

Anna Siewierska (1955-2011)

Anna Siewierska, President of the Association for Linguistic Typology and one of the world's leading typologists, died in a car accident on 6 August 2011, at the age of 55. Originating from Gdynia, Poland, she spent many years in her early life in Australia as her father worked in foreign trade. In 1980-1981 she was in Gdansk and took active part in the historic events surrounding the rise of *Solidarność*, working as a link between the trade union's leadership and English-speaking journalists.

Her linguistics career began as a student of Barry Blake's at Monash University in Melbourne, where she excelled at an early stage of her studies. Her M.A. thesis on the passive in cross-linguistic perspective (written in 1979, published as Siewierska 1984) was widely read and seems to have been her most widely cited work. She later also coedited a festschrift for Barry Blake (Siewierska & Song 1998). Throughout her career, she remained interested in valency and voice matters, as is attested by her most recent edited book on impersonal constructions (Malchukov & Siewierska 2011), as well as her last two conference presentations at the ALT conference in Hong Kong, both dealing with three-participant constructions (Siewierska & van Lier 2011, van Lier, Siewierska & Witzlack-Makarevich 2011). A recent conference organized by her and her team in May 2011 in Lancaster discussed referential hierarchies in three-participant constructions.

When she came from Gdansk to Amsterdam in the late 1980s and joined the Functional Grammar circle, these matters were high on the agenda in that group, too. A few years later, she published a book on Functional Grammar (Siewierska 1991) that gave a "friendly outsider's" overview of the theory developed by Simon Dik and his students (one of them being her later husband Dik Bakker). Collaboration with the Amsterdam FG typologists continued also in the later years (e.g. Hengeveld, Rijkhoff & Siewierska 2004). Her FG-oriented thinking shaped some of her broadly cross-linguistic work (e.g. Siewierska 1998a on dative alternations in a sample of over 200 languages, as well as Siewierska & Bakker 2005), but she never limited her approach in this way. Some of her work was inspired by Lexical-Functional Grammar (e.g. Siewierska 1999a), some of it by construction grammar (Hollmann & Siewierska 2007), and some by Cognitive Linguistics (Hollmann & Siewierska 2011). She was always happy to see dialogue between linguists of different outlooks (e.g. Siewierska 2006).

An early interest of Anna's was word order, not only from a typological, but also from a grammatical-theory point of view. Her book on word order rules (Siewierska 1988) drew on a wide range of ideas, but perhaps because generative grammar was the overwhelmingly dominant approach to word order at the time, the book was not as influential as it might have been otherwise. In 1990 she became the leader of the EUROTYP word order group, which was her first leadership position in typology at an international level (the results were published as Siewierska (ed.) 1998).

One of the members of this group was computational typologist Dik Bakker, with whom she subsequently built a large-scale typological database dealing with argument marking, pronouns and other phenomena in several hundred languages. Some of the data from that database were published in *WALS* (e.g. Siewierska 2005), and they were a solid cross-linguistic basis for her book on personal pronouns and person agreement markers (Siewierska 2004). Agreement and person forms had become one of Anna's research foci in the late 1990s (Siewierska 1998a, 1999ab, 2003); she referred to these simply as "person forms", noting that there is a typological continuum from agreement markers to personal pronouns (Siewierska & Bakker 2005).

Anna was not a fieldworker, but working with individual languages and with corpora was not alien to her. She worked on her native Polish (e.g. Siewierska 1993) and, after moving to Lancaster, on the Lancashire dialect of English (Hollmann & Siewierska 2007, 2011). And most recently, she developed an interest in Chinese (Siewierska, Xu & Xia 2010). Of course she had many students who worked on particular languages, and after the first *Syntax of the World's Languages* conference was held in 2004, where typologically oriented fieldworkers and typologists came together, she decided to host this conference in Lancaster in 2006. She was very active in finding subsequent venues for this conference series and tried to strengthen its ties with ALT.

Anna Siewierska was a model scholar who not only advanced the field by her ideas and scholarly practice (including her well-prepared and clear presentations), but was also a great organizer who brought people together. She played an important role in reinvigorating the *Societas Linguistica Europaea*, and after that had been accomplished, she steered ALT with the same energy and friendliness. She brought together functionalists and formalists, Eastern European and Western European linguists, and most recently, Western and Chinese linguists as part of a campaign to raise awareness of typology as a subfield in China. One of her latest projects was an edited book on typology to be published in Chinese in China.

The small world of typology has become emptier. Many of us have lost a good friend who will be dearly missed.

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