A Superlative Argument for Syntactic Movement in Fragment Answer

This paper draws on literatures on superlative interpretations (Pancheva & Tomaszewicz 2012 (P&T), Shen t.a., Tomaszewicz 2015) to support accounts for fragment answer involving syntactic movement (Merchant 2004) and against accounts involving PF-movement (Weir 2014, 2015) or no movement (Ott & Struckmeier t.a. (O&S)).

Fragment Answers involve (1b) rather than a full answer (1a). Merchant (2004) argues that fragment answers are derived from movement and deletion. In (2), the fragment answer starts as a full answer, *apples* undergoes syntactic movement to Spec,CP, the rest of the sentence is elided.

Recently Weir (2014, 2015) argues that the fragment only moves in PF. O&S argue that fragment answers involve no movement and the elided parts are deleted in-situ (3). Both accounts predict that the fragment will be interpreted in-situ.

(1) a. What did John eat?   b. Apples.   c. John ate apples.
(2)   [$_{CP}$ Apples [$_{TP}$ ~~John ate~~ t$_{Apples.}$]]   (3)   ~~John ate~~ apples.

Relative Reading with NP Internal Focus (RIN) is observed by P&T in superlative expressions like *the largest photo of Dog.* RIN is true in (4), which can be paraphrased as 'among the photos that Sally bought, the largest one is of Dog'. Although (4a) does not allow RIN, Tomaszwicz (2015) and Shen (to appear) observe that the **overt movement of the focus** *Dog* out of the superlative DP makes RIN available in clefts (4b), pseudoclefts, relative clauses.

(4) Scenario: There are photos of Dog and Fish for sale. Sally bought one photo of Dog and two photos of Fish indicated in the picture.
a.   #Sally bought the largest photo of Dog.
b.   It was Dog that Sally bought the largest photo of.

LF for RIN is in (5) where the focus *Dog* is required to move to the clausal level (P&T; Shen to appear; Tomaszewicz 2015). In (4a) the non-movement of *Dog* rules out RIN. Since this movement made RIN available, it must be a movement in the narrow syntax, not in PF. Shen (to appear) accounts for the overt/covert asymmetry with the Shortest principle in Richard 2001.

(5) [Dog$_F$ [[$_{DegP}$ EST-C] [~S [Sally bought t$_{DegP}$ large photo of t$_F$]]]]

Crucial Example (6): RIN + Fragment. In (4), the *wh*-question (6) can be answered with the fragment answer in (6-A1), indicating RIN, but not (6-A2). Weir's and O&S's approaches predict (6-A1) not to have an interpretation missing in the full answer. The availability of RIN is expected if *Dog* undergoes movement in narrow syntax: *Dog* moves to Spec,CP, the LF for RIN is generated and the rest of the sentence has elided as in (7).

(6)   Q: Of what did Sally buy the largest photo?   (adopted from Szabolcsi 1986 and Shen to appear)
         A1:   Dog.   A2:   #Sally bought the largest photo of Dog.

(7) LF for (6-A1): [Dog$_F$ ~~[[$_{DegP}$ EST-C] [~S [Sally bought t$_{DegP}$ large photo of t$_F$]]]~~]   (word count: 498)

Selected References:

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