A basic paradigm: Ne extraction in Italian and unaccusatives

The internal argument of unaccusatives behaves like an internal argument/direct object of transitives. Syntactically it behaves as a direct object (Burzio 1985; Belletti & Rizzi 1981).

As verbal agreement indicates, it is the subject of the clause. Indeed, it can be the pre-verbal subject of the clause. However, when it is a post-verbal (indefinite) subject, a grammatical possibility in a null subject language like Italian, it behaves as a direct object differently from the post-verbal subject of e.g. an intransitive/unergative verb.

Cfr. Extraction of partitive, indefinite clitic ne:

(1)  a Ho incontrato [tre ragazzi]  
     (I) have met three boys  
    Tr (IA/DO)  
   b Ne ho incontrati [tre -]  
     (I) of-themCL have met three  
   c Sono usciti [tre ragazzi]  
     - Are run out three boys  
   d Ne sono usciti [tre -]  
     - of-themCL are run out three  
   e Hanno partecipato [tre ragazzi]  
     - Have participated three boys  
   f ?*Ne hanno partecipato [tre -]  
     - of-themCL have participated three  

No difference depending on verb class in ne-extraction possibility from the preverbal subject position:

  g  [Tre ragazzi] hanno partecipato  
     Three boys have participated  
  h ?*[Tre - ] ne hanno partecipato  
     Three __ of-themCL have participated  
   i  [Tre ragazzi] sono usciti  
     Three boys are run out  
  l ?* [Tre - ] ne sono usciti  
     Three __ of-themCL are run out
Appendix 2:  

The External (implicit) Argument in passive

The DP that in clauses with the same (transitive) verb in the active voice is the EA filling the subject/Spec TP position is either:

i. a silent argument >> implicit argument or
ii. an overtly expressed by-phrase

i. As an implicit argument, the DP is not phonetically realized. It is however realized as a silent PRO with arbitrary/generic reference (= anybody; people)

The implicit argument is thus not only present in the interpretation but it is also syntactically active. E.g. it can act as a controller and control a silent PRO attributing generic/arbitrary reference to it. Cfr. the following examples in Italian and English:

1 Queste scuse di solito vengono addotte da un imputato [per PRO dichiararsi innocente]
   These excuses are adduced by a defendant [to PRO defend himself]
2 Queste scuse di solito vengono addotte [per PRO\textsubscript{Arb} dichiararsi innocenti\textsubscript{masc.pl}]\[1pt]
   These excuses are adduced [to PRO defend oneself]
3 Un imputato di solito adduce queste scuse [per PRO dichiararsi innocente\textsubscript{masc.sing}]\[1pt]
   A defendant usually adduces these excuses [to PRO defend himself]
4 *Un imputato di solito adduce queste scuse [per PRO dichiararsi innocenti]\[1pt]*
   *A defendant usually adduces these excuses [to PRO defend oneself]*
5 Gianni ha deciso [di PRO essere consenzienti\textsubscript{sing}]\[1pt]
   John has decided [to PRO be sincere\textsubscript{sing}]
6 E’ stato deciso [di PRO\textsubscript{Arb} essere consenzienti\textsubscript{pl}]\[1pt]
   It has been decided [to PRO\textsubscript{Arb} be sincere\textsubscript{pl}]

N.B.: Generic/Arb is always masculine plural in Italian. Arbitrary/generic PRO equivalent of overt impersonal Si(/one):

7 Se si è condannati e non si è colpevoli è una grave ingiustizia\[1pt]
   If one is condemned and one is not guilty it is a great injustice
8 [PRO essere condannati [senza PRO essere colpevoli]] è una grave ingiustizia\[1pt]
   to be condemned without being guilty is a great injustice

ii. If explicitly realized the EA is introduced by preposition by (on by-phrase in the clause structure see related slides):

a. La decisione è stata presa dal giudice // The decision has been taken by the judge