

FINAL *pero* AS A DISCOURSE PARTICLE IN BAHIENSE SPANISH

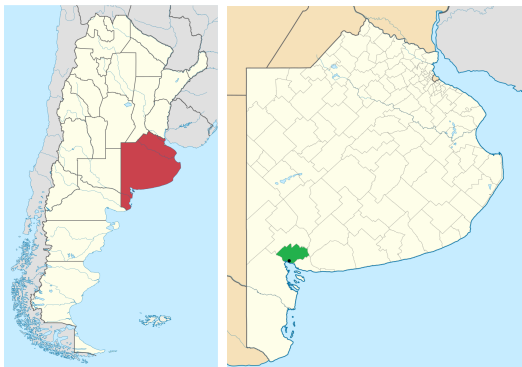
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INTRODUCTION

My talk focuses on a phenomenon attested in the Spanish variety spoken in the city of Bahía Blanca, Argentina.



More than 300,000 people live in the area (around 2,300 km²).

INTRODUCTION

In Spanish, the adversative conjunction *pero* ‘but’ may be used as a contrastive connector. When it does, it appears “in between” both propositions.

- (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) ANA: ¿Vas a ir a la fiesta?
go.3SG to go to the party
‘Are you going to the party?’

HERNÁN: Calculo que sí. **Pero** no tengo ganas.
think.1SG that yes not have.1SG urge but
‘I think so. I’m not in the mood, though.’

INTRODUCTION

In Bahiense Spanish, however, *pero* can also appear **at the end** of the second proposition.

- (3) El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, **pero**.
the mayor is a turnip won.3SG the elections but
'The mayor is an idiot. He won the elections, though'.
- (4) ANA: ¿Vas a ir a la fiesta?
go.3SG to go to the party
'Are you going to the party?'
- HERNÁN: Calculo que sí. No tengo ganas, **pero**.
think.1SG that yes not have.1SG urge but
'I think so. I'm not in the mood, though.'

People from Bahia Blanca call this phenomenon *pero bahiense* 'Bahian but'.

INTRODUCTION

To begin with, *pero bahiense* should be distinguished from suspended *pero* (5), and adverbial *pero* (6).

(5) Iba a comprarte un regalo, pero...
was.1SG to buy.you a gift but
'I was about to buy you a gift, but...'

(6) Esto requiere, pero/empero, un enfoque unificado.
This requires.3SG but/although a approach unified
'This requires, however, a unified approach.'

INTRODUCTION

Suspended *pero* is not final: it introduces an unpronounced proposition.

- (7) Iba a comprarte un regalo, pero... (no lo merecés)
was.1SG to buy.you a gift but not it deserve
'I was about to buy you a gift, but... (you don't deserve it).'

If the silent proposition is not salient enough, it is possible to ask about it, as in (8). This is not allowed with *pero bahiense*.

- (8) ANA: Iba a comprarte un regalo, pero...
was.1SG to buy.you a gift but
'I was about to buy you a gift, but...'
- HERNÁN: ¿Pero qué?
but what
'But what?'

INTRODUCTION

With respect to adverbial *pero*, my Bahiense informants tend to judge it as unacceptable. This is not surprising as it is a rather archaic construction.

(9) * Esto requiere, pero, un enfoque unificado.

This requires.3SG but a approach unified

‘This requires, however, a unified approach.’

Bahiense speakers’ judgment

There are some speakers that accept the construction, but they observe that “eso es algo que se puede decir, pero no suena bahiense” (*that is something you may say, but it does not sound Bahian-like*).

IN THIS TALK...

As far as I know, *pero bahiense* has never been described before. The data I will present today is based on a survey involving 50 *pero bahiense* users from Bahia Blanca.

In what follows:

- I will present to you some defining properties of *pero bahiense*, specially in comparison to initial connective *pero*.
- I will argue that *pero bahiense* is a final discourse particle.
- I will offer an sketchy analysis of the distribution of *pero bahiense* based on Haegeman's (2014) proposal for discourse markers in West Flemish.

MIRROR IMAGE?

Initial connective *pero* and *pero bahiense* have some properties in common that may lead to propose a unified analysis.

Connective *pero* must be the first thing in its sentence (10); *pero bahiense* must be the last (11).

- (10) a. Juan es buen tipo. **Pero** también un poco amarrete.
Juan is good guy. But also a little stingy
'Juan is a good guy. But also a little stingy'
- b. * Juan es buen tipo. También **pero** un poco amarrete.
- (11) a. Juan es buen tipo. Un poco amarrete también, **pero**.
Juan is good guy. a little stingy also but
'Juan is a good guy. But also a little stingy'
- b. * Juan es buen tipo. Un poco amarrete, **pero**, también.

MIRROR IMAGE?

Both connective *pero* and *pero bahiense* may appear in interrogative (12) and imperative sentences (13) given the right context.

- (12) ANA: No tengo ganas de salir.
 not have.1SG urge of go.out
 'I'm not in the mood to go out.'
- HERNÁN: ¿(**Pero**) vas a ir a la fiesta, (**pero**)?
 but go.2SG to go to the party but
 'Are you going to the party, though?'
- (13) Ya se fueron todos. ¡(**Pero**) vos no te vayas
 already SE go.3PL all but you not CL.2SG go.2SG
 todavía, (**pero**)!
 yet but
 'Everyone left already. But you don't go yet!'

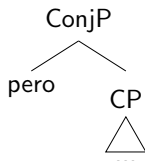
MIRROR IMAGE?

Other properties shared by connective *pero* and *pero bahiense*:

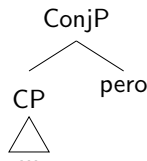
- They have seemingly the same contrastive meaning.
- Both appear in matrix clauses only.
- They are not truth-functional.

We may be tempted to propose a common analysis for both *peros* differing only in word order, i.e., some version of the contrast in (14).

(14) a.



b.



MIRROR IMAGE?

Compare the behaviour of both types of *pero* when adding the adversative conjunction *aunque* 'although'.

(15) No me gusta que me corrijas...
not 1SG.DAT like that 1SG.ACC correct.2SG
'I don't like it when you correct me.'

- a. * **Pero** aunque en este caso tenés razón.
but although in this case have.2SG reason
'Although in this case you are right'
- b. Aunque en este caso tenés razón, **pero**.
although in this case have.2SG reason but
'Although in this case you are right'

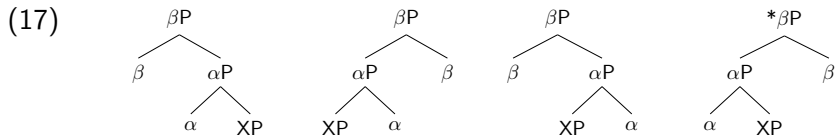
How is that *pero bahiense* accepts the presence of *aunque* even though they are supposed to be the same type of element?

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

There are reasons to believe that *pero bahiense* is a final particle. My first argument is a little indirect.

(16) Final-over-Final Condition – FOFC (Biberauer et al. 2014)

If α is a head-initial phrase and β is a phrase immediately dominating α , then β must be head-initial. If α is a head-final phrase, and β is a phrase immediately dominating α , then β can be head-initial or head-final.



(18) [ConjP [CP ... VERB OBJ] **pero**]

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

There is, however, a rather homogeneous set of elements that constitutes a systematic exception to FOFC: final particles.

- (19) Ni xiang chī muguā **ma**.
2SG want eat papaya Q
'Do you want to eat papaya?'

Mandarin

- (20) Bis sa ja tebire **ga**.
dog eat meat yesterday COMPL
'The dog has eaten the meat.'

Bagirmi

If *pero bahiense* is taken to be a final particle, the fact that it doesn't comply with FOFC is captured as part of a larger generalization.

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

Hill (2007) and Haegeman (2014) notice that discourse particles interact in interesting ways with vocatives. Consider the following West Flemish patterns from Haegeman (2014:128):

- (21) a. **Né** Valère, men artikel is gereed.
NÉ Valère my paper is ready
'Look, Valère, my paper is ready!'
- b. Men artikel is gereed, Valère, **né**
- c. Men artikel is gereed, **né** Valère.
- (22) a. Men artikel is gereed **wè**, Valère.
my paper is ready WÈ Valère
'My paper is ready, Valère, you know.'
- b. * Men artikel is gereed Valère, **wè**.

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

Something similar is attested with connective *pero* and *pero bahiense*. To begin with, connective *pero* does not seem to constrain the distribution of the vocative: it can appear at the left, at the right, and even before *pero*.

- (23) **TEACHER:** ¡Juancito, estás castigado sin recreo!
 Juancito are.2SG grounded without break
 ‘*Juancito, you are grounded!*’
- JUANCITO:** Señor, **pero** yo no hice nada.
 Miss but I not did.1SG nothing
 ‘*But I didn’t do anything, miss.*’
- JUANCITO’:** **Pero** Señor, yo no hice nada.
- JUANCITO’’:** **Pero** yo no hice nada, Señor.

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

However, *pero bahiense* seems to be totally incompatible with vocatives: they cannot co-appear no matter the position

(24) **TEACHER:** ¡Juancito, estás castigado sin recreo!
Juancito are.2SG grounded without break
'Juancito, you are grounded!'

JUANCITO: ?? Señor, yo no hice nada, **pero**.
Miss I not did.1SG nothing but
'But I didn't do anything, miss.'

JUANCITO': * Yo no hice nada, Señor, **pero**.

JUANCITO": * Yo no hice nada, **pero**, Señor.

I take these data to offer strong evidence against a unified analysis of both types of *pero*.

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

A recurring trait of discourse markers is that they have a *bleached* meaning in comparison to the lexical items they come from. Something similar may be said about connective *pero* and *pero bahiense*.

(25) ANA: Esa película es mala.
 that movie is.3SG bad
 ‘That movie is bad.’

 HERNÁN: ¡**Pero** no es mala!
 But not is.3SG bad
 ‘It’s not bad!’

(26) ANA: Esa película es mala.

 HERNÁN: * ¡No es mala, **pero**!

It seems that *pero bahiense* lacks some kind of adversative meaning.

IS *pero bahiense* A FINAL PARTICLE?

This effect is more explicit in the following example.

- (27) Antes de salir, pensé “voy a llevar una campera”.
Before of go.out thought.1SG go.1SG to carry a jacket
Pero no creí que me hiciera falta.
but not believed.1SG that 1SG.DAT do lack
‘Before going, I thought “I’ll bring the jacket”. But I didn’t believe I would need it’.
- (28) Antes de salir, pensé “voy a llevar una campera”. No creí que
me hiciera falta, **pero**.

My informants tend to interpret (28) as meaning that the speaker took the jacket; the preferred interpretation for (27) is that he did not take it. Once again, *pero bahiense* fails at expressing an adversative type of meaning.

WHERE DOES *pero bahiense* COME FROM?

While I have been describing the construction in Bahiense Spanish, patterns that are seemingly analogous to *pero bahiense* have been attested in Andean Spanish varieties.

- (29) Me encanta el fútbol, no me gusta el tenis **pero**.
1SG love the football not 1SG like the tennis but
'I love football, but I don't like tennis'.

However, the construction in these varieties seem to be different: they allow vocatives together with final *pero*.

- (30) Es muy difícil eso, amigo, **pero**.
is very difficult that friend but
'But that is very difficult, my friend'.

(Both examples here are anecdotal).

WHERE DOES *pero bahiense* COME FROM?

The use of final *pero* in Andean varieties is usually explained as a language contact phenomenon between Spanish and Quechua (e.g., NGLE 2009).

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

Quechua (Cusihuamán 2001:240)

This explanation does not apply to *pero bahiense* because of geographical reasons. In fact, I am not aware of any evidence supporting this hypothesis for Andean varieties either.

WHERE DOES *pero bahiense* COME FROM?

An alternative answer comes from Mulder & Thompson's (2008) analysis of *final-but* in Australian English.

(32) Got a few mates who play jazz. Not my kind of music, **but**.

According to Mulder & Thompson, *but* in Australian English is an element undergoing a process of grammaticalization from a connective conjunction to a final discourse particle that functions as a turn-yielding cue.

initial-*but* → Janus-faced *but* → final-*but*
'conjunction' mixed properties 'discourse particle'

WHERE DOES *pero bahiense* COME FROM?

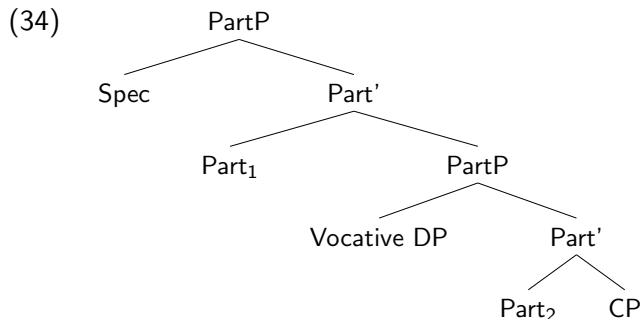
While I have no data to discuss whether Mulder & Thompson's proposal would work for *pero bahiense*, I think the idea is promising. Consider the following sentences:

- (33) a. # El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, **pero**.
the mayor is a turnip won.3SG the elections but
El otro candidato es peor.
the other candidate is worse
'The mayor is an idiot. He won the elections, though. The other candidate is even worse'.
- b. El intendente es un nabo. Ganó las elecciones, **pero**.

Speakers tend to reject fragments containing a *pero bahiense* that is followed by another sentence. This might show that *pero bahiense* works as a turn-yielding cue, just like final-*but* in Australian English.

A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

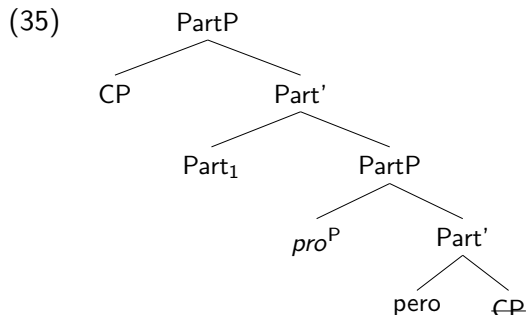
Haegeman (2014) proposes the following structure for the *Speech Act Layer* above CP. It is basically a vP-shell for discourse particles *Part*.



In this structure, (i) **Part₂** moves to **Part₁**, and (ii) **CP** moves to **Spec** if the particle is final.

A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

Additionally, I assume that a null pronoun pro^P that refers to the previous proposition is merged in the specifier position of *pero*.



As there is no position available for the vocative DP, it is predicted that no vocative may co-occur with *pero bahiense*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Some conclusions:

- We have seen that connective *pero* and *pero bahiense* share many properties.
- However, there are certain important differences with respect to their interpretation, the distribution of vocatives, the possibility of co-appearing with (other) adversative conjunctions.
- The overall evaluation of the construction leads to classify *pero bahiense* as a final discourse particle.
- More comparative studies are required to fully understand the nature of the construction.

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¡Gracias!
Thanks!