This talk will be mainly devoted to the description of the intonational phonology of Sardinian, as well as the interplay processes existing between intonation, lexicon, and syntax in conveying specific pragmatic meanings. Sardinian is considered to be the most conservative of the Romance languages regarding phonology. Some of its archaic features in terms of phonology when compared to other Romance languages are: preservation of the original sound of Latin short vowels [i] and [u] while in languages such as Catalan, Italian or Spanish they have changed into [e]/[ɛ] and [o] respectively (pira > pira ‘pear’ but pera (Cat., It., Spa.); absence of diphthongizations found in other Romance languages (pote ‘s/he can’ but può (It.) or puede (Spa.), etc. However, Sardinian also shows a number of phonetic innovations such as the transformation of Latin -ll- into a retroflex [ʎ] (caballus > c(u)addu ‘horse’, villa > bidda ‘city’), or vowel prothesis in Logudorese Sardinian before an initial s followed by consonant like in Western Romance (scriptum > iscritu ‘written’; escrit (Cat.), écrit (Fr.) or escrito (Spa.)), etc. (Ingrassia and Blasco Ferrer 2009). Data from two dialectal varieties will be presented in this seminar, namely, Logudorese Sardinian (northern part of Sardinia, apart from the Gallura region), and Campidanese Sardinian (region known as Campidano, southern Sardinia). The most prominent differences between Logudorese and Campidanese Sardinian involve lexicon and phonetics. Despite the differences between these varieties, it is important to say that they are not significant enough to prevent the mutual comprehension between speakers of Logudorese and Campidanese Sardinian.

Previous research on Sardinian intonation has mainly focused on describing the intonation patterns found in yes-no questions (Contini 1976 for Central Logudorese, Schirru 1982 for Sardinian regional Italian), even though recent studies have analyzed other sentence types such as neutral declaratives also compared to yes-no questions (Lai 2002 for Central Logudorese) or vocatives (Vanrell and Cabré 2011 for Logudorese Sardinian). During the last year, the first studies within the Autosegmental-Metrical framework have been conducted focusing on different issues such as pitch accent alignment (Kim & Repetti to appear) or the relationship between prosody and meaning (Vanrell et al. to appear). To our knowledge, no study exists describing the intonation patterns of different sentence types and pragmatic meanings in different Sardinian varieties following the same controlled methodology. This is the specific contribution of this research.

We will describe the intonation and phrasing patterns found in a variety of sentence types (statements, questions, commands and requests, vocatives) as well as the lexicosyntactic markers used to convey some specific pragmatic meanings associated to these sentence types. Special attention will be devoted to yes-no questions, since they have been characterized as featuring a variety of linguistic markers that are said to be related to evidentiality/epistemicity properties, such as the following: (a) optional presence of sentence-initial particles such as a or nachi (na(rat) chi, ‘he/she says that’), as in A benis a jocare chin mecus? ‘Are you coming to play with me?’, Nachi benis a mandigare? ‘Are you coming to eat (I suppose so)?’; see Jones 1993); (b) optional fronting of the constituents (Mandicatu as? ‘Have yo eaten?’, Ello inoche ses? ‘Are you here?’; see Remberger 2010); and (c) a variety of intonation patterns (¡H+L* L% in the ToBI system; see Contini 1976, Schirru 1982 and Vanrell et al. 2011). After that, the basic inventory of pitch accents and boundary tones attested in Sardinian with their phonetic realizations and distributional properties will be described.

Finally, we will summarize the major findings of this research and its general conclusions. Our results will provide evidence that Sardinian uses the most general contrasts found in other Romance languages and for the necessity of an extra high tone in order to account for relevant linguistic contrasts. Moreover, Sardinian language adds to the group of languages/varieties such as Alguerese/Balearic/Northwestern/Tarragonese Catalan and Galician which use falling intonation patterns for yes-no questions. Interestingly, these languages/varieties are spoken for example in lateral (as opposed to central areas) or isolated (islands) areas, which according to
Bartoli (1925) tend to show archaic linguistic traits. According to Bartoli’s principles, one could hypothesize that the presence of falling intonational patterns in yes-no questions is another relic feature found in Sardinian.

References


Kim, M., Repetti, L. Accepted. Bitonal pitch accent and phonological alignment in Sardinian. *Probus*.


