On the temporal and modal interpretation of unmarked verbs in Paraguayan Guaraní

Judith Tonhauser

The Ohio State University

judith@ling.osu.edu

This talk explores the temporal and modal interpretation of Paraguayan Guaraní verbs that are realized without any (verbal) temporal, mood or modal markers. I motivate that these verbs, which I refer to as *unmarked verbs*, are by default interpreted as (non-future) realis, and that this default interpretation can be overridden in certain, well-defined contexts. Since over 70% of verbs in natural discourse are unmarked, understanding their temporal and modal properties is key to analyzing Paraguayan Guaraní temporality and modality. I conclude by arguing that Matthewson's (2006) proposal that unmarked verbs in St'át'imcets are interpreted by a phonologically zero, non-future tense morpheme cannot be extended to Paraguayan Guaraní.

Reference: Matthewson, L. (2005). Temporal semantics in a supposedly tenseless language. *Linguistics and Philosophy 29*, 673-713.