

## Abstract 19

### Linguistic Analysis of “*Viridu*”

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The genre of Sinhala Narrative Poetry called “*Viridu*” has been a source of entrainment that can be traced right back to the courts of the Kings of Kotte and Kandy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. The strong narrative element (a kind of a Ballard), the ¾ beat played on a small hand drum called “Rabana”, repeated rhythm without words, the catchy refrain, use of simple words with many colloquial borrowings, the comic, tragic, sentimental and sensational elements, nonsensical words and words imitating the rhythm have all contributed to the perennial appeal of these poems. They were once heard at the royal court, market places, tea shops at bus stands and ferries (in British colonial times), in public transport (train and bus) now even as “*Viridu Bana*” at Buddhist temples, “*Wesak Pandals*” and orphanages to collect money by relating stories of neglect, abandonment and destitution. Intensions were to emotionalize the onlookers with tragic story, moralize to the Western educated Sinhala Elite to abstain from eating beef and drinking alcohol, narrate a sensational, sad or moralizing story, create awareness, advertise a commercial product or to sell the printed version of the narrative at a market place (Kavi Kole). The media used, in addition to live performances mentioned above, were gramophone records, Sinhala Nurthi Theatre, (called Tower Hall Theatre), novels (by Piyadasa Sirisena et alia.), Radio Ceylon, Sinhala movies and Youtube and CDs today. In this particular study, a linguistic analysis will be presented to demonstrate the transformation of Sinhala Language by taking the *Viridu* texts examples from the following: “*Auwul nada Sapiriwaedane*” by Ambanwela Rala from the “Kandyan Kavikara Maduwa”, ‘*Viridu*’ from the “Dam Street Scene” from John de Silva’s play ‘*Sinhala Parabhava Prakaranaya*’, enactment of *Viridu* in the earliest Sinhala Movies: “*Hadisi Vinishchaya*” (1950), “*Sujatha*” ( 1953) and “*Rekawa*” (1953), while focusing on the language change of performativity.

**Key words:** Language of Sinhala Narrative Poetry, Performativity in Public Space, Mediums of Transmission