**Linkers in the English Language**

Chain (PSF).jpg

**What are linkers?**

The word link can be defined as a connecting structure. It can be a physical connection, as we know it from links in a chain, but it could also be a connection on a more abstract level, as when we think of the connection between two ideas. For instance, “scientists have found that there is a link between smoking and cancer.”

In language, linkers are the words that connect one sentence or idea with another. They are a way to secure that there is a logical connection in a text. They function as a way to guide the reader or listener. Linkers are especially useful when making arguments and are an important part of any type of analysis. Consider the difference between the following two sentences:

“The man is sad. His wife has left him. His son is leaving home. He is all alone.”

“The man is sad because his wife has left him. Furthermore, his son is leaving home. In the end, he is all alone.”

The first sentence is an example of bad writing. It is just a series of statements with no visible connection between the sentences. The reason why it is possible to make sense of the first sentence is because we make the connection anyway. We can’t help trying to find the connection between the sentences, but the writer certainly doesn’t help us.

It is a different story in sentence number two where linkers are used to connect the sentences. There are three different types of linkers used in the sentence. The first linker describes cause and effect (the reason, if this then that): The man is sad because his wife has left him. The second linker gives an addition to the argument: Furthermore, his son is leaving home. The final linker sums up the argument: in the end, he is alone.

**The three linkers mentioned do not stand alone. Here is a list of some of the most common types of linkers in the English language:**

**1. Linker:** Cause and effect: because, so,  accordingly, thus, consequently, hence, therefore, as, as a result, since, due to, owing to, on account of, thanks to, that’s why, for this reason.

**Purpose:** If this then that. Shows result and reason: “Due to bad weather, I can’t play football.”

**2. Linker: Comparison:** similarly, likewise, equally, in the same way.

**Purpose:** This is like this. Shows similarity: “He is equally tired and giddy.”

**3. Linker: Contrast:** but, however, yet, still, even though, nevertheless, on the other hand, otherwise, after all, for all of that, on the contrary, notwithstanding, in contrast, unlike, whereas, instead of, alternatively, although.

**Purpose:** This but not that. Shows difference: “He claims that he is a vegetarian, but eats meat.”

**4. Linker: Time:** once, at once, immediately, meanwhile, at length, in the meantime, at the same time, in the end, when, as, before that, after that, suddenly.

**Purpose:** at that time. Shows the time something takes place: “When she was young, she used to party.”

**5. Linker: Addition:** and, also, even, again, moreover, further, furthermore, in addition, as well as.

**Purpose:** this and also this. Functions as backup to an idea: “She eats apples as well as oranges.”

**6. Linker: Example:** for example, such as, for instance, in this case, on this occasion, in this situation,  in this manner, to illustrate.

**Purpose:** exactly that. Gives evidence of an idea: “He loves to practice his guitar, for instance, he played five hours yesterday.”

**7. Linker: Sequence:** firstly, secondly, thirdly, next, then, following, now, at this point, after, after this, subsequently, eventually, finally, previously.

**Purpose:** this and then this and this. Shows the priority between ideas and the logical connection: “Firstly I’m going to hire the best lawyer in the city, secondly I will drag you to court and finally I will get my money back.”

**8. Linker: Summary:** in brief, on the whole, in sum, to sum up, thus, in conclusion, all in all.

**Purpose:** that’s it. Sums up the idea or argument: “All in all, I love this life.”