Unaccusativity phenomena [Syntax handout, J. Merchant]

Key to abbreviations on example numbers:
>s = subject of transitive
>o = object of transitive
>p = subject of passive
>e = subject of unergative
>a = subject of unaccusative

1. Impersonal passives (Perlmutter 1978)
>Passivization operates only on *v*Ps that have an external argument.

2. Russian genitive of negation (Pesetsky 1982)
>[neg] assigns [genitive] inside the VP (optionally)

3. Assamese case (Amritavalli and Sarma 2002)
>Ergative *-e* is assigned to spec*v*P

4. Hidatsa agreement ('active-stative' languages) (Boyle 2000)
>*ma-* is in spec*v*P, *mii-* in object position

5. Noun incorporation in Southern Tiwa (Baker 1988:82ff) (Mohawk, etc.)
>N can raise to V from complement position (not lower from spec)

(1)o　Ti-**seuan**-mu˜-ban.　　(cf. Seuan-ide ti-mu˜-ban. *man-SUF 1sS:A-see-PAST*)
　　*1sS:A-**man**-see-PAST*　'I saw the man.'

(2)e　* -**khwien**-teurawe-we.　(cf. Khwien-ide　-teurawe-we. *dog-SUF A-run-PRES*)
　　*A-**dog**-run-PRES*　　'The dog is running.'

(3)a　We-**fan**-kur-mi.
　　*C/NEG-**snow**-fall-PRES/NEG*　'Snow isn't falling' (= 'It isn't snowing.')

6. German split phrases (Grewendorf 1989)
>movement is okay from within the VP

(4)s　*Studenten haben fleißige das Seminar besucht.
　　students have industrious the class attended ('Industrious students took the class.)

(5)o　Kleider hat er immer dreckige an.
　　clothes has he always dirty on　　'He always has dirty clothes on.'

(6)e　*Studenten haben fleißige telefoniert.
　　students have industrious called　　('Industrious students called.')

(7)a　Widersprüche sind dem Richter mehrere aufgefallen.
　　inconsistencies are the judge many stricken
　　'The judge noticed many inconsistencies.'

7. German, Dutch, Swed 'what-for' split (Grewendorf 1989)
>movement out of NP in complement position is okay, not from specs

(8)s　*Was haben für Studenten Bücher gelesen?
　　what have for students books read　'What kind of students read books?'

(9)o   Was hast du für Bücher gekauft?
what have you for books bought 'What kind of books have you bought?'
(10)e   *Was haben für Leute getanzt?
what have for people danced ('What kind of people danced?')
(11)a   Was sind für Bücher erschienen?
what are for books appeared 'What kind of books appeared?'

8. Russian *po* (Pesetsky 1982, Schoorlemmer 2004)
Distributive *po* on DOs and unacc/pass subjects okay, not on xitive/unerg
(12)s   *V kazhdoj komnate po rebenku poluchil(o) knigu.
in every room po child received book ('In every room, a child got a book.')
(13)o   Kazhdyj rebenok poluchil po knige.
every child received po book.DAT 'Every child received a book.'
(14)o   Ja dal kazhdomu mal'chiku po jabloku.
I gave every boy po apple.DAT 'I gave every boy a (different) apple.'
(15)e   *V kazhdoj kvartire smejalos' po mal'chiku.
in every flat laughed.3s.NEUT po boy.DAT 'In every apartment, a boy laughed.'
(16)a   V kazhdom gorshke roslo po cvetochku.
in every pot grew.3s.NEUT po flower.DAT 'In every pot grew a flower.'

9. Georgian case marking in II series (Harris 1981)

	subject	object
xitive	-ma	-i
unerg	-ma	--
unacc	-i	--

10. Italian *ne*-cliticization (Burzio 1986)
movement from inside the VP is okay
(17)o   Giovanni ne ha insultati due.
G.   of.them has insulted two 'Giovanni has insulted two of them.'
(18)e   *Ne telefonano molti.
of.them telephone many 'Many of them call.'
(19)a   Ne arrivano molti.
of.them arrive many 'Many of them arrive.'

11. Hebrew (Tzotzil, Hittite) possessor raising
movement from inside the VP is okay
(20)s/o Le-mi ha-yalda nigna ba-psanter?
to-who the-girls played in.the-piano ='Whose piano did the girls play?'
                           =/='Whose girls played the piano?'
(21)e   *Le-mi ha-xatulim yelilu?
to-who the-cats whined 'Whose cats whined?'
(22)a   Le-mi ha-mitriya nafla?
to-who the-umbrella fell 'Whose umbrella fell?'

12. Postverbal subjects in Hebrew (Shlonsky 1987), Greek, Romance
(23)a Nishbar mashehu.
       broke something
(24)p Ne'ecru shlosha xayalim ba-hafgana.
       were.arrested three soldiers in-the.demonstration
(25)e *Radku shlosha yeladim ba-mesiba.
       danced three boys in-the.party
(26)a Hit'alfu shlosha xayalim ba-hafgana.
       fainted three soldiers in-the.demonstration

13. Resultatives (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1995)
       "Direct object restriction": A resultative phrase may be predicated of a VP-internal NP, but not of an external argument or oblique complement (*She shouted at them deaf* → they end up deaf)

(27)   xitive: He shot them dead.   [they end up dead, not him]
(28)   pass: The floor had been swept clean.
(29)   unerg: They laughed *(themselves) helpless.
(30)   unacc: The river froze solid. / The bottle broke open.
           cf   The dog barked (him) awake.
                *The snow melted the road slushy.

14. Causative alternation (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1995)
(31)   unacc anticaus/inchoative: The window broke / opened.
                             The ship sank / The ice melted.
(32)   caus   She broke/opened the window. They sank the ship. We melted the ice.
(33)   unerg The crowd laughed / actor spoke / children played / boy giggled.
(34)   caus   *The comedian laughed the crowd. *The director spoke the actor. *The teacher played the children. *The joke giggled the boy.

15. Adjectival past participles (Levin and Rappaport 1986)
(35)o unemployed man, uneaten food, *uneaten children (< The children ate the food)
(36)e *unworked man, *unrun jogger
(37)a unfallen leaves, unsunken ship, undescended testicle, unretired unionists
       also in German, Dutch
       Italian postnominal reduced relatives
(38)   a   l'uomo   [arrivato a Milano]   arrived in M.
         b   the.man   [arrestato dalla polizia]   arrested by the police
         c   *[telefonato a suo nonno] *called his grandpa
         d   *[visto Maria]   *seen Maria

16. Jim McCloskey's 'crude' test (McCloskey 1993)
(39)o I've written sod|fuck all this year.
(40)s *Sod all could destroy these walls.
(41)p Sod all was accomplished at that meeting.
(42)a Sod all grows in my garden.

(43)e   *Sod all works around here.

17. Hittite clitics (Garrett 1991)
  subject occur only with unacc, not with xitive or unergs
  object clitics are also okay

Weak/inconclusive tests/tests of limited usefulness:
1. -er affixation [Ag]
  player, employer worker, dancer *faller, *retirer
2. -ee affixation [Th]
  playee, employee *workee, *dancee retiree, ?sinkee
3. auxiliary selection (really telicity?)
4. pseudo-reflexives
  Jean brisera le verre. Le verre se brisera. *L'homme se travaillera.
5. preverbal quantifiers in Cree (Dahlstrom 1986)? only modify underlying objects?
6. *there*-insertion (There were three unicorns in the garden.)
7. locative inversion (On the screen appeared a strange message.)