

## Abstract 60

### **Ithin e:kiyanne: An Investigation into Sinhala Discourse Markers**

Dr. Kaushalya Perera

English Language Teaching Unit, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

*kperera@kln.ac.lk*

Even though discourse markers – such as ‘well’ and ‘now’ in English – have important functions in speech, they have not figured as an important research area in Sinhala language studies (Fraser 1999; Perera & Strauss 2015). This paper aims to provide a preliminary mapping of the forms and functions of Sinhala discourse markers. The data consist of naturally occurring speech in formal and informal settings including interviews, debates and conversations. These are transcribed and coded for their discursive functions. Using a broad definition of discourse markers as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk...which are both cataphoric and anaphoric” (Schiffrin 1988, p.31) over ten discourse markers are identified in the speech samples available. These include the markers ‘mehemayi’, ‘ithin’, ‘daen’, ‘me:’, ‘hodayi’ and ‘e:kiyanne’. The saliency of their use depends not only on the speech situation but personal differences as well. These findings illustrate the necessity of further research on Sinhala discourse features in order to understand how Sinhala discourse is structured.

**Key words:** coherence, discourse markers, Sinhala, spoken discourse