IN MEMORIAM ANNA SIEWIERSKA

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Anna Siewierska, Professor of Linguistics and Human Communication at Lancaster University, President of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT), and former President of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (2001-2002), died on 6 August 2011 in a tragic car accident in Vietnam, at the age of 55.

Born in Gdynia, Poland, Anna spent her early life in Australia, where business had provided her parents with temporary residence, and began her linguistics career as a student of Barry Blake's at Monash University in Melbourne. She then held positions at the University of Gdansk (1980-1988), at Monash University (1982-1984), where she obtained her PhD (1985), and at the University of Amsterdam, where she was a senior research fellow (1988-1994). In 1994 she was appointed Professor of Linguistics and Human Communication at Lancaster University.

The published version of Anna's Monash University MA, defended in 1980, appeared in 1984 under the title *The passive: A comparative linguistic analysis*; it was widely read and cited, and exhibited many of the features that would figure prominently in her later work, namely, a) the adoption of a cross-linguistic perspective for the analysis of morphosyntactic variation; b) the attention to different models of grammar, even if her preferences lay primarily with functionally-oriented, usage-based models; and c) the attention to discourse pragmatics.

The areas that Anna covered in her research were wide ranging: voice (Siewierska 1984, 2005a, 2010), word order (Siewierska 1988, 1998b), person forms (Siewierska 1998a, 2003, 2004, 2005b, etc.), ditransitives (Siewierska & Bakker 2007, Siewierska & Hollmann 2007), impersonals (Siewierska 2008a/b, 2011, Malchukov & Siewierska 2011, Siewierska & Papastathi 2011), English dialect grammar (Hollmann & Siewierska 2007, 2011, Siewierska & Hollmann 2007), and, most recently, Chinese (Siewierska, Xu & Xiao 2010), to name but a few. Since it is impossible to do justice here to such a sheer breadth of topics, the following paragraphs will refer mainly to her most recent monograph (Siewierska 2004) and to some of the publications stemming from the research project on the grammar of the Lancashire dialect that she developed from 2006 onwards.

Anna Siewierska's *Person* is one of several titles in the Cambridge University Press red series ('Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics') to carry a one-word title, alongside Bernard Comrie's *Aspect* (1976) and *Tense* (1985), Greville Corbett's *Gender* (1991) and *Number* (2000), and Barry Blake's *Case* (1994; 2nd ed.: 2001). Like these,

Person is not really a textbook but rather a comprehensive survey that covers almost everything there is to say about personal pronouns and person markers: the typology of person forms, arguing for a distinction between independent and dependent forms, such as *she* vs -*s* (e.g., *likes*) (Ch. 2); the structure of person paradigms (Ch. 3); person agreement (Ch. 4); the function of person forms in discourse and intra-sententially (Ch. 5); honorific distinctions and person forms (Ch. 6); the diachrony of person forms, in particular the sources of person markers (lexical items, demonstratives, other person markers, conjugated verbal forms) (Ch. 7). The enormous amount of information provided on these various aspects "draws on language data from over 700 languages" (p. 15), and many of the book's generalizations pertaining to the distribution and frequency of particular properties and features of person markers are based on a computerized database of 402 languages that Siewierska prepared over the years in cooperation with her husband Dik Bakker. *Person* thus constitutes a work of great scholarship and a milestone of typological research.

After moving to Lancaster from Amsterdam, Anna became interested in a field she had not covered before, namely the morphosyntax of English dialects. Together with Willem Hollmann, one of her younger colleagues at Lancaster University, she set out to investigate the twofold question of how grammatical variation and change in dialects can be accounted for by linguistic theory, and in what ways this variation can lead to new theoretical insights. This area of her research, focused mainly on the Lancashire dialect, can thus be seen as part of a more general trend towards integrating theoretical approaches to grammar with the study of dialectal variation (see, for instance, the studies collected in Kortmann 2004). Along these lines, Hollmann & Siewierska (2007) explore possessive–noun constructions in the Lancashire dialect that show reduction of first singular possessives (i.e. [mə] instead of the full form [mai]). They find that reduction accords with (in)alienability, that is, the reduced form is more frequent in constructions where the noun is a kinship (*my brother*) or body-part term (*my eyes*). To account for this unexpected finding (the normal assumption about English is that there is no such effect of (in)alienability), Hollmann & Siewierska resort to the Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995) notion of 'schemas', that is, form-meaning pairings ([*my mother*], [*my head*], etc.) for which we build up mental representations on the basis of their frequent use and frequent exposure to them. This line of research was continued in a later paper (Hollmann & Siewierska 2011) discussing the advantages of considering definite article reduction (DAR) in the same dialect from the perspective of both Construction Grammar and the nascent field of Cognitive Sociolinguistics (Kristiansen & Dirven 2008, Geeraerts, Kristiansen & Peirsman 2010). Based on recordings of interviews held at the North West Sound Archive, Hollmann & Siewierska show that DAR is constrained by semantic-pragmatic factors (information structure, frequency, and the availability of a schema), but also by social factors (article reduction acts as a marker of local identity).

Since her election in 2001 as President of the Societas Linguistica Europaea, Anna Siewierska played a crucial role in reinvigorating SLE, and was constantly looking for ways to give young scholars increased opportunities to participate in its

annual meetings and other activities. At the time of writing this obituary, SLE and ALT, two associations which Anna actively helped to steer, are preparing a joint issue of their official journals (respectively, *Folia Linguistica* and *Linguistic Typology*) in recognition of their debt to this model scholar, generous colleague and great friend.

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