**Grammar theory as ideology –**

**When metaphors are mistaken forontologies**

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In generative grammar, the concept of ‘movement’ is a theoretical core concept with an asserted ontological status. In practice, however, it is treated like a metaphor.

These metaphors (i.e. structure as the result of merge & move; linearization as a by-product of ‘spell-out’) are widely shared and – by habituation – have gradually changed into ontological convictions, in spite of the absence of any immediate evidence for their ontological status or appropriateness. In the presentation, I shall illustrate ways in which the ‘movement ideology’ frames and confuses the modelling of syntactic data.

The ‘merge & move’ metaphor invites a reverse engineering perspective on the role of gram­mar in determining syntactic wellformedness: An expression is well-formed if it is paired with a successful derivation, that is, with its flawless derivational ‘history’. This is a highly indirect way of matching an expression with its well-formedness requirements.

In the competing representational approaches, grammatical wellformedness is characterized in a direct way: An expression is well-formed if the structure of the expression meets the grammatical requirements that are applied to the structure.