Chapter 7, Problem 2: Imperative 'Subjects'

A simple solution would simply be to modify the Imperative Rule by allowing an optional NP to precede the infinitival VP on the right-hand side of the rule. That is, it would now read as follows:

$$
\begin{bmatrix} phrase \\ \text{HEAD} & \begin{bmatrix} verb \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{SPR} & \langle \ \rangle \\ \text{COMPS} & \langle \ \rangle \\ \text{SEM} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{MODE} & dir \\ \text{INDEX} & s \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \quad (\text{NP}) \quad \begin{bmatrix} phrase \\ \text{HEAD} & \begin{bmatrix} verb \\ \text{FORM} & inf \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{SPR} & \left\langle \text{NP}\begin{bmatrix} \text{PER} & \text{2nd} \end{bmatrix} \right\rangle \\ \text{SEM} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{INDEX} & s \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}
$$

This gets the binding facts right, since the newly introduced NP is not an argument of the verb. But this proposal is clearly incomplete, since it says nothing about how the optional NP fits in semantically. Moreover, it will overgenerate, since not all NPs can appear in this position (e.g., no personal pronouns except *you* are permitted).

Providing a full account of these initial NPs in imperatives is a difficult problem, and we do not know of a completely satisfactory analysis.