Control in minimalism

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(1) The man kicked the ball

(2) I saw the man kick(ing) the ball
    for the man to kick the ball
    The man tried [to kick the ball]
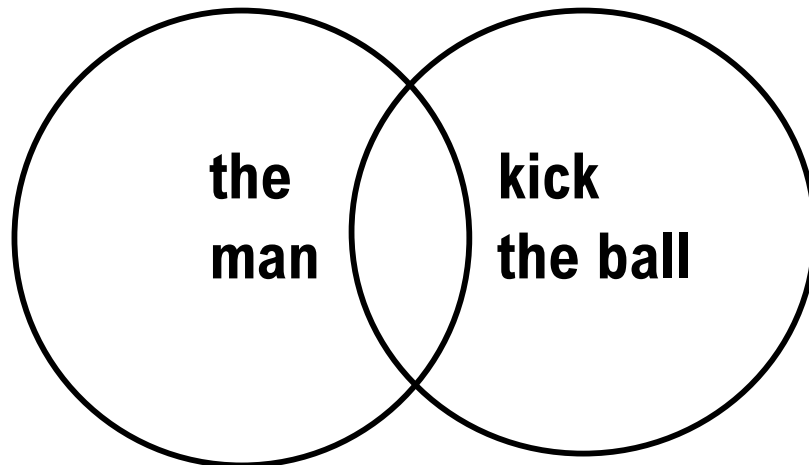   **The man seemed [to kick the ball]**
    The kicking of the ball (by the man)
    (The man's) kicking the ball
    the ball kick

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only in (1) subject-predicate nexus

do nonfinite structures have a subject?

(3) **I saw the man kick the ball**   **>**   **object**
     for the man to kick the ball   **>**   **P-complement**
     the man's kicking the ball   **>**   **possessor**

(4) the man tried [PRO to kick the ball]

> **always empty**
> **only in this position**
> **curious interpretational properties**
   (*de se*, PRO-gate, split antecedents)

hypothesis:
nonfinite structures never have a subject

motivation for PRO in GB-theory:
it fills a field in the table of NP-types

[+ana, +pron]

> no longer possible in minimalism
because of copy theory of movement

Chomsky et al (2023)

no PRO > back to Equi-NP-deletion

Form Copy

- embedded subject = NP
- antecedent = second 'inscription'
- the two NPs have different theta roles (not identical)
- from different theta role assigners (not not identical)
- Form Copy > deletion of lower copy

modeled on NP-movement

(5) a.   John saw John   > repetition
    b.   John arrived John   > copy

(6) a.   John [John kicked the ball]   > copy
    b.   John [was arrested John]   > copy

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Form Copy is subject to Theta Theory

> requirement of structural identity
> different theta roles: not structurally identical, no Form Copy
> unless different theta roles from different theta assigners = control

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Logic:

**if Form Copy does not work for NP-movement
then it is ad hoc for control**

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Hale & Keyser's problem

In reality, all verbs are to some extent phrasal idioms, that is, syntactic structures that must be learned as the conventional "names" for various dynamic events. (Hale and Keyser 1993:96)

> lexical and syntactic at the same time
> lexical status is real, but so is syntactic structure (lexical decomposition)

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Layered Derivations (Zwart 2009)

> certain complex elements must be put together in a separate derivation
> these are then opaque in the next derivation
> all derivations are networks of derivations

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(7) the man kicked the ball

(8) Numeration

    { the, man, kicked, the, ball }

(9) Derivation   [the ball]

                      [kicked [the ball]]

                      [man [kicked [the ball]]]   > wrong constituents

(8')   {[the man], kicked, the, ball}

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Generalized Integrity

(11) **Given derivations α, β,**
      such that   the output of derivation α
                is a member of the Numeration for derivation β,
      elements merged in α
      may not be merged in β

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Little vP

> **lexical decomposition is real (Hale & Keyser, Ramchand, Harley, etc.)**
> **but the vP is built in a separate derivation layer (> idiomatic status)**
> **vP is included in the next Numeration as a single item (VERB)**

> **nothing can ever be moved out of vP**

Talsma (in preparation)

> lexical decomposition: CAUSE, BECOME, DO **etc**
> these introduce participant requirements (PR-features)
> vP/VERB has a hierarchically ordered set of PR-features
> PR-features need a value for interpretation
  (if not valued > generic interpretation)

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PR-feature valuation

> subject, object are merged to the VERB's extended projection
> they c-command the VERB
> they value the VERB's PR-features (top-down)

(12) John ate
> no (internal) PR-feature valuation, generic object reading

(13) *The man kicked the ball Bill
> Bill not associated with any PR-feature = *

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Passive

(14) The man was arrested

> something blocks valuation of the external PR-feature
> single NP values internal PR-feature

Unaccusatives > single PR-feature

This boils down to a base-generation analysis of passive

> no NP-movement needed or in fact possible
> Form Copy mechanism not needed (a considerable simplification)

NB evidence for vP-internal subject hypothesis very weak to begin
with (mainly conceptual)

back to control

> if Form Copy is not needed (or in fact impossible) for NP-movement
> then its application to control is entirely *ad hoc*

But the idea to do away with PRO is attractive (no subject-predicate nexus)

> can we still keep the result that nonfinite structures do not have a subject?

the benefits of not having PRO

(15) obligatory de se reading

a. The unfortunate amnesiac expects to get a medal

b. The unfortunate amnesiac expects himself to get a medal

> b = the self as other (Rooryck and **VandenWyngaerd** 1988)

> a = that reading is not available (explained if there is no PRO)

(16) PRO-gate

   Who did (PRO/*his) getting fired upset [e]

> Weak Crossover effect if who/[e] = his

> absent with PRO (explained if there is no PRO)

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so how does control work?

> it's a verb-verb dependency (not a NP-NP dependency)

(17) Jan   beloofde   Marie   te   (mogen)   vertrekken
**   John promised Mary   to   modal   leave**
**   'John promised Mary to (be allowed to) leave.'**

> without modal: controller = Jan
> with modal: controller = Marie (control switch, Farkas 1988)

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Farkas' analysis (paraphrased)

> alignment of responsibility of the two predicates
> normal: controller is [high responsible] (for the matrix predicate)
> modal: shift to [low responsible] controller (for the matrix predicate)

in fact, both arguments are potential controllers at the same time

(18) John promised Mary to leave together

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key question:

> which PR-features of the matrix VERB
control the interpretation of the [highest available*]
PR-feature of the embedded VERB

(*normally the external PR-feature,
but not with passives/unaccusatives)

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the role of T

> formalizing the idea of subject-predicate nexus
> we need a functional element linking the subject and the verb in finite contexts

    subject   > T > VERB

> in nonfinite contexts, T is defective (Tdef)
> if T is defective --> no subject
> control is a VERB-T-VERB dependency
such that a PR-feature of the matrix verb values a PR-feature of the embedded verb

nonobligatory control

(19) to kick the ball (is fun)

> only a Tdef-VERB dependency
> Tdef values the embedded verb's PR-feature
> a generic (contextually defined) reading results

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upshot

> if propositional nexus is achieved by T
> and the highest argument PR-feature of the embedded verb
is valued by the matrix VERB (via T)
> and Tdef can value that PR-feature by itself
(yielding a generic/default interpretation)

> then T has essentially replaced PRO

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Appendix

syntactic evidence for a subject PRO

a. case agreement with PRO on secondary predicates
b. anaphor binding by (and pronoun/R-expression obviation with) PRO
c. subject oriented material in infinitives
d. subject obviation effects in infinitives
e. split antecedents channeled through PRO
f. overt realization of PRO (backward and copy control)

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