

## Unsanitizable Yoga: Revivalistics and Hybridic Reclaimed Sanskrit

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### INTRODUCTION

Our paper is an attempt to locate the 'Spoken Sanskrit' revival within the complex socio-political, religious, linguistic ecological context of a contemporary, globalized South Asia, and world.<sup>1</sup>

One of the key points of discussion in this paper surrounds the nomenclature used to define the varieties of Sanskrit spoken today. Simply put, for many reasons, a lot of the Sanskrit spoken today is not really the same as the archaic Vedic and Classical predecessors. Therefore, through a revivalistic lens, we explore some of the different registers of vernacular Sanskrit spoken today, and propose that they ought to, instead, be called Hybridic Reclaimed Sanskrit (henceforth, HRS).

Finally, we argue that these Classical Sanskrit-Modern Indian Language hybrids are a result of the imperfect learning of 'Spoken Sanskrit'; which, due to their combination, essentially consisting of Sanskrit (*samskr̥ta*) and what we can appreciate as 'modern Prakrits' (*prākṛta*), should be considered similar to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the key point is that HRS consists of a spectrum of registers, which can be topologized as running between 'high' and 'low' registers. As discussed below, this concept has historical precedent and is likely the least interesting part of the discussion. While more research is required, our main argument is that the lower the register, the higher the level of hybridity

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<sup>1</sup> See BORDIA, RADHIKA. 2015. *24 hours: Liberating Sanskrit*. Online: <http://www.ndtv.com/video/shows/24-hours/24-hours-liberating-sanskrit-369235>; as well as BRASS, PAUL. 2005. *Language, religion and politics in North India*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.

<sup>2</sup> See BRONKHORST, JOHANNES. 1993. Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit: The original language. *Aspects of Buddhist Sanskrit: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Language of Sanskrit Buddhist Texts, Oct. 1–5, 1991*, ed. by Kameshwar Nath Mishra, 396–423. Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.

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with a Modern Indian Language (MIL) there will be. This occurs through the substrate interference with the speaker's L1 (first language), and often, L2 (second language).

Section 1 provides a brief overview of *revivalistics*; is a new trans-disciplinary field of enquiry surrounding language *reclamation* (e.g. 'sleeping beauty' Barnjarla Aboriginal language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia<sup>3</sup>), *revitalization* (e.g. severely endangered Adnyamathanha) and *reinvigoration* (e.g. 'unhealthy' Welsh). Section 2 contextualizes Sanskrit through a historical sociological perspective. Thereafter, in Section 3, we explore the nomenclature of defining old and new versions of Sanskrit. This includes a brief comparison with Ancient Hebrew/Modern Israeli in Section 3.1. In Section 4, we investigate aspects of the Sanskrit reclamation movement through a revivalistic paradigm. Section 5 follows with an analysis of Sanskrit utterances collected from ethnographic fieldwork in a 'Sanskrit-speaking' village located in Madhya Pradesh.

## 1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF REVIVALISTICS

Revivalistics aims to move beyond the general ambit of documentary linguistics to comparatively and systematically analyse the universal constraints and global mechanisms on the one hand, and the *particularistic* peculiarities and culturally relativist idiosyncrasies on the other hand, of language reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration attempts across various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD and the Barnjarla people. 2016. *Barnjarla Aboriginal Dictionary App*. iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/barnjarla-dictionary/id1151693665?mt=8> ; Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.regenr8.dictionary.barnjarla&hl=en>; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD 2018. *Dictionary of the Barnjarla Aboriginal Language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia*. <http://www.dictionary.barnjarla.org/> (based on Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann, 1844); as well as ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD and the Barnjarla people. 2019. *Barnjarlidhi Manoo (Speaking Barnjarla Together)*. (Barnjarla Alphabet & Picture Book). South Australia: Barnjarla Language Advisory Committee.

<sup>4</sup> ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD. 2009. Hybridity versus revivability: Multiple causation, forms, and patterns. *Journal of Language Contact*, 2.40–67; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD AND MICHAEL WALSH. 2011. Stop, revive, survive: Lessons from the Hebrew revival applicable to the reclamation, maintenance and empowerment of Aboriginal languages and cultures. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 31.1.111–7; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD AND MICHAEL WALSH. 2014. Our Ancestors are Happy! Revivalistics in the service of Indigenous Wellbeing. *Indigenous languages: Value to the community*, 113-119. Okinawa, Japan: Foundation for Endangered Languages; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD, SHIORI SHAKUTO-NEOH AND GIOVANNI MATTEO QUER. 2014. Native tongue title: Proposed compensation for loss of Aboriginal languages. *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1.55–71; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD. 2020. *Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Revivalistics combines scientific studies of *native* language acquisition and *foreign* language learning. Revivalistics asserts that language reclamation is the most extreme case of foreign language learning. It proposes that genetic and typological hybridization should be expected in any reclamation attempt, and that the family tree model of historical linguistics does not capture the complexity of reclaimed languages. In relation to the historical sociolinguistic context of so-called ‘Sanskrit Hybrids’ across a ‘linguistic area,’ Houben<sup>5</sup> asserts that a simple genetic model is inadequate to discuss the complexities of the popular emergence of a Sanskritized Prakrit or Prakritized Sanskrit through the historical existence of Sanskrit interlanguages. This is especially true when considering how substrate interference involves the production of a third *inter-language* hybridizes the revived language and the mother tongues of the aspiring speech community.<sup>6</sup> For example:

Language 1 (Hindi) → Language 3 (Revived-Sanskrit) ← Language 2 (Classical Sanskrit)

The desires and expectations of the aspiring Sanskrit-speaking communities are to speak an idealized, sanitized, utopian, ‘pure’ version of Classical Sanskrit. However, these aspirations, which are found in several media reports, suggest a reality that is at odds with insights by Zuckermann,<sup>7</sup> and with literature related to the processes involved in language acquisition that anticipate an imperfect learning stage and formation of a possible hybrid

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<sup>5</sup> HOUBEN, J.E.M. 2018. Linguistic Paradox and Diglossia: The emergence of Sanskrit and Sanskritic language in Ancient India. *Open Linguistics*, 4, 1-18. doi: 10.1515/opli-2018-0001; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2019. Scope of Early Sanskrit Usage: A Wider Approach. In M. Deshpande and J. Houben (eds.) *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 2: Linguistics*. DOI:10.14288/1.0379841.

<sup>6</sup> See CORDER, S. PIT. 1982. *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>7</sup> ZUCKERMANN, GHIL‘AD. 2006. A new vision for Israeli Hebrew: Theoretical and practical implications of analyzing Israel’s main language as a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid language. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.1.57–71; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL‘AD. 2009. Hybridity versus revivability: Multiple causation, forms, and patterns. *Journal of Language Contact*, 2.40–67; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL‘AD. 2020. *Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond*. New York: Oxford University Press.

target language.<sup>8,9</sup> Reclaimed Sanskrit is therefore unsanitizable. Even though it is tempting, it does not seem suitable to define these *Classical Sanskrit-Modern Indian Languages* hybrids as creoles, as there is generally a common first language available for communication in these rural, Sanskrit-speaking language nests where a simplified version of Classical Sanskrit is being revived, ostensibly among non-scholarly farmers.<sup>10</sup> This is evidenced by the Sanskrit revival movements aim to make Sanskrit a rural *lingua franca*, or ‘language of the masses in rural areas.’<sup>11</sup> Let us familiarize ourselves with one of the core concepts of revivalistics. First, we need to make a distinction between language reclamation, revitalization, and reinvigoration. This is represented visually in the Table 1, below.

- **Reclamation** is the revival of a sleeping beauty tongue, that is, a no-longer spoken language, as in the case of Hebrew, Barngarla (the Aboriginal language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia), Kurna (the Aboriginal language of Adelaide, South Australia), Wampanoag (First Nation language of New England, USA), Siraya (Indigenous language of Taiwan) and Myaamia (First Nation language of Oklahoma, USA).

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<sup>8</sup> Two Late Middle-Age texts were produced to inspire second language acquisition of Sanskrit through a revival of spoken Sanskrit in the family home. Shah (1960) brought these texts out of obscurity, and they later became the focus of Deshpande (1993), Salomon (1982) and Wezler (1996). Deshpande (1993) notes that the first languages of the various authors has inadvertently influenced how the prescribed version of Sanskrit in these texts was produced. This demonstrates how substrate influence from the authors’ mother tongues can influence the production of the target language. Undoubtedly, a similar effect occurs today amongst the global Sanskrit-reclamation enthusiasts.

<sup>9</sup> See LEFEBVRE, CLAIRE, LYDIA WHITE AND CHRISTINE JOURDAN. 2006. *L2 acquisition and creole genesis*. Amsterdam John Benjamins Publishing Company; LICERAS, J.M., C. MARTÍNEZ, R. PEREZ-TATTAM, and S. PERALES. 2006. L2 acquisition as a process of creolization: Insights from child and adult code-mixing. *L2 acquisition and creole genesis: Dialogues*, ed. by Claire Lefebvre, Lydia White and Christine Jordain, 113–44. Amsterdam, John Benjamins; as well as SAVILLE-TROIKE, MURIEL. 2006. *Introducing second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>10</sup> See BLASI, DAMIÁN, SUSSANNE MARIA MICHAELIS and MARTIN HASPELMATH. 2017.

*Grammars are robustly transmitted even during the emergence of Creole languages*. Online: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0192-4.epdf>.

<sup>11</sup> DEOPUJARI, SHREESH. 2009. *Sanskrit can become the language of the masses in rural areas*. Online: <http://organiser.org/archives/historic/dynamic/modules24bf.html?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=307&page=29>.

- **Revitalization** is the revival of a severely endangered language; for example: Adnyamathanha (Flinders Ranges in South Australia); as well as Karuk (California, USA) and Walmajarri (Western Australia).
- **Reinvigoration** is the revival of an endangered language that still has a high percentage of children speaking it, for example the Celtic languages such as Welsh and Irish, and the Romance languages such as Catalan and Quebecoise French. The following table depicts the difference:

<b>Reclamation</b>	<b>Revitalization</b>	<b>Reinvigoration</b>
NO native speakers (when the revival begins)	Severely endangered. Some speakers.	Endangered. Many speakers.
e.g. Hebrew, Kurna, Barngarla, Wampanoag, <u>Siraya</u> , <u>Myaamia</u>	e.g. Adnyamathanha, Karuk, <u>Walmajarri</u>	e.g. Welsh, Irish, Catalan, Quebecoise French

TABLE 1. Revival Cline: Reclamation, Revitalization and Reinvigoration

Based on these categories, we place the contemporary spoken Sanskrit within the *reclamation* category. We do this because the claims of a continuous chain of native speakers of Sanskrit are unreliable, and possibly statistically irrelevant. Based on UNESCO's classification system, we place Sanskrit in the *definitely endangered* category, because *children no longer learn the language as a 'mother tongue' in the home*. Instead, most children who do learn Sanskrit do so at school, as a second language; which does not necessarily imply that it includes a focus on building up conversational skills. In the next section, we explore Sanskrit's biography.

## 2. GLANCING AT 'SPOKEN SANSKRIT': DIACHRONICALLY SPEAKING

### 2.1 A very brief account of Sanskrit's antiquity

Sanskrit (*saṃskṛta*, Sanskrit for 'adorned, purified [by grammar]') is a form of Old Indo-Aryan that has been used over a wide area of northern South Asia since about the middle of

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the second millennium BCE.<sup>12</sup> The historicity, as opposed to the history, of Sanskrit is an emotive issue. For many, it is a deeply significant and sacred heritage language. While for others within the global consumption-scape of Yogaland,<sup>13</sup> it is imbued with an equally sacred power as the language of Yoga. Regardless of any popular, albeit, ahistorically-monolithic appeals to mystery and purity, particularly through various culturally-nationalist claims, such as Vedic Sanskrit is the *Ursprache* of a pan-global Vedic empire that enabled the supposed *Urkultur* of humanity—Vedic Sanskrit-speaking Aryans—to migrate out of India to colonize the entire world while also becoming the best language for computer programming,<sup>14</sup> what the historical linguistic record can tell us is that it transitioned to a post-vernacular second language (L2) through natural stages of language shift.

One opinion, which is shared by both scholars and laypeople, is that the cultural and linguistic zenith of Sanskrit has passed and that the spoken register of this language has either already died,<sup>15</sup> or it is a ‘dying language’.<sup>16</sup> Deshpande’s articles on the historical sociolinguistic situation of the pre-modern period present an intrepid picture of South Asia’s remote sociolinguistic past, where Sanskrit was spoken across various regions over two millennia ago, and how the socio-political and religious forces that led to it becoming a post-vernacular language approximately 2000 years ago.<sup>17</sup> Even though Sanskrit has been

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<sup>12</sup> CARDONA, GEORGE. 2003. Sanskrit. *The Indo-Aryan languages*, ed. by George Cardona and Dhanesh Jain, 104–60. London: Routledge; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 1987. Sanskrit and Prakrit: Some sociolinguistic issues. *Select papers from SALA-7: South Asian languages analysis roundtable conference*, ed. by Elena Bashir, Madhav Deshpande and Peter E. Hook, 76–93. Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

<sup>13</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2019. Spiritual Bypass and Entanglement in Yogaland: How Neoliberalism, Soft Hindutva and Banal Nationalism Facilitate Yoga Fundamentalism. *Politics and Religion Journal* 1(13): 137–175.

<sup>14</sup> See MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2019. Spiritual Bypass and Entanglement in Yogaland: How Neoliberalism, Soft Hindutva and Banal Nationalism Facilitate Yoga Fundamentalism. *Politics and Religion Journal* 1(13): 159–160.

<sup>15</sup> HANNEDER, J. 2002. On “the death of Sanskrit”. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45.293–310; POLLOCK, SHELDON. 2001. The death of Sanskrit. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43: 392–426; POLLOCK, SHELDON. 2006. *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture, and power in premodern India*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>16</sup> HOCK, H.H. 1992a. Is Sanskrit dying? *Seminar* 391.17–24; HOCK, H.H. 1992b. Spoken Sanskrit in Uttar Pradesh: Profile of a dying prestige language. *Dimensions of Sociolinguistics in South Asia: Papers in Memory of Gerald B Kelley*, ed. by E. Dimock Jnr., 247–260. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2008. Sanskrit in the South Asian sociolinguistic context. *Language in South Asia*, ed. by Brij B. Kachru, 177–88. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic*

continuously spoken for the past couple of millennia, albeit, as a post-vernacular, elite, second language;<sup>18</sup> as a result of language shift, the evidence suggests that about 500-200 BCE, the elite register of *bhāṣā* (the emic, Paninian term for the vernacular ‘Vedic Sanskrit’) ceased being used as a mother tongue.

More recent work provide ever more fascinating insights into the dialectology of Indic languages, particularly in relation to issues of language order, code-switching, diglossia and internal, subsets of registers.<sup>19</sup>

While this current paper does not intend to delve into the hoary past too much, it is worth at least mentioning that there is enough historical linguistic evidence to show that there were certainly dialects, regional variations, high/low and sub registers related to medicine, liturgy, poetry etc. beyond the simple fact that these more refined registers must have built upon a foundation of less refined spoken forms. As Deshpande explains, “Whether such dialects were Sanskrit or Prakrit is a mere question of nomenclature, but the very existence of such multiple dialectal layers of Indo-Aryan during Vedic times seems unquestionable.”<sup>20</sup> Particularly with relation to sub-regional variation within the Vedic canon, itself whereby it becomes clear that different *maṇḍala*-s (books) within the Ṛgveda were composed by families located in different geographic areas who also spoke distinct dialects.

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*identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 218–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>18</sup> ARALIKATTI, R.N. 1989. *Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns*. Tirupati: Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 218–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>19</sup> OLLET, ANDREW. 2017. *Language of the Snakes: Prakrit, Sanskrit and the Language Order of Premodern India*. Oakland: University of California Press; HOUBEN, J.E.M. 2018. Linguistic Paradox and Diglossia: The emergence of Sanskrit and Sanskritic language in Ancient India. *Open Linguistics*, 4, 1-18. doi: 10.1515/opli-2018-0001; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2019. Scope of Early Sanskrit Usage: A Wider Approach. In M. Deshpande and J. Houben (eds.) *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 2: Linguistics*. DOI:10.14288/1.0379841.

<sup>20</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2019. Scope of Early Sanskrit Usage: A Wider Approach. In M. Deshpande and J. Houben (eds.) *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 2: Linguistics*. DOI:10.14288/1.0379841.

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Houben<sup>21</sup> explains how the ‘matrix language’ that was later-named ‘Sanskrit’ (from first centuries CE onwards) is sufficiently attested as a “Prakritic” or “Middle Indo-Aryan” language. Given the fact that ancient grammarians privileged the more desired or perceived, ‘higher registers,’ it is no wonder that ‘lower forms (*apaśabda*)’ are hardly mentioned.<sup>22</sup> Regrettably, our ability to peer into Sanskrit’s past is hampered by a less than ideal, almost barren, historical linguistic record. What is clear is that the linguistic ecology of ancient South Asia was more dynamic and complex than many narratives offered. Particularly, for example, the ‘flat-earth’ style narrative offered to attendees while participating in the two-week residential spoken Sanskrit camp in Delhi, in which we were told that, ‘In ancient India everyone only spoke Sanskrit; *purāṇa-bhārata-varṣe sarve janāḥ kevalaṃ saṃskṛta-bhāṣāṃ vadanti sma*’.<sup>23</sup> It is regrettable and frustrating that a mythological rendering of Sanskrit’s past is perceived as more valuable and ‘true’ than its fascinating and complex historiography. And that any critical investigation is often considered heretical, anti-national, seditious, or, even racist. Let us now look at Sanskrit in the past 60 years.

## 2.2 Post-Independence Era Sanskrit

In the post-Independence era, studies related to spoken Sanskrit were initiated first by the Sanskrit Commission (1957), which laid down several recommendations for preserving and promoting Sanskrit, some of which have been successfully introduced. Following this, there was a small group of scholars who have produced invaluable studies into various aspects of Spoken Sanskrit. These studies began with Nakamura<sup>24</sup> and Hock and Pandaripande.<sup>25</sup> Due to the changes in the three-language educational policy, Sanskrit has fared better in the

<sup>21</sup> HOUBEN, J.E.M. 2018. Linguistic Paradox and Diglossia: The emergence of Sanskrit and Sanskritic language in Ancient India. *Open Linguistics*, 4, 3, 6. doi: 10.1515/opli-2018-0001

<sup>22</sup> HOUBEN, J.E.M. 2018. Linguistic Paradox and Diglossia: The emergence of Sanskrit and Sanskritic language in Ancient India. *Open Linguistics*, 4, 7. doi: 10.1515/opli-2018-0001; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2019. Scope of Early Sanskrit Usage: A Wider Approach. In M. Deshpande and J. Houben (eds.) *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 2: Linguistics*. DOI:10.14288/1.0379841.

<sup>23</sup> See MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>.

<sup>24</sup> NAKAMURA, HAJIME. 1973. *A companion to contemporary Sanskrit*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.

<sup>25</sup> HOCK, H.H. and RAJESHWARI PANDARIPANDE. 1976. The sociolinguistic position of Sanskrit in pre-Muslim South Asia. *Studies in Language Learning* 1.2: 106–38.



Hindi speaking states (which Uttar Pradesh is) than in the non-Hindi speaking states, where a dramatic reduction in students studying Sanskrit occurred once it became optional in 1968.<sup>26</sup>

The policy of the Indian Census is that, if the number of speakers of any language drops to less than 10,000, it will no longer be reported as a separate language.<sup>27</sup> Sanskrit's virtual position is precarious. This is one reason why the RSS (the National Volunteer Corps) 'wants citizens to voluntarily register Sanskrit as their second language in the census. The RSS feels that if people register the language, the final census data would reflect higher literacy of Sanskrit, which will force the government to take measures to preserve the language'.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, the main organization that promotes the revitalization of Sanskrit, known as Samskrita Bharati,<sup>29</sup> claims that 15,000 people have attended their two-week, full immersion camps, and that over three million people have learnt Sanskrit from attending the other types of courses they offer. Kashyap<sup>30</sup> boldly asserts that 'not less than five lacks'<sup>31</sup> [*sic*] people of India can speak fluent Sanskrit as like their mother tongue'.<sup>32</sup> However, as mentioned above in 2.1, a common, albeit simplified, assertion made by Samskrita Bharati is that Sanskrit was a trans-regional *lingua franca* spoken by everyone, and that it ought to return to not only being a pan-Indic 'national' language but also replace English as the next global *lingua franca*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 218–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Sanskrit Commission. 1957. *Report of the Sanskrit Commission 1956-57*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>27</sup> GOSWAMI, HEMANT. 2012. *Mother language 'Sanskrit' needs urgent protection*. Online: <http://goimonitor.com/story/mother-language-sanskrit-needs-urgent-protection>.

<sup>28</sup> TARE, KIRAN. 2010. RSS Wants Sanskrit Registered in Census. *DNA*. Online: <http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-rss-wants-sanskrit-registered-in-census-1387878>.

<sup>29</sup> SAMSKRITA BHARATI. 2017. *Samvadshala*. Online: <https://www.sanskritabharati.in/samvadashala>.

<sup>30</sup> KASHYAP, DHANANJOY. 2013. Spoken Sanskrit movement in India: A study. *Global Research Methodology Journal* 2.8.1.

<sup>31</sup> A *lakh* is a South Asian numerical figure that equals 100,000.

<sup>32</sup> The position of Sanskrit as an L<sub>3</sub> or L<sub>4</sub> is influenced by the L<sub>1</sub> and whether the subject also is an L<sub>2</sub> Hindi speaker. If Hindi is the L<sub>2</sub> then Sanskrit is likely to be the L<sub>3</sub> or even L<sub>4</sub> (McCartney 2011:66-67).

<sup>33</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Is the global prestige of Sanskrit aiding and abetting Hindu nationalists and supremacists? *Political Theology*. Online: [http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/is-the-global-prestige-of-sanskrit-aiding-and-abetting-hindu-nationalists-and-supremacists-patrick-mccartney\\_/](http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/is-the-global-prestige-of-sanskrit-aiding-and-abetting-hindu-nationalists-and-supremacists-patrick-mccartney_/); MCCARTNEY,

This assertion seriously elides the multilingual pre-history of South Asia, particularly within the communities who spoke several regional varieties of mutually intelligible dialects and intra-familial registers of Sanskrit. These people were not monolingual Sanskrit speakers even though Sanskrit did, and still does, have a pan-Indic use.<sup>34</sup> This was only ever through ‘[a] thin layer of the Indian society, and yet it covers a wide geography. Within this scholar-to-scholar communication, we notice a fairly conservative maintenance of the high Classical Sanskrit. In centers like Banaras, Paithan, Pune, and Kanchipuram, we know of a strong presence of Sanskrit teaching and debating institutions, and how these magnet centers interacted with regions across India.’<sup>35</sup>

There are volumes of research conducted on the literary Sanskrit canon from philological, general linguistic, historical sociological, and anthropological perspectives; however, for a multitude of reasons, ‘Spoken Sanskrit’ often falls into a research blind spot and is overlooked by various disciplines. Further complicating the issue of conducting sociolinguistic research on Sanskrit is that it is typically not spoken *naturally* in mainstream society, which makes finding ‘authentic’ speakers for the study of ‘natural’ Sanskrit speech difficult.<sup>36,37</sup>

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PATRICK. 2017. Yoga Practitioners and the unspoken global aspirations of Indian Ethno-Nationalism. *Political Theology*. Online: <http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/yoga-practitioners-and-the-unspoken-global-aspirations-of-indian-ethno-nationalism-patrick-mccartney/>.

<sup>34</sup> See DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 1993. *Sanskrit and Prakrit: Sociolinguistic issues*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas; HOCK, H.H. and RAJESHWARI PANDARIPANDE. 1976. The sociolinguistic position of Sanskrit in pre-Muslim South Asia. *Studies in Language Learning* 1.2: 106–38; as well as POLLOCK, SHELDON. 2006. *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture, and power in premodern India*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>35</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 222. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>36</sup> This makes employing sentence repetition tests (SRT) somewhat challenging. An SRT consists of fifteen prerecorded sentences in the target language (TL). Each sentence is played once, and the subject is given the opportunity to repeat the phrase. Deviations are considered errors (Varghese and colleagues 2009:30). Combining this in future research will lead into applying Error Analysis and Interlanguage Analysis (see Al-khresheh 2015:128–129). It is anticipated that this will enable a more thorough understanding of the ‘natural’ form of Sanskrit spoken today. This is why it is productive to use an interdisciplinary approach. Broadening this endeavor.

<sup>37</sup> MISHRA, DIWAKAR, GIRISH NATH JHA AND KALIKA BALI. 2011. Challenges in developing a Tts for Sanskrit. *Information systems for Indian languages: ICISIL conference proceedings*, ed. by Lakhwinder Singh, Gurpreet Singh Lehal, Jyotsna Sengupta, Dharam Veer Sharma and Vishal Goyal, 228–31. Patiala: Springer.

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As a minority language, Sanskrit already enjoys significant governmental support and societal patronage due to its prestige and symbolic capital as a heritage language of high culture and religion. As well, Sanskrit is embedded in a much broader religious and nationalist discourse.<sup>38</sup> It enjoys state support through the media. For example, it is still used in daily media reports by Doordarshan, India's central government public service broadcaster (Doordarshan News 2016).<sup>39</sup> Even though this example is from across the border in Nepal, parallel activities occur within the Republic of India. Manchanda<sup>40</sup> uses an excerpt to highlight how the cultural forces of the elite are imposed on minorities; and so, while the elite is pushing back against the hegemony of the British colonial period, the minorities and other non-Brahminical groups in South Asia are pushing back against the hegemony of the Brahmins, which includes not adopting Sanskrit as a chosen vernacular. This is because the elite has (mis)used cultural weapons such as Hinduization, Sanskritization and Bahunbad (Brahmanism) against the minority and/or indigenous ethnic groups in order to forcibly integrate them under a homogenizing and hegemonic authority that operates against religious and ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity.

Even though the tradition of Vedic chanting is included on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage,<sup>41</sup> the spoken variety of Sanskrit is not found on UNESCO's list of endangered languages,<sup>42</sup> as it is considered to already be in a moribund state. Furthermore, this list only considers what are referred to as 'natural languages' as opposed

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<sup>38</sup> See JAFFRELOT, CHRISTOPHE. 2000. Sanskritization vs ethnicization in India: Changing identities and caste politics before Mandal. *Asian Survey* 40.5.756–66; RAMASWAMY, SUMATHI. 1999. Sanskrit for the nation. *Modern Asian Studies* 33.2.339–81; TRIVEDI, ANUPAM. 2010. *Sanskrit is second official language in Uttarakhand*. Online: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/sanskrit-is-second-official-language-in-uttarakhand/story-wxk5118Re4vNxofrr7FAJK.html>; as well as VISHVANATHAN, MEERA. 2014. *The language of eternal return: Sanskrit and the politics of the present day*. Online: <https://thismomentintimeblog.wordpress.com/2014/12/12/the-language-of-eternal-return-sanskrit-and-the-politics-of-the-present-day-2/>.

<sup>39</sup> DOORDARSHAN NEWS. 2016. *Vaarta: Morning Sanskrit News / Feb 3*. Online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_\\_lpxq1Vv8M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__lpxq1Vv8M).

<sup>40</sup> MANCHANDA, RITA. 2009. *The no nonsense guide to minority rights in South Asia*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

<sup>41</sup> UNESCO. 2017. *Tradition of Vedic chanting*. Online: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00062>.

<sup>42</sup> UNESCO. 2017. *Atlas of the world's languages in danger*. Online: <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php?hl=en&page=atlasmap>.

to ‘artificial languages.’ Aklujkar<sup>43</sup> raises the point that Sanskrit has, for quite some time, not been spoken as a ‘living language in the fullest sense of the term’.

While it is almost impossible to say definitively when this post-vernacular state occurred,<sup>44</sup> does this mean, then, that the Sanskrit spoken today is an artificial or natural language? Does it also mean that the post-vernacular, semi-engineered, simplified varieties spoken today as revitalized forms should be called something else, other than ‘Sanskrit’?<sup>45</sup> Answers to these questions become even more difficult to produce when we consider the language planning policy of the Indian state, which prefers a Sanskritized Hindi as the official language (see Articles 343 and 351).<sup>46</sup>

The dominant emic perspective insists that Sanskrit is a vibrant language and should play a central part in the construction of Hindu nation and world. Primarily, the revival of Sanskrit is central to the political theology of Hindu ethnic nationalism, which is otherwise referred to as *hindutva* (Hindu-ness) and is often translated as ‘Hindu first’. As McCartney<sup>47</sup> explains, the symbolic capital of Sanskrit operates as an efficient cause in the creation of a moral imagination that presupposes a cultural renaissance; which, it is believed will help foster a utopian-inspired *rāma rājya*, which is Gandhi’s term for a ‘Golden Age’. While *hindutva* has several shades, as a secular philosophy, the aim is first to replace the sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic Indian republic with Hindu theocracy. And, second, the

<sup>43</sup> AKLUJKAR, ASHOK. 1996. The early history of Sanskrit as supreme language. *Ideology and status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the history of the Sanskrit language*, ed. by Jan E. Houben, 59. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>44</sup> SHANDLER, JEFFREY. 2008. *Adventures in Yiddishland*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>45</sup> See ZUCKERMANN, GHIL‘AD. 2006. A new vision for Israeli Hebrew: Theoretical and practical implications of analyzing Israel’s main language as a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid language. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.1.57–71.

<sup>46</sup> Something interesting is occurring, which requires more research to ascertain more precisely the current state of ‘Spoken Sanskrit’. It is clear from looking in any modern Hindi-English dictionary that the Indian state is serious about sanitizing Hindi of its Persian and Arabic loan words by Sanskritizing it with neologisms or lexemes straight out of the Sanskrit lexicon. One thing is evident, that, due to substrate interference, some of the varieties of Sanskrit spoken today can be classified, grammatically speaking, as Modern Indian Languages that use a Sanskritized lexicon. Interestingly, this sounds quite similar to Sanskritized Hindi. Therefore, what are the similar and contrasting characteristics shared by Spoken Sanskrit and a Sanskritized Hindi? Unfortunately, this is a question that we will not have much time to answer and will require further research to satisfy the curious mind.

<sup>47</sup> See MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>; as well as MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Speaking of the little traditions: agency and imposition in ‘sanskrit-Speaking’ villages in north India. *Puspikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Text and Traditions*, ed. by Lucas den Boer and Daniele Cuneo, 62–88. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books.

expansionist agenda includes creating a Hindu world, which will have Sanskrit replace English as the global *lingua franca*.<sup>48</sup>

Deshpande provides a brief but cogent overview of the current successes and failures of the spoken Sanskrit movement and poses the question of whether or not the term ‘living language’ should only be applied to first languages.<sup>49</sup> Deshpande wonders whether a second language that has a statistically insignificant number of self-reported native speakers should also be considered a ‘living’ language. If a language is *alive* when it is spoken, does it matter if it is as a foreign language or a mother tongue? From an emic perspective, these fundamental questions are often regarded as irrelevant, as for the communities of people who speak Sanskrit, the language is indeed alive. Frustratingly, however, when it comes to the ambits of organizations that focus on other endangered and undocumented languages, we find a general apathy towards providing funding for sociolinguistic research into spoken Sanskrit. This is because Sanskrit is considered to already have a well-researched grammar and considerable institutional support. Although the most damning criticism is that most of the organizations consider Sanskrit to be ‘dead’. Or, possibly worse, any affection for or promotion of Sanskrit is considered to signify an individual as some form of Hindu supremacist. However, there is a difference between literary, Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, and the vernacular Sanskrit spoken today. In the next section, we discuss the problems with definitions in relation to spoken Sanskrit.

### 3. DEFINING OLD AND NEW VARIANTS OF SANSKRIT

As Petersen (1912) explains, Classical Sanskrit evolved out of a superordinate, prestigious dialect of the previously spoken Vedic Sanskrit.<sup>50</sup> Prior to Vedic Sanskrit becoming an archaic, literary language, it was a natural language that was spoken as part of a dialectical

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<sup>48</sup> PTI. 2015. India will be a Hindu nation by 2020, world by 2030: VHP Leader Ashok Singhal. *Indian Express*. Online: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/by-2020-india-will-be-hindu-nation-world-by-2030-ashok-singhal/>; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. *Sanskrit and Utopian Aspirations*. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap0OH4ksN-0&t=29s>.

<sup>49</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 219. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>50</sup> PETERSEN, WALTER. 1912. Vedic, Sanskrit, and Prakrit. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 32.4.414–428.

complex.<sup>51</sup> Over time, Classical Sanskrit also became an archaic, literary language, just like its predecessor.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, Bronkhorst<sup>53</sup> shows how ancient grammarians, like Namisādhu considers Ardha-Māgadhī as the precursor to Sanskrit.

The vernacular (*laukika*) varieties spoken today are considered derivatives of the post-Paninian variety of Classical Sanskrit. Today, the *laukika* TL of ‘Spoken Sanskrit’ is situated in contrast to *vaidika-saṃskṛta*, which refers to the ritualized recitation of liturgical utterances, that is, *mantra*-s (prayers). While this obviously occurs today in Hindu temples and homes, a conversational *vaidika* Sanskrit, as spoken 2500 years ago, is not spoken today. While it is difficult to say, with certainty, the pace at which language shift occurred, there is no doubt that it did. The grammatical ossification occurred during the transition between the Vedic and Classical periods. While the perceived ‘purity’ of Classical Sanskrit continues to be celebrated as testament to its purported, immutably ‘divine’ origin and status; this process is at least a significant contributory factor for the language entering an artificial and post-vernacular state some 2000-plus years ago. It is, however, remarkable that due to its prestige and symbolic capital, it has survived; albeit as a second language, and more so, today, as a heritage language. While there are hundreds of other endangered languages in India, from several different language families that are equally deserving, if not more, of institutional support, the Indian state continues to favour the revival of Sanskrit.

Building upon Haugen,<sup>54</sup> Pandharipande<sup>55</sup> explains that, in order to understand the nature and function of language shift and loss in India, we ought to understand the region’s complex language ecology. This is an unenviable task. As Tsunoda<sup>56</sup> shows, previous

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<sup>51</sup> AKLUJKAR, ASHOK. 1996. The early history of Sanskrit as supreme language. *Ideology and status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the history of the Sanskrit language*, ed. by Jan E. Houben, 59–85. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>52</sup> In this paper, unless otherwise specified, ‘Sanskrit’ refers to the Classical variety.

<sup>53</sup> BRONKHORST, JOHANNES. 1993. Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit: The original language. *Aspects of Buddhist Sanskrit: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Language of Sanskrit Buddhist Texts, Oct. 1–5, 1991*, ed. by Kameshwar Nath Mishra, 399. Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.

<sup>54</sup> HAUGEN, EINAR. 1972. *The Ecology of Language: Essays by Einar Haugen*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>55</sup> PANDHARIPANDE, RAJESHWARI. 1992. Language shift in India: Issues and implications. *Maintenance and loss of minority languages: Issues and implications*, ed. by William Fase, Koen Jaspert and Sjaak Kroon, 254. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

<sup>56</sup> TSUNODA, TASAKU. 2017. *Language endangerment and language revitalization: An introduction*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

literature on language shift terminology refers to *language A* (which, in this present case, is Sanskrit) as: an ‘abandoned’, ‘disappearing’, ‘fading’, ‘receding’ or ‘recessive’ language. Sanskrit, is in something of a unique situation, as the terminology above seems more representative of current or recent shifts.

In the remote past, as like today, *laukika* Sanskrit had both ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ registers, and existed in a diglossic situation.<sup>57</sup> Today, the ‘elite’ register refers to the type of spoken Sanskrit one is most likely to learn through the modern *gurukula* education system, which is a traditional pedagogical system that trains, mainly male, upper-caste children, in the various *aṅga*-s (limbs) of education related to Brahminical orthopraxis – see Larios (2017) for a sweeping overview of this intangible cultural heritage.<sup>58</sup> As Ciotti explains:

*Vedalakṣaṇa* (lit. ‘characteristic of the Vedas’) is the field of Brāhmaṇical scholarship that collects those language-related expertises [...] to preserve and transmit, generation by generation, the Vedic Saṃhitās (“Collections [of hymns]”). [...] In fact, the Vedic reciters are expected to master a gamut of topics, including the correct articulation of the Sanskrit speech-sounds (*varṇas*) and pitch modulations (*svaras*), the modification these can undergo in the specific linguistic and recitational contexts (*sandhis*, lit. “combinations”), and the mastering of complex recombinations of the words of the text (*vikṛtis*, lit. “[textual] modifications, which in fact are the mnemonic techniques devised for the preservation of the form of the Saṃhitās.”)<sup>59</sup>

Due to this elite, traditional pedagogical system,<sup>60</sup> which typically includes rote learning of Vedic texts related to ritual praxis (*karmakaṇḍa*), and the other limbs related to exegetical attainment of knowledge (*jñānakaṇḍa*), individuals are trained to become elite knowers of

<sup>57</sup> ARALIKATTI, R.N. 1989. *Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns*. Tirupati: Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha; DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 218–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press; MASICA, C.P. 1986. *South Asian languages: Structure, convergence and diglossia*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas; D’SOUZA, JEAN. 1988. Diglossia in the South Asian sociolinguistic area. *ITL Review of Applied Linguistics*, 79/80: 25–59; THOMASON, SARAH G. 2009. How to establish substratum interference. *Issues in Tibeto-Burman Historical Linguistics* 75.319–28.

<sup>58</sup> LARIOS, BORAYIN. 2017. *Embodying the Veda: The transmission of knowledge in traditional Vedic schools of contemporary Maharashtra*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

<sup>59</sup> See Ciotti, Giovanni 2014, pp. 36-37.

<sup>60</sup> Taylor (2017:99) explains how students typically have the following options for advancing their careers as elite knowers within the Sanskrit episteme: 1) as a professional reader of the Bhāgavata (*Bhāgavata-pārāyaṇa*); 2) as a Bhāgavata exponent (*Bhāgavata-kathā pravacaka*); 3) as an expert in the ritual worship of Rudra (a form of Śiva, a practice known as *Rudrābhiśeka*); and 4) as a practitioner of *karma-kāṇḍa*, that is, as an officiating priest in a range of other ritual practices. To this list, we can add: 5) teacher (*ācārya*).

Sanskrit.<sup>61</sup> This includes being exposed to an elite register of Sanskrit, which the non-specialist (non-scholarly) speaker of Sanskrit does not typically have access to.

The modernized *gurukula* institution aims to blend traditional and modern education. The Muktānanda Saṃskṛta Mahāvīdyālaya,<sup>62</sup> located in southern Gujarat, India, is just one example of this approach. This college (*mahā-vidyālaya*) offers three types of majors for its senior students: 1) ritual (*karmakaṇḍa*); 2) grammar (*vyākaraṇa*); and 3) philosophy (*darśana*), which focuses on aesthetics (*kāvyaśāstra*), literature (*sāhitya*), and mythology/history (*purāṇa/itihāsa*). Students who graduate from the final two-years of the post-graduate education attain the *ācārya dīkṣā* qualification. This qualification is roughly equated to a master's degree.

Those that choose to become teachers, will also study for a one-year Diploma of Education. As this particular college, which is representative of other, similar colleges, is not yet a university (*viśva-vidyālaya*), it is unable to dispense the equivalent of a doctoral degree (PhD), which is equated with the *gurukula* degree of *vaidya dīkṣā*. However, none of these occupations require the exponent to be conversant, to any degree, in either high or low registers of spoken Sanskrit. This is regardless of the general opinion within this Sanskrit language nest that a Sanskrit scholar-teacher appears more 'knowledgeable', 'authentic', 'competent', and 'trustworthy' if they can converse in Sanskrit, as opposed to the memorized recitation of poetic verse and grammatical rules that underpins the ritualized learning within the Sanskrit episteme. However, not all students report sharing the same level of enthusiasm for speaking Sanskrit.<sup>63</sup>

Normally, students enter this system around the age of ten years. After a decade of daily exposure to Sanskrit, the student is likely to become quite competent, if not fluent, in speaking what Aralikatti refers to as an 'elite' register. Regardless, there are no native speakers of Sanskrit at this particular college.<sup>64</sup> The attitudes of the school principal and

<sup>61</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Suggesting *Śāntarasa* in Shanti Mandir's *Satsaṅga*: Ritual, Performativity and Ethnography in Yogaland. *Ethnologia Actualis*, 17(2), 81–122. doi: 10.2478/eas-2018-0005; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2018a. *Śāntamūrti*: The Legitimate Disposition(s) of the 'Temple of Peace' Social Network. *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture*, 8, 65–104. doi:10.17605/OSF.IO/4MP3K.

<sup>62</sup> www.shantimandir.com.

<sup>63</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2011. Spoken Sanskrit in a Gujarat Ashram. *JOSA* 43.61–82.

<sup>64</sup> See MCCARTNEY 2011.



teachers is that the students will, ostensibly by osmosis, learn to speak Sanskrit to relative degrees of fluency during their time at the college; and while some students are more enthusiastic, it is anticipated that all the students will graduate with a conversational ability in Sanskrit. As mentioned above, competency is seen as an important linguistic identity marker, and demonstration of legitimacy, for an elite knower of Sanskrit.

In contrast to the ‘elite’ register, the ‘popular’ register of Sanskrit is learnt and used by individuals who have generally not been afforded the privilege of studying Sanskrit for several years, but who still might consider Sanskrit as their heritage language, and see it as their moral, politico-religious duty to learn to speak *some* Sanskrit. As is quite often the case, many people who have grown up in India have learnt some Classical Sanskrit at primary and secondary levels. There is a communal and nationalistic motivation for reclaiming Sanskrit, which includes a competency in Sanskrit as an inherent characteristic of what some people consider to be an ideal Indian ‘patriot’ (*deśabhakta*).<sup>65</sup>

Figure 4 below shows the logic behind the Sanskrit revitalization process. This project is led by Samskrita Bharati ([www.samskritabharati.in](http://www.samskritabharati.in)), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to the popularization of spoken Sanskrit. Samskrita Bharati has branches in several countries. The image in Figure 1 is from the United Kingdom’s branch website. The orange road signs next to the light-green path explain the philosophy: *saṃskṛtaṃ saralam*, *saṃskṛtaṃ sarveṣāṃ* (‘simple Sanskrit, all the time’); *saṃskṛtaṃ anivāryam* (‘inevitable Sanskrit’); and *saṃskṛtaṃ sarvatra* (‘Sanskrit everywhere’). It is believed that the use of Sanskrit as a medium of communication will lead to a moral and

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<sup>65</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Speaking of the little traditions: agency and imposition in ‘sanskrit-Speaking’ villages in north India. *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Text and Traditions*, ed. by Lucas den Boer and Daniele Cuneo, 62–88. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books.

cultural renaissance (*abhyudaya*). These aspirations are made clearer in an edited video of a speech by the founder of Samskrita Bharati, C.K. Shastry, which is available on Youtube.<sup>66</sup>

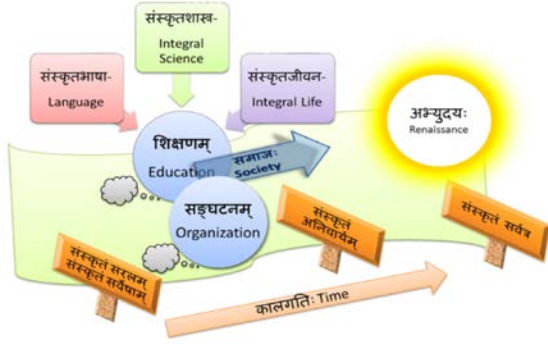


FIGURE 1. Samskrita Bharati's 'Road Map'.<sup>67</sup>

However, this revived form of Sanskrit that is quite often acquired in adulthood includes a general simplification and structural/formal shift. This is a strategy of survival-maintenance that enhances Sanskrit's functionality and use in particular domains through reducing number and complexities of the morphological options.<sup>68</sup> Another contributing factor is that many 'elite' speakers also attend the same multi-day immersion intensives to improve their own Sanskrit-speaking capabilities; therefore, the simplified, popular Sanskrit directly informs the elite register.

Within the current world of spoken Sanskrit, there are at least two registers of *laukika-saṃskṛta*. We choose to refer to this elite variety as *upama-saṃskṛta* (High

<sup>66</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. *Sanskrit and Utopian Aspirations*. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap0OH4ksN-0&t=29s>.

<sup>67</sup> SAMSKRITA BHARATI. 2017. *Namaste*. Online: <http://www.sanskritabharatiuk.org/>.

<sup>68</sup> PANDHARIPANDE, RAJESHWARI. 1992. Language shift in India: Issues and implications. *Maintenance and loss of minority languages: Issues and implications*, ed. by William Fase, Koen Jaspaert and Sjaak Kroon, 253–76. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; PANDHARIPANDE, RAJESHWARI. 1996. Language shift with maintenance: The case of Sanskrit in India. *Perspectives on language in society: Papers in memory of Prof. Srivastava*, 1.183–205. Delhi: Kalinga.

Sanskrit), which is contrasted by the non-elite register spoken by non-scholars of Sanskrit, namely, *apara-saṃskṛta* (Low Sanskrit). Deciding about what constitutes a ‘high’ or ‘low’ dialect in Sanskrit and the Prakrit languages is a conversation that has been going for millennia. An eloquent overview of the history behind this discussion is Drocco,<sup>69</sup> who discusses the tripartite Prakrit terminology *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī*. While *tatsama* loan words are said to be loan words that are adopted as 1:1 representations from the source language, they are considered phonetically the ‘same as that [Sanskrit]’. In contrast *tadbhava* loan words have been altered slightly to suit the target language, and are, instead, ‘of the nature of Sanskrit’; while *deśī* (or *deśaja* ‘country-born’) are local words. However, this typology only helps us to classify the words of dialects and not the dialects themselves.

Moreover, it becomes important when considering the nomenclature used to describe the registers of Sanskrit spoken today. It becomes especially important when trying to understand the reality of Sanskrit’s revival, as what exactly are we referring to when we talk about spoken Sanskrit, and its revival, reclamation or reinvigoration? This is why we now discuss the similarities and differences between the reclamation of Sanskrit and Hebrew.

### 3.1 COMPARING SANSKRIT WITH ANCIENT HEBREW AND MODERN ISRAELI

Both the Indian state<sup>70</sup> and the Sanskrit reclamation movement find inspiration in the formation of the Zionist state of Israel and its Hebrew reclamation.<sup>71</sup> However, while there are some similarities, there are many differences in the social, political, religious and historical contexts, which make the success of reclaiming Sanskrit to a similar, semi-engineered and natural level, difficult, if not, impossible. As Matras and Schiff<sup>72</sup> explain, qualifying Hebrew as ‘modern’ is problematic, as it promotes ‘an unambiguous

<sup>69</sup> DROCCO, ANDREA. 2012. Eternal Sanskrit and the meaning of the tripartite Prakrit terminology *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī*. *Linguistica e Filologia* 32.119–136.

<sup>70</sup> Samskrita Bharati’s aim is instead to bring about through the promotion of Sanskrit as a spoken and ultimately an utopian first national language. This is coterminous with linguistic and cultural purification, religious-moral edification, and ultimately the creation of a ‘Hindu nation’ and then a Hindu world. The globalist aspiration is informed by a particular vision constituted by a Hindu ideology (*Hindu dharma*) to create a Hindu theocratic state (see Manthan 2015; PTI, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> See e.g. GUREVITCH, ERIC. 2017. *Hindutva Zionism*. Online: <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/hindutva-zionism/>; as well as GUREVITCH, ERIC. 2017. Lost in Translation. *Economic and Political Weekly* 52.28.135–136.

<sup>72</sup> MATRAS, YARON and LEORA SCHIFF. 2005. Spoken Israeli Hebrew revisited: Structures and variation. *Studia Semitica* 16.145.

periodization separating Classical or Biblical Hebrew from the present-day language'. When we consider Deshpande's comment below, in the same way saying that the Sanskrit spoken today is the same as Classical Sanskrit, this is equally problematic. While there is scope to categorize contemporary spoken Sanskrit as severely endangered, Deshpande positively asserts that it is too soon to declare Sanskrit 'dead'. Instead, he qualifies the 'modern standard' as being:

in effect a trade-off of a partly re-lexified, morphologically and syntactically simplified and in effect truncated variety of the fullness of the Classical language; yet it keeps the language in circulation, indeed not as a mother tongue, but as a reasonably functional second language, usable in some contexts.<sup>73</sup>

However, there are also modern 'non-standards', which, more or less, are constituted by the lower register varieties. Therefore, the nomenclature we choose to identify contemporary, colloquial Sanskrit with presents a problem, at least, for the academic. Evidence of the inherent problems with naming and comparing a classical, heritage language with a revived, or partly revived variant is seen in Rosén,<sup>74</sup> who proposes a variety of ways to qualify Hebrew, such as: Contemporary Hebrew, Neo-Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, and Spoken Hebrew. However, it is *Israeli Hebrew* that has been the most popular.

Going one step further, Zuckermann<sup>75</sup> suggests that the official language of Israel should instead be simply referred to as *Israeli*, because it is based on Yiddish and other European languages as much as it is based on Hebrew. Therefore, Israeli Hebrew, as coined by the fervent structuralist, Rosén, is misleading as his assertion that Israeli is only based on Hebrew *tout court* is inaccurate. We argue that for some variants of Sanskrit, a similar argument can be made.

The same adjectives have been used to qualify the type of Sanskrit spoken today; however, for the same reasons, they are equally inefficient. This is because the post-

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<sup>73</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 227. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>74</sup> ROSEN, HAIM. 1977. *Contemporary Hebrew*. 18. The Hague: Mouton.

<sup>75</sup> ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD. 2006. A new vision for Israeli Hebrew: Theoretical and practical implications of analyzing Israel's main language as a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid language. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.1.57–71.

vernacular history of Sanskrit is similar to Hebrew's. As Zuckermann<sup>76</sup> explains, Hebrew 'served as a liturgical and literary language and occasionally also as a lingua franca for Jews of the diaspora, but not as a mother tongue'. Rosén<sup>77</sup> explains that the structural and functional characteristics that make Israeli Hebrew different from Classical Hebrew are present in both contemporary writing and speech. The same can be said of Vedic and Classical Sanskrit when compared with the contemporary variants.

As Zuckermann and Holzman demonstrate, native speakers of Israeli do not *understand* the Bible, and much worse: they often *misunderstand* the Hebrew Bible without realising it.

Even though Sanskrit enjoys the status of a classical, literary and religious language; as a vernacular language, like close to approximately 300 endangered languages in India, today, it is threatened by linguicide.<sup>78</sup> More worrying is the fact that the promotion of Sanskrit over and above other vulnerable and minority languages transgresses particular constitutional and internationally recognized treaties on fundamental linguistic and human rights.<sup>79</sup> As Sanskrit is not a dominant regional language and is already in a post-vernacular state, the prospects of reclaiming Sanskrit into a dominant regional, or even international language, are extraordinarily slim. This is mostly due to the lack of need and interest in Sanskrit becoming a national and global *lingua franca*, regardless of the utopian aspirations of the Sanskrit-speaking community.

As witnessed by the perceived success of reviving Ancient Hebrew into Israeli, we ponder whether it is possible to do the same for Classical Sanskrit, as there is a high proportion of substrate interference from the current-day speakers's first languages, which is compounded by imperfect learning. This is further compounded by the South Asian

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<sup>76</sup> ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD. 2006. A new vision for Israeli Hebrew: Theoretical and practical implications of analyzing Israel's main language as a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid language. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.1.57.

<sup>77</sup> See ROSEN 1977.

<sup>78</sup> See TAYLOR, DONALD M., JULIE CAOQUETTE, ESTHER USBORNE and STEPHEN C. WRIGHT. 2008. Aboriginal languages in Quebec: Fighting linguicide with bilingual education. *Diversité Urbaine* Autumn. 69–89.

<sup>79</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Is the global prestige of Sanskrit aiding and abetting Hindu nationalists and supremacists? *Political Theology*. Online: <http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/is-the-global-prestige-of-sanskrit-aiding-and-abetting-hindu-nationalists-and-supremacists-patrick-mccartney/>

linguistic area's multilingualism as the norm and not the exception.<sup>80</sup> This results in a high degree of hybridity between the substrate languages (e.g. Hindi) and the target language (Classical Sanskrit).

#### 4. SANSKRIT AND THE REVIVALISTIC PARADIGM

The Sanskrit reclamation should be viewed as an integral part of an ethno-nationalist, utopian enterprise that seeks to build a sense of agency and hope for a better future.<sup>81</sup> The utopian plan of 'Re-establishing a Vedic India' includes, at its core, the ideology of *sanātana dharma* (an eternal 'way of life'). *Sanātana dharma* is often used as a synonym for one expression of Hinduism.

*Sanātana dharma* is the basis for Sanskrit becoming the official language of a new Hindu theocratic state (Vedic India Foundation 2015, Manthan 2015, Pirbhai 2008, Samskrit101 2009).<sup>82</sup> Levitas<sup>83</sup> suggests that instead of thinking of various utopian alternatives to the present, we ought, instead, to understand them as a vehicle for reflection about how to broaden, deepen and raise our aspirations. Sanskrit—both its canon (legal and religious) and its vernacular version—has become an instrument of a clear political agenda. It seeks to establish social stability (that is a homogenous Hindu *ethnie* or ethnic group)

<sup>80</sup> AGNIHOTRI, RAMAKANTA. 2007. Identity and multilinguality: The case of India. *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts*, ed. by Amy B.M. Tsui and James W. Tollefson. 185–205. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; AGNIHOTRI, RAMAKANTA. 2008. Orality and literacy. *Language in South Asia*, ed. by Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru and S.N. Sridhar, 271–84. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>81</sup> See FISHMAN, JOSHUA. 1991. *Reversing language shift: Theory and practice of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters; FISHMAN, JOSHUA. 2001. *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing language shift, revisited: A 21st century perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters; LEVITAS, RUTH. 2016. *Utopia as a Method: The imaginary reconstitution of society*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; as well as TAYLOR, DONALD M., JULIE CAOUILLE, ESTHER USBORNE and STEPHEN C. WRIGHT. 2008. Aboriginal languages in Quebec: Fighting linguicide with bilingual education. *Diversité Urbaine* Autumn.69–89.

<sup>82</sup> VEDIC INDIA FOUNDATION. 2015. *International conference to re-establish Vedic India*. Online: <http://www.vedicindiafoundation.org/>; MANTHAN, VICHAR. 2015; *Vichar manthan ma. Krishna Shastry on "Sanskrita movement - Its relevance and necessity in USA"*. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKljhDp9boU&feature=youtu.be>; PIRBHAI, M. REZA. 2008. Demons in hindutva: Writing a theology for Hindu nationalism. *Modern Intellectual History* 5.1.27–53; SAMSKRIT101. 2009. *Sanskrita Bharati ITV interview Sri Chamu Krishna Shastry and Sowmya Joisa*. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhpRKY4a3ds>.

<sup>83</sup> LEVITAS, RUTH. 2016. *Utopia as a Method: The imaginary reconstitution of society*. 4. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

through imposition of a clear nationalized moral discipline that includes preserving and asserting a specific form of *sadācāra* (proper social/ritual conduct). Through this moral imagination,<sup>84</sup> these prescribed modes of conduct are located in the socio-legal *śāstra* (manuals of instruction) texts, particularly the Mānava Dharma Śāstra and the Artha Śāstra.<sup>85</sup> The role of religions and languages in Indian society is complex. Sanskrit finds itself within a socio-politico-religious quagmire.<sup>86</sup> While claims are made that Sanskrit is the first language of some South Asians, the figures are unreliable, statistically irrelevant or embroiled in a wider politico-religious exercise that detracts from the realities of a successful revival.<sup>87</sup> The Sanskrit reclamation is part of a post-colonial pushback, righting the perceived wrongs of the past, using counter-hegemonic claims and the soft power of Sanskrit's symbolic capital as a heritage language in a broader decolonization process.

In some instances, the proposed myth of non-scholarly Sanskrit speaking communities in remote regions of India sustains the idea that Sanskrit continues to prosper as something of a natural language.<sup>88</sup> However, language and politics are forever entwined.

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<sup>84</sup> WATANABE, CHIKA. 2019. *Becoming One: Religion, Development, and Environmentalism in a Japanese NGO in Myanmar*. Manoa: University of Hawai'i Press.

<sup>85</sup> JAFFRELOT, CHRISTOPHE. 2000. Sanskritization vs ethnicization in India: Changing identities and caste politics before Mandal. *Asian Survey* 40.5.756–66; SQUARCINI, FEDERICO. 2011. Punishing in public: Imposing moral self-dominance in normative Sanskrit sources. *Religion and identity in South Asia and beyond: Essays in honor of Patrick Olivelle*, ed. by Steven E. Lindquist, 165-66. London: Anthem Press; WOOLARD, KATHRYN. 1989. *Double Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>86</sup> VISHVANATHAN, MEERA. 2014. *The language of eternal return: Sanskrit and the politics of the present day*. Online: <https://thismomentintimeblog.wordpress.com/2014/12/12/the-language-of-eternal-return-sanskrit-and-the-politics-of-the-present-day-2/>.

<sup>87</sup> See NANJAPPA, VICKY. 2013. *Sanskrit must be janbhasha: It's not a language of Brahmins alone*. Online: <http://www.rediff.com/news/report/sanskrit-must-be-janbhasha-its-not-a-language-of-brahmins-alone/20131017.htm>; as well as PRABHU, JAIDEEP. 2014. *Here's why Sanskrit is not a dead language and should be at the core of school curricula*. Online: <http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/standpoint-here-s-why-sanskrit-is-not-a-dead-language-and-should-be-at-the-core-of-school-curricula-2043121>.

<sup>88</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Speaking of the little traditions: agency and imposition in 'sanskrit-Speaking' villages in north India. *Puspikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Text and Traditions*, ed. by Lucas den Boer and Daniele Cuneo, 62–88. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Jhiri: A 'Sanskrit-speaking' village in Madhya Pradesh. *Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics* 4.2.167–209; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Is the global prestige of Sanskrit aiding and abetting Hindu nationalists and supremacists? *Political Theology*. Online: [http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/is-the-global-prestige-of-sanskrit-aiding-and-abetting-hindu-nationalists-and-supremacists-patrick-mccartney\\_/](http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/is-the-global-prestige-of-sanskrit-aiding-and-abetting-hindu-nationalists-and-supremacists-patrick-mccartney_/); MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Imagining Sanskrit Land: Religious Nationalism and Transglobal Yoga. *Utne Magazine*. Fall; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2018. Reflections on the Imagining Sanskrit Land Project. *Global Ethnographic*, 41(April): 1–9.

The politics of second language acquisition and the subjective agency involved in determining code negotiations (i.e. which language is used in conversation) is implicitly connected with an ideology of pure speech and separation of codes.<sup>89</sup> Often, second language learners overcompensate for their lack of fluency through the inclusion of a hypercorrect, overly purified lexicon; that is regularly, unbeknownst to them, only found in textbooks and not, typically, used on the street corner in the real world. McCartney's<sup>90</sup> work amongst aspirational Sanskrit speakers demonstrates this desire to speak a 'pure', unrealistic register. This situation is indicative of the purist constraint found within the Sanskrit revival project in India.

Revivalistics explains this phenomenon as what Zuckermann calls *imprisoning purism prism*, which creates unrealistic expectations regarding how a post-vernacular language ought to be spoken during the revival process, and after it has been successfully revived.<sup>91</sup> In any instance of language revival there will necessarily be a period of code-mixing before an idealized grammatical, morpho-phonological and lexical 'purity' is attained in the adopted language (Corder 1982, Thomason 2001).<sup>92</sup> However, Thomason<sup>93</sup> suggests that the 'most important fact about shift-induced interference in this context is that it involves imperfect learning of a Target Language (TL) by a group of shifting speakers'. However, the political theology of the Sanskrit revival movement does not tolerate any

<sup>89</sup> FOGLE, LYN W. 2012. *Second language socialization and learner agency*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>90</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Speaking of the little traditions: agency and imposition in 'sanskrit-speaking' villages in north India. *Puspikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Text and Traditions*, ed. by Lucas den Boer and Daniele Cuneo, 62–88. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Jhirī: A 'Sanskrit-speaking' village in Madhya Pradesh. *Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics* 4.2.167–209; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Imagining Sanskrit Land: Religious Nationalism and Transglobal Yoga. *Utne Magazine*. Fall; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2018. Reflections on the Imagining Sanskrit Land Project. *Global Ethnographic*, 41(April): 1–9.

<sup>91</sup> SHANDLER, JEFFREY. 2008. *Adventures in Yiddishland*. Berkeley: University of California Press; ZUCKERMANN, GHIL'AD AND MICHAEL WALSH. 2011. Stop, revive, survive: Lessons from the Hebrew revival applicable to the reclamation, maintenance and empowerment of Aboriginal languages and cultures. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 31.1.111–7.

<sup>92</sup> CORDER, S. PIT. 1982. *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; THOMASON, SARAH G. 2001. *Language contact: An introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>93</sup> THOMASON, SARAH G. 2009. How to establish substratum interference. *Issues in Tibeto-Burman Historical Linguistics* 75.319–28.



hybridity or an imperfect learning stage. Instead, it promotes a ‘purity now’ approach that prefers people to speak a ‘pure’, yet simplified Sanskrit.<sup>94</sup>

This general attitude of several Sanskrit-speaking communities towards the hybridized Sanskrit they speak is that it ought to be purer. The phrase ‘*atisuddham bhaviṣyati*; It will become purer’, was heard on several occasions in several ‘Sanskrit-speaking’ language nests when discussing the current status of code-mixing and spoken Sanskrit. This includes the village of Jhiri in Madhya Pradesh, which is famous within ‘Sanskrit Land’ for being a prime example of the exalted, yet romanticized, ‘Sanskrit-speaking village’.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, based on the Perso-Arabic influences on the hybrid that is Hindi, and, considering that Hindi is the substrate for many Sanskrit speakers (while Sanskrit is the superstrate), then lexically, and less so, typographically, at least, perhaps only to a small degree, there is an Indo European-Semitic hybridic influence in the Sanskrit spoken today.<sup>96</sup>

It is indicative of the present situation and the imprisoning purism prism that exists in this community, as well as in others similar to it. While Sanskrit is spoken in Jhiri, it is often mixed with Hindi, Malvi, and/or English words or phrases. The community sees this hybridity as a sign of, not only lexical and grammatical impurity, but, more importantly, as a sign of personal and collective moral impurity that must be countered through the adoption of a ‘purer’ form of Sanskrit, which is absent, at least, of the perceived influence of any other language. Especially from English and Arabic. Not to mention the camouflaged borrowing calques that enter through transference or code-mixing.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Jhirī: A ‘Sanskrit-speaking’ village in Madhya Pradesh. *Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics* 4.2.167–209.

<sup>95</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Speaking of the little traditions: agency and imposition in ‘sanskrit-speaking’ villages in north India. *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Text and Traditions*, ed. by Lucas den Boer and Daniele Cuneo, 62–88. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Jhirī: A ‘Sanskrit-speaking’ village in Madhya Pradesh. *Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics* 4.2.167–209; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2017. Imagining Sanskrit Land: Religious Nationalism and Transglobal Yoga. *Utne Magazine*. Fall; MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2018. Reflections on the Imagining Sanskrit Land Project. *Global Ethnographic*, 41(April): 1–9.

<sup>96</sup> KUCZKIEWICZ-FRAŚ, AGNIESZKA. 2003. *Perso-Arabic hybrids in Hindi: The socio-linguistic and structural analysis*. New Delhi: Manohar.

<sup>97</sup> See ZUCKERMANN, GHIL‘AD. 2003. *Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Even though the idea of purity and social cohesion combined with other related questions regarding value, particularly religious and economic value, has preoccupied the minds of South Asian scholars for centuries;<sup>98</sup> the pivotal question for the success of a Sanskrit reclamation is: How to make it popular and turn it from the restricted *śiṣṭa* (elite) code, known as the *devabhāṣā* (god's language), to the *janabhāṣā* (people's language)?<sup>99</sup>

The consensus is that Sanskrit has little economic value or functional utility in the current Indian employment sector.<sup>100</sup> However, one commercial use of the Revitalized-Hybrid-Sanskrit, and the 'Sanskrit village' meme, briefly entered the popular imagination as a backdrop for the TV commercial sale of Bajaj motorbikes.<sup>101</sup>

Sanskrita Bharati has made it their mission to 'Revive a language, rejuvenate a culture, and revolutionize the world'.<sup>102</sup> However, the implications for such an ambitious project are couched in supremacist, ethno-nationalist rhetoric. This ideology is based on linguistic, cultural, and religious purity where hybridity is not tolerated. Considering Zuckermann's insistence that hybridity between the language being reclaimed and the revivalists' first language(s) is inevitable, Revitalized-Sanskrit syncretism ought to be embraced.

Thwarting this imprisoning purism prism is the fact that MILs have been in long and intense contact with each other. Multilingualism implies intense language contact, which results in characteristic features being transferred through 'convergence'.<sup>103</sup> This linguistic area has led to contact between languages and language families over countless

<sup>98</sup> See GREGORY, CHRIS. 2013. The value question in India: Ethnographic reflections on an ongoing debate. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3.1.116–39.

<sup>99</sup> INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR INDIA'S HERITAGE. 2014. *The case for Sanskrit as India's national language*. Online: <http://ifih.org/TheCaseforSanskritasIndiasNationalLanguage.htm>; NANJAPPA, VICKY. 2013. *Sanskrit must be janbhasha: It's not a language of Brahmins alone*. Online: <http://www.rediff.com/news/report/sanskrit-must-be-janbhasha-its-not-a-language-of-brahmins-alone/20131017.htm>.

<sup>100</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 2011. Efforts to vernacularize Sanskrit: Degree of success and failure. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: The success-failure continuum in language and ethnic identity efforts*, ed. by Joshua Fishman, 228. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>101</sup> SHARMA, GOVIND. 2009. *Bajaj discover advertisement in Sanskrit*. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FTVGNdDp2o>.

<sup>102</sup> SAMSKRITA BHARATI. 2014b. *Vision and mission*. Online: <http://sanskritabharati.in/about-us-2/mission>.

<sup>103</sup> SUBBARAO, KARAMURI V. 2008. Typological characteristics of South Asian languages. *Language in South Asia*, ed. by Brij B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru and S. N. Sridhar, 49–78. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

generations.<sup>104</sup> It is and ought to be considered a facilitator and not an obstacle to linguistic diversity and language revival.<sup>105</sup> However, for the Sanskrit revivalist, creating a monolingual, Sanskrit-speaking nation is perceived as key to creating an egalitarian, non-communal, theocratic, utopian society. Unfortunately, for the Sanskrit revivalist the possible installation of Sanskrit as a dominant national and even international *lingua franca* is fraught, tenuous, and divisively sectarian. As Lange<sup>106</sup> explains: ‘Language and language use is not a decontextualized issue for speakers, neither on a national nor on a more local level, and issues of language use and language choice are particularly complex in multilingual societies with a colonial heritage’.

## 5. ANALYSIS OF REVITALIZED-HYBRID-SANSKRIT

Aralikatti<sup>107</sup> produced one of the most comprehensive accounts of the sentence structure of vernacular Sanskrit modelled on Classical Sanskrit, while seeking to provide justification for its potential as a national medium of communication and the modern standard for revival. Sharma<sup>108</sup> highlights some of the contemporary philosophy behind the ‘simplified Sanskrit’ approach, which seeks to restrict use of the dual number, while keeping only the present, past, and future tenses; one or two moods, restricting the use of the medio-passive to passive only, reducing the number of conjugations, removing the word-final *visarga*, and omitting *sandhi*-s (points where words connect) in sentences.

Traditional Sanskritists, who speak the elite register, punningly call this simplified variant ‘*vāntam saṃskṛtam*’. In Sanskrit, *-ānta* is an affix related to the end of something. *Vāntam*, modelled upon *ānta(m)*, refers to a type of Sanskrit that has the question marker *vā*

<sup>104</sup> EMENEAU, MURRAY B. 1956. India as a linguistic area. *Language* 32.1.3–16; ERRINGTON, JOSEPH. 2008. *Linguistics in a colonial world: A story of language, meaning, and power*. Melbourne: Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>105</sup> PANDIT, P.B. 1972. *India as a sociolinguistic area*. Gune Memorial Lectures: University of Poona.

<sup>106</sup> LANGE, CLAUDIA. 2012. *The syntax of spoken Indian English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

<sup>107</sup> ARALIKATTI, R.N. 1989. *Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns*. Tirupati: Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha; ARALIKATTI, R.N. 1991. A note on the word order in modern spoken Sanskrit and some positive constraints. *Studies in Sanskrit Syntax*, ed. by H.H. Hock, 13–17. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.

<sup>108</sup> SHARMA, BELA RANI. 2002. *Modern methods of teaching Sanskrit*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons.

at the end of a sentence (a Dravidian calque, see 2c below). It is considered a type of ‘vulgar Sanskrit’ that has been ‘vomited’ (*vamana*) (Hock 1991:164–5).<sup>109</sup>

As the first example demonstrates, students who attend Samskrita Bharati’s residential camps are repeatedly assured that by listening to the teacher, and by speaking themselves, they will begin to understand what is being said:<sup>110</sup>

- (1) *Vyākaraṇa-aya*                      *cintā*                      *ma*                      *astu*  
Grammar-M.DAT.SG                      worry.F.NOM.SG                      NEG                      be.2SG.IMP  
‘Don’t worry about grammar.’

In Sanskrit, *kim* (NOM/ACC/SG/Q) is the equivalent of Hindi’s *kyā* (what), although it has a more flexible semantic function. This interrogative marker can be found in several syntactic locations depending on emphasis. It is sometimes used instead of the aforementioned Dravidian calque *vā*. For example:

- (2a)                      *bhava-taḥ*                      *pustakaṃ*                      *kim*  
You.2SG-M.GEN.SG                      book.N.NOM.SG                      Q  
*asti*  
is.3SG.PRS  
‘Is that your book.’

- (2b)                      *Kim*                      *tat*                      *uktavān*  
Q                      PRON                      said.PST.ACT.PTCL  
‘Who said that?’

- (2c)                      *Delh-yām*                      *gatavān*                      *vā*  
Delhi-F.LOC.SG                      go.PST.ACT.PTCL                      Q

<sup>109</sup> HOCK, H.H. 1991. Review: R.N. Aralikatti: Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 21.1.164–5.

<sup>110</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>.

‘Did you go to Delhi?’

According to Montaut,<sup>111</sup> in Hindi the use of the thematic enclitic particle *to* has four ‘homonyms’ — intensive, contrastive, assertive, and as a request particle. The Hindi *to* has undoubtedly evolved from the Classical Sanskrit (CS) *tāvāt*, and its enclitic form *tu*, which had an older function as a correlative pronoun and conjunction. From a phonetic level, in Hybridic Reclaimed Sanskrit (HRS), it is McCartney’s observation that once an individual is made aware that they are saying /t̪o/ instead of /t̪u/, a hypercorrection to the Sanskrit participle often occurs. Furthermore, syntactically /t̪o/ is used in the same locations as the Hindi participle. Below are some brief examples. Example 3c features a native speaker of Umawadi Malvi from the ‘Sanskrit village’ Jhiri, Madhya Pradesh:

(3a) [Hindi]

*maĩ to ghar (ko) jātũ*  
 I.M.SG.PRON INT house.M.DO go.1SG.IMPERF  
*hũ*  
 be.1SG.PRS.AUX  
 ‘I go home.’

(3b) [Sanskrit]

*ahaṃ to gr̥he gacchāmi*  
 I.PRON INT house.N.LOC.SG go.1SG.PRS  
 ‘I go home.’

(3c) [Sanskrit]

*ahaṃ to saṃskṛtaṃ jānāmi*

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<sup>111</sup> MONTAUT, ANNIE. 2016. The discourse particle *to* and word ordering in Hindi: From grammar to discourse. *Information structure and spoken language*, ed. by Robert van Valin and Jocelyn Fernandez-West, 263–82. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

I.M.NOM.SG.PRON INT Sanskrit.ACC know.1SG.PRES  
 ‘I know Sanskrit.’<sup>112</sup>

More research needs to be conducted to understand how this *to* particle functions semantically and grammatically; whether *to* is used not just after subjects (or other, fronted elements), as a kind of topic marker but in other positions, as well.

In Classical Sanskrit, the quotative marker *iti* is located after direct discourse. In contrast, the modern Hindi equivalent *ki* is located *before* direct discourse. Although for emphasis, in HRS the constituent order can be rearranged accordingly. More to the point, in HRS the substrate interference from a first language like Hindi means that the HRS utterance is likely to follow 4c instead of 4b, with the agent in the principal syntactic location. For example:

(4a) [Hindi]  
*maĩ-ne kahā ki kal bāriś*  
 I.PRON-ERG speak.PERF QUOT tomorrow rain.NOM  
*hogĩ*  
 be.3SG.FUT  
 ‘I said, “tomorrow there will be rain.”’

(4b) [CS]  
*svaḥ varṣā bhaviṣyati iti maya*  
 Tomorrow rain.NOM be.3SG.FUT QUOT I.1SG.INS  
*udita*  
 speak.1SG.PST.PTCL  
 ‘“There will be rain tomorrow”, I said.’

(4c) [HRS]

<sup>112</sup> An audible clip where one can hear the phrase uttered is available in the latter stages (1 min: 57-58 sec) of the following: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHLIy-WHDew>.

*aham*      *uktavān*                      *iti*      *svaḥ*      *varṣā*  
 I.PRON    speak.PST.ACT.PTCL QUOT    tomorrow    rain.NOM  
*bhaviṣyati*  
 be.3SG.FUT  
 ‘I said, “Tomorrow there will be rain.”’

Comparing phonetic and morpho-syntactic features of Classical Sanskrit, Revitalized-Hybrid-Sanskrit and Hinglish utterances allows us a perspicacious insight into the ways in which these languages differ and cross-fertilize. Even though more research is required, our paper can be treated as a revivalistic starter’s gun, opening up a window for understanding how HRS emerges and how shift happens in it.

Around the beginning of the eighteenth-century CE, two conversational ‘Teach Yourself Sanskrit’ texts were composed. Shah<sup>113</sup> made them available. *Gīrvāṇapadamañjarī* by Varadarāja and *Gīrvāṇavānmañjarī* by Dhunḍirāja were composed to teach Sanskrit by a direct conversational method, providing an example of how conversations in Sanskrit could and perhaps ought to be conducted. While compiling these texts, according to Deshpande,<sup>114</sup> the editor, Shah, corrected what he perceived as incorrect usage with numerous examples of vernacular features surviving within the original texts.

The second story, that is, *Gīrvāṇavānmañjarī* focuses on the daily routine of a Brāhmaṇa family and a conversation they have with their renunciant (*saṁnyāsīn*) dinner guest. It employs humour to entertain and teach vernacular Sanskrit while displaying a number of features of both Marathi and certain Hindi dialects.<sup>115</sup> The reason for providing the following example is not necessarily to ‘desacralize’ Sanskrit, but, instead, ‘sacralise’ the mundane, banal and quotidian activities. The belief is that Sanskrit is not useful as a vernacular language. One often hears non-specialists refer to Sanskrit as ‘sacred’ (*pavitra*), ‘eternal’ (*sanātana*), as the ‘language of the gods’ (*devabhāṣā*), or as the ‘language of immortality’ (*amṛtabhāṣā*). The thought of discussing one’s morning ablutions (voiding

<sup>113</sup> SHAH, UMUKANT PREMANAND. 1960. *Gīrvāṇapadamañjarī and Gīrvāṇavānmañjarī*. Baroda: Oriental Institute.

<sup>114</sup> DESHPANDE, MADHAV M. 1993. *Sanskrit and Prakrit: Sociolinguistic issues*. 43. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.

<sup>115</sup> See DESHPANDE 1993.

urine and excrement) in this ‘sacred’ language might offend some people – see the hostile *fin-de-siècle* orthodox Jews’ reaction to Eliezer Ben-Yehuda’s reclamation of Hebrew, desecrating in their view the ‘Holy Tongue’ (Yiddish *loshn koydesh*, lit. ‘language-holiness’). Yet, just like Samskrita Bharati, the author of this text was aiming to instruct potential speakers how to use the language at home as their preferred vernacular, and in so doing, to purify and to sacralise space.<sup>116</sup>

At the beginning of the story, one example of the use of humour and vernacular borrowing involves the protagonist rising at day break, spreading out his morning prayer books and other religious paraphernalia to begin his religious practice. Suddenly, he realizes his need to defecate; and pronounces to his wife:

- (5)    ayi            mayā                    dīrgha-śaṅka-arthaṃ            gamyate  
       VOC        1S.INS.PN            great-fear-purpose            go.1S.PAS  
       ‘Hey, I have to go for taking care of the great danger.’

He then tells his wife:

- (6)    śīgram            udakam                    dehi  
       Quickly.ADV    water                    give.2S.IMP  
       ‘Give me water quickly.’

- (7)    karapāda-viśodhana-arthaṃ            mṛttikā                    deyā  
       feet-cleaning-purpose            fragrant soil            give.3S.FUT  
       ‘Fragrant soil is to be given for the purpose of cleaning the feet.’

Deshpande notes that although each of the two components of this phrase is Sanskrit, the phrase *dīrgha-śaṅkā* (great fear) itself was coined within Marathi. However, most would assume that it is a Sanskrit term. In Hindi, it is considered to be a purer form for referring to

<sup>116</sup> See HASTINGS, ADI M. 2004. *Past Perfect, Future Perfect: Sanskrit Revival and the Hindu Nation in Contemporary India*. PhD Thesis. Chicago: Chicago University; HASTINGS, ADI M. 2008. Licked by the mother tongue: Imagining everyday Sanskrit at the home and in the world. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 18.24–45.



defecation although the euphemistic vernacular Hindi verb *ṭaṭṭī karnā* (lit. ‘to answer the call of nature’) is much more common. In Hindi, this similar utterance would be realized as:

- (8) *Mujhe ṭaṭṭī-karnā hai*  
 1S.DAT latrine-do.V.INF be.3S.PRS  
 ‘I need to answer the call of nature’

The pro-drop nature of Hindi (and Sanskrit) allows the sentence to be informally uttered as ‘*ṭaṭṭī karnā hai*’ (without the dative first singular pronoun *mujhe*). Just like any formal learning of a language, in the classroom at least, students are taught a register and vocabulary potentially unfamiliar to the average person they might engage with in conversation on a street corner. In Israel, one might call such a language *ulpanūt*, from *ulpán* (lit. ‘studio’, a school for the intensive study of Israeli, often forcing a Hebrew grammar on the hybridic Israeli language). To employ the expression ‘*Mujhe dīrgha-śaṅkā karnā hai*’, although grammatically correct, would generate consternation in one’s interlocutor simply because this Sanskritized and sanitized register is not used by the majority of Hindi speakers. The use of such a *tat-sāma* (lit. ‘that-same’ = synonymous with) loan words in Sanskrit such as *dīrgha-śaṅkā* is one reason that many Hindi speakers believe they already speak some form of Sanskrit even if this is a Marathi loan word. In fact, for a Hindi speaker listening to a Sanskrit conversation, they should be able to understand a certain amount of it due to the derivational roots and semantic consonance.

Another interesting feature of this sentence is the use of the passive. Today, across South Asia there are differing opinions within various Sanskrit language nests regarding the use of the passive (middle/reflexive) versus active construction. Some communities consider the passive to be more refined and elegant because the actor’s ego is removed, while others oppose any or even limited use of the passive. In the above sentence, instead of using the middle verb, the active construction would be uttered, thus:

- (9) *Ahaṃ śaucālayaṃ gacchāmi*  
 1S.PN toilet go.1S.PRS

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‘I go to the toilet.’

Students who attend Samskrita Bharati’s residential camps are repeatedly assured that by listening to the teacher, and by speaking, they will begin to understand what is being said. As this example demonstrates:<sup>117</sup>

10) *Vyākaraṇa-aya cintā ma astu*  
 Grammar-DAT worry NEG be.2S.IMP  
 ‘Don’t worry about grammar.’

All South Asian Languages (SALs) of Indo-Aryan origin are verb medial languages. Meaning, they have a middle voice. Sanskrit has both middle (*ātmanepada*) and active (*parasmaipada*) verbs. SALs share constituent order (word order) universals with other SOV languages. SALs are verb final, which determines the occurrence and position of adpositions (pre/post) to the right or left of the noun phrase. Sanskrit is noun-head final. The basic unit of the verbal system is the root (*dhātu*) of which there are 2000. Affixes are added to make different tense and modal forms having up to five suffixes. Case-marking indicates clause constituents and allows free constituent order, as in Latin. Verbal affixation marks person, number and genders of subject and object. Sanskrit consists of seven cases: nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, and locative, plus the vocative, which in Sanskrit is traditionally not listed as an independent case.

We compare Sanskrit’s free word order, that is, syntactic versatility and flexibility, to Neo-Sanskrit’s SO(O)V order. Pandharipande<sup>118</sup> argues that this syntactic ‘change’ occurred consciously, ‘as a strategy for maintenance’. We believe, however, that rather than a conscious strategy, this is an inevitable reality. Even if revivalists wish the word order to reflect the ancient language, they simply cannot help but replicate their mother tongue(s)’s word order in the emerging tongue. Consider Israeli’s Subject-Verb-Object word order,

<sup>117</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2014. The sanitising power of spoken Sanskrit. *Himāl Southasian*. Online: <http://himalmag.com/sanitising-power-spoken-sanskrit/>.

<sup>118</sup> PANDHARIPANDE, RAJESHWARI. 1992. Language shift in India: Issues and implications. *Maintenance and loss of minority languages: Issues and implications*, ed. by William Fase, Koen Jaspaert and Sjaak Kroon, 262. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

which mirrors the European languages spoken natively by Hebrew revivalists, as opposed to Biblical Hebrew Verb-Subject-Object.

The movement of lexical constituents (noun/verb phrases) occurs for sake of emphasis.<sup>119</sup> In SALs, the auxiliary verb follows the main verb. The indirect object (IO) precedes the direct object (DO) in the unmarked canonical word order of most SALs. Languages with rich subject-verb agreement or morphologically uniform inflectional paradigms permit deletion of pronouns (pro drop) optionally in a sentence. Sanskrit is non-ergative although Hindi is. Sanskrit has tense, aspect, passive and voice. It is also non-tonal and has three genders — masculine, feminine and neuter, whereas Hindi has dropped the neuter. Both Hindi and Sanskrit are inflectional languages, although Sanskrit is synthetic (i.e. it creates long compounds consisting of several morphemes) while Hindi is analytic (i.e. it relies more on a 1:1 correlation between morphemes and words).

The following presents a list of various differences between Classical Sanskrit (CS) and the features of Neo-Sanskrit (NS). It is not an exhaustive list but instead provides a brief summary of salient morpho-syntactic and phonetic features recognized in McCartney's own research and that of others. The first section focuses on phonetic variation.

Each consonant in Sanskrit has an inherent vowel [ʌ] whereas MILs like Hindi do not. For instance, the five consonantal points of articulation in Sanskrit are: bilabial [pʌ, pʰʌ, bʌ, bʰʌ, mʌ]; dental [tʌ, tʰʌ, dʌ, dʰʌ, nʌ]; retroflex [ʈʌ, ʈʰʌ, ɖʌ, ɖʰʌ, ɳʌ]; velar stops [kʌ, kʰʌ, gʌ, gʰʌ, ŋʌ]; the palatal affricate series patterns identical to stops is [cʌ, cʰʌ, ʃʌ, ʃʰʌ, ɲʌ]. Sanskrit also has four semi-vowels [yʌ], [rʌ], [lʌ], [vʌ]; and four sibilants [ʂʌ], [sʌ], [ʃʌ], [ɦʌ] (Subbarao 2008:52). Therefore, when a native Hindi speaker speaks Sanskrit there is a tendency to elide the inherent vowel. This is most common when using a loan word from Sanskrit that has been relexified from Hindi and also with verbal participles.

(11) Inherent vowel /x-ʌ/. For example in CS- *pratīkṣita* (hoped.Adj)

/pɾʌtīkṣitə:/, /pɾʌtīkṣita:/ → MIL- /pɾʌtīkṣit/. Another example is *nāma* (name.N):

<sup>119</sup> SUBBARAO, KARAMURI V. 2008. Typological characteristics of South Asian languages. *Language in South Asia*, ed. by Brij B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru and S. N. Sridhar, 55. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

[CS]	<i>Mama</i>	<i>nāma</i>	<i>Mahendraḥ</i>	<i>asti</i>
	My.1S.GEN	name.DO	Mahendra.IO	be.2S.PRS.AUX
	‘My name is Mahendra.’			
[CS]	/mʌmə	nə:mə	mʌhɛndɪhə	ʌsti/
[HRS]	/mʌmə	nə:mə	mʌhɛndɪə	ʌsti/

An alternate pronunciation of the 1S.GEN.PRON *mama* is: /məmə/.

The difference between CS and an MIL like Hindi is that Hindi consonants, which more or less mirror the points of articulation in Sanskrit, include extra phonemes to account for the Perso-Arabic (PA) loan words /x, ɣ, q, f, z/. The inclusion or omission of these phonemes, seen in examples 12a, b, often depends on the level of education, sophistication, and the particular identity the individual wants to construct; whether it be more Hindu (Sanskritized) or Muslim (Arabicized) pronunciation. This results in phonemic shift in both standard and non-standard varieties, which is particularly common amongst non-urban Hindi speakers or Hindi speakers who are consciously trying to avoid using the PA phonemes.

(12a)            /p<sup>h</sup>, dʒ, s/        →        /f, z, ʃ/

It is common to hear /p<sup>h</sup>/ replaced with [f]. One example is:

*phalam* (fruit.N) /p<sup>h</sup>ʌləm/ → /fʌləm/. There are no bilabial or labio-dental fricatives in Sanskrit. This normally occurs in a word initial position. Compare this with 12b where [f] is word final. However, substrate interference produces non-standard variations that can often replace the labio-dental approximant [ʋʌ] with [vʌ].

(12b)            /k, k<sup>h</sup>, g/        →        /q, x, ɣ/

This example focuses on the /k/ → /q/. In both Hindi and Urdu *bevakūf* (idiot.N) is widely

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used as a derogatory term. However, the replacement of either the uvular with the velar stop depends on what identity is constructed. For instance: /bɛvəkuf/, /bɜvΛquf/. The inclusion of the front or central open-mid vowels and either a labio-dental fricative or approximant depends on regional dialects. The common Neo-Sanskrit term for ‘idiot’ is *mūrkhā* /mʊ:ɪkʰΛ/. However, in informal situations, when the construction of identity is not such a conscious endeavour, the code-mixing/switching or use of loanwords becomes more frequent.

The following two examples occur frequently. In 13, an individual may choose to highlight their Sanskrit education through emphasizing the retroflex phonemes in *tatsama* borrowings. However, lenition from retroflex stops/fricatives to alveolar equivalents often occurs.

(13) /ŋΛ, ʂΛ/ → /n, s/

An example is *kr̥ṣṇa* (black.Adj), which in CS is /kṛ̥ṣṇə/ but in Neo-Sanskrit it is often realized as /kri:ʃnə/, /kreʃnə/, /kreʃn/, /kɪisnə/, /kɪ:snə/ or /kɪisn/.

(14a) Examples of metathesis were noticed in the Umawadi Malvi dialect spoken in Village 4 — Jhiri, Madhya Pradesh. In the following sentence, two interesting phonological features are apparent:

[CS]	<i>ahaṃ kṣetr-e</i>	<i>gacchāmi</i>
	I field-LOC	go.1S.PRS
	‘I go to the field.’	
[NS]	əhəṃ /k̠ṣetɾe/ → /t̠ṣetɾe/	/gʌt̠ʰa:mi/ → /gʌt̠ʰa:mi/

The change from /k̠ṣ/ → /t̠ṣ/ represents a reliance on the Malvi pronunciation for the Sanskrit loan word for ‘field’ (*kṣetram*). While in Malvi ‘field’ is *khet* /kʰɜt/, there is an interesting historical situation where the Sanskrit /k̠ṣ/ became /k̠ʰ/ and is then relexified through the interlanguage of NS as /t̠ṣ/. The second feature, that of omitting the aspiration /t̠ṣʰ/ → /t̠ṣ-ø/

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is common when speaking Sanskrit. While aspiration (and voicing) is phonemic, intelligibility is still often possible through context.

In 14b, the fricatives are often interchanged amongst each other even by erudite scholars speaking an elite register of Sanskrit. This is a very common occurrence amongst native speakers of Northern MILs like Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, etc. Example (14a) also shows evidence of this.

(14b)            /ʃʌ, sʌ, ɕʌ, ʃʌ/

For example: *śani* (the planet Saturn) in CS is /ʃʌni/ or /ɕʌni/; however, in NS it is often realized as either /ʃʌni/ or /sʌni/. Another example is: *lakṣaṇā* (aim.N) in CS it is /lʌkṣəṇa:/; however, in NS it is often found as /lʌkṣɪ/, /lʌksn/, /lʌkṣɪə/.

Elision of the final vowel *ḥa* /ʌhə/ is due to it having become a redundant feature in MILs and a conscious language planning policy by the spoken Sanskrit movement.

(15)            /N-ḥa/ → /N-∅/

<i>Bhava-taḥ</i>	<i>grāmaḥ</i>	<i>kim</i>	<i>asti?</i>
You.2S-GEN	Village	which.INT	is.2S.PRS.AUX
‘Which is your village?’			

In this example *grāmaḥ* /gɾə:məhə/ the final vowel is elided /gɾə:m/. This influence occurs because *grām* is a relexified Hindi word. The following examples show some morpho-syntactic evidence of how Neo-Sanskrit is spoken.

(16) The *-(a)m* particle is used to take an English or MIL loanword and lexify it into Neo-Sanskrit. This particle is a singular accusative case marker for masculine and neuter nouns. The feminine equivalent is similar *-ām*. For instance:

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(16a) [CS]

*Mama koṣ-e dhanam na asti*  
 My.1S.GEN Pocket-LOC Money not.NEG is.2S.PRS.AUX

‘[There] is no money in my pocket’

(16b) [NS]

*Mama pocket-am dhanam na asti*  
 My.1S.GEN Pocket-ACC Money not.NEG is.2SG.AUX

‘[There] is no money in my pocket.’

While grammatically there is now a DO (*pocket-am*) and an IO (*dhanam*), the location of the money is grammatically unclear. This shows a certain degree of conflation of the case system in NS. Upon querying this particular sentence an alternative was giving, which was decided amongst the group, to be ‘*kiñcidapi spaṣṭam*; a little bit better’. In order to clarify the location of the money in the pocket, the accusative *-am* particle was replaced with the locative case marker *-e*:

(16c) *Mama pocket-e dhanam na asti*  
 My.1S.GEN Pocket-LOC Money not.NEG is.2S.PRS.AUX

‘[There] is no money in my pocket.’

(17) A fascinating example of the *-am* particle follows in 17a–l. This occurred in a nearby village to Jhiri on a trip to collect approximately 300 hundred kilograms of *godhuma* ‘wheat’ (*Triticum aestivum* L). McCartney had the following conversation about the wheat while watching its bagging and transport from the storage area into the street where the tractor and trailer was located. Below are five speakers labelled A→E. What is most interesting is the mixing of codes, not only inter, but also intra-personally. Examples 17 and 19 are the most interesting. Example 17a consists of a Sanskrit vocative (*bhaginī*), a Hinglish noun (kilogram), a Sanskrit interrogative (*kati*), and a Sanskrit verb (*santi*). While in 17f–j, we observe how the Hinglish adjective is lexified into Sanskrit with the *-am* particle.

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Grammatically, this is interesting; however, ethnographically the consent and laughter shared by the group at this utterance show at least in the less prestigious realms of rural Sanskrit-speaking communities that exceptions to grammatical rules and lexical purity exist and are tolerated. A similar attitude was also found among elite speakers of Sanskrit.<sup>120</sup> Here is an ethnographic documentary that features this conversation:

- (17a) Speaker A  
*bhaginī kati kilogram santi*  
 sister.VOC Wh.Q OBJ is.3Pl.PRS.AUX  
 ‘O Sister, how many kilograms of wheat are there?’
- (17b) Speaker B  
*bolen* [Hindi]  
 speak.SBJV  
 ‘You should tell him.’
- (17c) Speaker C  
*viṃśati*  
 20.NUM  
 ‘20 [kilograms].’
- (17d) Speaker A  
*jānati*  
 know.3S.PRS  
 ‘Do you know?’
- (17e) Speaker C  
*ām viṃśati ām*

<sup>120</sup> MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2011. Spoken Sanskrit in a Gujarat Ashram. *JOSA* 43.61–82.



AFF 20.NUM AFF

‘Yes, 20, yes.’

(17f)

Speaker A

*total kim* [Sanskrit] *uṭ-jaega* [Hindi]

ADJ Wh.Q up-go.3S.FUT

‘What will be the total weight?’

(17g)

Speaker A

*kevalam atraiva*

only.ADV here.ADV

‘There is only 20 kilograms here.’

(17h)

Speaker C

*kilogram na asti total-am*

S NEG is.3Pl.PRS.AUX ADJ

*asti*

is.3Pl.PRS.AUX

‘Not kilograms, the total weight.’

(17i)

Speaker A

*total-am*

ADJ

‘Totalam.’

(17j)

Speaker D

*total-am* [group laughs]

ADJ

‘Totalam.’

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- (17k) Speaker E  
*thirty kintu*  
 30.NUM CONN  
 ‘30, but.’
- (17) l. Speaker E  
*trimśat ityukte trini-śatam paryaptam*  
 30.NUM said.ADV 300.NUM fully.ADV  
 ‘It is 30, actually what I mean to say is the total amount is 300.’

(18) Past (passive/active) participles are verbal adjectives used as a predicate.<sup>121</sup> This requires the agent to be expressed in the instrumental (or genitive, particularly for pronouns) while the DO is expressed in the nominative case. This construction is the origin of the modern ergative alignment in IA languages like Hindi (see Hock 1991a:59).<sup>122</sup> Pandharipande<sup>123</sup> notes the usage of past participles is more convenient, as it can be built directly from the verb stem requiring less augmentation than an infinite construction.<sup>124</sup> This convenience sees an increase in the middle voice (*ātmanepada*) used in the passive.

(19) There are several neologisms that are built directly from English words. As a way to make Sanskrit modern, functional and also appealing, these words are used, not only in Sanskrit, but as calques in Hindi, as well. For example: *pradūṣaṇa* (pollution – *pra* ‘much’ + *dūṣana* ‘defiling’); *sarvekṣaṇa* (survey – *sarva* ‘everywhere’ + *īkṣaṇa* ‘seeing’); *nauvijñāna* (navigation – *nau* ‘boat’ + *vijñāna* ‘skill’); *antarjāla* (internet – *antar* ‘inner’ + *jāla* ‘net’); *dūrbhāṣā* (telephone – *dūr* ‘far’ + *bhāṣā* ‘talking’); *saṃvidhāna* (constitution – *saṃ* ‘together’ + *vidhāna* ‘arrangement’). However, several of these words are certainly not used by the

<sup>121</sup> See ARALIKATTI, R.N. 1989. *Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns*. Tirupati: Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha.

<sup>122</sup> See HOCK, H.H. 1991. Review: R.N. Aralikatti: *Spoken Sanskrit in India: A study of sentence patterns*. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 21.1.59.

<sup>123</sup> PANDHARIPANDE, RAJESHWARI. 1996. Language shift with maintenance: The case of Sanskrit in India. *Perspectives on language in society: Papers in memory of Prof. Srivastava*, 1.183–205. Delhi: Kalinga.

<sup>124</sup> See MCCARTNEY, PATRICK. 2011. Spoken Sanskrit in a Gujarat Ashram. *JOSA* 43.20–23.

average IA-MILs speaker. For instance, *dūrdarśana* (television – *dūr* ‘far’ + *darśana* ‘seeing’) will be replaced by *īvī*. So too, *(teli)fon* and *iṅṭarṇeṭ* also find wider usage.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Obviously, every linguistic reclamation is unique and has particular culturally-specific features that might inhibit or corroborate a successful outcome. One size does not fit all. That said, be spoken rather than bespoke!<sup>125</sup> There are *universal* revivalistic constraints occurring in *any* reclamation attempt. This paper attempts to understand the broader revivalistic context in which the Sanskrit reclamation movement – as any linguistic revival – is situated. We explore the impacts on the possible outcome of reclaiming Sanskrit as a first language. We demonstrate how Sanskrit has been a second language for thousands of years. This is due to its cultural capital as a language of religion, spirituality and scholarship. Today, the belief continues that through speaking Sanskrit people will attain moral rectitude (*dharma*). People believe that this is not possible through speaking or hearing other less ‘pure’ or less ‘divine’ languages. Yet, there is very little progress made with increasing the usage of Sanskrit beyond certain domains and communities. Regardless, Sanskrit is in a more fortunate position than many other languages. There are many languages in India that do not have State support or similar educational pathways that allow people to pursue tertiary education in Sanskrit.

The minority of people interested in speaking Sanskrit has an unenviable task of promoting a language that the majority of their fellow citizens have little interest in speaking or studying. This is due to the stigma resulting from the appropriation of Sanskrit by the Hindu right-wing, ethno-nationalist groups, as well as due to the attitude that there is little economic potential in studying, and particularly speaking, a perceived antiquated language. For most people, Sanskrit is perceived as part of a conservative politico-religious agenda that does not tolerate or represent a modern, inclusive, secular nation or state. One only needs to observe the rhetoric propagated regarding the unabashed desire to establish a

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<sup>125</sup> See ZUCKERMANN, GHIL’AD. 2020. *Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond*. New York: Oxford University Press.

theocratic state or ‘Hindu nation’ to understand the utopian, sanitized ideal Sanskrit is (m)aligned with.

The attempt to reverse the flow of language shift is admirable. However, in attempting to use it as part of a return to an imagined ‘glorious Vedic age,’ through the ideology of *sanātana dharma* (eternal ‘way of life’), large swathes of India’s populace are left either excluded, due to historical reasons, or, feeling the historical baggage of the Sanskrit episteme, to be a hindrance towards development and progress.

Furthermore, with the Sanskritization of Hindi, a common attitude is that people are already speaking something of a lower register version of Sanskrit. At least some politicians, education board members, language policy officers, and certain sections of the media promote a Sanskritized register of Hindi that even an educated person would have trouble understanding, or, for that matter, choose to use and identify with. What will be the fate of Sanskrit if even Sanskritized Hindi is generally unintelligible? Ideology seems to be getting in the way of successful language planning and implementation, at both practical and constitutional levels.

Understanding these intricate issues in concert with a rigorous analysis of HRS, and the linguistic ecology it is a part of, enables – with the help of revivalistics – an increase in the vitality of Sanskrit as a living foreign language, and potentially, one day in the future, as a first language. However, further research needs to be conducted in order to disinter where, how and why Sanskrit is spoken, identify the local constraints within particular language nests inhibiting the use of Sanskrit, and explore how these constraints can then be countered.

From a micro to a macro analysis, the ways in which Sanskrit is spoken as a hybridic, cross-fertilized tongue provides us with invaluable insights into the reclamation of dreaming, ‘Sleeping Beauty’ tongues<sup>126</sup> and the revitalization and reinvigoration of (severely) endangered languages. HRS thus belongs to the family of ‘Revival Languages’. We determine that the vernacular forms of Sanskrit spoken today should be considered as reclaimed forms of the post-vernacular classical variety, regardless of register. Therefore, returning to the terminology in Table 1, we assume that all contemporary iterations of

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<sup>126</sup> See ZUCKERMANN, GHIL’AD. 2020. *Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond*. New York: Oxford University Press.

‘spoken’ Sanskrit belong in the first, *reclaimed* category, and propose the emically-inspired term: *śvasita-prajāti-saṃskṛta* — Hybridic Reclaimed Sanskrit — to describe the varieties of Sanskrit spoken today.

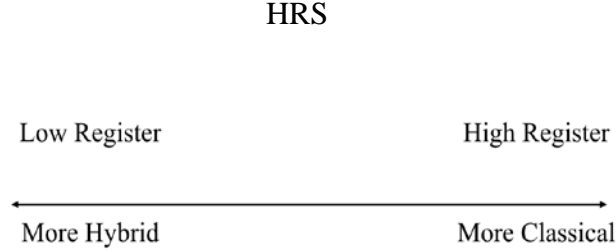


FIGURE 2. Hybrid-Classical Spectrum

A final, visual representation in Figure 2 shows how we can understand HRS and its registers. The higher, elite register is more likely to be a closer representation of the archaic, classical variety. The lower register, on the other hand, which is more likely to be spoken by non-elite knowers of Sanskrit, has a higher likelihood of being more hybridic, due to the stronger tendency for substrate interference from the speaker’s L1(s) and a probable ‘imperfect’ terminal stage of acquisition. While our initial research seems to support these claims, more research is required in a wider variety of Sanskrit-speaking communities to ascertain the validity of our hypothesis.<sup>127</sup>

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### Leipzig Glossing Key

<sup>127</sup> With the aim of putting this fascinating and multifaceted situation into proper perspective, McCartney (forthcoming) goes to great depths to compare and contrast thousands of lines of data across several excel sheets from the 2001 and 2011 Indian Census data regarding the locations (urban versus rural, for example), all the way down to the sub-district tehsil/tehelka administrative level of several states, to seemingly pinpoint where people who returned to Sanskrit as either their L1, L2 or L3 are located. This results in a much more precise and nuanced idea of many interconnecting factors related to Imagining Sanskrit Land, including, several maps.

1	first person	NEG	negative
2	second person	NOM	nominative
3	third person	PRON	pronoun
ACC	accusative	PRS	present tense
ACT	active	PST	past
ADV	adverb(ial)	PRF	perfective
DAT	dative	PTCL	participle
ERG	ergative	Q	question particle
F	feminine	QUOT	quotative
FUT	future	SBJ	subject
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
IMPERF	imperfect	V	verb
INS	instrumental	CS	classical Sanskrit
INT	intensifier	MIL	modern Indian language
LOC	locative	HRS	Hybridic Reclaimed Sanskrit
M	masculine		
N	neuter		

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