

Homework: Larson 1988

Syntax 2 (Bruening)

Due May 2, 2006

1 Double-Object Idioms

Larson (1988) claims that his theory predicts that only the verb and the prepositional phrase could together form an idiom to the exclusion of the other object, like the following:

(1) (L10)

- a. Lasorda *sent* his starting pitcher *to the showers*.
- b. Mary *took* Felix *to the cleaners/to task/into consideration*.
- c. Felix *threw* Oscar *to the wolves*.
- d. Max *carries* such behavior *to extremes*.

According to Larson, there could be no idiom like **send the pitcher to X*, where X can be filled by any NP. Because of the way Larson's theory of Dative Shift works, there could also then be no idiom of the form **send X the flowers*, where X can be filled by any NP. Explain how Larson's theory rules out both of these as idiomatic expressions. Then explain whether the following idioms are problematic for Larson:

- (2) a. Max gave linguistics his all.
- b. Alice gave John hell.
- c. Oscar will give every late employee the boot.
- d. The Count gives everyone the creeps.

References

Larson, Richard K. (1988), "On the Double Object Construction." *Linguistic Inquiry* 19: 335–391.