shakk-a fī 'anna / mā lā shakk-a fīhi 'anna</i>	There is no doubt that, undoubtedly	5	DMs of topic change	Thesis/ evaluation/ conclusion
<i>'inna</i>	Certainly, indeed	11		
<i>la-qad</i>		11		
<i>al-'akīd-u 'anna</i>	Surely, definitely	4		Evaluation/ conclusion
<i>l lā rayb-a 'anna</i>	There is no doubt that, undoubtedly	2		
<i>min al-wāDhiH-i 'anna</i>	It is evident that, it is clear that	1		Conclusion

Table (2) Continued:

DMs & variable(s)	Meaning	No. of occurrences	Textual function	Textual stage
<i>al -wāqi' -u 'anna</i>	As a matter of fact	3		Evaluation
<i>lā budd-a 'anna</i>	It is certain that	1		
<i>lā 'adri</i>	I wonder	1		
<i>yabdū/ yabdū 'anna</i>	It seems that	3		
<i>rubbamā</i>	Perhaps	3	DMs of topic change	Thesis
<i>qad+ imperfect verb</i>		2		

Table (3): Interpersonal/Interactive DMs that Occur Paragraph-initial

DMs & variable(s)	Meaning	No. of occurrences	Textual function	Textual stage
<i>al-su'āl-u huwa/ al-su'āl-u al-maThrûH-u (س)</i>	The question is	2	DMs that refocus attention	Thesis
<i>mā yahumm-u-nā hunā huwa</i>	What is interesting here is	1		
<i>al-muthîr-u fi -l-'amr-i 'anna/ al-'amr-u al-muthîr-u li-l-ihtimām-i huwa 'anna/ al-'amr-u al-muthîr-u al-'ākhar-u 'anna</i>	What is interesting about the matter is that	3		Thesis/ evaluation
<i>al-mufāraqat-u al-qā'imat-u Hāliyy-an hiya 'anna</i>	Ironically	1		Evaluation
<i>al-'akthar-u 'ahamiyyat-an 'anna</i>	Most importantly	1	DMs that refocus attention	Evaluation
<i>al-gharîb-u fi -l-'amr-i 'anna</i>	Oddly	1		
<i>al-muthîr-u li-l-'asā 'anna</i>	Sadly	1		
<i>li-sû'-i -l-HaZh-i fa-'inna (Zh ذ)</i>	Unfortunately	1		
<i>min al-mustaghrab-i 'anna</i>	It is surprising that	1		
<i>al-lāfit-u 'anna</i>	What is interesting is	2		
<i>al-mushkilat-u hiya 'anna</i>	The problem is that	1		
<i>li-nubādir-a bi-l-'ishārat-i 'ilā 'anna</i>	Firstly, it must be mentioned that	2		
<i>SaHiH-un 'anna</i>	It is true that	3		
<i>'alaynā al-i'tirāf-u 'anna</i>	We should admit that	1		

Table (2) indicates that interpersonal/subjective DMs that occur paragraph-initial in the data either express the writer's evaluation of the content of the paragraph or present the topic from his point-of-view.

DMs that express the writer's certainty of the paragraph's content, whether they are emphatic expressions, such as 'inna 'certainly, indeed,' or personal comments, such as *al-'akîd-u 'anna* 'surely, definitely,'

occur 38 times in the data, whereas the two DMs of probability that appear in the data, i.e. *rubbamā* and *qad+* imperfect verb both meaning 'perhaps,' occur only five times, and the two DMs that present the message from the writer's viewpoint, i.e. *yabdū/ yabdū* 'anna 'it seems that' and *lā 'adri* 'I wonder,' only four times.

However, most of the interpersonal/ interactive DMs that appear at paragraph onset in this study serve an attention-getting function, as table 3 demonstrates. Out of the 14 paragraph-initial interactive DMs in the data, 11 serve to draw the attention of the reader to an important point in the following paragraph, such as *al-'akthar-u 'ahamiyyat-an 'anna* 'most importantly,' while the three other interactive DMs either appeal to the reader, such as *'alaynā al-i-'tirāf-u 'anna* 'we should admit that,' or guide his interpretation, such as *SaHiH-un 'anna* 'it is true that.'

According to the above two tables, the stages of text structure that paragraph-initial interpersonal DMs, whether subjective or interactive, correlates with are: thesis, evaluation, and conclusion. This means that these expressions introduce only prominent stages of text structure that the writer usually wants to emphasize and highlight.

On the one hand, subjective DMs that occur at paragraph boundaries introduce thesis, evaluation and conclusion stages of text structure to mark a topic shift at these points. These expressions serve to set main text stages off while at the same time emphasizing the importance of their content. In fact, it seems that it is the emphatic force of the subjective DMs that produce the strong textual shift at these major points of text structure. Consider how the subjective DM in the following example signal topic shift by means of its emphatic effect.

(6)

[P1] اعترف الأمريكيون في بغداد أنهم سينأون بقواتهم عن ملاحقة القيادات السياسية المتورطة في العنف، وأنها ستتتبع الفاعلين مباشرة من عسكر الميليشيات المحلية. وهذه سياسة محكوم عليها بالفشل إن كان الهدف

بالفعل إنهاء العنف الذي أسال الكثير من الدماء. فالقادة عادة انتهازيون ولن يرف لهم جفن إن قتل نصف أتباعهم من أجل تنفيذ خططهم مهما كانت؛ من تصفية الخصوم، أو نشر الفوضى، أو إعلان الحرب. [P2] إن ('inna) ملاحقة القادة الحقيقيين في أزمة التطهير الطائفي والسياسي المستمرة في العراق هي الحل الحقيقي الذي يختصر الوقت والدم. مثل هؤلاء القادة من سنة وشيعة الذين يقتلون المدنيين هم جبناء ولن يخاطروا بأنفسهم في أي مواجهات مع القوات الحكومية أو الأمريكية. سيضحون بعسكرهم ولن يخاطروا بأنفسهم ومصالحهم الشخصية كونهم يسعون من أجل بناء مجد ونفوذ بأي ثمن كان.

(Al Kohlani, 2010: 433)

[P1] Americans in Baghdad have admitted that their forces will stop pursuing political leaders that are implicated in violence and will track the culprits of the militia soldiers directly. This policy is doomed to fail if indeed the aim is to end the violence that has already spilled much blood. Leaders are usually opportunists. Thus, they would not care if half their supporters died while executing their plans, whatever they may be, from eliminating opponents to spreading chaos, or declaring wars.

[P2] ('inna) The pursuit of the real leaders in the ongoing crisis of political and sectarian genocide in Iraq is indeed the only real solution that can save time and blood. Such leaders, Sunni or Shia, who murder innocent civilians are cowards and will not put themselves at the risk of any confrontation with the government or US forces. They will sacrifice their troops but not hazard their own lives or personal interests, because their goal is to build glory and influence at any cost.

It is clear that the subjective DM 'inna 'certainly, indeed' that opens [P2] in the above example marks a shift from a background

stage that locates the text in its context into a stage of text structure where the writer presents his thesis. In this example, the emphatic force of 'inna not only signals an obvious topic change at the boundary point where it occurs, but it also emphasizes the importance of the topic that is being initiated.

On the other hand, interactive DMs that occur paragraph-initial in the data are found to introduce thesis and evaluation stages of text structure to refocus the reader's attention to a specific point in the previous stage. Since most of the interactive DMs that occur at paragraph onset in the data are expressions of notification, as mentioned earlier, it seems that it is the attention-getting effect of these DMs that creates their refocusing textual force. The following example illustrates the attention-getting/refocusing role of the paragraph-initial DMs of notification.

(7)

[P1] في آخر استفتاء حول الوضع الديني في فرنسا نشرته مجلة عالم الديانات، تبين أن الكاثوليكية تكاد تكون قد انحسرت في الدولة التي طالما تسمت ببيت الكنيسة. فحسب الأرقام المنشورة لا يتجاوز نسبة من يعتبرون أنهم كاثوليكيون 51 في المائة من السكان مقابل 67 في مطلع السبعينيات من بينهم 8 في المائة فقط يواظبون على الصلاة في الكنيسة يوم الأحد؛ أي أقل من ثلاثة ملايين فرنسي.

[P2] المثير في الأمر أن (al-muthîr-u fi -l-'amr-i 'anna)

في فرنسا الذي هو ظاهرة عامة في أوروبا واكتبه ظاهران تبدوان متعارضتين مع هذا المشهد البارز هما من جهة أزمة النظام العلماني، وانتشار الطوائف الدينية الجديدة الغربية على النسيج الطقوسي التقليدي. وعلى رغم أن هذه المشاهد الثلاثة تبدو متعارضة، إلا أنها في واقع الأمر متلازمة يفسر بعضها بعضا. وتندرج في السياق ذاته؛ أي انهيار القاعدة المعيارية والمؤسسية للديانات التاريخية وتشكل المطلق الديني وفق النماذج المجتمعية والسلوكية الجديدة. (Al Kohlani, 2010: 413)

[P1] A recent survey of the religious situation in France published by 'Le Monde des Religions' magazine, revealed that Catholicism appears to have declined in the state that has long been hailed the 'Daughter of the Church.' According to the published figures, those who consider themselves Catholics constitute no more than 51 percent of the population, compared with what stood at 67 percent in the 1970s. Only a miniscule 8 percent regularly attend Sunday services – that is, less than 3 million French.

[P2] (al-muthîr-u fi -l-'amr-i 'anna) What is interesting about the matter is that the decline of the Catholic Church in France – which is also a general European phenomenon – coincided with two phenomena that seem to be contradictory to this striking scene, namely, the crisis of the secular system and the spread of religious sects that are alien to the traditional ritual fabric. Although the three examples seem to contradict one another, they do, in fact, constitute a pattern where they explain one another. And they fall within the same context. That is the collapse of the standard and institutional foundation of historical religions, and the formation of the religious absolute in accordance with new societal and behavioral models.

The DM of notification al-muthîr-u fi -l-'amr-i 'anna 'what is interesting about the matter is that' that introduces [P2] in example (7) indicates that the writer wants to highlight a specific aspect of the topic being discussed. It serves to refocus the reader's attention from the general information introduced in the background stage of text structure to a specific point that is related to this information but has more importance because it represents the writer's thesis.

Therefore, although both subjective and interactive DMs mark important points in the text progression by means of their interpersonal effect, they employ different

strategies to signal this importance. While subjective DMs signal this importance by setting the paragraphs they introduce off, interactive DMs signal that the content of the paragraph they open is important in relation to the information provided in the previous paragraph. Both of these strategies, however, mark that there is a move toward a major point in the text structure.

To sum up, textual and interpersonal DMs that occur at paragraph boundaries in the data of this study serve three main textual functions: continuity, refocusing attention, and topic-change. While continuity is indicated only by textual DMs, refocusing attention, and marking topic change in text could be signaled by both textual and interpersonal DMs.

Interpersonal DMs, therefore, display a clear textual function at paragraph onset in the present study. However, the textual function that they perform is different from the one performed by textual DMs because of the interpersonal effect that these items create. Interpersonal DMs not only signal a refocus or change of topic like textual DMs, but they also highlight the content of the paragraphs they introduce. The force of the interpersonal effect created by these expressions is actually what signals boundaries in the text organizational structure.

CONCLUSION

The present study is the first systematic work that investigates DMs from a discourse perspective in Modern Written Arabic. By identifying these items and describing the main characteristics they display and the main functions they perform at paragraph level in one type of Arabic text, i.e. newspaper opinion articles, it makes the first step in creating an inventory for DMs in Modern Written Arabic. Future studies of DMs in other text types in Arabic could add to this inventory and refine it.

Moreover, the detailed description that the present study provides of the way DMs function at paragraph boundaries is an important contribution to the study of

text. Because DMs are key elements in text production and perception, as mentioned previously, describing how these linguistic items operate in text helps L2 learners of Arabic as well as translators from and into Arabic to perceive and produce Arabic texts more effectively.

On the other hand, this study is an important contribution to the field of discourse analysis in Arabic. A by-product of the investigation undertaken in this study is describing the structure of newspaper opinion articles. As mentioned previously, no specific description of the structure of this type of text is found in the literature. Providing a comprehensive description of the organizational structure of one type of Arabic text, i.e. newspaper opinion articles, is an essential step in establishing models for different written Arabic text-types.

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الدور الوظيفي لأدوات الربط بين الفقرات في مقالات الرأي في الصحف العربية

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة اللغوية الدور الوظيفي لأدوات الربط التي تربط بين فقرات النص الجدلي في اللغة العربية، وذلك من خلال تحليل نماذج من مقالات الرأي في الصحف. وأدوات الربط التي تتناولها هذه الدراسة مثل: «ف، هكذا، غير أن» تمثل ظاهرة لغوية نصية لا ترتبط وظيفياً بحدود التركيب اللغوي للجمل، بل تعمل على مستوى النص لتحقيق الترابط والاتساق بين جملة وفقراته من جهة، وللتواصل مع القارئ والتأثير على طريقة فهمه للنص من جهة أخرى، لذا فهي أدوات لغوية ذات دور محوري وأساسي في صياغة النص وفهمه. وتعتمد هذه الدراسة على المنهج التحليلي الوصفي، حيث تقوم بتحليل خمسين مقالا للرأي مأخوذة من صحيفتي الشرق الأوسط والحياة، وذلك أولاً: لتحديد أدوات الربط التي تستعمل على مستوى الفقرة في هذه النصوص الجدلية، وثانياً: وصف الدور الذي تؤديه هذه الأدوات في هذا المستوى من بنية النص. ويتألف نموذج التحليل الذي تم توظيفه من ثلاث مراحل، تقسيم النصوص إلى فقرات-وحدات فكرية مكتملة، وصف نوع العلاقات الوظيفية التي تربط بين هذه الفقرات، تحديد التعبيرات-حرف أو كلمة أو عبارة أو جملة-التي تتوفر فيها شروط أدوات الربط في بداية كل فقرة. وبناء على نتائج التحليل والوصف في هذه المراحل الثلاث تطرح الدراسة تصنيفاً وظيفياً لأدوات الربط بين الفقرات في النص العربي. الكلمات المفتاحية: أدوات الربط، الربط بين الفقرات، ظاهرة نصية، مقالات الرأي، النص الجدلي.