

# THE SYNTAX OF DISCOURSE PARTICLES: A COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON SPANISH *pero*

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SPADISYN III  
University of Alcalá  
October 19-20 2019

# INTRODUCTION

The Spanish conjunction *pero* 'but' may function as a *discourse marker* connecting contrastively two propositions *p* and *q* (Portolés 2001).

- (1) El intendente es un nabo, *pero* ganó las elecciones.  
the mayor is a turnip but won.3SG the elections  
'The mayor is an idiot, but he won the elections.'
- (2) A: Cosmo es buen tipo.  
Cosmo is good guy  
'Cosmo is a good guy.'
- B: *Pero* es un poco amarrete.  
but is a little stingy  
'But he is also a little cheap.'

# INTRODUCTION

Since *pero* forms a constituent with the second proposition  $q$  and precedes it, I call this element *initial pero*.

(3)  $p$  *pero*  $q$  *initial pero*

In certain varieties, *pero* may appear “to the right” of the proposition  $q$ . I call this phenomenon *final pero*.

(4)  $p$   $q$  *pero* *final pero*

In all varieties exhibiting the pattern in (4), this is an entirely optional ordering as they still can use (3).

(5) OBSERVATION I

If *final pero* is available in a Spanish variety  $S_1$ , *initial pero* is also available in  $S_1$ .

## THE *final pero* LANDSCAPE

The *final pero* phenomenon can be attested in Andean Spanish.

- (6) Me encanta el fútbol. No me gusta el tenis, *pero*.  
1SG.DAT love soccer not 1SG.DAT like the tennis but  
'I love soccer, but I don't like tennis.'

According to the *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* (RAE 2009: 2458), this phenomenon is due to the influence of Quechua.

- (7) Kunan-qa eskuyla-ta-n ripu-saq; paqarin-*taq* *ichaqa*  
today-TOP school-DIR-FOC go-FUT tomorrow-CONT but  
tayta-y-*taq* yanapa-saq.  
dad-1SG-CONT help-FUT  
'Today I have to go to school. But tomorrow I have to help my dad.'

*Quechua (Cusihuamán 2001: 240)*

## THE *final pero* LANDSCAPE

The *final pero* construction is not restricted to Andean dialects. The example in (8) corresponds to the Spanish variety spoken in Palma de Mallorca.

- (8) Siempre recibieron otros. No recibí yo, *pero*.  
always received other not received I but  
'Others always received (stuff). But I never received (anything).'

Levas (2018) suggests that the *final pero* construction in Mallorcan Spanish is a Spanish-Catalan contact phenomenon.

- (9) ... jo no us hi podria acompanyar, *però*.  
I not you there could accompany but  
'... but I couldn't accompany you there.' Catalan (Levas 2018)

## THE *final pero* LANDSCAPE

Finally, *final pero* is also attested in variety spoken in the city of Bahía Blanca and surroundings, in Argentina.

- (10) El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, *pero*.  
the major is a turnip won the elections but  
'The major is an idiot. But he won the elections.'

- (11) A: Cosmo es buen tipo.  
Cosmo is good guy  
'Cosmo is a good guy.'
- B: Es un poco amarrete, *pero*.  
is a little stingy but  
'But he is a little cheap.'

# THE *final pero* LANDSCAPE

The language contact account seems to hold for Bahiense Spanish as well:

- ☞ Half the population of Bahía Blanca was immigrant by 1914,
- ☞ by far, the most numerous group was the Italian contingent,
- ☞ General Italian exhibits *final pero*, e.g., (12).

(12) ... era la settimana scorsa, *però*.  
was the week last but

‘... but it was last week.’ Italian (Maiden & Robustelli 2013: 417)

# IN THIS PRESENTATION...

Sorry, but I WILL NOT DISCUSS language contact.

The focus of my talk will be the comparison of syntactic patterns involving *final pero* in Andean, Mallorcan and Bahiense Spanish.

- A number of non-trivial properties of *final pero* remain constant across these three Spanish dialects.
- Variation was detected regarding certain distributional restrictions.
- An analysis of these distributional constraints is advanced in terms of Haegeman's (2014) *speech act layer*.



## CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

As for the properties of *final pero* attested in all varieties, the following observation seems to hold.

### (13) OBSERVATION II

The properties of *final pero* that remain constant across varieties are also attested in *initial pero*.

An alternative way to put it is the following:

### (13) OBSERVATION II'

The properties of *final pero* that vary from one dialect to another are not in variation for *initial pero initial pero*.

Thus, the data that follow involve a comparison between *initial pero* and *final pero*.

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are discourse markers.

☞ Neither *initial pero* nor *final pero* can alter the truth value of their host sentence.

- (14)
- a. El intendente es un nabo y ganó las elecciones.  
the mayor is a turnip and won the elections  
'The mayor is an idiot and won the elections'.
  - b. El intendente es un nabo. *Pero* ganó las elecciones.  
the mayor is a turnip but won the elections  
'The mayor is an idiot. But he won the elections'.
  - c. El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, *pero*.  
the mayor is a turnip won the elections but  
'The mayor is an idiot. But he won the elections'.

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are discourse markers.

☞ Both elements are insensitive to sentence mood.

(15) A: No tengo ganas de salir.  
not have desire of go.out  
'I'm not in the mood to go out.'

B: ¿*Pero* vas a ir a la fiesta?  
but go to go to the party  
'But are you going to the party?'

(16) Ya se fueron todos. ¡*Pero* vos no te vayas!  
already SE left all but you not SE go  
Everyone left already. But don't you leave!

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are discourse markers.

☞ Both elements are insensitive to sentence mood.

(17) A: No tengo ganas de salir.  
not have desire of go.out  
'I'm not in the mood to go out.'

B: ¿Vas a ir a la fiesta, *pero*?  
go to go to the party but  
'But are you going to the party?'

(18) Ya se fueron todos. ¡Vos no te vayas, *pero*!  
already SE left all you not SE go but  
Everyone left already. But don't you leave!

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are discourse markers.

☞ Both types of *pero* guide inferential processes during discourse.

(19) [SOMEONE IS ASKED WHETHER SHE IS HAPPY WITH HER NEW JOB.]

☹ El sueldo es muy bueno. *Pero* siempre tardan en pagarme.  
the salary is very good but always delay in pay.me  
'The salary is very good. But there is always a delay with my payment.'

INFERENCE: *she is not happy with the job.*

😊 Siempre tardan en pagarme. *Pero* el sueldo es muy bueno.  
always delay in pay.me but the salary is very good  
'There is always a delay with my payment. But the salary is very good.'

INFERENCE: *she is happy with the job.*

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are discourse markers.

☞ Both types of *pero* guide inferential processes during discourse.

(20) [SOMEONE IS ASKED WHETHER SHE IS HAPPY WITH HER NEW JOB.]

☹ El sueldo es muy bueno. Siempre tardan en pagarme, *pero*.  
the salary is very good always delay in pay.me but  
'The salary is very good. But there is always a delay with my payment.'

INFERENCE: *she is not happy with the job.*

😊 Siempre tardan en pagarme. El sueldo es muy bueno, *pero*.  
always delay in pay.me the salary is very good but  
'There is always a delay with my payment. But the salary is very good.'

INFERENCE: *she is happy with the job.*

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* are sentence peripheral.

(21) *Cosmo is a good guy...*

- a. *pero* también es un poco amarrete.  
but too is a little stingy  
'but he is also a little stingy.'
- b. \*también *pero* es un poco amarrete.  
too but is a little stingy

(22) *Cosmo is a good guy...*

- a. es un poco amarrete también, *pero*.  
is a little stingy too but  
'but he is also a little stingy.'
- b. \*es un poco amarrete, *pero*, también .  
is a little stingy but too

## CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

Both forms of *pero* are restricted to matrix contexts.

- (23) a. Está lloviendo mucho. *Pero* el partido se juega.  
is raining much but the match SE plays  
'It is raining a lot. But the match will be played.'
- b. Está lloviendo mucho. El partido se juega, *pero*.  
is raining much the match SE plays but
- (24) Está lloviendo mucho. [<sub>prot</sub> Si el partido, *sin embargo*,  
is raining much if the match without impediment  
se juega], me voy a mojar.  
SE plays 1SG.ACC go to wet  
'It is raining. If the match, however, is played, I'm going to get wet.'



# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

Both forms of *pero* are restricted to matrix contexts.

(25) *It is raining a lot...*

- a. \* [*prot* si *pero* el partido se juega], me voy a mojar.  
if but the match SE plays 1SG.ACC go to wet  
*Intended*: 'if the match, however, is played, I'm going to get wet.'
- b. \* [*prot* si el partido se juega, *pero*], me voy a mojar.  
if the match SE plays but 1SG.ACC go to wet

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

Both forms of *pero* are restricted to matrix contexts.

- (26) Afuera está re nublado. El pronóstico dice que el día  
outside is very cloudy the forecast says that the day  
está lindo, *pero*.  
is nice but  
'It is very cloudy outside. But the forecast says that it is a nice  
day.'
- (27) a. El pronóstico dice [<sub>CP</sub> que el día está lindo], *pero*.  
≈ *The forecast, however, says that it is a nice day.*  
b. \* El pronóstico dice [<sub>CP</sub> que el día está lindo, *pero*].  
≈ *The forecast says that it is, however, a nice day.*

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Final pero* expresses a subset of the meanings of *initial pero*.

Siguiendo a Lakoff (1971) y Rivarola (1976), pueden distinguirse dos tipos de relaciones contrastivas.

- ✎ CONCESSIVITY (aka *denial-of-expectation*)  
Presuppositional phenomenon; a concessive proposition  $q$  denies a presupposed expectation arising from a prior proposition  $p$  and “default” world knowledge.
- ✎ SEMANTIC OPPOSITION  
Non-presuppositional phenomenon; the proposition  $q$  expresses an opposition regarding some dimension of the meaning of a proposition  $p$ .

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Final pero* expresses a subset of the meanings of *initial pero*.

Languages vary on how they lexicalize concessivity and semantic opposition. The examples in (28) and (29) are from English and Russian.

- (28) a. John is short, *but* he is still good at basketball. *concessivity*  
b. John is short, *but* Bill is tall. *semantic opposition*
- (29) a. Vanja prostudilsja, *no* poshel v shkolu.  
Vanja caught.cold but went to school  
'Vanja caught cold, but went to school.' *concessivity*  
b. Petja staratel'nyj, *a* Vanja lenivyk.  
Petja diligent CONJ Vanja lazy  
'Petja is diligent, but Vanja is lazy.' *semantic opposition*

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Final pero* expresses a subset of the meanings of *initial pero*.

The Spanish varieties exhibiting *final pero* seem to lexicalize concessivity and semantic opposition in the following way.

- (30) a. CONCESSIVITY  $\rightarrow$  *initial pero* or *final pero*  
b. SEMANTIC OPPOSITION  $\rightarrow$  *initial pero*

The ambiguity of *initial pero* in Spanish is well-known (Rivarola 1976).

- (31) a. El intendente es un nabo. *Pero* ganó las elecciones.  
the mayor is a turnip but won the elections  
'The mayor is an idiot. But he won the elections.' *concessivity*  
b. Gerardo es alto, *pero* Jorge es petiso.  
Gerardo is tall but Jorge is short  
'Gerardo is tall, but Jorge is short.'

*semantic opposition*

# CONSTANT PROPERTIES OF *final pero*

*Final pero* expresses a subset of the meanings of *initial pero*.

*Final pero*, however, does not seem to be able to express semantic opposition, only concessivity.

- (32) a. El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, *pero*.  
the mayor is a turnip won the elections but  
'The mayor is an idiot. But he won the elections.' *concessivity*
- b. \*Gerardo es alto, Jorge es petiso, *pero*.  
Gerardo is tall Jorge is short but  
'Gerardo is tall, but Jorge is short.' *semantic opposition*

## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* have different distributions with respect to vocative elements.

- (33) TEACHER: ¡Juancito, estás castigado sin recreo!  
Juancito are grounded without break  
'Juancito, you are grounded!'
- JUANCITO: *Pero* yo no hice nada, *Seño*.  
but I not did nothing Miss  
'But I didn't do anything, Miss.'
- JUANCITO': *Pero Seño*, yo no hice nada.  
but Miss I not did nothing
- JUANCITO'': *Seño, pero* yo no hice nada.  
Miss but I not did nothing

## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Final pero* manifests distinct distributions with respect to vocative elements in different varieties; *initial pero* does not vary in this regard.

- (34) TEACHER: ¡Juancito, estás castigado sin       recreo!  
                  Juancito are   grounded without break
- JUANCITO:     Yo no hice nada, *pero*, *Seño*.  
                  I not did nothing but Miss  
ANDEAN: ✓ – MALLORCAN: ✓ – BAHIENSE: \*
- JUANCITO':    Yo no hice nada, *Seño*, *pero*.  
                  I not did nothing Miss but  
ANDEAN: \* – MALLORCAN: \* – BAHIENSE: \*
- JUANCITO'':   *Seño*, yo no hice nada, *pero*.  
                  Miss I not did nothing but  
ANDEAN: ✓ – MALLORCAN: ✓ – BAHIENSE: ??



## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* have different distributions with respect to other conjunctions.

As Portolés (2001: 51) points out, *initial pero* cannot form sequences like *pero y* 'but and', or *pero aunque* 'but although'.

(35) *It rained the whole holidays week...*

\* *pero y* lo pasamos lindo.

but and it spent nice

*Intended:* 'but we had fun.'

(36) *I don't like it when you correct me...*

\* *pero aunque* en este caso tenés razón.

but although in this case have reason

*Intended:* 'but in this case you are right.'

## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* have different distributions with respect to other conjunctions.

*Final pero* cannot co-appear with the conjunction *y* 'and' either.

(37) *It rained the whole holidays week...*

\* *y* lo pasamos lindo, *pero*.  
and it spent nice but  
*Intended*: 'but we had fun.'

But it can co-appear with *aunque* 'although' in Bahiense Spanish.

(38) *I don't like it when you correct me...*

*aunque* en este caso tenés razón, *pero*.  
although in this case have reason, *pero*  
'but in this case you are right.'

ANDEAN: \* – MALLORCAN: \* – BAHIENSE: ✓

## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* have different distributions with respect to some other discourse markers.

The marker *bueno* 'well' expresses that the speaker admits what her interlocutor said (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999: 4162).

- (39) A: El intendente es un nabo.  
the mayor is a turnip  
'The mayor is an idiot.'
- B: *Bueno*, *pero* ganó las elecciones.  
well but won the elections  
'Well, but he won the elections.'
- B': *Bueno*, ganó las elecciones, *pero*.  
well won the elections, but
- ANDEAN: ✓ – MALLORCAN: ✓ – BAHIENSE: \*

## VARIATION OF *final pero*

*Initial pero* and *final pero* have different distributions with respect to some discourse markers.

This contrast does not hold for every discourse marker, e.g., *igual* 'anyway'.

- (40) El intendente es un nabo. *Pero* ganó las elecciones *igual*.  
the mayor is a turnip but won the elections anyway  
'The mayor is a turnip. But he won the elections anyway.'
- (41) El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones *igual*, *pero*.  
the mayor is a turnip but won the elections anyway  
'The mayor is a turnip. But he won the elections anyway.'
- ANDEAN: ✓ – MALLORCAN: ✓ – BAHIENSE: ✓

# INTERIM SUMMARY

## (5) OBSERVATION I

If *final pero* is available in a Spanish variety  $S_1$ , *initial pero* is also available in  $S_1$ .

## (13) OBSERVATION II

The properties of *final pero* that remain constant across varieties are also attested in *initial pero*.

- *Initial pero* and *final pero* do not alter the truth-value of their propositions,
- are insensitive to sentence mood,
- occupy a peripheral position in the sentence,
- are restricted to matrix clauses,
- and express concessivity.

# INTERIM SUMMARY

As for the microvariation of *final pero*:

	ANDEAN	MALLORCAN	BAHIENSE
VOC – CP – <i>pero</i>	✓	✓	??
CP – <i>pero</i> – VOC	✓	✓	*
CP – VOC – <i>pero</i>	*	*	*
<i>aunque</i> – CP – <i>pero</i>	*	*	✓
<i>bueno</i> – CP – <i>pero</i>	✓	✓	*

## TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS

- ✓ OBSERVATION I and OBSERVATION II suggest that *final pero* is a syntactic variant of *initial pero*.
- ✓ A syntactic analysis of *final pero* needs to account for the distributional restrictions attested in each dialect.

# GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE ANALYSIS

The analysis can be sketchily summarized in three items.

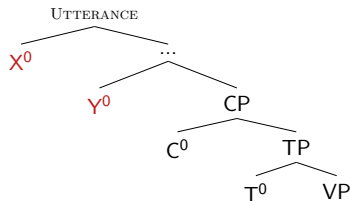
- ☞ Spanish has two homophonous forms of *pero*, one is the concessive *pero<sub>conc</sub>*, while *pero<sub>op</sub>* expresses semantic opposition.
- ☞ Both forms are sentence-initial in General Spanish.
- ☞ In some dialects, *pero<sub>conc</sub>* admits a movement-based syntactic variant.

The following assumptions on the nature of *pero<sub>conc</sub>* are required.

- ☞ At the assertion level, *pero<sub>conc</sub>* is an identity function taking an argument of type  $\langle t \rangle$ .
- ☞ At the presuppositional level, *pero<sub>conc</sub>*( $q$ ) in the context of a preceding proposition  $p$  triggers the presupposition that *if  $p$ , then normally  $\neg q$* .
- ☞ Syntactically, *pero<sub>conc</sub>* functions as a head of the *speech act layer* (Speas & Tenny 2003, Hill 2007, Haegeman 2014).

# ANALYSIS: THE SPEECH ACT LAYER

The *speech act layer* involves a set of functional projections above the CP level that syntactically encode part of the utterance-discourse interface.



where  $X^0$  and  $Y^0$  are heads of the *speech act layer*

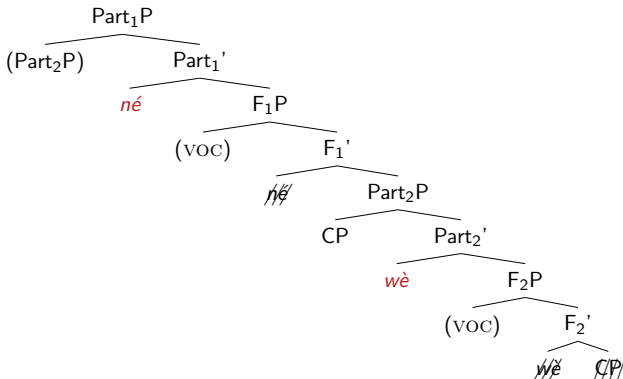
Assuming that *perconc* is one of these heads allows to account for:

- ✎ incapability of altering truth-values,
- ✎ insensitivity to sentence mood,
- ✎ restriction to matrix clauses, and
- ✎ peripheral position.



# ANALYSIS: THE SPEECH ACT LAYER

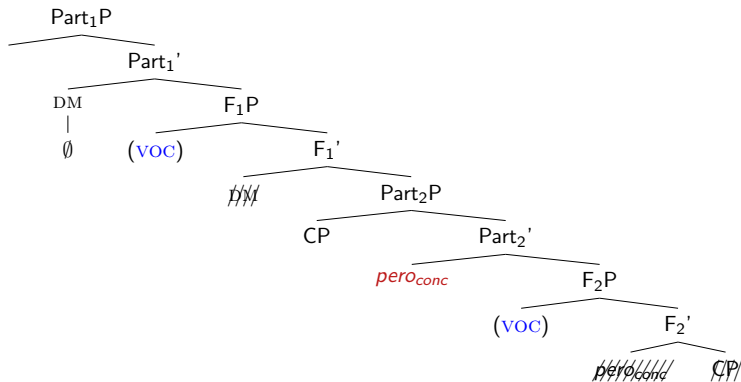
Haegeman's (2014) analysis of markers *né* and *wè* in West Flemish.



- Discourse particles involve a VP-shell type of structure.
- Final discourse particles involve movement to Spec,PartP.
- Vocatives alternate between two positions.

# ANALYSIS: ANDEAN AND MALLORCAN SPANISH

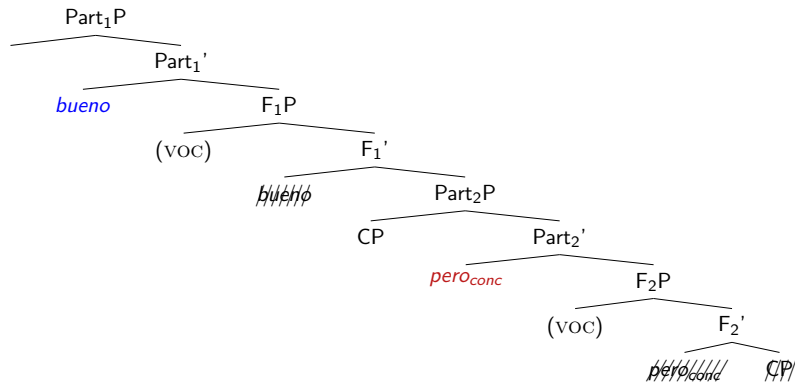
I propose that *pero<sub>conc</sub>* is introduced as the head of the lower particle shell.



- ☞ This derivation successfully predicts that the order CP–*(voc)*–*pero* is impossible in Andean and Mallorcan Spanish.

# ANALYSIS: ANDEAN AND MALLORCAN SPANISH

As for the examples in which *final pero* co-appears with *bueno* 'well', this is expected if the latter is introduced as the head of the higher particle shell.

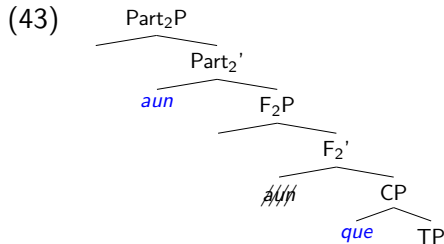


# ANALYSIS: ANDEAN AND MALLORCAN SPANISH

With respect to *aunque* 'although', I assume that it is formed by the concessive adverbial *aun* 'even' and the declarative complementizer *que*.

(42) *aunque* = [AdvP *aun* [CP *que* ... ]] Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2009: 734)

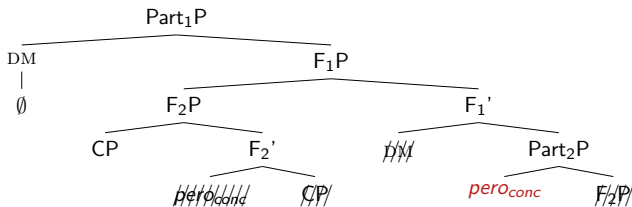
Specifically, I assume that *aun* is a head that competes with *pero<sub>conc</sub>* for the same position in Andean and Mallorcan (and General) Spanish.



☞ This predicts that *pero<sub>conc</sub>* and *aunque* cannot co-appear.

# ANALYSIS: BAHIENSE SPANISH

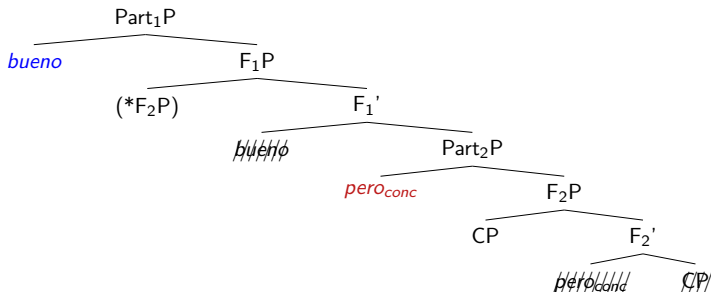
I propose that this variety derives the order CP-*pero*<sub>conc</sub> through successive movements involving the projection FP instead of PartP.



- ☞ As there are no positions available for vocatives, these cannot co-appear with *final pero* in this dialect.

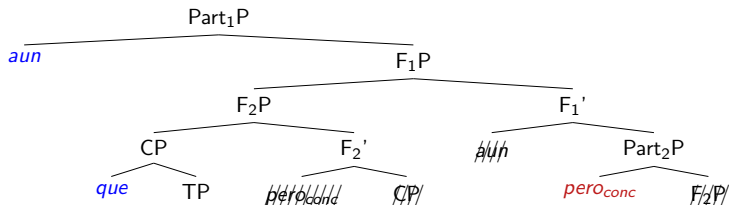
# ANALYSIS: BAHIENSE SPANISH

- ➡ Notice that inversion in this derivation requires exploiting both particle shells.
- ➡ Thus, if the higher discourse particle does not attract the  $F_2P$  constituent to its domain, *final pero* leads to ungrammaticality.
- ➡ Presumably this is what prevents *bueno* 'well' from co-appearing with *final pero* in this dialect.



# ANALYSIS: BAHIENSE SPANISH

As for the possibility of co-appearing with *aunque*, I assume that *aun* 'even' can function as the head of the higher particle shell in the Bahiense dialect.



- ➡ Movement of  $\text{F}_2\text{P}$  to  $\text{Spec},\text{F}_1\text{P}$  creates a context in which *aun* and *que* can linearly attach and form *aunque*.
- ➡ Thus, movement motivated by a discourse particle is taken to feed a morphological process.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

- A number of Spanish dialects exhibit *final pero*; the common denominator for the availability of the construction seems to be language contact.
- *Final pero* shares a number of properties with standard *initial pero*; these characteristics seem to remain constant for all the varieties manifesting *final pero*.
- There is variation across dialects regarding the distributional constraints of *final pero*.
- For Andean and Mallorcan Spanish, the structure of the *speech act layer* proposed by Haegeman (2014) accounts for the distributional restrictions of *final pero* rather straightforwardly.
- To account for the patterns in the Bahiense dialect, a number of additional assumptions are required, as the pattern exhibits further complexities.



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¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!