

Week 1

Overview of the issues of the course

April 20, 2009

1 Argument structure alternations

(1) *Active, passive, and impersonal passive*

- a. Los piratas saquearon la ciudad
the pirates looted the city
- b. La ciudad fue saqueada (por los piratas)
the city was looted by the pirates
- c. Se saqueó la ciudad (*por los piratas)
SE looted the city by the pirates

- Are these examples all derived from a common source?
- Is one of them a “default”, from which the rest are derived? If so, which one?
- What is the contribution of the clitic *se*?

2 Wh- movement

(2) *Obligatory subject/verb inversion with wh- questions*

- a. ¿Qué ciudad han saqueado los piratas?
which city have looted the pirates
- b. * ¿Qué ciudad los piratas han saqueado?
which city the pirates have looted

- (2b) is ungrammatical in European Spanish and most dialects of South American Spanish, but it is acceptable in some dialects of the Caribbean.

(3) *Multiple questions*

- a. ¿Quién ha leído qué?
who has read what
- b. ¿Qué ha leído quién?
what has read who

- (3a) and (3b) are both grammatical, but they have different meanings: (3a) requires the answer to be a list of [readers–read things] (a pair-list reading), whereas (3b) requires the answer to be a single [reader-read thing] item (a single-pair reading).