The paper analyzes the unidirectional change of *rather* as a consequence of syntactic structure, movement, and interpretation principles at the syntax-semantics interface. **Claim**: *rather* than structures (RTSs) develop capitalizing on a temporal scale, using it in an ordering (degree-) structure, and reinterpreting the output as a modal structure.

**Ingredients** RTS are comparatives (Dieterich & Napoli 1982). Semantic reasons why RTSs resemble comparatives have been neglected. Doxastic weighing of alternatives is available: In (1), instead of the logically following q from the expectations-background, a doxastic alternative - p - is closer to the truth-evaluation of the (fictious) situation. This is a modal reading in terms of possible situations, not worlds (adopting Kratzer 2007). (2) bouletic readings exist; (3) temporal *rath(er)* existed.

**Proposal**: 1. OE/ME *rath(er)* induced a temporal scale (Mitchell 1985). In comparatives, this involves QR (Heim 2006, Stechow 2006); see (4a). 2. Situations which are preferred or more likely are frequently communicated through ‘earlier, faster’ (cf. German *eher* a.m.o.). The set of times denoted by the Asp phrases in (4) are not sets of times (<i,t>) after the change, but sets of situation in a modal ordering (e.g. desires). See Heim 1992, though the alternative to p is not necessarily non-p (Villalta 2006). RTSs are a cheap way to order distinct p and q. 3. The change from times to situations for the AspPs becomes fatal for interpreting the structure. Without the set of times, Past can serve no function, no IFA (Heim & Kratzer 1998) can apply. One is stuck with two sets of situations and the *rather* predicate “in-between”, in an originally moved dependency. The moved generalized quantifier of times is re-interpreted as a first-merged relation. The semantic movement index has no application (no compositional rule can use it) and is erased. With the movement-dependency lost, a modal structure obtains. The than clause is its “restrictor”.

**Summary**: While Merge over Move is historically widely present, the case study shows and explains how it obtains on LF trees.

(1) She heard Spanish and Korean, Russian and Chinese, Arabic and Greek,… but rather [q than feel intimidated …], [p she exulted in this variety of human sound] (P. Auster *The Brooklyn Follies*)

(2) Harry [p walked to work ] rather [q than drive]. (Dieterich & Napoli 1982)

(3) a. sterres of the north [arisen] rather than the degree of her longitude
   b. … for Cristes swete tree, / Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, benedicite! (PPCME2 and Chaucer, *The Miller’s Tale*, respectively)

(4) Analysis in a nutshell:

![Diagram of comparative- temporal structure](image)

![Diagram of modal structure](image)

(5) \[ ([rath]^{p(a)}(s) = 1 \text{ iff } \forall q: q \neq p \land q \in g(C): p >_{\text{DES}_{a,s}} q \text{ (where } >_{\text{DES}_{a,s}} \text{ is suitably defined; cf Heim 1992; Villalta 2006; with } p, q \text{ sets of situations here}) \]