

The four-way PERSON distinction: arguments from anaphora¹

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1 Overview

- ☞ Standard theories classify PERSON into three categories: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.
- ☞ The goal of this paper is to argue that this classification is not fine-grained enough to capture all the PERSON distinctions attested in language.
- ☞ We actually need four categories of PERSON, not three.
- ☞ And we need a bivalent, rather than a privative feature system, involving a three-way distinction for a feature $[F] = \{[+F], [-F], \emptyset\}$.
- ☞ I will propose the following categories for PERSON which result from a fully binary classification on the feature $[\pm Participant]$ in combination with $[\pm Author]$:
 - 1st-PERSON = $[+Participant, +Author]$
 - 2nd-PERSON = $[+Participant, -Author]$
 - 3rd-PERSON = $[-Participant, -Author]$
 - NULL-PERSON = \emptyset
- ☞ Empirical support for this proposal will primarily be brought in from differing patterns of behavior in anaphors crosslinguistically.

2 The ϕ -deficiency view of anaphora

- ☞ The ϕ -deficiency view of (nominal-)anaphora holds that an anaphor is defined by its lack of ϕ -features.

There are both theoretical and empirical motivations for this approach.

2.1 Theoretical support

- Most binding analyses (Reuland 2001, 2011, Kratzer 2009, Rooryck and vanden Wyngaerd 2011) assume, in keeping with GB-era intuitions on this subject (Pica 1987, Progovac 1993, Reinhart and Reuland 1993) and drawing on Bouchard (1984)’s observation that a nominal needs a full set of ϕ -features to be LF-interpretable.

¹Many thanks to Tom McFadden for helping me think about and understand the issues discussed here more clearly.

- The approach is also theoretically economical in that it exploits the use of features that are independently motivated, as opposed to positing the existence of features (e.g. referential features) that are needed for anaphora alone.

2.2 Empirical support

- The fact that so many long-distance bound anaphors from such a rich typological range of unrelated languages seem to fail to mark the full range of ϕ -distinctions in the given language — i.e. if the restrictions placed on their antecedence is any indication.
- Anaphor Agreement Effect (Rizzi 1990, Woolford 1999, Tucker 2011, Sundaresan 2016a, a.o.): the observation that an anaphor (in agreement-triggering position) cannot trigger covarying ϕ -varying agreement on its clausemate verb: if the anaphor itself were lacking in ϕ -features, such a restriction would follow automatically (as explicitly argued by Kratzer 2009).

Such analyses vary wrt. the nature and number of ϕ -features that they believe are lacking and to what extent this deficiency is crosslinguistically parametrized:

- Per Kratzer (2009), all anaphors are “born minimal” with no (valued) ϕ -features: these ϕ -features are valued in the course of the syntactic derivation by c-commanding local functional heads (T or v) and non-anaphoric nominals. This valuation triggers binding at LF.
- Reuland (2001, 2011) assumes that this is a matter for parametric variation. I.e. anaphors differ in the number (and nature) of ϕ -features they are born with which, in turn, yields the parametric variation observed on the surface.

(NOMINAL) ANAPHORICITY \leftrightarrow ϕ -DEFICIENCY.

3 Against a ϕ -feature account of anaphoricity

But a ϕ -feature account of anaphoricity is problematic in several respects, both theoretical and empirical:

3.1 Theoretical challenges

- ☞ The main theoretical issue with a ϕ -deficiency approach to anaphora is that, while the ϕ -features of a nominal restrict its domain of reference (in the evaluation context), they crucially don't exhaust it.
- ☞ In theories like Heim and Kratzer (1998), this intuition is captured by proposing that ϕ -features introduce presuppositions that restrict the reference of nominals: these are formally hardwired as partial functions into the lexical entries of the referring expressions themselves.

More informally (and to quote Hicks 2009, 112):²

²A plausible defense of the ϕ -deficiency approach might be to contend that this type of difference is encoded, not in the syntax, but at LF where an assignment function maps linguistic entities to salient entities in the evaluation context. ϕ -defectiveness flags a nominal as being anaphoric in the syntax and restricts the domain of the assignment function in the form of partial functions at LF, they may claim. But this is undermined by the fact that there are languages with anaphors that don't lack any ϕ -features whatsoever, Modern English being one of them — a point I turn to next.

While the shared reference of an anaphor and its antecedent perhaps naturally implies that the two share the same ϕ -features, it is not at all clear that referential properties are encoded in ϕ -features. A system of ϕ -feature agreement between anaphors and their antecedents simply predicts that the two ϕ -feature values should be identical, but nothing more. If Agree were to simply match the ϕ -feature values of *John* and *himself* in *John loves himself*, for example, *himself* could in theory refer to any other male individual, contrary to fact. Essentially, what is at stake in anaphor binding is referential dependency, not simply a ϕ -feature dependency.

3.2 Fully ϕ -specified anaphors

- ☞ A second empirical challenge to the NOMINAL ANAPHORICITY \leftrightarrow ϕ -DEFICIENCY idea comes from languages with anaphors that don't seem to lack any ϕ -features whatsoever.
- ☞ Heintz (2008) discusses examples from San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec and Thai, among others, to show that even R-expressions may be anaphorically bound.

The following examples are from Heintz (2008, p. 151) for Zapotec (1) and Thai (2), respectively:

- (1) R-ralloh Gye'eihlly_i [_{CP} r-yu'lààa'z Lia Paamm Gye'eihlly_i].
 HAB-think Mike HAB-like F Pam Mike
 "Mike thinks [_{CP} Pam likes Mike_{i,*j}]." (literal)
- (2) Aa-jaan_i chɔɔp mǎa tee nák-rian hǎi aa-jaan_i
 teacher like dog that student give teacher
 "[The teacher]_i likes the dog that the student gave [the teacher]_i."

Below, I'll consider two types of counter-argument against this type of data and argue that they don't work.

3.2.1 Against accidental coreference

- One potential counter-argument against the kind of data in (1)-(2) might be to claim that such structures don't involve anaphoric binding but accidental coreference.
- Accidental coreference between deictic pronouns and R-expressions is not unknown – thus, (3) below is perfectly grammatical as an ironic statement in English:

(3) Everyone loves Bill. Bill_i, in particular, really loves Bill_i.

- However, this argument doesn't work: Heintz shows that sloppy readings obtain under VP ellipsis (1), a sure sign that variable binding rather than accidental coreference is involved. This is shown in the reflexive Zapotec sentence in (4):

(4) B-gwi'ih Gye'eihlly_i lohoh Gye'eihlly_{i,*j} zë'cy-cahgza' Li'eb_j
 PRF-look Mike at Mike likewise Felipe
 "Mike_i looked at himself_{i,*j} and Felipe did too." (i.e. Felipe_j looked at himself_j/*Mike)

3.2.2 Against syncretism

- ☞ A second type of counter-argument might be to claim that sentences like these represent a form of syncretism between R-expressions/pronouns, on the one hand, and anaphors, on the other.

Rooryck and vanden Wyngaerd (2011) adopt to deal with sentences which involve the local binding of apparent pronouns, as in the Brabant Dutch example below (Rooryck and vanden Wyngaerd 2011, 35, Ex. 53):³

- (5) Jan_i heeft 'm_{i,j} gewasse.
 Jan has him washed.
 "Jan_i washed him_j", or
 "Jan_i washed himself_i"

- For the authors (who subscribe to the ϕ -deficiency view of anaphora), the apparent lack of Condition B effects in (5) follows from the notion that the bound element is underlyingly not a pronoun at all, but an anaphor.
- But for independent reasons having to do with the availability (or lack thereof) of distinct forms in this language, both anaphors and pronouns are spelled out identically on the surface.

While this kind of syncretism approach (within a late insertion model of Spell-Out) may be reasonable for languages like Brabant Dutch (and potentially also be able to deal with ϕ -specified anaphora in languages like Modern English), it seems less suited as a general approach:

- ☞ For languages like Thai and Zapotec, it would require copying not just ϕ -features but also some sort of lexical content to trigger the pronunciation of e.g. *Mike* vs. *Bill* in anaphoric position.
- ☞ In Tamil, the pronominal form which is fully specified for ϕ -features may be locally bound (6):

- (6) Raman-ükkü_i avan-æ-jee_{i,j} pidikka-læ.
 Raman[NOM] he-ACC-EMPH like-NEG
 "Raman_i didn't like (even) himself_i/him_j."

- ☞ Nevertheless, this cannot be due to syncretism of an underlying anaphoric element with an underlying pronominal element, because there is a distinct anaphoric form *ta(a)n* (7):⁴

- (7) Raman-ükkü_i tann-æ-jee_{i,*j} pidikka-læ.
 Raman[NOM] ANAPH-ACC-EMPH like-NEG
 "Raman_i didn't like (even) himself_{i,*j}."

³Other such languages would be Frisian, Old English, and potentially the Palakkad dialect of Tamil.

⁴While I won't defend a specific analysis of this pattern here, the data in (6)-(7) at the very least shows that ϕ -deficiency and anaphoricity (whatever that may formally amount to) do not always reduce to the same thing.

3.3 Anaphor Agreement Effect

- ☞ In certain languages, e.g. the Bantu languages Swahili (Woolford 1999) and Chicheŵa (Baker 2008), the anaphor triggers “special” agreement — i.e. agreement marking that differs from the normal ϕ -paradigm.

Thus, the special *ji* marking on the verb in (9) (contrast with (8) does not ϕ -covary, so it is a form unique to the anaphor alone:

- (8) Ahmed a-na-m/**ji*-penda Halima
 Ahmed 3SBJ-PRS-3OBJ-love Halima.
 “Ahmed loves Halima.”
- (9) Ahmed a-na-*ji*/**m*-penda mwenyewe.
 Ahmed 3SBJ-PRS-REFL/*3OBJ-love himself
 “Ahmed_i loves himself_i.” (emphatic)

Furthermore, and just as important, this object agreement prefix (the prefix *ji*- in (9)), contrasts with the clearly ϕ -agreeing elements of the paradigm in Swahili (Table 1, Thompson and Schleicher 2001, 245, and also Mpiranya (2015)).

ϕ	OBJECT-MARKER	VERB-FORM
1sg	-ni-	a-na- <u>ni</u> -penda
2sg	-ku-	a-na- <u>ku</u> -penda
3sg (class 1)	-m/mw-	a-na- <u>m</u> -penda
1pl	-tu-	a-na- <u>tu</u> -penda
2pl	-wa...-eni	a-na- <u>wa</u> -pendeni
3pl (class 2)	-wa-	a-na- <u>wa</u> -penda
:		

Table 1: Swahili object agreement paradigm

Baker (2008, pp. 150-151) provides parallel examples from the Bantu language Chicheŵa, adapted below:

- (10) Ndi-na-**i**/***dzi**-khal-its-a *pro[-anaph]* y-a-i-kali.
 1S-PAST-CLIV.O-BECOME-CAUS-FV (them) CLIV-ASSOC-CLIV-fierce
 “I made them (e.g. lions) fierce.”
- (11) Ndi-na-**dzi**/***i**-khal-its-a *pro[+anaph]* w-a-m-kali.
 1S-PAST-REFL-BECOME-CAUS-FV (myself) CLII-ASSOC-CLI-fierce
 “I made myself fierce.”

- In (10), the causativized ‘become’ verb shows overt agreement both with the subject and the non-coreferent *pro* object.
- In the minimally varying (11), the verb again agrees with the subject, but the usual object agreement marking is replaced by a special reflexive form, namely the infix *-dzi-*.

☞ This suggests that anaphors (at least in these types of language) *are* featurally specified for PERSON.

☞ Furthermore, such anaphors are simply specified for a different kind of feature from the standard (1st, 2nd, 3rd) categorization of the PERSON system (see also Chapter 4 in Baker 2008, for discussion along these lines, based on such data).

3.4 Asymmetries in anaphoric antecedence: 1/2 vs. 3

Crosslinguistically, anaphors tend to disprefer 1st and 2nd-PERSON antecedents:

- Anaphors like German *sich* (and its other Germanic equivalents in Dutch, Norwegian, Icelandic etc.), Japanese *zibun*, Korean *caki*, Italian *se* (and its equivalents in French and Spanish), Tamil *ta(a)n* (and its Dravidian equivalents in Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada) and many others — allow only 3rd-PERSON antecedents.
- Attempts have been made in the literature to formalize this restriction as stemming from a definitional property of anaphors, such as their inability to refer deictically (Safir 2004): e.g. Schlenker (2003, et seq.) formalizes this as a presuppositional restriction into the lexical entry of an anaphor.
- While there *are* anaphors like Chinese *ziji* that allow 1st, 2nd person antecedents — they crucially *also* allow 3rd-PERSON antecedents (as shown in (12)-(13) from Huang and Tang 1991, see also Huang and Liu (2001) a.o.):

(12) Zhangsan_i renwei [Lisi_j hai-le ziji_{i,j}].
 Zhangsan think Lisi hurt-ASP ANAPH
 “Zhangsan_i thought [that Lisi_j hurt himself_{i,j}]”

(13) Zhangsan_i renwei [wo_{Auth} hai-le ziji_{*i,Auth}].
 Zhangsan_i think I hurt-ASP ANAPH
 “Zhangsan_i thought [that I_j hurt myself_{*i,Auth}]”

But as far as I am aware:

- (14) The pattern of an anaphor allowing 1st/2nd-PERSON antecedents while simultaneously *disallowing* 3rd-PERSON antecedents is crosslinguistically unattested.

It is hard to see how a ϕ -deficiency account would be able to capture this crosslinguistic person asymmetry:

- Under the assumption that all anaphors are (ϕ -)featurally minimal (as Kratzer 2009, proposes), we would expect all anaphors to behave like Chinese *ziji*: i.e. the lack of any inherent ϕ -features on the anaphor should entail the lack of any person restrictions on the antecedent.
- We could instead assume that anaphors are characterized by having *at least one* ϕ -feature unvalued, so that while Chinese *ziji* starts completely unvalued (allowing all antecedents), German *sich* starts with a valued 3rd PERSON feature and some other ϕ -feature(s) (e.g. number) unvalued, preventing it from taking 1st and 2nd person antecedents.

But there would be nothing to rule out a hypothetical element parallel to *sich* but with a valued 1st PERSON feature and some other unvalued ϕ -feature, yielding an anaphor that allows 1st but not 3rd person antecedents, going against (14).

4 Proposal

- Harbour (2011) argues that NUMBER requires a binary, not privative classification, yielding a three-way featural distinction: [+F], [−F], and \emptyset .

- “+” and “-” denote logically positive and negative values for $[F]$, respectively. I.e. \emptyset is the absence of $[F]$ whereas $[-F] = \neg[+F]$.⁵
 - Harbour argues that such a distinction is empirically warranted to deal with “inverse” agreement patterns in Kiowa.
- ☞ Here, I argue that such a bivalent featural system may be profitably transposed to PERSON to help us better deal with the empirical challenges presented above.

4.1 A four-way PERSON categorization + bivalent features

- ☞ The crux of the proposal is that there are four main categories for PERSON, not three and that we need a bivalent rather than privative feature system
- ☞ The two features I will use are $[\pm Participant]$ and $[\pm Author]$.
- ☞ Adapting Halle (1997), Nevins (2007), I define these features as follows:
- $[+Author]$ = the reference set contains the speaker of the evaluation context (default: utterance-context)
 - $[+Participant]$ = the reference set contains one of the participants of the evaluation context (default: utterance context).

A cross-classification of $[\pm Participant]$ and $[\pm Author]$ now yields these categories:⁶

- Note, incidentally, that the category corresponding to $[-Participant, +Author]$ doesn't exist because its extension is undefined.
- This automatically follows from the definitions for $[+Author]$ entails $[+Participant]$ above — since the speaker is one of the participants of the evaluation context.⁷

⁵In a privative feature system, on the other hand, there is no clear way to distinguish between the absence of a feature $[F]$ and the presence of a negative specified value for $[F]$, so we end up with only a binary distinction on features.

⁶An alternative would have been to go with bivalent cross-classifications on $[\pm Author]$ and $[\pm Addressee]$ instead, yielding e.g. the following:

FEATURES	CATEGORY
$[+Author]$	1
$[+Addressee]$	2
$[-Author]$	$\neg 1$
$[-Addressee]$	$\neg 2$
$[-Author, -Addressee]$	3rd-PERSON
$[+Author, +Addressee]$	1incl.
$[+Author, -Addressee]$	1excl.
$[-Author, +Addressee]$	$2 \wedge \neg 1$
\emptyset	NULL-PERSON

While the above might make it easier to accommodate inclusive vs. exclusive distinctions on PERSON, it yields a larger set of potential PERSON categories — since there is no entailment relationship between $[Author]$ and $[Addressee]$ — at least some of which (e.g. $\neg 1$, $\neg 2$, $2 \wedge \neg 1$ vs. 2) don't seem to be clearly motivated. Note, crucially, that all these categories pertain to underlying featural specifications on syntactic elements and not to the morphological exponents; for the latter, one could imagine classifications like $\neg 2$ being useful. See Nevins (2007), Adger and Harbour (2007) for a way to model the inclusive vs. exclusive distinction within the kind of featural system proposed in this talk.

⁷We can formalize this as a presuppositional restriction on the definition of $[+Author]$, similar to ϕ -feature restrictions on the denotations of pronouns (Heim and Kratzer 1998).

CATEGORY	FEATURES	EXPONENTS
1st-PERSON	[+Participant, +Author]	I, we
2nd-PERSON	[+Participant, –Author]	you
3rd-PERSON	[–Participant, –Author]	he/she/it, sich, taan
NULL-PERSON	∅	ziji, himself, yourself, myself

Table 2: Four-way Person Classification

4.2 Two classes of anaphor

I will propose that there are two types of anaphor crosslinguistically.

Class I: Null anaphors: Anaphors of this class are specified as NULL-PERSON.

- In other words, such anaphors begin their syntactic life-cycle with a fully unvalued set of ϕ -features (and are minimal pronouns in the sense of Kratzer 2009).
- Anaphoric binding is the result of ϕ -valuation by Agree with a locally c-commanding T/ v or a non-anaphoric DP.
- From this, it automatically follows that these anaphors can allow antecedents of all PERSON: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.
- Chinese *ziji* is an example.

Class II: 3rd-PERSON anaphors: Anaphors of this class are specified as 3rd-PERSON.

- This means they are featurally specified as: [–Participant, –Author].
 - Within the bivalent feature-system being pursued here, this means that such anaphors are explicitly forbidden from referring to (thus being anteceded by) elements that are [+Participant].
 - This automatically derives the ban on 1st and 2nd-PERSON antecedence (seen with German *sich*, Tamil *ta(a)n*, Romance *se* and many others).
 - Such anaphors could then also trigger special “anaphoric” agreement of the kind seen with Swahili (cf. (8) vs. (9)) and Chicheŵa (cf. (10) vs. (11)).
- An important question to ask at this stage is what makes 3rd-PERSON anaphors “anaphoric”.
 - Put another way, how do we distinguish a 3rd-PERSON anaphor (like German *sich*) from a 3rd-PERSON pronoun (like *er/sie/es*)?
- ☞ The answer must be that 3rd-PERSON anaphors are deficient with respect to some *other* feature – which defines their anaphoricity.
 - ☞ As already mentioned, Adger and Ramchand (2005) and Hicks (2009) argue that this is the ID-feature (which directly targets the referential index).
 - ☞ With at least some languages (e.g. Italian, Japanese, Icelandic, Dutch, Norwegian, Ewe, and Tamil), there is empirical evidence for the relevance of (spatio-temporal or mental) perspective for the regulation of anaphoric dependencies (Kuno 1987, Sells 1987, Hellan 1988, Sigurðsson 1991, Lødrup 2007, Pearson 2013, Sundaresan 2012, a.o.).

- ☞ So we could propose that for these languages, there is an unvalued perspectival feature which, in turn, renders them (syntactically) anaphoric.
- ☞ In contrast, while NULL-PERSON anaphors may additionally lack other features as well — the lack of ϕ -features is their defining property.

4.3 Deriving 1/2 vs. 3

Consider again, the generalization in (14), repeated below:

- (15) The pattern of an anaphor allowing 1st/2nd-PERSON antecedents while simultaneously *disallowing* 3rd-PERSON antecedents is crosslinguistically unattested.

Under the classification proposed above, (15) might be derived as follows:

- A null-anaphor, like Chinese *ziji*, which allows 1st- and 2nd person antecedents will automatically also allow 3rd-PERSON antecedents, since it is featurally \emptyset .
- A 3rd-PERSON anaphor, like German *sich*, which is featurally specified as $[-Participant, -Author]$ would automatically *disallow* 1st- and 2nd-PERSON antecedents and only allow 3rd.
- The two classes of anaphor in this system are thus well-behaved according to the generalization in (15).
- ☞ The only scenario that would allow 1st/2nd-antecedence while disallowing 3rd would be if the anaphor were itself specified $[+Participant]$.
- ☞ However, there is independent evidence showing that $[+Participant]$ -marked nominals cannot serve *solely* as anaphors — they would indexically *also* be able to denote participants of the utterance context.
- E.g. there *are* bound-variable uses of 1st and 2nd-PERSON forms (see discussion of so called “fake indexicals” in von Stechow 2002, Rullman 2004, Kratzer 2009, Déchaine and Wiltschko 2010, a.o.) as in (16):

(16) I am the only one who broke my laptop this week.

- However, such forms always *also* involve an indexical use. I.e. there aren’t unique, dedicated anaphoric forms for 1st and 2nd-PERSON alone in any language, as far as I’m aware.⁸

But why should this be the state of affairs?

- For perspectival anaphors, at least, there is strong empirical support for the idea that these are *obviative* in the sense that they explicitly *cannot* refer to the perspective of the utterance context participant (Bylinina and Sudo 2015, Bylinina, McCready, and Sudo 2014, Sundaresan 2012, Sundaresan and Pearson 2014, Sundaresan 2016b).⁹

⁸Forms like Modern English *myself* and *yourself* might seem to look like exceptions to this. But arguably they aren’t unique 1st and 2nd-PERSON anaphors so much as a 1st- and 2nd-PERSON pro-form, respectively, attached to a *-self* suffix. I would probably treat English as having a null anaphor, much like Chinese *ziji*.

⁹Perspectival anaphors in Italian (Bianchi 2003, Giorgi 2006, 2010) and Icelandic (Hellan 1988, Reuland 2001, Hicks 2009, Reuland 2011, a.o.), for instance, are used only across subjunctive clauses (and are disallowed across indicatives) — a mood that has independently been noted to have an obviative function, in that it precludes the perspective of the utterance-speaker (Hellan 1988, Sigurðsson 2010).

- We can understand this to mean that perspective as relevant for anaphors is really about *perspective-shift* away from that of the participant's (in particular, the speaker's), which may be seen as the default.
- If this is correct, then we can imagine that interpreting the perspectival feature on the anaphor together with a [+Participant] feature leads to semantic incompatibility, perhaps even a contradiction.

5 Conclusions

In this talk, I've argued the following:

- A ϕ -deficiency approach to nominal anaphora is not featurally rich enough to capture all the empirical distinctions observed crosslinguistically, such as:
 - i. anaphoric R-expressions in Thai and Zapotec,
 - ii. anaphoric agreement in Bantu, and
 - iii. 1/2 vs. 3 PERSON-asymmetries in anaphoric antecedence.
- To this end, we need four categories of PERSON, not three, and a bivalent rather than a privative feature system.
- Based on a cross-classification of [\pm Participant] with [\pm Author], there are two classes of anaphor:
 - i. A null anaphor = \emptyset
 - ii. A 3rd-PERSON anaphor = [$-$ Participant, $-$ Author]
- The former allows antecedents of all PERSON and is defined by its lack of ϕ -features (e.g. Chinese *ziji*, the Modern English anaphoric system).
- The latter allows only 3rd-PERSON antecedents and must be defined by a lack of some other feature (e.g. a perspectival feature or an ID feature).

Potential further support for this proposal comes from Person Case Constraint (PCC) Effects:

- Nevins (2007) doesn't argue for a distinction among types of 3rd-PERSON, but presents data from a range of empirical phenomena (including but not limited to the PCC) to argue that 3rd-PERSON is real and = [$-$ Participant, $-$ Author].
- Adger and Harbour (2007), however, do briefly argue for a distinction between two types of 3rd-PERSON based on data from PCC effects in Kiowa.
- ☞ An advantage of this approach, if it is correct, is that it may help resolve the long-standing debate (going back at least to Benveniste 1971) of whether there are two types of 3rd-PERSON or not.
- ☞ Under the four-way PERSON-classification argued for here, 3rd-PERSON, being featurally specified [$-$ Participant, $-$ Author] would, indeed, count as a real PERSON.
- ☞ However, NULL-PERSON, being featurally \emptyset would not.

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