

## Abstract 69

### Problems in Translating Sinhala ‘weniya’ into English

Senior and Chair Professor R.M.W. Rajapakse  
Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
*rmwrajapaksha@yahoo.com*

One language may differ from another phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically. There are, however, differences as well as similarities between two languages. The degree of those differences and similarities between two languages depends on target languages. A number of differences and similarities can be seen between Sinhala and English. The purpose of this study is to analyse the difficulties of translating the Sinhala word “weniya” into English. When it refers to a position of a student in a class the word palaweniya, dewaniya, thuweniya are used to mean first, second, and third respectively. There are no problems in translating such words. The adjective forms of those words, namely palaweni, dewani and thunweni can be translated into English without any difficulty. However, a problem arises when translating a Sinhala sentence like “J.R. Jayawardena mahattaya lankawe kii weni janadhipathiwara da?” Ten scholars including university lecturers, professors and highly qualified professional translators gave different answers to this question. The problem here is that there is no parallel grammatical structure for this sentence in the English language. This study attempts to find the most suitable solution to the above problem. Data was gathered from six university professors, two university lecturers and two professional translators.

**Key words:** differences, grammatical structures, language, similarities, translation