Please, Trim Your Replies! A hybrid fragment answer in Russian

Julie Goncharov, University of Toronto

The goal of this talk is to provide a syntactic analysis of constructions in which Russian *samyj* is used as part of a fragment answer, see (1). I show that A’s reply in (1) has a hybrid derivation combining properties of fragment answers to *wh*-questions (e.g. Merchant 2004) with properties of polarity particles (e.g. Authier 2013).

(1)  
A: Do you remember Peter? He called me yesterday.  
B: Which Peter? Peter who plays the violin?  
A: On samyj.  
   he self-M.SG.NOM  
   ‘That’s the one.’ (lit. He himself.)

In the dialogue in (1), A affirms the identity of Peter. In addition, A’s reply has an emphatic flavour when compared to simple answers, such as *Da* ‘yes’ or *On* ‘he’.

**Properties of Pron+*samyj*** Pron+*samyj* has a number of peculiar properties:  
(i) As illustrated above, it can be used as an affirmative answer to a *yes/no*-question.  
(ii) Pron+*samyj* can be embedded under reportative verbs and epistemic modals, but is deviant under modals expressing desire.  
(iii) Pron+*samyj* is incompatible with negation.  
(iv) For most speakers, Pron+*samyj* cannot surface in a regular argument position.  

These properties clearly distinguish *samyj* from the so-called emphatic reflexives as in *On sam prišel* ‘He himself came’ (e.g. Klenin 1980).

**Analysis** The analysis I propose derives the fragment answer *On samyj* ‘He self’ in (1) from the identity statement ‘He self is Peter’. I argue that ‘he self’ raises to the specifier of a positive Polarity Phrase above TP and triggers an obligatory TP-ellipsis (e.g. Merchant 2004, Progovac 2005, Authier 2013), see (2):

(2)  
\[ [\text{PolP} \ [\text{DP} \ \text{he self}], \ [\text{Pol} \ \text{Pol}\_+ \ [\text{TP} t \ \text{is Peter}]]) \] (simplified)

That is to say, I propose that Pron+*samyj* has an intermediate status between a fragment answer and a positive polarity particle, such as *yes*. Like a fragment answer (e.g. Merchant 2004), it is derived by TP-ellipsis and shows case-connectivity and preposition-stranding effects characteristic of fragment answers in other languages. However unlike fragment answers, Pron+*samyj* surfaces in PolP rather than FocusP which assimilates it to polarity particles. Like polarity particles, Pron+*samyj* can be used to answer a *yes/no*-question (property (i)), shows the embeddability restrictions (property (ii)) and makes the TP-ellipsis obligatory (property (iv)), see Authier 2013. The incompatibility with negation (property (iii)) is explained by postulating that *samyj* is an emphatic marker dependent on the positive value of PolP.

Thus, I argue that the fragment answers with Pron+*samyj* in Russian are different from other non-sentential phenomena in other languages, such as fragment answers to *wh*-questions, polarity particles and, additionally, the so-called *Ga*-ellipsis in Slovenian (e.g. Dvórák 2007).