08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

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November 21, 2018

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min e

I hematic relations (roles)

Arg. Structure

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

Projectionist Acc Probs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Propositions

homotic volotions

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

urther praction

Five min ex 1 / 41

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Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS

Argument Structure

Do we need argument structure?

Propositions

Thematic relations (roles

Remembering thematic relations

Further practice

Five minute exercise

Bibliography

nin ex Ience

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Thematic relations (roles)

we need AS?

Probs with PA (1)
Probs with PA (2)
Probs with PA (3)

oositions

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE
Other roles for NPs

oles for other t

Attributives Locatives

Instruments

A mnemonic

minemonic

Five min ex 1 / 41

5 minute exercise

08 - Verbs in the driving seat Nick Riches

ivation for AS

5 min ex

ematic relations (roles)

. Structure

Determining valence

rojectionist Acc

Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

positions t is a proposition

ematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for oth

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex 2 / 41

What is wrong with the following sentences?

- 1. Jack gave Mary
- 2. Petula put the beans
- 3. Julie laughed Peter

Valence

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- 1. Drive
- 2. Donate
- 3. Mix
- 4. Yawn
- 5. Slap
- 6. Rain

5 min ex Valence

Thematic relations (roles)

Definition Determining valence

o we need AS?

robs with PA (1) robs with PA (2)

with PA (3)

ositions

is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

Roles for other ohrases Attributives

Attributives Locatives Instruments

A mnemonic

urther practice

Five min ex 3 / 41

Valence

08 - Verbs in the driving seat Nick Riches

Valence

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex 4 / 41

A verb 'begs to be completed into a sentence' (Tomasello, 1992) The verb implies a certain number of participants (Valence)

Valence can range from 0 to 3.

Valence

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Psycholinguistic studies demonstrate that even when we hear verbs in isolation we mentally represent the number of participants (e.g. Shapiro et al. 1987 lexical decision task, or Kim & Thomson, 2000)

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

5 min ex Valence

Thematic relations (roles)

efinition

Do we need AS?

Probs with PA (1)
Probs with PA (2)
Probs with PA (3)

opositions

positions at is a proposition?

matic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other type

Attributives Locatives

struments

A mnemonic

_ . . .

Five min ex 5 / 41

Thematic relations (roles)

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations (roles)

rg. Structure

Determining valence

o we need AS?

Projectionist Acc Probs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

opositions

hat is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

Other roles t Roles for oth

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex 6 / 41

1. Jane fears Peter

- 2. Peter scares Jane
- 3. Paul liked the play
- 4. The play pleased Paul
- 5. Mary gave Pete a present
- 6. Pete received a present from Mary

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Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS
Argument Structure	5 min ex Valence Thematic relations (roles)
Do we need argument structure?	Arg. Structure Definition Determining valence
Propositions	Do we need AS? Projectionist Acc
Thematic relations (roles)	Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)
Remembering thematic relations	Propositions What is a proposition?
Further practice	Thematic relations Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE
Five minute exercise	Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of phrases Attributives
Bibliography	Locatives

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

A mnemonic Further practice Five min ex 6/41

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

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 $\mbox{Argument Structure} = \mbox{a level of linguistic representation} \\ \mbox{that comprises}$

- 1. the number of essential participants
- 2. their roles in the sentence
- 3. how those roles are ordered.

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Valence

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Definition

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

rojectionist Acc

Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (2)

ropositions

What is a proposition

hat is a proposition

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for

Roles for other phrases

Attributives

_ocatives

macramenta

A mnemonic

Five min ex 7 / 41

Essential participants are known as 'arguments'

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Nick Riches

Definition

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

Instruments

A mnemonic

Five min ex 8 / 41

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Definition

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex 9 / 41

Argument structure is partly semantic / partly syntactic:

- 1. Semantic level: roles specified by the verb
- 2. Syntactic level: ordering of roles.
- NB, role of subject, in particular is fixed, e.g.
- (1)She gave Patrick a cake
- (2)She gave a cake to Patrick

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Nick Riches

Definition

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex10 / 41

Adverbial

SYNTAX The man loaded the hay onto the wagon [with a pitch fork]

Syntactic frames The man loaded the wagon with hay [with a pitch fork]

X VERB-ed Y onto Z | X verb Z with Y (Alternation)

mapping / linking

ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

load <AGENT, PATIENT, LOCATION>

Valency / thematic relations / thematic roles

SEMANTICS



08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Determining valence

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex11 / 41

How do we determine **essential** participants?

Those which are obligatory?

- 1. * She dropped the pen
- 2. * She took the jacket

Thematic relations
Main roles for Noun Phrases

Main roles for Noun Ph XERCISE

Other roles for NPs

Roles for other ohrases

Attributives Locatives

A mnemonic

Further practice
Five min ex12 / 41

But most arguments can be rendered optional in certain contexts

- 1. She gives (money) to charity
- They all gave presents to Mary. Paul gave a pen (to Mary), Jenny gave a book (to Mary), and Brad gave a watch (to Mary)
- COOKING INSTRUCTIONS: Chop (the carrots) and stir (them) into the sauce

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In addition, some verbs seem to elicit a wide variety of arguments

- 1. [He] paints [walls]
- 2. [He] painted [the wall] [red]
- 3. [He] painted [the wall] [red] [with a paintbrush] and [some paint]
- 4. [This brush] paints well

Determining valence

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex13 / 41

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

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Determining valence

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex14 / 41

Extra-valent arguments which sound "added on"

- 1. She swam [ten lengths]
- 2. They laughed [the teacher] [out of the room]

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Nick Riches

Determining valence

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex15 / 41

1. Method 1: Corpus

2. Method 2: Introspection

These two methods can occasionally give different results!

So there is no foolproof method

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Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS
Argument Structure	5 min ex Valence Thematic relations (roles)
Do we need argument structure?	Arg. Structure Definition Determining valence
Propositions	Do we need AS? Projectionist Acc
Thematic relations (roles)	Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)
Remembering thematic relations	Propositions What is a proposition?

Further practice

Thematic relations
Main roles for Noun Phrases
EXERCISE
Other roles for NPs

Other roles for NPs

Five minute exercise

Bibliograph

Instruments
A mnemonic

Attributives

08 - Verbs in the

. . . .

Five min ex15 / 41

The Projectionist Account

it acts in a sentence?

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Why not just use the meaning of the verb to determine how

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Projectionist Acc

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex16 / 41

Problems with the Projectionist Account (1)

08 - Verbs in the driving seat Nick Riches

Probs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex17 / 41

Jane fears Peter

Peter scare Jane

The two verbs arguably have the same meaning but differ in order of realisation of arguments.

Problems with the Projectionist Account (2)

Frame	Tell	Say
Verb + N	He told a story	She said her lines
Verb + N + N	She told him a story	*She said him a story
Verb + N + non-finite clause	He told her to go	* He said her to go
Verb + Clause	* She told she was leaving him	She said she was leaving him

The two verbs arguably have the same meaning but differ in terms of valence.

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations (roles

Arg. Structure

Definition

Determining valence

Projectionist Acc Probs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2)
Probs with PA (3)
Propositions

What is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other types phrases

Attributives Locatives

Δ mnemonic

urther practice

Five min ex18 / 41

Problems with the Projectionist Account (3)

- 08 Verbs in the driving seat
- Motivation for AS
- 5 min ex Valence
- I hematic relations (roles
- Definition
 Determining valence
- Do we need AS?
- Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)
- Probs with PA (3)

Propositions What is a proposition?

hematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

ohrases Attributives

ttributives ocatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex19 / 41

- 1. He gave a book to Mary He gave her the book
- 2. He donated a book to the library *He donated the library a book

The two verbs have closely related meanings but differ in terms of their *alternation* characteristics (ability to occur in multiple frames)

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Motivation for AS
5 min ex
Valence Thematic relations (roles)
Arg. Structure
Definition
Determining valence Do we need AS?
Projectionist Acc

Remembering thematic relations

Further practice

Five minute exercise

Bibliography

Locatives Instruments

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

A mnemonic

Attributives

Probs with PA (2)
Probs with PA (3)
Propositions

...

Five min ex19 / 41

What is a proposition?

A mental scene involving at least one entity (or argument) participating in an event or situation



A tiger

ENTITY



A tiger creeping through the jungle

> **ENTITY + SITUATION** = A PROPOSITION

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Nick Riches

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

What is a proposition?

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

Five min ex20 / 41

Other roles f

phrases Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex21 / 41

Contains those entities which make the most important contributions to the **truth conditions** of the sentence

- The dog chased the cat →
 The robot washed the cat
 TRUTH CONDITIONS HAVE COMPLETELY
 CHANGED
- The dog chased the cat →
 The dog quickly chased a cat
 MINOR CHANGE TO TRUTH CONDITIONS

What is a proposition?

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Probs with PA (2)

What is a proposition?

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Five min ex22 / 41

1. Proposition

chase(dog,cat) Sentence

2.1 The dog chased the cat

2.2 It chased the cat

2.3 The cat was chased by the dog

Utterance

A: Is your dog energetic?

B: Well, it chases the neighbour's cat every day!

We need propositions to explain how different surface forms (e.g. 2) can have the same underlying meaning.

The proposition IS the underlying meaning.

What is a proposition?

SYNTAX

The man loaded the hay onto the wagon [with a pitch fork]

Syntactic frames
The man loaded the wagon with hay [with a pitch fork]

X VERB-ed Y onto Z | X verb Z with Y (Alternation)

mapping / linking

ARGUMENT
1 2 3

STRUCTURE load <AGENT, PATIENT, LOCATION>

SEMANTICS

Valency / thematic relations / thematic roles



08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations (rol

Arg. Structure
Definition

Oo we need AS?

Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

i ropositions

What is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other types phrases

Attributives Locatives

Δ mnemonic

Further pra

Five min ex23 / 41

driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for argument structure

Argument Structure

Do we need argument structure?

Propositions

Thematic relations (roles)

Remembering thematic relations

Further practice

Five minute exercise

Bibliography

in ex

08 - Verbs in the

ence

nematic relations (roles)

etermining valence

Probs with PA (1)
Probs with PA (2)
Probs with PA (3)

positions

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

Roles for other ot

ttributives ocatives

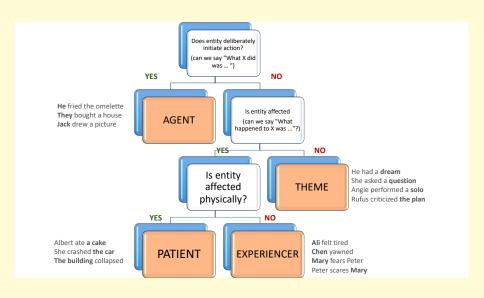
Instruments

A mnemonic

ırther practice

Five min ex23 / 41

Main roles for Noun Phrases



EXERCISE

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

raience

g. Structure

Determining valen

o we need AS?

Projectionist Acc

Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)

robs with PA (2)

1003 WILLI 171 (5)

Propositions
What is a proposition

What is a proposition

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of

Attributiv

Locatives

........

Further practice
Five min ex25 / 41

1. Charles crashed the car

2. Mavis heard the noise

3. The noise startled Mavis

4. The tree fell down in the storm

5. Ali considered the exciting proposal

6. Fatimah hated the start of term

7. The swing broke under his weight

8. The doctor felt the patient's foot

9. I like having a bath with my clothes on

10. Jack liked Susan's holiday snaps on Facebook.

EXERCISE

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relation

Arg. Structure Definition

Determining valen

Do we need AS?

Projectionist Acc Probs with PA (1

Probs with PA (2)

Propositions

What is a proposition

Thematic relations Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of

Attributives

Locatives

mnemonic

Five min ex26 / 41

1. Charles AG, crashed the car PAT.

2. Mavis EXP. heard the noise TH.

3. The noise TH. startled Mavis EXP.

4. The tree PAT. fell down in the storm

5. Ali AG. considered the exciting proposal TH.

6. Fatimah EXP. hated the start of term TH.

7. The swing PAT. broke under his weight

8. The doctor AG. felt the patient's foot TH.

9. $I_{\text{EXP.}}$ like having a bath $_{\text{TH.}}$ with my clothes on

10. Jack AG. liked Susan's holiday snaps TH. on Facebook.

Other roles for Noun Phrases

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex27 / 41

Benefactive is the role typically given to Indirect Object Noun Phrases, e.g.

- 1. She gave [him BEN.] [a book PAT.]
- 2. She bought [a book PAT.] [for him BEN.]

Other roles for Noun Phrases

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex28 / 41

Possessor is the owner of something

- 1. [Jack POSS.] has/owns a Ferrari
- 2. The house belongs to [Martha POSS.]

Roles for other types of phrases

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Phrases which describe a property of something else are called ATTRIBUTIVES

ATTRIBUTIVES are mapped to Cs and Co.

- 1. Janice feels happy ATTR
- 2. Losing at bingo makes Martha sad ATTR
- 3. Jack is in a mood ATTR

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relation

rg. Structure

Do we need AS?

Probs with PA (1)
Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

ropositions

hematic relations

Thematic relations
Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

Other roles for Roles for other

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

rther practice

Five min ex29 / 41

Roles for other types of phrases

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex30 / 41

We can often make questions about attributives using the question word how, e.g.

1. Q: How does janice feel? A: Happy

Roles for other types of phrases

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

5 min ex

Thematic relations (roles

Definition

Do we need AS7

Projectionist Acc

Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

ropositions

/hat is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles for NPs

Other roles for Roles for other

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex31 / 41

Phrases which describe locations are sometimes called LOCATIVES, e.g.

- 1. Jason is in the park LOC
- 2. Pat loaded the hay onto the wagon LOC

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

otivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations (roles)

rg. Structure

Do we need AS?

rojectionist Acc

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

positions

t is a proposition?

I hematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE Other roles fo

ohrases Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

urther practice

Five min ex32 / 41

урс с ришсо

A genuine argument?

1. The girls played baseball in the park

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex33 / 41

We can make questions about locatives using the question word where, e.g.

1. Q: Where is Jason? A: In the park.

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

5 min ex

hematic relations

rg. Structure

Do we need AS?

rojectionist Acc robs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

ositions

t is a proposition?

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for Roles for other

Attributives Locatives

Instruments

A mnemonic

Further practice
Five min e 34 / 41

An instrument is an object used to perform and action, e.g.

1. Angela covered the food with a cloth INSTR

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations (

Oefinition

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

obs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

ropositions

opositions

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Roles for otl phrases

> Attributives Locatives

Instruments

A mnemonic

Five min ex35 / 41

A genuine thematic relation?

- 1. He **hammered** the nail (? with a hammer)
- 2. She filed her nails (with a nail file).
- 3. She scratched her back (with a loofah)

driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for argument structure

Argument Structure

Do we need argument structure?

Propositions

Thematic relations (roles)

Remembering thematic relations

Further practice

Five minute exercise

Bibliography

tivation for AS

08 - Verbs in the

min ex

Valence

g. Structure

o we need AS?
Projectionist Acc

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

positions
at is a proposition?

hematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

ohrases Attributives

Locatives
Instruments

.

A mnemonic

Further practice
Five min ex35 / 41

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After Eating Peas All Tiny Babies Avoid Laughing In Public AGENT, EXPERIENCER, PATIENT, THEME, BENEFACTIVE, ATTRIBUTIVE, LOCATIVE, INSTRUMENT, POSSESSOR

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Probs with PA (2)

Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

A mnemonic

Five min ex36 / 41



08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min e Valence

I nematic relations (roles)

Arg. Structure

Definition

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

Projectionist Acc

Probs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2)

Propositions
What is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE
Other roles for NPs
Roles for other types of

Attributives Locatives Instruments

A mnemonic

Further prac

Five min ex37 / 41

	driving seat
	Nick Riches
Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS
Argument Structure	5 min ex Valence
	Thematic relations (roles)
Do we need argument structure?	Arg. Structure
Propositions	Determining valence Do we need AS?
	Projectionist Acc
Thematic relations (roles)	Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)
	Propositions
Remembering thematic relations	What is a proposition?
	Thematic relations
Further practice	Main roles for Noun Phrases
	EXERCISE Other roles for NPs
Five minute exercise	Roles for other types of phrases
	Attributives
	Locatives

Further practice
Five min ex37 / 41

Instruments
A mnemonic

08 - Verbs in the

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations

g. Structure

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

rojectionist Acc robs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2)

ronositions

nat is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

EXERCISE

Other roles f Roles for oth

Attributives

Locatives

A mnemonic

Five min e 38 / 41

1. Jack considers himself a real gigolo

2. Angie sent her father the bundle of letters last Tuesday

3. The steering wheel came off in his hands

4. Jance watched the hovering buzzard5. Who does this pencil case belong to?

6. Jake painted the wall with red paint.

o. Jake painted the wan with red paint

7. Alina smelt the beautiful flowers

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Probs with PA (3)

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Attributives

Further practice

Five min ex39 / 41

1. Jack EXP. considers himself TH. a real gigolo ATTR.

2. Angie AG. sent her father BEN. the bundle of letters PAT. last Tuesday

3. The steering wheel PAT, came off in his hands

4. Jance AG watched the hovering buzzard TH

Who POSS does this pencil TH, case belong to?

6. Jake AG. painted the wall PAT. with red paint INS.

7. Alina AG smelt the beautiful flowers TH

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	Nick Riches
Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS
Argument Structure	5 min ex Valence Thematic relations (roles)
Do we need argument structure?	Arg. Structure Definition Determining valence
Propositions	Do we need AS? Projectionist Acc
Thematic relations (roles)	Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)
Remembering thematic relations	Propositions What is a proposition?
Further practice	Thematic relations Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE
Five minute exercise	Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of phrases
Bibliography	Attributives Locatives
	A mnemonic

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

Further practice Five min ex39 / 41

08 - Verbs in the driving seat

ck Riches

5 min ex

/alence

Thematic relations

Arg. Structure
Definition

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

rojectionist Acc robs with PA (1)

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

positions

at is a proposition?

ematic relations

hematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases

Other roles for NPs

Roles for othe phrases

Attributives Locatives

Instruments

A mnemonic

Five min ex40 / 41

How many possible ways can you think of to complete the following sentence?

(NB think of how many different **syntactic structures** can be used after verb)

1. Doctor Who remembered . . .

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Motivation for argument structure	Motivation for AS
Argument Structure	5 min ex Valence Thematic relations (roles)
Do we need argument structure?	Arg. Structure Definition Determining valence
Propositions	Do we need AS? Projectionist Acc
Thematic relations (roles)	Probs with PA (1) Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)
Remembering thematic relations	Propositions What is a proposition?
Further practice	Thematic relations Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE
Five minute exercise	Other roles for NPs Roles for other types of

Bibliography

A mnemonic

Further practice

Five min ex40 / 41

Attributives

Instruments

08 - Verbs in the

Nick Riches

Motivation for AS

5 min ex

Thematic relations

Arg. Structure

Determining valence

Do we need AS?

ojectionist Acc

Probs with PA (2) Probs with PA (3)

opositions

at is a proposition?

Thematic relations

Main roles for Noun Phrases EXERCISE

Other roles for NPs Roles for other type

Attributives

ocatives

A mnemonic

Five min ex41 / 41

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