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The Vyākaraṇic descriptive model and the French grammars of Sanskrit

Emilie Aussant

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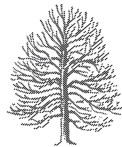
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The Vyākaraṇic descriptive model and the French grammars of Sanskrit

É M I L I E A U S S A N T



Introduction

This study¹ is devoted to the reception of the Indic, so-called Vyākaraṇic descriptive model² in French grammars of Sanskrit. This is, I believe, an opportunity to grasp the singularity of the Vyākaraṇic model somewhat differently. French grammars of Sanskrit—and, more broadly, Western grammars of Sanskrit—bring two different languages face to face (the language described, i.e. Sanskrit, and the language of description, French in the present case) but also two different descriptive models as well as two different metalanguages, both resulting from secular practices and thinking. The Sanskrit case, seen from a European point of view, creates a singular situation: on the one hand, the Sanskrit language fits particularly well with the Greco-Latin model because of its Indo-European origin, and, on the other hand, the Vyākaraṇic model offers a respectable alternative, because it is systematic and complete, because of its contribution—though not always admitted—to linguistics, and because of its major role, in Europe, as an entry point for the Sanskrit language (Rocher 2005:191). The present study—an overview which does not at all claim to discuss the topic at length—describes the way in which French grammars of Sanskrit navigated between these two descriptive models and metalanguages, keeping in mind their final aim (to describe the language in order to compare it with others or to teach the language for itself) and their target audience (linguists or Indologists), and it tries to draw some conclusions from this. It goes without saying that French studies of Sanskrit language are inextricably tied to French and Western linguistics, as well as to French and Western Oriental studies, both these fields of research having a long and complex history. I will bring up this topic in the conclusion.

¹Paper presented at the 15th World Sanskrit Conference (New Delhi, January 2012). I deeply thank Georges-Jean Pinault, Jean-Luc Chevillard, and Christèle Barois for their valuable suggestions.

²I use the expression “Vyākaraṇic (descriptive) model” to designate the descriptive model of language formalized by Pāṇini together with the works of his successors.

I To resort or not to resort to the Vyākaraṇic descriptive model?

I.1 Mention of the Vyākaraṇic model

The first question is whether French grammars of Sanskrit explicitly mention, in a very general way, the Vyākaraṇic model. For twenty of them, the answer is affirmative.³ Bergaigne and Rodet criticize it: according to Bergaigne, the “Indian method” of learning Sanskrit is not suitable for French students (Bergaigne 1884:xi), and according to Rodet, Indian classifications are artificial, irrational and not well-known.⁴ In both cases, the authors are obviously claiming to follow comparative linguistics and scrupulously adhere to the Greco-Latin grammatical model. One observes the same approach in Burnouf and Leupol’s *Méthode* (Burnouf and Leupol 1861:iv),⁵ though the authors concede, on rare occasions, the descriptive and explanatory power of the Vyākaraṇic model (Burnouf and Leupol 1861:iv). As Law (1993:249) had already observed, one finds here the characteristic attitude of

the comparativists to dissociate what they saw as “the structure of the language” from the system presented by native grammarians. The comparativists instinctively felt that the language could be perceived more clearly if one’s sight was not blurred by the spectacles of an alien framework of grammar.

Henry, who clearly does not follow the comparative line (though he was a professor of comparative linguistics; cf. Henry 1902:vii), is more moderate and discreetly points out that the relevance of classifications depends on the aim of the grammar:

Cette théorie, telle que l’ont formulée les grammairiens indigènes, a été reconnue fausse au point de vue de l’histoire et de la comparaison des langues indo-européennes; mais, pour qui n’a en vue que le sanscrit seul, elle continue à offrir les avantages d’une mnémotechnie pratique et simple. (Henry 1902:34)⁶

Renou explicitly resorts to Indian grammatical texts—he claims to follow the Pāṇinian school but does not restrict himself to it and quotes other works—as well as to Western studies on Sanskrit such as Wackernagel’s grammar (Renou 1961:i). These distinct sources are harmoniously put together, on an equal footing, and from this synthesis—which takes place in a structuralist scientific context—there results a complete synchronic description of the Sanskrit language.⁷

Indologists such as Varenne and, above all, Desgranges and P.-S. Filliozat, who are separated by more than 100 years, are the most overtly enthusiastic. They draw

³Father Pons (n.d.) and Burnouf (1824) do not mention it explicitly.

⁴Cf. Rodet 1859–60: Avertissement. De Harlez has the same attitude, see 1878:57, 59, 115.

⁵As well as Carnoy 1925. See the foreword, p. 57ff.

⁶Oppert (1864:iv–v) and Brocquet (2010:14) show a similar attitude.

⁷Which does not have an equivalent in the West, except Whitney’s grammar.

attention to—among other things—the systematized grammatical model of Indian grammars of Sanskrit (Desgranges 1845:25–6; Varenne 1979:5) as well as the descriptive power of the Vyākaraṇic model (Desgranges 1845:363; Varenne 1979:50). They also affirm their complete loyalty to the Indian model (Desgranges 1847:146; Varenne 1979:6–7). Desgranges, who quotes, as Renou does, a number of primary references, explicitly mentions study with pandits:

on lira les grammaires [indiennes] originales; et si on va aux Indes, on se trouvera en état d'entendre les leçons d'un Pandit. (Desgranges 1845:26)

This is also the case for P.-S. Filliozat, who clearly bases his work on the traditional knowledge of pandits:

Nous espérons, en présentant un tableau succinct des concepts grammaticaux des pandits de maintenant, faciliter l'introduction à leur culture et à la prise de contact avec eux. (P.-S. Filliozat 1988:42)

As elsewhere in the West, the reception of the Vyākaraṇic model gives rise to a bipolar situation: the positive pole of French grammars of Sanskrit which are sensitive to the native view of the language, and the negative pole of French grammars of Sanskrit, less, if at all, sensitive to the same native view. The first ones were composed in a philologico-cultural perspective and mainly written by Indologists of the earlier generation (Father Pons and Desgranges)⁸ as well as of the later generation (Renou, Varenne, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat, Balbir). The latter ones were composed in a strict comparative linguistic perspective (Baudry, Burnouf and Leupol, Rodet, Bergaigne, Carnoy; cf. Law 1993:256–7). This is an occasion to recall that Sanskrit grammars published in Germany had a strong influence on French authors of Sanskrit grammars, especially with the development of historical and philological German studies (Rabault-Feuerhahn 2008:294–318). The American Sanskritist Whitney, an important instigator of the “German School” (Rabault-Feuerhahn 2008:190–1, 244–6), is the author of a grammar, published in 1879, in German as well as in English, which was read by many French scholars, in particular Bergaigne (Bergaigne 1884:viii). As it happened, Whitney was—like his professor, Rudolf Roth—somewhat hostile to the adaptation of the native description of the Sanskrit language (Rabault-Feuerhahn 2008:336–41).⁹

⁸Eugène Burnouf, though he belongs to this earlier generation, does not really support the native view as is shown by his critical review of Bopp's *Ausführliches Lehrgebäude der Sanskrita-Sprache* (Burnouf 1825:302–3).

⁹Cf. Whitney 1879:xii: “The attention of special students of the Hindu grammar . . . has been hitherto mainly directed toward determining what the Sanskrit according to Pāṇini really is, toward explaining the language from the grammar . . . This, however, is not the way really to understand the language.”

1.2 Direct borrowings

The second question to ask is the following: in the case where there are direct borrowings from the Vyākaraṇic descriptive model, are they explicitly mentioned? If so, how is the point of view of the Indian grammarians introduced?

As far as I can see, when there are direct borrowings from Vyākaraṇa, there are three ways to refer to it: 1) the reference is explicitly stated, 2) the reference is not explicitly stated, 3) the reference is not stated at all.

When the reference is explicitly stated, one finds various expressions. Some of them are very general, like, “Il y a huit cas, qui sont, dans l’ordre indigène . . .” (Henry 1902:104),¹⁰ “Ceci était la description traditionnelle (c’est-à-dire selon la norme de Pāṇini) . . .” (Varenne 1979:31), “. . . les théoriciens du rasa . . .” (Renou 1961:235), while some others are more specific like “Le *Mouṅḍabodha* . . . Le *Kalapa* et quelques autres grammaires indoues . . .” (Desgranges 1845:9), “Pour la théorie hindoue : . . . la Candravṛtti . . ., la Durghaṭavṛtti . . ., la Siddhāntakaumudī . . .” (Renou 1961:ii).

When the reference is not explicitly stated, the Indian theoretical dimension is still present but totally abstracted from its original context, as the following examples show: “La classification des consonnes en faibles et fortes, sourdes et sonores, est d’une grande importance pour les lois d’euphonie: c’est ce qui m’a engagé à inscrire ces divisions sur le tableau de l’alphabet . . .” (Rodet 1859–60:1.2), “Les distinctions de temps et de modes ne sont pas celles que l’on enseigne d’habitude pour les langues classiques. La conjugaison sanskrite s’organise en ‘systèmes’ . . .” (Varenne 1979:77).

When the reference is not stated at all, the theoretical dimension has totally disappeared and things are presented as being *naturally* so: this is the *natural* arrangement of linguistic units. This category includes all the classifications which are taken for granted. One finds expressions like: “Il y a en sanscrit . . . huit cas: nominatif, accusatif, instrumental, datif, ablatif, génitif, locatif et vocatif . . .” (Scharpé 1945:34), “Le sanskrit classique fait mal la distinction entre ce que les grammaires classiques nomment ‘modes’ et ‘temps’ . . .” (Varenne 1979:112).

2 Elements which come from the Vyākaraṇic descriptive model

One may distinguish four elements French grammars of Sanskrit borrowed from the Vyākaraṇic model, whether explicitly or not. I have ordered them as follows: 1) framework or outline; 2) analysis of linguistic data; 3) classifications and inflectional patterns; and 4) metalanguage.

2.1 The framework

Three possibilities present themselves to authors of French grammars of Sanskrit: they can use the Pāṇinian (generative) framework, the Kaumudī framework with its

¹⁰Here and below, underlining is mine.

thematic outline¹¹ or the Greco-Latin framework with its outline organized into parts of speech.¹² Burnouf and Leupol¹³ and de Harlez excepted—they follow a peculiar outline—,¹⁴ all the works¹⁵ that I have studied show a kind of fusion of the Kaumudī and the Greco-Latin frameworks, probably made easier because of their “natural” convergences.

Coming from the Kaumudī framework, one finds:

- the section on ‘phonetics’, which is always mentioned before the ‘noun’ and ‘verb’ sections (Desgranges, Burnouf, Baudry, Burnouf and Leupol, Oppert, Bergaigne, Rodet, Henry, Carnoy, Renou 1946 and 1961, Courbin, Daumal, Scharpé, Varenne, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat, Broquet, Balbir);¹⁶
- the sections on ‘compounds’ and ‘derivatives’ (Baudry, Bergaigne, Carnoy, Renou 1961, Courbin, Daumal, Varenne, Brocquet),¹⁷ sometimes given in one and the same section (Desgranges, Oppert, Rodet, Henry, Renou 1946, Scharpé), sometimes given in three or more separate sections (Burnouf, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat).¹⁸ The compounds and secondary derivatives are never described together and are never distinguished from primary derivatives, as *ṛttis*;
- a section devoted to indeclinables (Father Pons, Desgranges, Oppert, Rodet, Henry, Carnoy, Renou 1961, Scharpé, Varenne, P.-S. Filliozat);
- sometimes (Father Pons, Desgranges, Renou 1946 and 1961, Courbin, Daumal, Scharpé, Varenne, Brocquet, Balbir), a section called “syntaxe” (‘syntax’) or “phrase” (‘sentence’) which describes, among other things, the semantic value of the nominal cases and which therefore can be seen as an equivalent of the *kāraṅka* section;

¹¹Generally the following: metarules, phonetics, nominal inflection, indeclinables, formation of feminine nouns, syntax (*kāraṅka*), compounds, secondary derivatives, reduplication, verbal inflection, primary derivatives, Vedic rules, accent, and genders. Western scholars knew the existence of the *Siddhāntakaumudī* of Bhaṭṭoḥji Dikṣita, the most popular grammar written in the Kaumudī genre, very early (Colebrooke 1837:2.12). The first edition of the text (in a MS form) seems to be the one by Bābu Rāma, in 1811 (Kidderpur), and the first English translation, the one by S. C. Vasu, in 1904–7 (Allahabad).

¹²The grammar by Dionysius Thrax (2nd–1st c. BCE) is generally considered as the reference handbook for the entire Greek tradition, as well as for a part of the Latin tradition (Lalot 1998). The work gives a list of eight parts of speech: noun, verb, participle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb, and conjunction.

¹³The work is organized into three parts: “Des lettres et de leurs permutations,” “Des mots et de leur formation” (with an additional subpart, “lettres, gouna, vridhhi, euphonie . . .”), and “De la dérivation des mots, De la composition des mots, Règles de syntaxe.”

¹⁴Book 1, “Des mots et de leur formation,” deals with phonology, alphabet, sandhi, derivation of words and composition. Book 2, “Des flexions,” deals with nominal and verbal inflections and invariant parts of speech.

¹⁵Fauriel’s work is incomplete; he worked on it over the period of 1802–43. One can establish the following approximate outline: pronouns (demonstrative, interrogative, personal), suffixes of agency nouns, secondary suffixes, adjectives, and extracts of Sanskrit texts.

¹⁶In Balbir, the title of the section is “Le sandhi.”

¹⁷Father Pons mainly deals with compounds. Brocquet provides a full chapter (“leçon”) on compounds only; his comments on derivatives are spread across the book.

¹⁸Balbir mentions compounds as well as adverbs and particles in the section “Syntaxe.”

- as for the section “alternances vocaliques” (‘vowel-gradation’), which does not exist as such in the Kaumudī framework but which mainly appears in the phonetics and derivation sections, it is sometimes included in the phonetics section (Desgranges, Oppert, Renou 1946, Scharpé, Varenne, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat, Brocquet, Balbir),¹⁹ sometimes in the section devoted to the formation of words (Bergaigne, Rodet, de Harlez) and sometimes set apart (Burnouf, Carnoy, Henry, Renou 1961, Courbin, Daumal).

From the Greco-Latin framework,²⁰ one finds the ‘adjective’,²¹ ‘pronoun’, and ‘numerals’ categories which generally reappear under the ‘noun’ category (Varenne combines them in his 3rd chapter “Nom et pronom”), Fauriel, Burnouf, Baudry, Henry, Carnoy, and Balbir excepted: they present them—at least the adjective and pronoun categories—separately.

From the fusion of the Kaumudī and Greco-Latin frameworks then results a hybrid system. One notes that the Kaumudī framework is generally followed for the main lines, whereas the Greco-Latin framework generally supplies a subframework or a subclassification.

2.2 The analysis of linguistic data

French grammars of Sanskrit—Father Pons and Fauriel excepted²²—unanimously borrowed two analyses of linguistic data from the Vyākaraṇic model:

- the analysis of diphthongs as made up of a/\bar{a} and another vocalic unit ($ai = a/\bar{a} + e$, $au = a/\bar{a} + o$);²³
- the theory of vowel-gradation as well as the terms *guṇa* and *vr̥ddhi* (it is noticeable that Bopp, in his *Vergleichende Grammatik*, already uses them and brings them into general use for other European languages such as Greek).²⁴

2.3 The classifications and inflectional patterns

2.3.1 Classifications

I will consider speech-sounds and compounds.

- Concerning the Sanskrit speech-sounds, Fauriel and de Harlez excepted,²⁵ the French grammars studied here unanimously borrow, without any modification,

¹⁹Baudry puts it in the alphabet section. Burnouf and Leupol include it in an ‘additional’ section, together with various considerations on letters, sandhi, nouns, pronouns, and verbs.

²⁰For more details on the Greco-Latin grammatical categories, cf. Colombat 1999.

²¹For more details on the adjective category, cf. Auroux 1992.

²²He nevertheless mentions, on folio 7, “*e* est d’après le terme des grammaires indiennes le *gouna* de l’*i* . . .”

²³This analysis appears in the *Mahābhāṣya*. Note that Balbir does not mention it.

²⁴Bopp 1833–52. Both terms also have their entries in Marouzeau’s *Lexique* (1951).

²⁵Concerning the consonants, de Harlez distinguishes between “buccales,” “nasales,” and “souffles” (‘breath’) sounds, the first being divided into two categories, the “dures” (‘hard’) and the “molles” (‘soft’).

the Vyākaraṇic classification used in glossaries: short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs, 25 stop consonants classified according to their place of articulation, glides, and sibilants. The *akṣarasamāmnāya* which distinguishes 14 groups of sounds is nevertheless mentioned by Desgranges and P.-S. Filliozat.

- Concerning the compounds, it is the Vyākaraṇic classification in *avyayībhāva*, *tatpuruṣa*, *bahuvrīhi*, and *dvandva* which is generally retained, more or less faithfully.²⁶

Henry (1902) and Renou (1961) give a classification distinguishing two kinds of compounds: the primary compounds, which do not modify their grammatical category, and the secondary compounds, which do.

Burnouf (1824) distinguishes between 1) compounds made up of two terms, with a dual ending; 2) compounds made up of two or more terms, with a singular neuter (collective) ending; and 3) compounds where the first member denotes a quality or a circumstance.

Carnoy makes a distinction between a formal classification (“préfixaux,” i.e. ‘with a prefix’, “syntactiques,” and “synthétiques” compounds) and a semantic classification (“itératifs,” “copulatifs,” and “déterminatifs” compounds) and adds a division between endocentric (the semantic core is inside the compound) and exocentric compounds (the semantic core is outside the compound).

2.3.2 Paradigms

I will consider the nominal and verbal inflections.

- *Nominal inflection*

a. Names and order of cases

Nominal cases are unanimously named according to the Greco-Latin model, though the Vyākaraṇic names (*prathamā*, etc.) are sometimes mentioned (Father Pons, Desgranges 1845:62, Burnouf and Leupol, Oppert,²⁷ Henry, Renou 1961, Brocquet) but actually used only twice, by P.-S. and V. Filliozat. De Harlez excepted,²⁸ the order of presentation of the cases is similar to the Vyākaraṇic model.²⁹ The vocative case is fre-

²⁶Baudry, for instance, makes a distinction between copulative, possessive, determinative, dependency, collective, and adverbial compounds. One notes that the Vyākaraṇic classification is even mentioned in Marouzeau’s *Lexique*.

²⁷Oppert even gives the Sanskrit name of the semantic value of the cases; for example, “instrumental (*kaṛaṇam* cause, ou *trīṭhīā* troisième).” The author obviously missed the subtle difference between both levels of analysis.

²⁸De Harlez gives the following list: nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, ablative, dative, instrumental, locative.

²⁹That is to say: nominative, (vocative), accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative, (vocative).

quently put at the end of the list (Desgranges, Burnouf, Baudry, Henry,³⁰ Renou 1961, Courbin, Scharpé, V. Filliozat), a way to indicate that it does not form a part of the sanctioned list; otherwise, it is given after the nominative case (Burnouf and Leupol, Oppert, Rodet, de Harlez, Bergaigne, Renou 1946, Varenne, Brocquet, Balbir); Burnouf and Leupol, Oppert, Renou 1961, Courbin, Daumal, and P.-S. Filliozat mention it either as a particular usage of the nominative case or as an ‘out’ case, while Carnoy does not mention it at all.

b. Kinds of paradigm and presentation

Paradigms are unanimously presented in a tabular form,³¹ additionally to the paradigm of endings when that is mentioned separately (Desgranges, Burnouf, Renou 1946, Daumal, Renou 1961, Varenne, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat). The separate mention of the case-ending paradigm, followed by the classification of the nominal paradigms according to their gender and stem, is actually the most faithful borrowing from the Vyākaraṇic model. Without mentioning his source, Varenne highlights this point (1979:57): “En théorie, il n’existe en sanskrit qu’une seule déclinaison et traditionnellement il n’est donné qu’une seule liste de désinences.” Concerning the classification of paradigms, the great majority of the grammars borrow—more or less faithfully—the Vyākaraṇic model as seen in Kaumudī works,³² which establishes paradigms according to the stem (and not according to case endings, as in the Greco-Latin model)³³ and according to gender. The number of paradigms is as variable as can be: from two, as for example in Varenne,³⁴ to fifteen, as for example in Balbir. The classification given in Renou 1961 combines the stem with the inflectional process:³⁵ 1) root-stems ending in a consonant or vowel, 2) derivative stems ending in a consonant (without gradation, with simple gradation, with complex gradation), and 3) derivative stems ending in a vowel.

• *Verbal inflection*

Here also, paradigms are unanimously presented in a tabular form.

One can observe two kinds of classification: 1) a classification according to conjugational types, mostly based on morphology; and 2) a classification according to tense systems, which mixes up morphology and semantics.

³⁰Henry points out that it is the ‘native order’.

³¹Henry gives some paradigms in the running text, in list form, but his choice seems to be guided by practical rather than theoretical reasons.

³²Vocalic stems: masculine, feminine, and neuter; consonantal stems: masculine, feminine, and neuter.

³³Bergaigne (1884:284) and Rodet (1859–60:1.35) try to follow the Greek model for the classification of the Sanskrit paradigms.

³⁴Oppert, Scharpé, and Renou (1946) also distinguish between two main classes of stems (vocalic and consonantal).

³⁵The inflectional process is also taken into account in Burnouf, Daumal, and Scharpé.

In the first kind of classification, one finds:

- the distinction between the thematic and the athematic conjugations (Oppert,³⁶ Rodet, Bergaigne, Carnoy), which is borrowed from the Greek model;
- the two classifications suggested by Burnouf and Leupol (though they mention the ten-class list): 1) the first one distinguishes between a strong (i.e., athematic) conjugation and a weak (i.e., thematic) conjugation; 2) the second one distinguishes between the pure roots, the verbal stems ending in *a*, the verbal stems ending in *u*, and the verbal stems ending in *i*;
- the classification given by Baudry, who distinguishes between three classes of verbs (though he mentions the ten-class list as well): 1) the verbs which add *a* or a syllable ending in *a* to the root; 2) those which directly add their ending to the root; and 3) those which add *u* or *nu* to the root;
- the classification given by Henry, who distinguishes between twelve classes of roots according to the vocalic gradation (but he mentions the ten-class list as well);
- the classification in the ten-class list, followed by the enumeration of the different verbal tenses and moods, faithfully borrowed from the Vyākaraṇic model (Desgranges, Burnouf, P.-S. Filliozat, V. Filliozat, Brocquet).

In the second kind of classification, one finds:

- the classification given in Baudry, Oppert, de Harlez, and Daumal, which distinguishes between “temps généraux” (‘general tenses’, i.e. future, perfect, aorist, injunctive, subjunctive) and “temps spéciaux” (‘specific tenses’, i.e. present, imperfect, optative, imperative) and which reintroduces morphological categories (athematic versus thematic forms, forms with infix, reduplicated forms, etc.) under these two main groups;
- the classification given in Renou (1946 and 1961) and a few others which distinguishes between four systems of verbal tenses (the order may vary), within which the morphological categorization is reintroduced.³⁷ Renou, for instance, mentions the following classification: 1) the system of ‘present’; 2) the system of ‘aorist’; 3) the system of ‘perfect’; and 4) the system of ‘future’ (cf. also Varenne 1979:77).

³⁶He nevertheless mentions the traditional ten-class list.

³⁷Balbir distinguishes between 1) verbal forms built on the present stem (the system of ‘present’), 2) verbal forms built on the root, and 3) the system of ‘aorist’.

2.4 The metalanguage

One should notice, above all, that each grammar consulted resorts to some Vyākaraṇic technical terms. It is also noticeable that there are two tendencies: some grammars (generally those which are not voluminous) use only about twenty Sanskrit technical terms, while the others use more than one hundred terms (Desgranges even quotes *yadycchā*, a term very sparingly used by Sanskrit grammarians). In the list of twenty-two grammars, one generally finds terms concerning the writing system, phonetics, compounds, and verbal voices. Terms such as *sandhi*, *guṇa*, *vṛddhi*, and the names of compounds certainly went through the common linguistic vocabulary.

Direct borrowings set apart, one observes three different ways to adapt the Vyākaraṇic terminology:

1. the Sanskrit term is translated by its French equivalent; e.g. *bahuvrīhi*, when not used as is, is translated by “composé possessif”;
2. the Sanskrit term is translated by a French calque translation; e.g. *mūrdhanya* which is translated by “cérébrale” (instead of “cacuminal,” “lingual,” or “rétroflexe”);
3. neologisms are also created from Sanskrit technical terms; in Oppert for instance, one finds the verbs “gunifie” (‘which makes the *guṇa* grade’) and “vridhifient” (‘which make the *vṛddhi* grade’), the noun “guation” (‘the fact of getting the *guṇa* grade’) and the adjective “gunifiées” (‘[units] which have gotten the *guṇa* grade’; cf. Oppert 1864:iv), and in Renou 1961, the adjectives “pluté” (‘which becomes *pluta*’; Renou 1961:29), “dvandvique” (‘of the *dvandva* kind’; Renou 1961:241), the noun “bahuvrīhisation” (‘the fact of becoming a *bahuvrīhi*’) as well as the adjective “bahuvrīhisé” (‘which becomes a *bahuvrīhi*’; Renou 1961:242), the adjective “sandhique” (‘having *sandhi*’; Renou 1961:342), the adjective “vṛddhique” (‘having *vṛddhi*’; Renou 1961:402–3).

The use of this third way to adapt the Vyākaraṇic terminology can be explained in two ways. On the one hand, it reveals the limits of the adaptation, that is to say, the inability to find a French term or expression which could exactly correspond to the Sanskrit one (see, for instance, Oppert 1864:iv). On the other hand, it reveals how the Sanskrit metalanguage pervades French scholars’ descriptive practice. In this respect, Renou is a perfect example, and his *Terminologie grammaticale du Sanskrit* (1942) is the result of a huge mastery.

3 Conclusion

The authors of the twenty-two grammars studied here obviously have an insight into the existence of Vyākaraṇa. Like the first known European grammar of Sanskrit,

composed in Latin by Heinrich Roth between 1660 and 1662, each work refers to linguistic tools coming from Vyākaraṇa, favorably or not, profusely or not. With the exception of Bergaigne's *Manuel*, French grammars of Sanskrit aim at making the Vyākaraṇic model more approachable rather than creating a new framework for the description of Sanskrit (Law 1993:247–8). From this attitude, which one can observe in other Western grammars of Sanskrit, there results a kind of synthesis of ancient Indian and European approaches. That is certainly the case for the framework, the classification of compounds, and the metalanguage. The description of nominal and verbal declensions more generally resorts to the Greco-Latin model, while the description and the classification of sounds is exclusively borrowed from the Vyākaraṇic model.

More precisely, what kind of conclusions can be drawn from such a study or, to put it a different way, what kind of discussions can these data fuel? I see at least two:

1. The complex relation between a language and its descriptive model(s), especially in the case of ancient languages. The “grammatisation” process, as Auroux calls it (Auroux 1994, Auroux and Mazière 2006), allows for a state of language to be fabricated, given a form, and represented as being a language to be named, spoken, and spoken about. Due to force of circumstance, the Sanskrit language French authors have described over two centuries³⁸ is not different from the language Pāṇini and his successors created. It is not surprising, then, to observe the more or less noticeable presence of the Vyākaraṇic model in *all* French grammars of Sanskrit. For that matter, it should have been even more present, but that would have meant not allowing for the Greco-Latin model and its suitability for describing Sanskrit.
2. The epistemological status of native—and yet scholarly—grammatical knowledge. In her deeply learned book, Rabault-F Feuerhahn (2008:ch. 6, especially 336–47) reminds us how controversial the status of the indigenous sciences was in Western Indological works from the beginning. One year before Rabault-F Feuerhahn's book was published, Lardinois, in his thought-provoking study (2007:chs. 8–10), clearly mentioned, from the perspective of sociology, the questions posed by the existence of native scholarly knowledge. It seems to me that, in the field of language description, the question of the epistemological status of native scholars' discourses was asked—even though not always consciously and explicitly—very early (and is still being asked, as descriptive models dictate; see, nowadays, the interest of computational linguistics in Pāṇini's grammar). The reasons for that, I think, are: first, the similarity of the Vyākaraṇic model to the Western models and the fact, already pointed out by Rocher (1995:191), that the native procedures could serve to analyze

³⁸Some of them, like Renou (1961), nevertheless tried to integrate into their work forms extracted from a huge number of different texts.

cognate languages; and second, the explanatory power of the Vyākaraṇic procedures, which was by far, and for a long time, greater than that of Western models. Note, moreover, that this question of the epistemological status of native knowledge is differently asked depending on the discipline within which authors work as well as on their use of Sanskrit texts: orientalist and Indologists³⁹ such as Desgranges, Varenne, and P.-S. Filliozat generally do not ask whether this descriptive model is more “true” or more “scientific” than that model. It is the model in itself, as a cultural product, that interests them.

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³⁹Obviously, the word “orientalism” did not denote exactly the same field of research by the time of Desgranges as by the time of P.-S. Filliozat. To avoid the difficulty, let us say that, besides the language in itself, these authors share a common interest in the intellectual and historical context of Vyākaraṇa, as well as in the texts to which the knowledge of the Sanskrit allows access.

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