Title: Fragment Answers and Movement - a Superlative Argument

Overview: This paper makes a novel link between the nature of fragment answers and superlative interpretations to argue against two recent approaches to fragment answers, and shows that the fragment undergoes movement in narrow syntax and not just PF.

Fragment Answers involve answering a question (1a) without pronouncing the full sentence (1c), but a subpart of it as in (1b). Merchant (2004 a.o.) argues that fragment answers are derived from movement and ellipsis. In (2), the fragment answer starts as a full answer, then the fragment *apples* undergoes movement to Spec, CP, and the rest of the sentence is elided.

(1) a. What did John eat?

- b. Apples.
- c. John ate apples.

- (2) [CP Apples [TP John ate tapples.]]
- (3) John ate apples.

Recent analyses deviate from the Merchant-style movement approach. Weir (2014, 2015) argues that the fragment only moves in PF thus has no interpretive effects. Ott & Struckmeier (2015a, b) argue that fragment answers do not involve movement and the rest of the sentence gets elided as in (3). Both accounts predict that the fragment will be interpreted in its base-generated position, either trivially or through reconstruction.

Relative Reading with NP Internal Focus (RIN) is recently observed by Pancheva & Tomaszewicz (2012) (P&T) in superlative expressions such as *the largest photo of Dog*. RIN is true in the scenario 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, Shen (to appear) observes that RIN is available in English once the focus *Dog* is **overtly moved** out of the superlative DP in constructions such as cleft in (4b).

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



All the RIN accounts argue for an LF in (5) where crucially the focus *Dog* is required to move to the clausal level (P&T; Shen 2013, to appear; Tomaszewicz 2015). In other words, the movement of *Dog* is necessary for RIN (4b). In (4a) the non-movement of *Dog* rules out RIN.

(5) [Dog_F [[Deg_P EST-C] [\sim S [Sally bought t_{DegP} large photo of t_F]]]]

Crucial Example in (6): RIN + Fragment. In the scenario in (4), the wh-question in (6) can be answered with the fragment answer in A1, indicating RIN, but not with the full answer in A2. If Weir's and Ott & Struckmeier's approaches are on the right track, (6-A1) cannot have an interpretation that is missing in the full answer. On the other hand, if the fragment *Dog* in A1 does undergo movement in narrow syntax, the data fall out naturally: *Dog* moves to the clause domain, 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)
 A1: Dog. A2: *Sally bought the largest photo of Dog.
- (7) LF for (6-A1): $[Dog_F + \{ Deg_P EST C \}] \sim S [Sally bought t_{Deg_P} large photo of t_F]]]$

References: Merchant 2001, 2004; Pancheva & Tomaszewicz 2012 WCCFL 30; Shen 2013 WCCFL 31, to appear PLC 38; Szabolcsi 1986; Tomaszewicz 2015 SALT; Weir 2014 Umass Diss, 2015 LSA; Ott & Struckmeier, 2015a PLC 39; 2015b WCCFL 33.