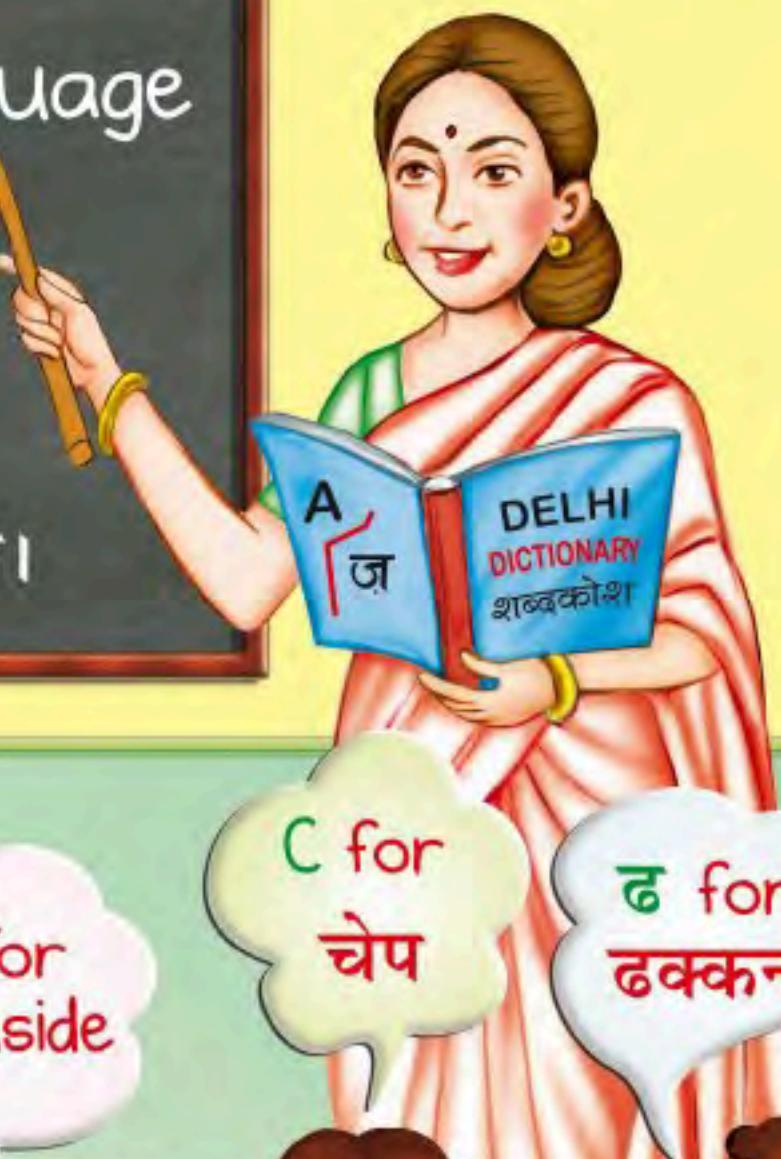


An education
Mira Nair on making
Salaam Bombay
City scholar
Amit Chaudhuri's
Calcutta

Mind Your Language

A glossary of
city slang, lingo
and general

झक मारना।

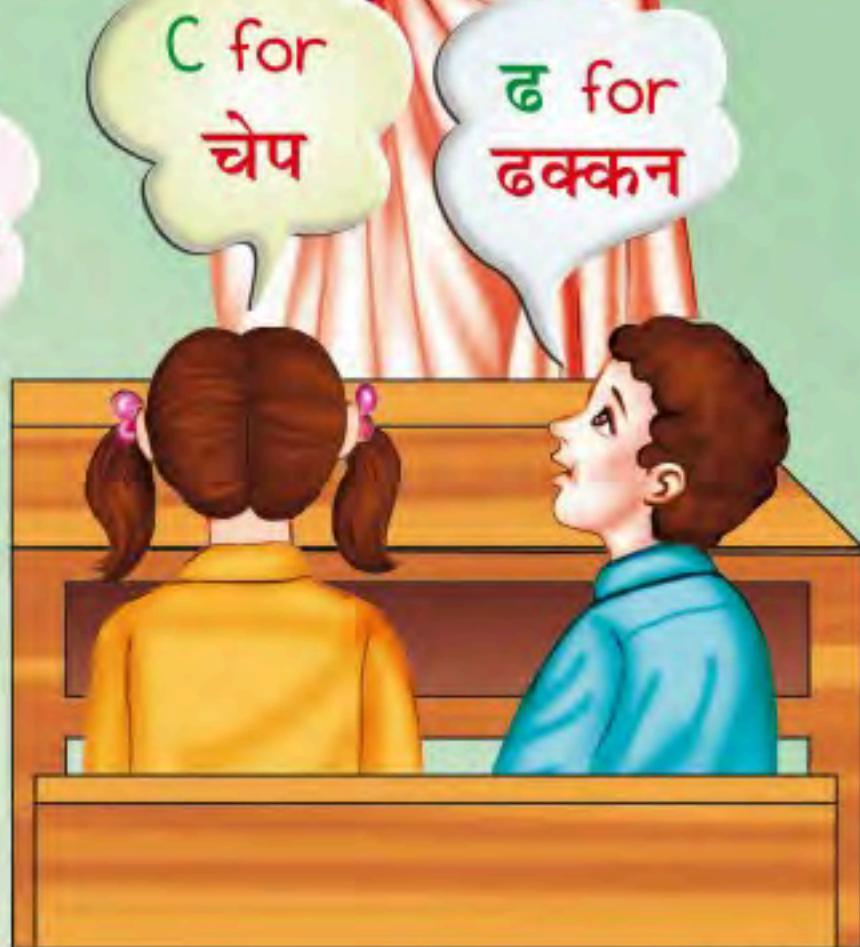


अ for
अबे-ओये

B for
backside

C for
चेप

ढ for
ढक्कन



DELHI DICTIONARY

The word “kedgeree”, according to *The Concise Hobson-Jobson*, “appears to have been applied metaphorically to mixtures of sundry kinds and also to jargon or *lingua franca*.” That definition, from the Anglo-Indian glossary first published in 1886, still finds a place in this issue’s cover story: our humble attempt to capture some of the flavour of Delhi talk, which is as much a commingling of linguistic and cultural sources in the 21st century as it was in the 19th. Creating a dictionary of slang, which exists at the edges of standardised language, is a slippery and paradoxical exercise even for proper linguists, and we don’t presume to provide an authoritative source. What we do hope you find in the following pages is an echo of the joyous, polyglot cacophony of our linguistically absorbent capital city, as well as some insights into why we speak the way we do. To go with the faux-educational tone of this sheher ka shabdkosh, we’ve also commissioned illustrations by the same artists who design those ubiquitous alphabet and “good habits” charts. We’ve included words that we think are either exclusive to or especially common in Delhi, but given the gaalis flying about our office during disagreements while compiling the list, we’re sure you, too, may take issue with some of the entries. Weigh in with your opinions and tweet your additions (@timeoutdelhi, #delhislang) after sampling the khichdi we’ve made of our city’s native tongues.

LEARN THE LINGO

Abay kyun bana raha hai?

(अबे क्यों बना रहा है) Why are you making things up?

Abay-oye!

(अबे-ओये) Hey you! ainvayi (ऐन्वाइ) No real reason, whatever.

aisi ki taisi (ऐसी की तैसी) [I'll] finish [you]. “Tune meri headlight smash kar di? Teri aisi ki taisi kar doonga.”

Amby Short for an Ambassador car. Lately, used to refer to Ambience Mall, Gurgaon.

annexy Local pronunciation for annex; outbuilding. “Pran Neville is speaking in the annexy only.”

anyways Fits into a larger pattern of pluralising words, from adverbs like “anyway” to proper nouns like “Shiro” (“Let’s go to Shiro’s.”)

arbit Short for arbitrary. “Koi bhi arbit shot kheench ke ley aao.”

babaji ka ghanta (बाबाजी का घंटा) Balls! From a nude babaji (holy man’s) gently swaying junk. Often

shortened to just ghanta, meaning zippo, “yeah, right.”

backside Back entrance; nothing to do with buttocks. “Entry from backside only.”

bade log (बड़े लोग) Powerful people. “Who actually goes to jail because of these sting operations? Sab bade log hain.”

badhiya (बढ़िया) Excellent, superlative. Sometimes used sarcastically.

badi pahunch hona (बड़ी पहुंच होना) Having reach. “Don’t mess with him, uski badi pahunch hai.”

baigod (बाईगोड़) Not the god of all bails, but rather the exclamation “By God!”.

“Baigod, aaj kal badi garmi hai.”

bakch-di (बक्च-दी) Generally faffing, talking rubbish, doing nothing or “taking someone’s trip.”

“We didn’t do anything productive, we were just maroing bakch-di.”

believe you me An extended

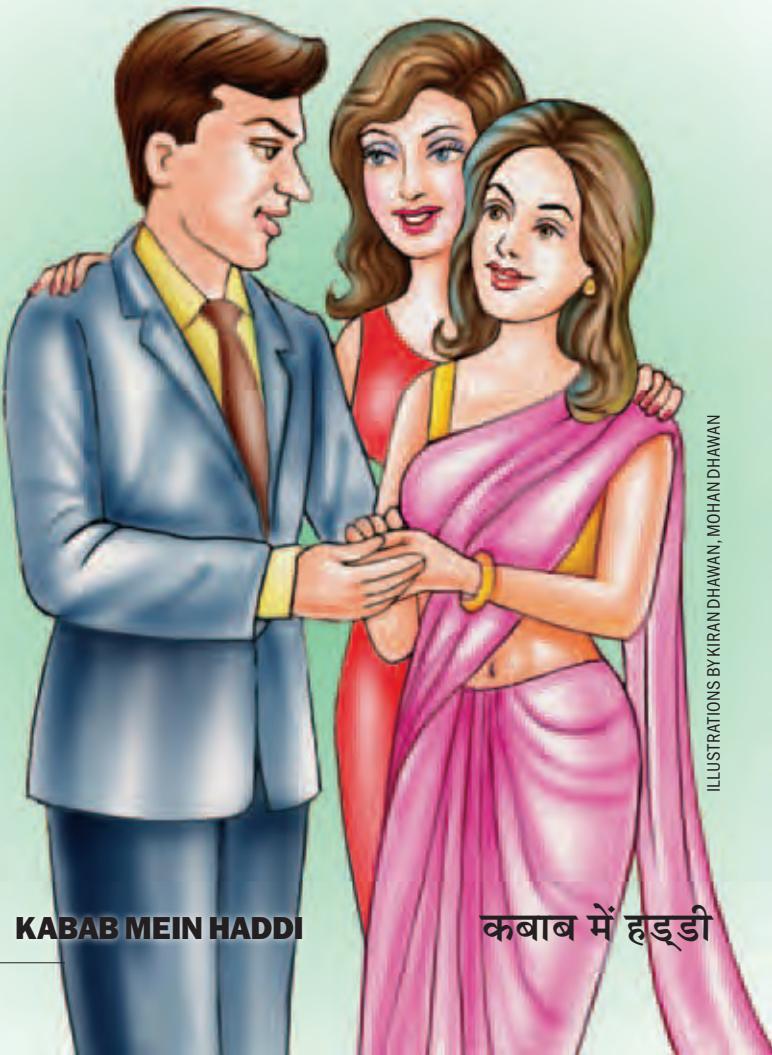
version of “believe me”, that at-

tempts to enhance the plausibility of

the statement in question by



MUG UP
Chutneyfying English: The Phenomenon of Hinglish
Edited by Rita Kothari & Rupert Snell.
Penguin, ₹299.



KABAB MEIN HADDI

कबाब में हड्डी

inserting a you. “You will regret this, believe you me.”

bhaad mein ja (भाड़ में जा) Go to hell.

“If you still don’t get it, then bhaad mein ja.”

bhai (भाई) A bromantic term used by male members of the citizenry. “Sab bhai log uske jeep mein gaye.”

bhaiyya (भर्भया) A form of address used to refer to anyone male providing a service – from an autowala to a shopkeeper.

bhains ki aankh (भैंस की आँख)

Literally buffalo's eye, an exclamation slightly ruder than the French “mon oeil!”, used to express surprise or shock. Also “Bhains ki aankh mein haathi ka anda”. “Oh bhains ki aankh! She actually said yes to you?”

bhasad (भसड़) Confusion, everything going haywire, a muddle. “Ghar main kya bhasad macha rakhi hai?”

bhosd-ke (भ-सड़ी के) Oddly inclusive gaali meaning “of the vagina”. Its popularity was reflected in the infamous song from *Delhi Belly* (2011).

BT Abbreviation for Bad Trip. “That shaadi was a BT from the start.”

bunk To skip class or other mandatory activity, mostly to hang out outside the school gate.

call girl In the argot of the Delhi property broker, a woman who works in a call centre.

cent percent One hundred per cent, a guarantee. “She’s definitely got a nose-job. Look at her photo yaar, cent percent.”

chaatu (चाटू) Suck-up or ass-licker. From the verb form chaatna, to lick.

chaddi buddy Childhood or close friend, bum chum. “We went to

preschool, school and college together; she’s my chaddi buddy.”

chakkar (चक्कर) Literally circle; affair, sticky situation.

chalta hai (चलता है) That’ll do; whatever.

chaalu (चालू) Literally “working”, but also sly, clever, sneaky.

chamcha (चमचा) Literally spoon; a sycophant. “Kejriwal kisi ka chamcha nahin hai!”

champu (चम्पू) A dorky looking person, with oiled hair, thick-rimmed specs and so on.

changha (चंगा) Good, in Punjabi; used by non-Punjabis also.

chapad ganju (चपड़ गंजू) A floundering fool.

chapaid (चपेड़) A slap.

chape (चैप) A highly evolved and evocative Hinglish concept, bringing Hinglish to near German levels of economy and precision. An adjective used for someone who is too clingy or invites themselves over despite the many signs of being unwelcome. “She’s always following me to barsati parties – such a chape yaar.”

charsi (चरसी) Literally a habitual user of marijuana or hashish; also slacker. “Don’t expect much from him. He’s a regular charsi.”

chhittar (छित्तर) A Punju spanking, originally referring to the footwear used to give the spanking.

chill maar (चिल मार) Relax. “Tu itna senti kyun kar raha hai – zara chill maar.”

chillad (चिल्लड़) Change, especially in coin form. “I barely have any cash, my pocket is just full of chillad.”

chillax Chill + relax. See chill maar.

chirkut (चिरकुट) Loser; a cheap,



टोटा

TOTA

stingy individual.

chooza Literally a baby chick.

Used to describe someone who is very gullible and naive.

chunt (चंटे) Very sly, clever.

ch-t-ya (चू-या) A f-cking idiot (literally c-nt). A basic building block of informal Dilli chatter.

Civils Civil Service Exams.

connects Connections. Required to access the privileged social circuit.

contacts People in high places and also in one’s phone book. “He can get you into the concert for free, he has a lot of contacts.”

conti “Continuation party”, that goes on late, usually to celebrate the last day of high school. Some speculate it owes its provenance to DPS RK Puram. “It finished early ya; the cops always crash contis.”

cum Conjunction by no means local to Delhi, but certainly very popular, as in restaurant-cum-bar; now more often shortened to resto-bar and resto-bar.

cut sleeve An important social

marker to judge the level of regression in a person. Only patriarchal knuckle dragger call an article of clothing “cut sleeve” as opposed to “sleeveless”.

cut surd A Sikh who has cut his hair short.

daath Death, used to affect a ditzy tone: “The food was so expensive – hai! meri to daath ho gayi.”

dabana (दबाना) To gorge food. “I dabao’d that thaali in a sec.”

dhakkan (ढक्कन) Dumbass, duffer.

dhikchik (डिक्चिक) A musical genre encompassing everything from bhangra to dubstep, listened to avidly by Delhi dudes.

dhinchak (डिंचक) Loud, showy style. “Look at those dhinchak platform heels.”

dicky The boot of a car. “Dicky mein car-o-bar set hai.”

duffer A dhakkan. Not native to – but still flourishing – in Delhi soil.

enjoy Have fun; used more liberally in Hinglish. “Shaam ki class cancel ho gayi. Full enjoy marenge.”

enthu cutlet Someone who’s a bit

Talking transport

auto Short for auto-rickshaw. Particularly confusing to Mumbai-kars, who continue to call them ricks. “I don’t have a car ya, and it’s too cold for an auto.”

chooch (चूच) Autorickshaw. Can be turned into a verb or noun: choochiya (autowala). “I don’t have my car, I’ll just chooch it.”

cut Refers to a turning while giving directions. “Aap samne ka cut le lijiye.” Ulte haath se cut means a left turn, while seedhe haath indicates a right turn.

phatphatiya, phat-phat (फटफटिया, फटफट) Scooter, rickshaw, or really anything vehicular and old that rattles along.

gol chakkar (गोल चक्कर) Roundabout; Delhi is replete with them.

laal batti or red light (लाल बल्टी) As opposed to Mumbai’s “signal”.

Matro (मेट्रो) The Delhi Metro; also a handy excuse for lateness. “Main matro mein hoon. Bees minute mein pahunchunga.”

staff pass Used in buses to explain the lack of a ticket. No one knows what staff this is. By extension: “Koi staff ka pass nahin chalega.”

T-point A T-intersection. “Bhaiyya, T-point se left lena.”

too keen for their own good. "Stop being an enthu cutlet and asking when the next quiz is."

fanne khan (फने खाँ) One who thinks of himself as a great authority.

feel aana (फील आना) The feeling when you do something awesome or when something awesome happens. "Qutab Minar pe chadh kar badi feel aa gayi."

firang (फ्रिंगा) Foreigner. Also see gora.

friendship What Delhi boys want to do or make with girls they don't know, over Facebook and otherwise. Variations: fraanship, frenship. "Why not do fraanship with me?"

free fund Swag, comped loot, something for nothing. "Didi yeh meri taraf se aapko gift hai: free fund mein."

full on Full fledgedly; as in the song "(FOPS) Full On Party Scene". "She was flirting with him full on."

full power Full on, in full flow. "Full power mein rave chal raha tha."

funda Abbreviation of fundamentals; concept, basics. Resurgence after the song "Ande Ka Funda" from the 2011's *Jodi No 1*. "Aao sikhaun tumhe ande ka funda."

gedi (गेड़ी) To take a round, usually in a car or bike. "Chal, India Gate ki gedi lagate hain."

ghaas nahi dalna (गास नहीं डालना) Play hard to get.

ghapla (घप्ला) Big mess, scam.

gherao (घेराओ) Protest strategy involving surrounding a place of

Jokes apart SMS manuals



Published locally in several Indian cities and available here on the pavement around the Chandni Chowk Metro station, a breed of manuals uses the old medium of print to educate readers about communication in a newer one. With titles like *Zabardast SMS* and *Superhit SMS*, these cheap booklets compile jokes, poems and choice words of inspiration to be duly typed and forwarded to all of one's mobile phone friends.

Written in freely mingling Roman and Devanagari script, the books use a mix of English, and Hindi – not to mention SMS shorthand (there's even a glossary of abbreviations for the uninitiated). Emerging around

four or five years ago the books are a delightful case study of contemporary street talk that thrives on the mobile networks.

A short walk down Ballimaran, not far from the haveli where Ghalib is thought to have lived, brought us to the offices of Lakshmi Prakashan, the books' publishers in Delhi. Established in 1989, it primarily produces religious books, but also prints primary education worksheets, recipe books, and fashion and hair manuals, and it introduced these texting manuals for inexpensive roadside sales, along with straight-up joke compilations like *Romantic SMS* and *Hansi Ka Golgappa*.

Despite not being his chief

interest, Lakshmi Prakashan's owner RK Aggarwal was more than willing to talk about these more alternative compilations. "Unfortunately, this is what sells nowadays," he told us regretfully. "In the olden days, humour used to be an art form, to be presented in the courts of kings. Jokes were clever; it took a few seconds to fully understand them. Now, people don't even want to spend that much time on a joke. So the jokes are unsophisticated, and quite often vulgar."

As for the jokes being in SMS form, Aggarwal believes that this is just the latest way to keep up with the times. "Earlier we used to have books of jokes, 'chutku-las'; now we package the same material, with minor deviations, as SMS's. Young people these days are constantly in touch with each other. At some point they run out of things to say and send these joke SMS's," he explained. "The format may be different, but these jokes are nothing new." **Vilasini Roy**

Lakshmi Prakashan 4734
Ballimaran (2391-7707).
Θ Chawri Bazaar. Mon-Sat
11am-8pm. SMS books ₹10.

DIMAAG KA DAHI

दिमाग का दही



Locale lingo

Clony (क्लोनी) Dialect for "colony".

CP Connaught Place. Technically now Rajiv Chowk.

Def Col Defence Colony – home of RWA aunties, defence persona, builder flats, 4S and a nala.

HKV Hauz Khas Village. "Gunpowder is in the backside of HKV."

Jamna-paar (जमना-पार) Anything east of the River Yamuna is indiscriminately Jamna-paar. An excuse offered by autowalas when refusing a customer: "Vo zyaada door padega, Jamna-paar hai."

K-Nags Kamla Nagar, near DU North Campus.

Lutyens The British built central city. A place where you will inevitably get lost, roaming around the gol chakkars.

Medical, Madikull, All India Words referring to AIIMS, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Savaari: "Bhaiyya, madikull jaana hai." Autowala: "All India?" Savaari: "Ji."

MKT The area around Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tilla. Usually refers to the New Aruna Nagar Tibetan Colony up the road.

NFC New Friends Colony, particularly its district market.

Nyoda Noida. Call it the New Okhla Industrial Development Area at your own peril.

sheher (शहर) Literally city; used to refer to Old Delhi, or Puraani Dilli, by some who live there.

South Ex South Extension. No longer geographically the southernmost part of Delhi.

The Gaon Gurgaon; the back of beyond for South Delhi diehards. "It's just a mall; I'm not going all the way to the Gaon."

Law and order

- 10 Janpath** A reference to Congress high command, or to Sonia Gandhi.
- 420** Scammer, conman.
- 7 Racecourse** A reference to the Prime Minister.
- Aaya Ram** (आया राम) Short for “Aaya Ram Gaya Ram”: a politician who changes allegiances.
- baba log** (बाबा लोग) Used by domestic help to refer to young (and sometimes grown-up). More sarcastically used to refer to young MPs, especially from the Congress Party, from political dynastic families. “Baba log aaj constituency mein hain.”
- babudom** State of entitlement; see babucracy below. From Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*: “Watch him, all babudom laid aside, smoking at noon on a cot...”
- babucracy** Bureaucratic rule defined by slow movement of documents and copious red tape. “They were trying to get a liquor licence, but babucracy prevailed.”
- sarkari** (सरकारी) Related to government; also babu-like in nature.



THULLE

employment until workers' demands are met.

goli (गोली) Literally bullets. Ditch, let-down. “Plumber ko subah aane ke liye bola tha, par usne to goli de di.”

good man di laltain Jolly good fellow; used mostly by old army uncles.

gora (गोरा) Foreigner of the Caucasian persuasion. “These poor goras always get mobbed at Palika Bazaar.”

gup (गप) Gossip, prattle. More colloquially, to shoot the breeze. “Kal woh kitty party mein badi guppein maar rahi thi.”

gyaan (ज्ञान) Wisdom. Often used in a sarcastic vein. “Stop giving me gyaan about lauki juice.”

hafta (हफ्ता) A regular bribe paid by street vendors.

hatke (हटके) Offbeat, different and cool. “Uski sari zara hatke si thi.”

healthy Polite word for rounded out, chubby or fat. Not necessarily negative in connotation.

jaat boys (also **Jaatboizz**) A popular rear windshield decal, especially on pimped-out jeeps, advertising the presence of Haryana Jats within, possibly as an explanation for the erratic driving of said vehicle. Also common are “Gujjar of India” and other variations.

janaab (जनाब) Literally “excellency” or “sir”, but heard frequently, almost as an interjection, especially amongst mid-level government types around Mandi House.

jeena (जीना) Ladder, as opposed to the word “seedi”.

jhadna (ज़ह़ना) To toss around. “Jamia-type hai-vo, shayari jhadta rehta hai.”

jhataak (झटैक) Hyper-bling; typical of outfits worn to a Delhi wedding. “Is this anarkali suit too jhataak?”

JLT Abbreviation for Just Like That. “Why are you in Khan Market?” “JLT.”

jota (जोता) A joint.

jugaad (जुगाड़) In the most basic sense, providing a solution, which is often inventive or out of the ordinary. “Tension mat le, whiskey ka jugaad ho jayega.”

kaan ke neeche (कान के नीचे) Below the ear; apparently a vulnerable spot to lay one tight slap. “Man kar raha hai ki mein use kaan ke neeche zor se maroon.”

kaand (कांड) A screwed up situation.

kabab mein haddi (कबाब में हड्डी) Third wheel. “He crashed their Valentine’s party – total kabab mein haddi.”

Daddy issues

baap ki sadak (बाप की सड़क) Father’s road. Used in reference to rash drivers or poor parkers: “BMW hai to sochta hai yeh uske baap ki sadak hai? Who drives at 70 in bloody Kotla Mubarakpur?”

baap ki shaadi (बाप की शादी) Daddy’s wedding. An occasion – possibly made-up – of huge significance. In Punjabi, “peyo da vyaaah”. “Paise do yaar.” “Kyun, tere baap ki shaadi hai?”

mera baap (मेरा बाप) Some big daddy who apparently owns this city. Common stereotypical phrase used by feudal Dilliwalas: “Tu jaanta nahi mera baap kaun hai?”

Lingua franca Ask a linguist



Anvita Abbi

Anvita Abbi is best-known for her research on tribal languages and the endangered languages of the Andaman Islands, for which she was awarded the Padma Shri this year. The veteran linguist has also been a Delhi resident for over four decades. Born into a family of writers – her father was the Hindi poet, playwright and satirist Bharat Bhushan – Abbi herself wrote Hindi stories until the mid-1970s before turning her attention to linguistics. Currently the chairperson of the Centre for Linguistics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, where she has taught since 1976, Abbi spoke to **Sonam Joshi** about Delhi's changing speech.

Are there any distinctive aspects about the Hindustani spoken in Delhi, as compared to the rest of north India?

Delhi Hindi is full of English words, which you don't find in Hindi spoken in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and other states in the Hindi belt. In Lucknow, you find more Urdu words in the speech, which Delhi Hindi has lost. It may be because Standard or shuddha Hindi was taught in school. In the spoken form, Delhi Hindi has also incorporated some Punjabi language structure. There is an influence of Punjabi and Haryanvi, including constructions like "maine jana hai". Similarly I find many people in Delhi saying aap, but the verb is not inflected rightly: "aap baitho". This inflection of verbs is typically Delhi, where there is the formality of aap but not the respect of aap baithiye.

Code mixing and switching has become rampant, so you may have half a phrase in Hindustani and half in English – what is known as Hinglish. These terms draw attention to the fact that no language is monolithic or pure, every language has a mixture of other languages and the degree varies. We even have an indigenized Indian English now – when people speak English they use the conjuncts of Hindi – so it's not a unilateral trade.

Is the scale of this hybridization of language in Delhi unprecedented?

I don't think we have witnessed mixing on such a scale. The reason could be education for the masses and exposure for the media. When the Indian government opened two different radio news channels in Hindi and Urdu, both the communities said we can't understand Akashvani – they distanced themselves from the common people's understanding of the two languages. Doordarshan mitigated that difference and there was more prominence given to spontaneous speech, which made it possible for people to use both Perso-Arabic and Sanskrit words. English-medium schools and globalization brought in many English words. What we call Hindustani is... mili-juli of three or four languages.

How does slang become an accepted part of a language?

Slang, being a spoken form, becomes accepted when a large number of people use it, but [slang words] never make inroads into writing systems unless in short stories or novels where the characters speak a particular language. As far as the spoken form is concerned, [these words] come and go. They are accepted when youth accepts them largely. I remember when I was young, people would use plural form of nouns with an -aat suffix, which is Perso-Arabic, like kitabaat for books. Now people instead use the suffix -ein, which is taught in school. People often think I am an Urdu speaker, but it is Hindustani of 50 years ago.



CHAMPU

चम्पू

The language of learning

D-School Delhi School of Economics. Famous students include Manmohan Singh and Amartya Sen. Good mutton dosas too.

Dipsites The "another brick in the wall" produce from Delhi Public School.

Dosco Describes students from Doon School, rampant in Delhi's upper echelons of power and commerce.

fuchcha (फुच्चा) A contraction of "first year ka bachcha". First-year college students, targeted for ragging by seniors. "Tell those fuchchas to clear the seats, I want to sit down and have my coffee properly." Female: fuchchi.

Mamsee Pronunciation of MAMC, short for Maulana Azad Medical College. Used to refer to medical or public health types.

Modernites Students of Modern School.

passed out Graduated (fully consciously).

Patelian A Hindi-speaking, kajal-wearing student of Sardar Patel Vidyalaya.

poltu Campus politics, particularly at IIT Delhi.

fakka Failing grade.

soc Short for society, as in Shake Soc (Shakespeare Society), Dram Soc (Drama Society) or Eco Soc (Economics Society).

Stephanian Student of St Stephen's College.

subsy Short for Subsidiary Course. "Subsy ke liye kaun padhta hai?"

zook A zero score on an exam.

Jat's the way Learning Haryanvi

Recently Akshara Theatre hosted the Festival of Four Languages, with plays in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, the NCR's major tongues, according to the organizers. A large chunk of Dilliwalas might have been miffed – namely Haryanvi speakers like Virender Sehwag and Sushil Kumar and many of their Jat brethren from Najafgarh and other parts of north-west Delhi. And if you happen to ply your trade in steel-and-glass Gurgaon, it's almost impossible not to encounter a smattering of Haryanvi. It's another matter altogether whether you can decipher the meaning cloaked by the heavy accents.

The weekly newspaper *Friday Gurgaon* sheds some light on the language in its column "Haryanvi Made Easy". This handy section has been a feature of the paper since it started out in August 2011. Atul Sotbi, the owner and editor of *Friday Gurgaon*, has lived in the city for the past 15 years and the column is very close to his

heart. "Gurgaon can be confusing. Is it a part of Delhi, is it a suburb, or is it a part of the NCR? You cannot ignore the fact that it's part of Haryana," the former MD of Ranbaxy Laboratories said. "So it was natural choice to include the section."

Sotbi finds similarities between Mumbai and Gurgaon as well. "Mumbai has this issue of Marathis and outsiders. Even here newer residents and locals feel alienated from each other and there is no need for that," Sotbi said. "What worries me is that we are becoming a very state-centric country and very few tolerate people from other parts of the country. What's the big deal if a kid picked up a bit of Haryanvi? Why not encourage them and they can learn it so fast."

Each issue, five to ten simple conversational sentences in English are translated into Haryanvi by Anita Bagchi from



the editorial department. "It started out as a touristy kind of thing, like giving an outsider living in Gurgaon some phrases that would be useful when, say, visiting the Electricity Board office," Bagchi said. "Gradually we turned it into themes; otherwise, it would become boring."

Sample one batch during the cold wave in early January: "Everything is so wet and cold" (Sab keeme alla aur seela hai); "I heard it was snowing in Shimla" (Manne suni ke Shimla mein baraf padhi se). Even if you don't intend to hobnob with

Haryanvi Made Easy

Get in touch at www.timeoutdelhi.net

1. My house has been robbed!
Misaare ghar ne cheri ho gayi se.

They have taken all my money.
Mera saare rupye le ke bhanga.

They even took away my clothes.
Mere latya me bhi le gaye.

I need to file a complaint at
the police station.
Main raja karna chahun sun
thuna mein.

I hope they act fast.
Bhagwan kare we jaldi si kuch karen.

Where is the nearest police station?
Labte dhurre kaun sa thaana se?

6. Take me there now.
Manne vaade le chat.

5. I want all my things back.
Manne apna saara saman vita chahiye.

6. Beat the thieves when you catch them.
Choraa ne pakadte peetye.

Haryanvis, there are always words and phrases that make it into the more mainstream speech of the NCR – chhora, chhori, or arrey, urey. And if, for example, you wanted to enjoy the glorious weather with a game of cricket, you could always ask your buddy, "Bat ball khelan challe?"

Kingshuk Niyogy

Friday Gurgaon appears weekly and is online at www.timeoutdelhi.net.

kat le (कर ले) Get out, leave. "Kat le, nahin toh bahut pitega."

khichdi (खिचड़ी) Literally a dish of rice and lentils cooked together, but also a mess, a muddle. "Woh dono kuchh khichdi paka rahe hain."

khota (खोता) Idiot. "Arre khote, tu apna business kab shuru karega."

KLPD Short for Khade L-nd Pe Dhoka; getting blue-balled.

koi na (कोई ना) Never mind.

kothi (कोठी) Literally house, but in DDA flats sometimes used to refer to the ground floor flat. Also where prostitutes live.

kudi (कुड़ी) Girl, in Punjabi – used informally, like "gal".

Kya prograam hai? (क्या प्रोग्राम है?) What's the plan?

lag jana (लग जाना) To be screwed. More emphatically "lode lag gaye".

lakeer ka fakeer (लकीर का फकीर)

Someone who goes by the book. "That traffic policeman is a real lakeer ka fakeer."

late latif (लेट लतीफ) A person who is perpetually tardy. In a Mulk Raj Anand story "Why Does the Child Cry", Abdul Latif, a potter's son, was called Late Latif by everyone.

l-da lassan (ल-ड़ा लस्सन) A nonsensical but gross exclamation; also used, like phalana dhamkana, as the final "etc" in an uninspiring

list: "Mein ne khareeda doodh, ande, bread, phal, l-da lassan."

launda (लौंडा) Boy, dude.

lend A habitual borrower. Also LML, last-minute lend.

le lena (ले लेना) To make fun of someone. "He was wearing the ugliest red shoes aur sab ne uski le li."

local Luckily this slang is fading fast. But in immediate post-liberalized India and the accepted fascination for all things foreign,

calling someone "local" meant to disparage them for being too earthy, not being able to speak good English.

l-du chand (ल-दू चंद) An idiot.

l-nd fakir (ल-ड़ फकीर) Someone desperate for sex.

maal (माल) 1. Stuff for a joint. 2. A really hot woman.

Majnu (मज्जु) Roadside Romeo.

maalik (मालिक) Owner, or boss; used liberally in mock-deference.

mast maula (मस्त मौला) A happy

camper; contented soul.

MCBC Short for M-ch-d, Bh-nch-d.

mere ko (मेरे को) Used instead of "mujhe" or "mujh ko". "Tu to mere ko bholo gaya."

meri jooti (मेरी जूटी) A mock threat meaning "my foot!"

mom-dad One's parents.

mooh mein le le (मूँह में ले ले) Blow me. Mostly figuratively. Mostly.

native place Place of origin.

"Please fill your goodname and native place."

Brain trauma

dimaag ka dahi (दिमाग का दही)

To curdle one's brains, literally into curds; get irritated. "Why can't she ever shut up, mere dimaag ka dahi jama rahi hai."

Eat [one's] brains To eat away at one's sanity through annoyance. Hindi equivalent "Mera dimaag mat kha."

Don't break my head Don't irritate me. "These salespeople are breaking my head, calling ten times a day."

fried The state of boredom, exhaustion or frustration. Also "bheja fry".

Tail-enders

- baazi (बाज़ी) Suffix added to refer to the art of the word it has been added to. So ladkibaazi is the art of being a skirt-chaser; lecturebaazi the solid giving of gyaan. Can be used to form a noun, as in golibaaz – one who always lets you down.

- inder (इंदर) Added to words for a Punjabi touch; goodinder, etc. For instance, "When I want to commend Shravya Reddy for showing some Punjabiness, I call her Shravinder."

- iyo (ईयो) Slangy imperative verb ending that captures the polite -ein and the informal -ao. "Ramesh ka phone number bathaaiyo."

- pati (पति) Literally "husband"; added to words to describe a lover or haver of the word added to. Crorepatti, Rashtrapati, Kailashpati (an IITian who hangs around the Kailash Hostel for girls).

- type Like the Hindustani "wala", used to lump together a particular stereotype: behenji-types, journo-types, NGO-types, jhola-types, JNU-types, Page 3-types, etc. "Why don't you jhola-types ever buy your own cigarettes?"

Dialect to camera

YouTube as urban dictionary

In his book *Maximum City*, Sukeetu Mehta expounds on the importance of a certain beloved gaali. "I missed saying *bh-nch-d* to people who understood it," he writes of his time as a Bombay kid in New York. "It does not mean 'sister fucker'. That is too literal, too crude. It is rather, punctuation, or emphasis, as innocuous a word as 'shit' or 'damn'."

One can only imagine how much more Mehta would have missed the word had he been from Delhi instead of Bombay. The swear is an inescapable, vital component of Delhi lingo, a point drive home by the YouTube short "Shit Delhi Boys Say". In this minute-and-a-half clip by Mainduck, purveyors of "Urban Indian sketch comedy", an actor says the word half a dozen times, each instance with a different inflection. The clip does even better with the simple "oye", which is used to convey emotions as specific as "Hello", "Listen to me", "C'mon", "Careful!", "You lucky dog" and "Come out before I kick your ass".

Mainduck's "Shit Delhi Girls Say" is more exaggerated – not surprising, considering the girl is a bearded guy in drag – but it packs in as many laughs. Its targets are more social than linguistic: celeb-spotting in the capital being limited to politicians ("Guess who I saw at Lodhi Gardens yesterday? Rahul Gandhi!"); the snobbishness of car-owners ("She takes the Metro to work. Eww"); the ritual badmouthing of Mumbai ("I'd totally be an actress, but I can't bear Bombay"). There's even a bit of symmetry between the two

shorts, with one's "That Maruti van totally followed me here" finding a sardonic echo in "Tujhe ladki pasand hai? Utha lenge".

The Delhi of these videos is hopelessly divided along lines of dialect and enunciation – one sentence is enough to mark you out as "Punjabi Bagh" or "Vasant Vihar". Glaceo plays on the specificity of these stereotypes with "Shit South Delhi People Say", "Shit South Delhi Adventures" and "Shit South Delhi People Say in Mumbai". Though they lack the pace and comic consistency of the Mainduck originals, they have their moments: you don't have to stay long in this part of Delhi to hear a variation on "Aaja saale, meri bhi back hai", "Dub-step is so epic" or a skeptical "Gurgaon? Raat ko?".

Other dialect videos that sprouted up in Mainduck's wake include Sharyl Productions' "Shit People Say in Delhi/Gurgaon", which is best when picking on pronunciation, and RSC Tunes' "Shit Delhi Boys Say In Mumbai". The latter is a great dissection of how Dilliwalas – okay, stereotypical hyper-aggressive Dilliwalas – behave when they're in Bollywood land (they complain about the quality of kababs and momos, make repeated Goa plans, and say things like "Yahaan pe sher ban raha hai? Tu Dilli aa"). What's interesting is how videos like these simultaneously make fun of "the other" and also mock themselves. With Delhi's patois gaining currency in films and on TV, its citizens are more than happy to serve up their linguistic oddities on a platter. **Uday Bhatia**



Life's a drag YouTube short "Shit Delhi Girls Say"



BEHENJI TURNED MOD (BTM)

बी टी एम

needful (the) Something that needs doing. Especially by public relations professionals.

no ya A gentler way to say no.

non-veg Used to describe a risqué or dirty joke.

obvio Obviously; duh.

off A holiday. "Abay chal, let's go to Neemrana, I have an off."

Oh beta! (ओ बेटा!) An exclamation used to express approval, enthusiasm. The Hindi equivalent of "Oh boy!"

Oh teri! (ओ तेरी!) An expression of surprise.

pee ke palta (पी के पलटा) Fell down drunk.

pakaau (पकाऊ) Annoying. "That film was so pakaau, there were too many songs."

palang tod (पलंग तोड़) A rigorous form of copulation that breaks the bed. Also a barfi from Old Delhi, believed to have aphrodisiac properties, and the name of a paan. Used famously in a dialogue in *Rockstar*.

paalna (पालना) To tame, take someone under your wing; used in Hinglish as paalo: "I paalo'd that bartender."

panga lena (पंगा लेना) To mess with [someone].

pataka (पत्तका) Firecracker – used mostly for women.

patana (पतना) Woed. Used in Hinglish: "If we patao Vibha ma'am we're sure to get no homework."

peeps Short form of people; meant to affect an American worldliness.

phat gayi (फट गई) Got scared. "Meri to phat gayi."

phenkna (फेंकना) To lie blatantly. "Aise hi phenk raha hai – koi girlfriend nahin hai uski."

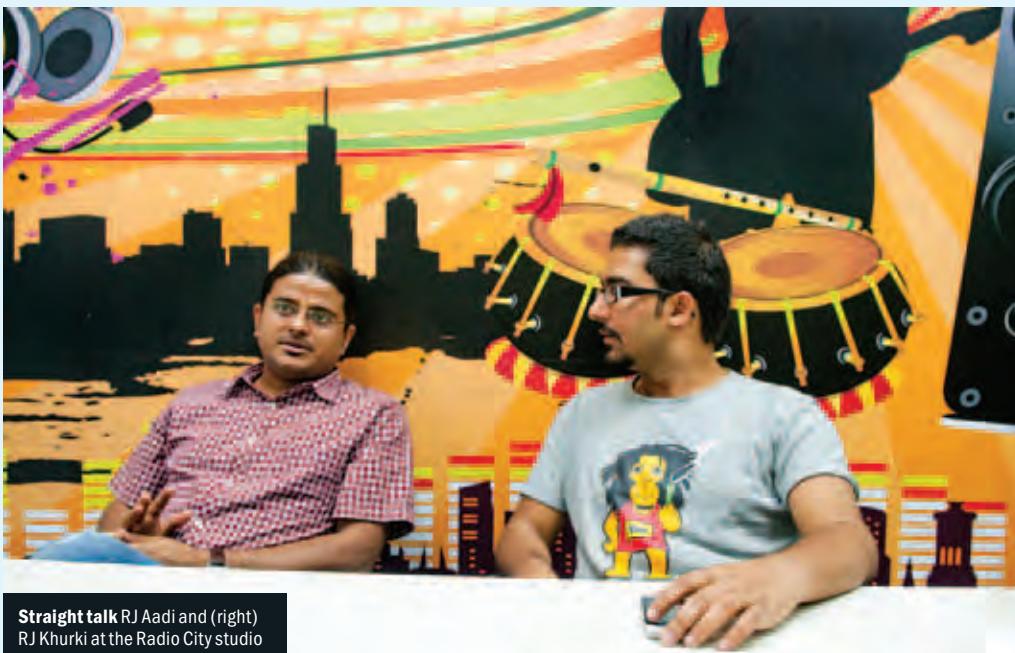
phod dala (फोड़ डालना) To be beaten black and blue.

Phone lagaoon kya? (फोन लगाऊँ क्या?) A threat to call an authority figure; usually the victim's parents.

phukra (फुकरा) Broke. "Dil to hai phukra, style hai vakhra."

phutt le, chal phutt (फूट ले) The imperative "get out".

Radio stars RJs air their views



Straight talk RJ Aadi and (right) RJ Khurki at the Radio City studio

"Cheetah". Not the cat known for hitting top speeds at the blink of an eye, but an expression used to praise someone ("mere cheeteh!"), this is only one of a galaxy of words that BPO culture has contributed to Delhi slang, if RJs Aadi and Khurki are to be believed. The "quintessential Delhi boys" who run the evening show *Route No 911* on Radio City told us that the call centres that came up in the city a little more than a decade ago have changed

the way Delhi speaks.

"The greatest influence though is Punjabi, of course," RJ Khurki was quick to add. "Words like 'fuddu', which means to make a fool of someone, that was used a lot in the film *Vicky Donor*; and 'baklol', a euphemism to ask someone to speak straight or shut up, are popular nowadays," he said. "Bhasad" though is our favourite slang right now," Aadi joined in. "A word like 'bhasad' can be used to convey a strong

sense of annoyance, without resorting to the ever popular maa-behen gaalis, which are a strict no-no while on air. The word has been around for a while, but we have noticed that it's coming back into everyday language lately. Besides, no self-respecting RJ is going to start swearing on air," he added.

With their pulse on the city's evolving language, radio jockeys are observers of and contributors to the lexicon of spoken Hinglish.

Hit 95 FM even has a 25-second spot called "Learn the Lingo", which runs between shows and is meant to broadcast the most common and in-vogue Delhi slang. The spot's presenters mention a word – like hafta, lafta, rapti or dhasuu – its meaning, and usage in a sentence. Aadi and Khurki of *Route No 911*, which is meant to ease the evening commute with humour and local colour, feel that as life in Delhi has become more serious, its language has become more frivolous. "Earlier, radio shows used to be long, drawn-out conversations and light music," Aadi said. Now, with more work stress and traffic, "people want to be entertained, listen to something that will take their mind off all their troubles. So in a way, all this stress in the city kind of helps us, since we are an escape mechanism for all our listeners."

There are some words they wish would stay in circulation, though. "It would be nice to hear near-extinct words such as 'Thank you' and 'Sorry' once in a while in the NCR region," Aadi said. "The way it's going, we feel like people will forget they ever existed." **Sibi Arasu**

Route No 911 airs daily 5-9pm on Radio City 91.1 FM. "Learn the Lingo" airs eight times daily on Hit 95 FM.

pile-on A clingy person. "Who invited him? He's such a pile-on."

POA Plan of Action; usually with reference to evening plans.

pull To have pull is to have contacts.

puppy (पूँछी) 1. Cutesy word for a kiss. 2. A Punjabi yuppy. 3. Someone who is a bit off, who indulges in pappipana.

put up Live, stay. "Where do you put up?"

raasta naap (रस्ता नाप) Literally: measure the road; get moving fast.

raita phail gaya (रायता फैल गया)

The shit hit the fan. "The prince caught us smoking in the loo – raita phail gaya."

revert To reply, get back to; particularly common in professional communication. "Pls kindly revert on the invite." Also "revert back" or even "reply back".

rishwat (रिश्वत) Bribe.

saand ki aulaad (सांड की औलाद) Literally child of a bull; fatass.

sadak chhaap (सड़क छाप) Street

vintage. "I bought this skirt in

Retro lingo

BTM Abbreviation for behenji turned mod – a dowdy woman made-over as a bombshell. Also BTMBF (...But Fails).

chop (also **chopsy**) The greatest Hinglish invention of the '90s. Basically the final word when you've proven someone wrong or won a bet. When the word first emerged it was usually followed by a gesture of moving one's arm as if chopping a log. "Just shhuddup ok? Teri chop ho chuki hai. Chop!"

Contessa Ultimate '80s statement car and vehicle of choice for Delhi's netas and Bollywood chase sequences. "Ek time unke paas bahaat paisa tha. Teen teen Contessa thi ghar pe."

Dhatt tere ki! (धत्त तेरे की!) Aw shucks!

hawji ka pawji (हौंजी का पौंजी) For shame. Similar in tone to "shame shame puppy shame".

hazaar (हजार) Literally 1,000. But commonly used to describe an untold large number. "Shaadi's on a dry day? We're hazaar f-cked."

Himalayan blunder A big mistake. Used mostly by army uncles. "Going to Doon instead of Sanawar was a Himalayan blunder, young man."

maha (महा) Prefix, translateable as "uber".

PLU People Like Us. Implies exclusivity but not necessarily superiority.

those ones Familiar old schtick. "You have the loosies? Don't give me those ones!"

Drinkytimes

bajaoed Plastered, wrung out. "He was totally bajaoed last night, he couldn't even walk straight."

car-o-bar A drinking facility set up in the back of a car outside a non-alcoholic venue or wedding. "Haan, Jain wedding hai, lekin car-o-bar ki bandobast karenge. Dry day thodi hai."

pee ke set (पी के सेट) Nicely drunk.

TC's The bar Turquoise Cottage – famed for its "media nights".

talli (टल्ली) Drunk. "Mein talli, mein talli, mein talli ho gayee."

Janpath – it's totally sadak chhaap."

sahi hai (सही है) [For something] to be cool. "You're from Delhi? Sahi hai."

saanu ki? (सानू की?) What's that to us?

sarky Short for sarcastic. "No need to be so sarky yaar."

sati savitri (सती सावित्री) A girl who is a goody-two-shoes.

sax Not the woodwind instrument, but pronunciation of "sex". Used as an interjection, meaning "great". "Gaadi nayi aayi hai. Bahut sax hai ji."

Scene? Brief form of "What's the scene?"

seedha-saadha (सीधा-साधा) Decent, as opposed to chalu or chunt.

senti (सेंटी) Short for sentimental.

Senti mat maar is an entreaty to not use emotional blackmail. "Bhai tu senti mat maar, main daaru le aaonga."

sex pakoda or **sex pataka** (सैक्स पकोड़ा) Hot thang.

shady A dubious and suspicious person; or adjective used to describe such person, place or thing. "The dive was full of shadies."

sirji The new "boss", "bhaiyya", "janaab", sirji's usage skyrocketed after local boy Virender Sehwag used it in a Boost commercial: "Sirji, why don't we get tired?"

siyappa (सियापा) Literally: a wake. But commonly used to refer to a problem.

stepney 1. Spare tire. 2. Mistress or third wheel.

sanki (सनकी) Eccentric, off.

utta (सुरदा) Cigarette

taadna (ताड़ना) To stare (in Punjabi); borrowed into Hinglish.

take [someone's] trip To make fun of someone. "He was so drunk he didn't realise they were taking his trip. Kept showing off his piddu muscles."

tashan (तश्न) High style. "Full tashan waale goggles pehen ke aaya hai."

tensun (टेंसन) Tension, worry. "Tensun mat le – chill maar."

thand rakh (ठंड रख) Stay calm, keep a cool head.

tharki (ठरकी) Horny, sexed up.

tharra (ठरा) Desi or country liquor.

theka (ठेका) Wine and beer shop.

thok dena (ठोक देना) To bash or beat up.

thulle (ठुल्ले) Cops.

timepass (टाइम पास) Hobby, useless activity. "Koi kaam nahin tha, bas aise timepass karne gaye the."

tip top (टिप टॉप) In good shape, best.



MUG UP
Entry From Backside
Only: Hazaar Fundas of
Indian-English by
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Penguin, ₹250.

"Ji sir, gaadi siraf do saal puraani hai. Owner driven, tip top bilkul."

To main nachoon? (तो मैं नाचू)

Sarcastic rejoinder meaning "Should I dance with joy?"

tota (टोटा) Hot woman. "That chick is a tota bro!"

uda lena (उड़ा लेना) To get rid of, make something or someone disappear. "Mera pencil kisne uda liya?"

vela (वेला) Jobless – can have the connotation of lazy; velapanti the state of being vela. "Come na, I know you're totally vela."

whack Traditionally to murder someone, but also used to steal. "You whacked my rubber, didn't you?"

yaar or yaara (यार) Buddy.

yesterday night Last night.

zapped To be astonished.

Tongue ticklers

c-bats Unfortunately, an abbreviation for chhola bhatura. "K-Nags mein first-class c-bats milta hai."

chai-paani (चाय-पानी) Basic offerings given to a guest. They may be simple, such as chai and paani, or an elaborate spread with mithai or sandwiches. "Chhotu, mehmaanon ko chai-paani serve kar do."

g-jam (also **gul-jabs**) Gulab jamun. "Let's have some golguppas and g-jams at Nathu's."

mixie Electric blender. "Chawri Bazaar mein mixie, espresso aur popcorn machine milti hain."

nashta-vashta, khaana-shaana (नाश्ता-वाश्ता, खाना-शाना) A common example of a popular repetition with replaced initial consonants, implying imprecision. "Kuchh khaana-shaana, chicken-shicken ho jaye."

nescoffee, expresso Regular coffee or espresso.

thanda-shanda (ठंडा-शंडा) Something cold to drink.



TASHAN

टशन

Chewing the fat Samosapedia

In this day and age, the first point of reference is always the Internet – and luckily, slang thrives and mutates with gay abandon online. Though several websites attempt to catalogue Indian speech, the best adda for desi slang is Samosapedia. Dividing their time between New York, San Francisco and Bangalore, with backgrounds variously in design, art, storytelling and high-altitude astronomy, friends Arvind Thyagarajan, Braxton Robbason, Arun Ranganathan and Vikram Bhaskaran set out to build the definitive crowd-sourced dictionary of South Asian lingo. Launched in 2011, Samosapedia accepts contributions from anyone, but entries are screened for “hatred, racism, and any kind of general bigotry”.

Asmita Bakshi corresponded with Bhaskaran and Ranganathan over email about some of their favourite words, innovative gaalis and more.

What's the big idea?

Samosapedia wants to be the biggest and most definitive guide to South Asian lingo in the world. For now, we're having a great deal of fun. We want lots of users, and lots of words. Soon, we'll have videos and images too, making us the world's largest rich media cultural encyclopedia for this region. Initially, contributions came from Samosapedia's co-creators, but we've now reached that wonderful stage where we don't know who the new people contributing words are. They used to be people we emailed. Now, we're taking great delight in meeting strangers. Visitors come to our site from over 100 countries.

What's the story behind the site's name?

We called it Samosapedia for [a few] reasons. We have a special fondness for hot samosas! What could be more iconic to desis than the samosa, which exists in some form or the other just about everywhere you'd think of as having a South Asian influence, whether it's in a Burmese soup or called the "sambusa" in Kenya? When Arun and I first hashed out the idea of a "dictionary" of our common desi "-isms" we first



Food for thought (l-r) Samosapedia founders Braxton Robbason, Arvind Thyagarajan, Vikram Bhaskaran and Arun Ranganathan

called it "wonly.in" – for "wonly in India" or even, "we are like this wonly". But our idea was bigger than India, and we wanted a bit more of a unifying name. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have their own unique lexicon, but also have so much in common with us that we wanted a site they could relate to as well. South Asian discourse today is dominated by Indians and so we thought this would be a great opportunity to create something truly inclusive that transcends regional boundaries, while respecting and celebrating highly localized culture and slang. And suddenly we had a brainwave. Samosapedia. Arun recalls an electrifying moment when we broke into a spontaneous tappan kooth dance and registered samosapedia.com on the spot. We love the cognitive dissonance that the words "pedia" and "samosa" create when placed together!

You have both the language of government officials and the language of the gutter. What demographic would you say is your biggest contributor?

What's interesting about our users is that they are not defined by age or city. One of our most loyal users is a grandmother from Mysore; another is a software engineer from UP. We have students, teachers, linguists, grammarians, historians, and many other types. However, what defines them all is a passion to

document, with humour, those elements of life that often make us exclaim with wonder "We are like this only." We find a keen appreciation for the absurd makes a great Samosapedian.

Have you noticed any trends or the addition of a particular type of word over the years?

Gaalies are as innovative as they've always been, with college students minting new ones almost every day. What's interesting to us is the changing face of culture. We marvel at the fact that the site actually changes as rapidly as culture does, and reflects the spirit of the times. For instance, the viral "Kolaveri Di" video led to definitions like "Soup Boy" ("Soup boys" are boys who get rejected. Has your doubt been cleared? Now check out KLPD to understand other forms of male rejection in India). When Narendra Modi talked about young Indians being "Mouse Charmers", that fascinating expression found a berth on our site. Robert Vadra recently gaffed about "Mango People in a Banana Republic" and that, too, found its way onto Samosapedia.

Has it also been helpful to people who are new to the country or countries represented?

The site goes as many places as do our people. Of course, the number one usage is from India, but this is followed by usage

in the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, the Gulf, and South Africa. We've received many emails from people studying and traveling in India thanking us for helping them linguistically navigate urban India. Some have even added words that they learned along the way.

What are some of your favourite Delhi words?

Our Dilliwalas give us some wonderful stuff (www.samosapedia.com/from/Delhi). Recently, we sat around giggling at "Open Mango C2" (Khulle Aam Chumma-Chaati: Making out in the open). And Arun, who is actually quite a Delhi boy at heart, fondly remembers the call of the chaukidaar in Kaka Nagar: "Jaagte Rahoooooooloo".

Any Delhi words you've turned down for being too offensive?

Sometimes humour can capture our sense of outrage as well. When Abhijit Mukherjee made the horribly insulting comment about the protesters being "dented and painted", that too was lampooned gracefully.

What's next?

In the next few months, we're going to do a full re-launch, featuring a brand new design and new features, where any user will be able to add videos and images as well as words. We're also launching an online store. Visit www.samosapedia.com.