

# Final *pero* across varieties

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## 1 Introduction

The Spanish conjunction *pero* ‘but’ may function as a *discourse marker* connecting contrastively two propositions *p* and *q* (Portolés 2001), e.g., (1) and (2).

- (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.’

Since in these cases *pero* forms a constituent with the second proposition *q* and precedes it, I call this element *initial pero*. Its functioning can be schematized as in (3).

- (3) *p pero q*

In certain varieties, *pero* may appear “to the right” of the proposition *q*, as sketched in (4). I call this phenomenon *final pero*.

- (4) *p q pero*

In all varieties exhibiting the pattern in (4), this is an entirely optional ordering as they still can use (3); there is no dialect employing only the configuration in (4).

- (5) OBSERVATION  
If *final pero* is available in a Spanish variety *S<sub>I</sub>*, *initial pero* is also available in *S<sub>I</sub>*.

The *final pero* phenomenon can be attested in Andean Spanish, as shown in (6).<sup>1</sup>

- (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* tayta-y-*taq*  
today-TOP school-DIR-FOC go-FUT tomorrow-CONT but dad-1SG-CONT  
yanapa-saq.  
help-FUT  
‘Today I have to go to school. But tomorrow I have to help my dad.’  
Quechua (Cusihuamán 2001: 240)

The *final pero* construction is not restricted to Andean dialects. The example in (8) corresponds to the Spanish variety spoken in Palma de Mallorca.<sup>2</sup>

- (8) Siempre recibieron otros. No recibí yo, *pero*.  
always received other not received I but  
‘Others always received (stuff). But I never received (anything).’  
Mallorcan Spanish (Levas 2018)

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)

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.’

<sup>1</sup>I use the term *Andean Spanish* as a mere shorthand for a number of dialects spoken in Central Andes. Particularly, the data discussed here pertains to the dialects from La Paz and the Peruvian Sierra.

<sup>2</sup>*Final pero* has also been attested in the Spanish variety spoken in Barcelona.

i. Porque estamos en España, aunque no lo quiero aceptar, *pero*.  
because are in Spain although not it want accept but  
‘Because we are in Spain, although I don’t want to accept it.’  
Barcelona Spanish (Vann 2001: 121)

However, its use does not seem to be as extended and productive as in the Mallorcan dialect.

B: Es un poco amarrete, **pero**.  
is a little stingy but  
‘But he is a little cheap.’

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...

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

## 2 Constant properties of **final pero**

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**.

Thus, the data supporting (13) involve a comparison between **initial pero** and **final pero**.

### 2.1 Both **initial pero** and **final pero** are discourse markers

**Initial pero** and **final pero** comply with the following definition.

- (14) DISCOURSE MARKER (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999)  
Marginal element in the structure of the sentence, that lacks a syntactic function with respect to the predicate, and has the role of guiding the inferential processes taking place during the communicative act.

**Initial pero** and **final pero** cannot alter the truth value of their host sentence, e.g., all the utterances in (15) are true in the same situations.

- (15) 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’.

Both elements are insensitive to sentence mood: **initial pero** can appear in declarative (15b), interrogative (16) and imperative sentences (17).

- (16) 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?’

- (17) 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!

In the same way, **final pero** can also be used in these contexts.

- (18) 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?’

- (19) 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!

Both types of **pero** guide inferential processes.

- (20) CONTEXT: 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.*

As the examples in (21) show, the same effect is obtained by employing **final pero**.

- (21) CONTEXT: 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.*

## 2.2 Both forms of *pero* are sentence-peripheral

*Initial pero* must appear at the beginning of the sentence.

- (22) *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

Similarly, *final pero* is required to appear at the very end of its sentence; no other element can follow it.

- (23) *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

## 2.3 Both forms of *pero* are restricted to matrix contexts

Take the contrastive relation between propositions  $p = \text{está lloviendo mucho}$  'it is raining a lot' and  $q = \text{el partido se juega}$  'the match will be played' in (24); in both cases, **pero** appears at the matrix level.

- (24) 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

Discourse markers as *sin embargo* 'although' may establish a contrastive relation even when the proposition  $q$  is embedded as the protasis of a conditional sentence.

- (25) Está lloviendo mucho. <sup>[PROTASIS]</sup> Si el partido, sin embargo, se juega],  
is raining much if the match without impediment SE plays  
me voy a mojar.  
1SG.ACC go to wet  
'It is raining. If the match, however, is played, I'm going to get wet.'

However, neither *initial pero* not *final pero* can be used in this context.

- (26) *It is raining a lot...*
- a. \*<sup>[PROTASIS]</sup> 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. \*<sup>[PROTASIS]</sup> si el partido se juega, **pero**], me voy a mojar.  
if the match SE plays but 1SG.ACC go to wet

It is fairly obvious that *initial pero* cannot appear in completive clauses (e.g., *\*dije que pero no vendría*), but consider the acceptability of (27).

- (27) Afuera está re nublado. El pronóstico dice que el día está lindo, **pero**.  
outside is very cloudy the forecast says that the day is nice but  
'It is very cloudy outside. But the forecast says that it is a nice day.'

In principle, this sentence should be ambiguous with respect to the scope of *final pero*.

- (28) *It is very cloudy outside...*
- a. El pronóstico dice <sub>[CP]</sub> que el día está lindo], **pero**.  
≈ *The forecast, however, says that it is a nice day.* wide scope
  - b. El pronóstico dice <sub>[CP]</sub> que el día está lindo, **pero**.  
≈ *The forecast says that it is, however, a nice day.* narrow scope

However, my informants seem to interpret (27) only as in (28a), e.g., their paraphrases for this example focus on the fact that the forecast is mistaken, an inference that requires **pero** to introduce a contrast with respect to the constituent containing the segment *el pronóstico dice* 'the forecast says'.

## 2.4 *Final pero* expresses a subset of the meanings of *initial pero*

Authors like Lakoff (1971) and Rivarola (1976) distinguish two types of contrastive relations.

- ☞ 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  $p$ .

Languages vary on how they lexicalize concessivity and semantic opposition.

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

The Spanish varieties discussed here seem to assign the following discourse values to **pero**.

- (31) a. CONCESSIVITY → *initial pero* or *final pero*  
 b. SEMANTIC OPPOSITION → *initial pero*

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

- (32) 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*

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

- (33) 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*

### 3 Variation of *final pero*

Authors as Hill (2007) observe that certain discourse particles interact with *vocatives*. **Initial pero** can co-appear with vocatives in any position.

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

- JUANCITO’: **Pero** Señor, yo no hice nada.  
 but Miss I not did nothing  
 JUANCITO’’: Señor, **pero** yo no hice nada.  
 Miss but I not did nothing

On the contrary, **pero final** manifests a varying distribution with respect to vocatives.

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

As Portolés (2001: 51) points out, *initial pero* cannot form sequences like *pero y* ‘but and’, e.g., (36), or *pero aunque* ‘but although’, e.g., (37). According to him, this restriction can be accounted for in terms of redundancy avoidance.

- (36) *It rained the whole holidays week...*  
 a. \* **pero** y lo pasamos lindo.  
 but and it spent nice  
*Intended*: ‘but we had fun.’  
 b. \* y **pero** lo pasamos lindo.  
 but and it spent nice
- (37) *I don’t like it when you correct me...*  
 a. \* **pero** aunque en este caso tenés razón.  
 but although in this case have reason  
*Intended*: ‘but in this case you are right.’  
 b. \* aunque **pero** en este caso tenés razón.  
 although but in this case have reason

While **final pero** behaves in the same way regarding *y* ‘and’, e.g., (38), the Bahiense dialect allows to use it together with the conjunction *aunque* ‘although’, e.g., (39).

- (38) *It rained the whole holidays week...*  
 \* y lo pasamos lindo, **pero**.  
 and it spent nice but  
*Intended*: ‘but we had fun.’

(39) *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: ✓

The same type of distributional asymmetry can be attested regarding other discourse markers. The marker *bueno* ‘well’ expresses that the speaker admits what her interlocutor said (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999: 4162).

(40) 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.’

(41) A: El intendente es un nabo.  
 the mayor is a turnip  
 ‘The mayor is an idiot.’

B: % Bueno, ganó las elecciones, **pero**.  
 well won the elections, but  
 ‘Well, but he won the elections.’

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

This contrast does not hold for every discourse marker, e.g., *igual* ‘anyway’ is accepted together with both *initial pero* and *final pero* in all varieties.

(42) 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.’

(43) 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.’

## 4 Brief summary of properties of *final pero*

In the varieties that manifest it, *final pero*...

- Does not alter the truth-value of its proposition,
- is insensitive to sentence mood,
- occupies the final position in its sentence (with very specific exceptions),
- is restricted to matrix clauses,
- and expresses concessivity.

As for variation:

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

## 5 Towards an analysis of *final pero*

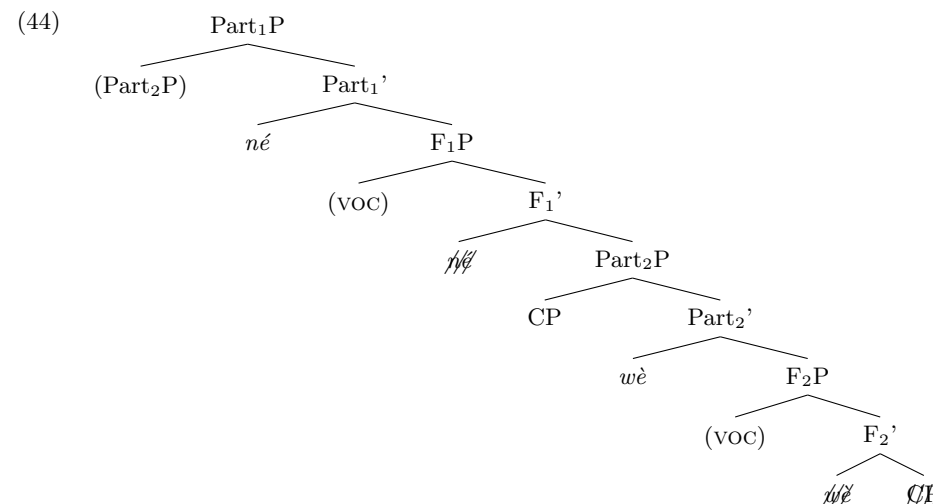
General aspects of the analysis:

- ☞ 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.

Specific assumptions:

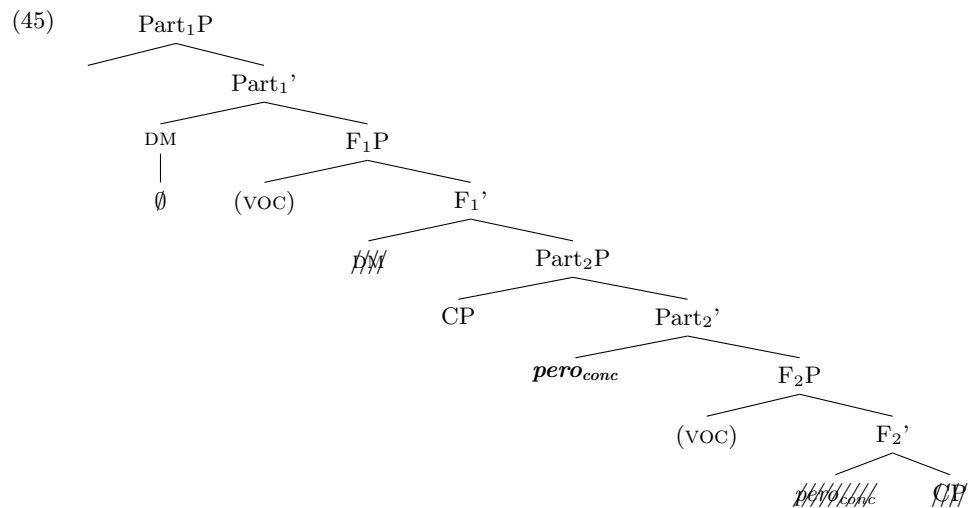
- ☞ At the assertion level, **pero**<sub>conc</sub> is an identity function taking an element of type  $\langle t \rangle$ .
- ☞ At the presuppositional level, **pero**<sub>conc</sub>( $q$ ) in the context of a preceding proposition  $p$  triggers the presupposition that *if p, then normally*  $\neg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

To capture the syntactic functioning of **pero**<sub>conc</sub>, I adopt the structure of the *speech act phrase* (SAP) advanced by Haegeman (2014), one of the few explicit attempts to capture the distributional restrictions of discourse markers and vocatives.<sup>3</sup>



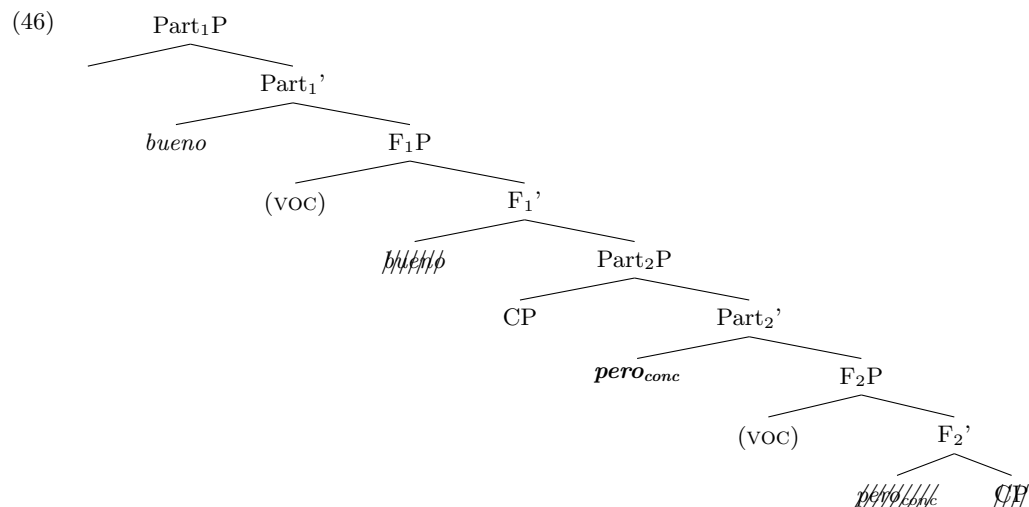
I propose that **pero**<sub>conc</sub> is introduced as the head of the lower particle shell Part<sub>2</sub>P. In *final pero* configurations in both Andean and Mallorcan dialects, the CP moves to Spec,Part<sub>2</sub>P.

<sup>3</sup>Hill (2007) is an obvious alternative, but, as Haegeman (2014) notices, both proposals are very similar in many regards.



- ✓ This derivation successfully predicts that the order CP–VOC–*pero* is impossible in Andean and Mallorcan Spanish, while the other two alternatives are still available.

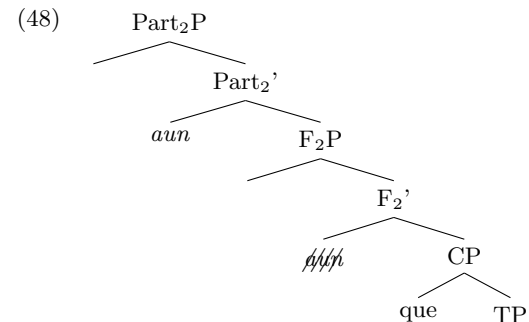
As for the possibility of co-appearing with *bueno* ‘well’, this is expected if this element is introduced as the head of the higher particle shell.



With respect to *aunque* ‘although’, I follow Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2009: 734) in assuming that this conjunction is formed by the concessive adverbial *aun* ‘even’ and the declarative complementizer *que*.

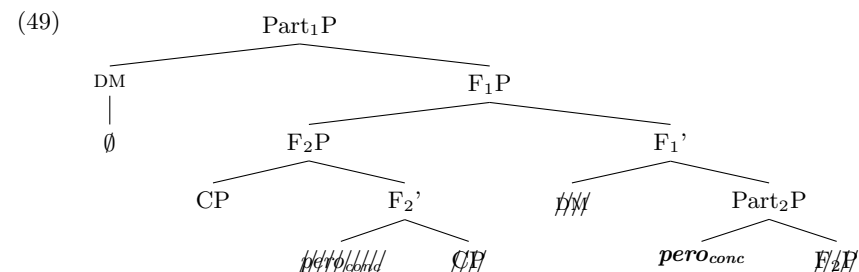
(47)  $aunque = [_{\text{AdvP}} \text{aun} [_{\text{CP}} \text{que} \dots ]]$

Specifically, I assume that *aun* is a head of the SAP that competes with *peroconc* for the same position in Andean and Mallorcan (and General) Spanish.



- ✓ As *aun* and *que* need to be linearly adjacent to form *aunque*, no vocative can occupy the Spec,F2P position.
- ✓ This analysis predicts that *peroconc* and *aunque* cannot co-appear in these varieties.

To capture the distinctive behaviour of *final pero* in the Bahiense dialect, I propose that this variety derives the order CP–*peroconc* through successive movements involving the projection FP instead of PartP.<sup>4</sup>



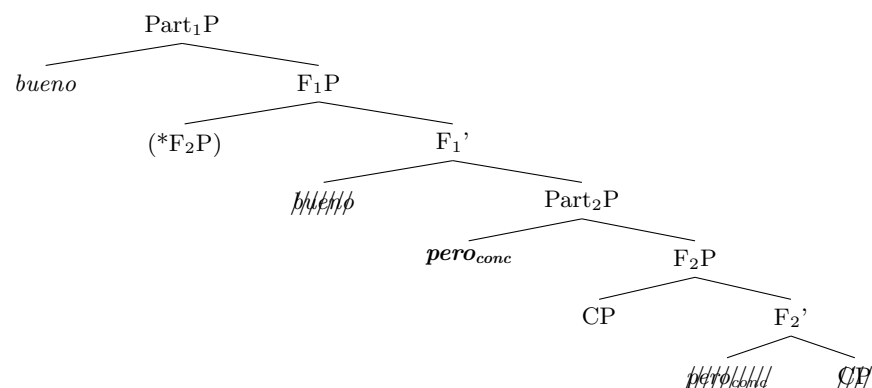
- ✓ As there are no positions available for vocatives, these cannot co-appear with *final pero* in this dialect.

Under this derivation, the order CP–*peroconc* is obtained by exploiting positions both in the lower and higher particle shell.

- ✓ If the higher discourse particle does not attract the F2P 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.

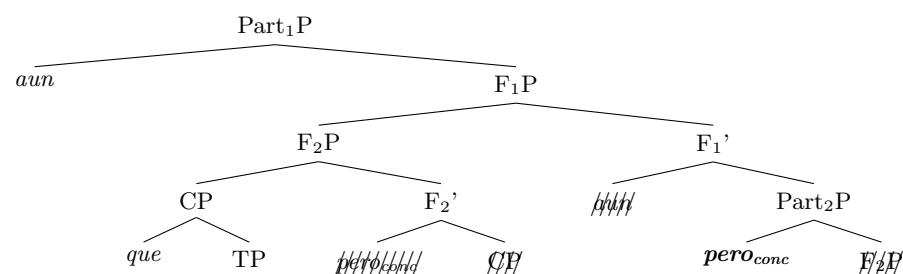
<sup>4</sup>Notice that this constitutes an important deviation from Haegeman’s original assumptions. In particular, the possibility that such specific aspects of the SAP can be in variation is problematic for some core ideas of the cartographic framework.

(50)



Moreover, I assume that *aun* ‘even’ can function as the head of the higher particle shell in the Bahiense dialect.

(51)



- ✓ Movement of F<sub>2</sub>P to Spec,F<sub>1</sub>P creates a context in which *aun* and *que* can linearly attach and form *aunque*.

While this analysis allows to account for the properties of **final pero** in the Bahiense variety, it should be mentioned that the proposal relies on several very specific assumptions on the functioning of the dialect.

## 6 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 SAP 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.

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