

Idiom Licensing in Non-restrictive Relative Clauses (NRCs)

Commonplace Observation:

A syntactically flexible idiom (SFI) can be split across a main clause and a restrictive relative clause (RRC) but not across a main clause and an NRC:

- (1) The **strings** [_{RRC} that I **pulled** for you] will get you that job.
- (2) *The **strings**, [_{NRC} which I promise I will **pull** for you], will get you that job.

Standard Explanation:

- SFI parts must be adjacent at some level of the *syntactic* derivation.
- Whereas RRCs are syntactically integrated (above requirement can be met), NRCs are *not* (requirement *cannot* be met).

Problem:

The sentence in (3) is fine in the idiomatic reading, but nowhere in the syntactic derivation is the second **pull** adjacent to **strings**.

- (3) The **strings** that I **pulled** for you before, [_{NRC} which I promise I will **pull** for you again], will get you that job.

Our Analysis:

We offer an account of NRCs and SFIs providing a *semantic* solution for the data.