The syntax of person

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This thematic issue contains a selection of papers that were presented at the Manitoba Workshop on Person, which was held in Winnipeg on September 22 and 23, 2017. The workshop featured twenty-three presentations, including keynote talks by two recognized experts on person, Daniel Harbour and Maria Luisa Zubizarreta. This was the tenth in a series of Canadian workshops on the syntax and semantics of nominals that have been held since 2005. These workshops have served to engage scholars working on nominals, from both within and outside of Canada, in an exchange of ideas. Several of the workshops have led to published collections of papers.

The topic of person, suggested to us by Éric Mathieu and Diane Massam, was chosen not only because of its empirical complexity, but also for its theoretical importance, as person has been argued to play a fundamental role in syntactic structure. Subject-verb agreement, for example, is typically driven by person, and Chomsky (2000, 2001) has proposed that such agreement is in fact the source of the grammatical distinction between subject and predicate: the subject gains its special status in the sentence precisely because the predicate has agreed with it for person. It is not an exaggeration, then, to say that person lies at the heart of the structure of sentences in many languages – much more so than other features such as number or gender.

Although great strides have been made in our theoretical understanding of person in recent years (e.g., Harley and Ritter 2002; Béjar and Rezac 2003, 2009; Cysouw 2003; Adger and Harbour 2007; Nevins 2007; Baker 2008; Wechsler 2010; Ackema and Neeleman 2013), the field is very far from a consensus regarding both the nature of person and the reasons for its important role in syntax. This may be because person has often been discussed secondarily in work focusing on other topics such as agreement (e.g., Baker 2008), alignment (e.g., Béjar and Rezac 2009), or case (e.g., Adger and Harbour 2007). However, with the recent publication of the

significant monograph titled *Impossible Persons* by Daniel Harbour (2016), it has become evident that looking at person as an independent object of inquiry may lead to new insights regarding its nature and patterning.

The papers in this issue address three broad themes:

- **The structural representation of person.** Two papers focus on the representation of person in the structure of nominals. Bjorkman, Cowper, Hall, and Peters argue that a parsimonious model of person features can also derive patterns of spatial deixis, while Ritter and Wiltschko use data from the patterning of impersonal pronouns to argue that the structure of nominals includes speech-act projections parallel to those that have been proposed in the structure of clauses.

- **The role of person in clausal syntax.** Three papers examine issues related to the Person-Case Constraint (PCC), a well-known set of restrictions on the person features of co-arguments. Keine, Wagner, and Coon show that agreement in German copula constructions exhibits hierarchy effects for both person and number; a partial unification with PCC contexts is proposed. Yokoyama argues that putative "repair" strategies employed to evade PCC violations are best regarded not as last-resort repair operations, but rather as distinct constructions that are conditioned in their own right. Compton shows that Inuktitut agreement displays patterns that could be taken to instantiate the PCC, but argues that a PCC-based analysis is not in fact appropriate.

- **The interpretation of person.** Three papers consider person from a perspective that includes its semantic interpretation. Kučerová proposes that the addition of semantic indices at the syntax–semantics interface accounts for various paradoxes in the patterning of syntactic versus semantic person. Pancheva and Zubizarreta propose that person features play a key role in the representation of evidential contrasts, which can in turn affect the temporal interpretation of a clause. Finally, the squib by Ceong considers the interpretation of person in discourse-oriented null subject languages, showing that the complementizer can impose a particular person interpretation on the null subject of a complement clause.

The authors examine these issues through the lens of a geographically, genetically, and typologically diverse range of languages, including Czech, French, German, Guaraní, Hebrew, Heiltsuk, Inuktitut, Italian, and Korean.

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