

# WORD PLAY, YOUR WAY. GOOD, NO?

From NYC to Bandra West and Bengaluru to San Francisco, the English language is undergoing a transformation. 'Junta' is accepted parlance for the crowd outside a cinema hall, and 'webtrovert' describes many of us whose extroverted online personality is at odds with our shy demeanour in the real world. While the purists of Queen's English may decry this crazy union of the banal and 'original', those who celebrate it are going all out to renew this marriage's vows. Meet the desi, the gora, and other fully mental individuals crusading for an inclusive approach to language, which was always meant to be fluid, they say. What to do, we are like this *wonly*



## THE ANATOMY OF A SAMOSA

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**W**HEN I first sent an email to Arvind Thyagarajan, who was shuttling between Bengaluru, San Francisco, and New York, I was greeted with an empty response and a lengthy signature that began with 'alias: studmuffin'. Then followed some Indian colloquialisms, starting with 'What is your good name? Why are you weeping?' that cracked me up.

A day later, Mr Studmuffin, realising that the mail was empty, wrote again, 'Excuse the finger flop that sent the empty email, I guess I'm a slippery character', followed by some more uniquely South Asian allusions.

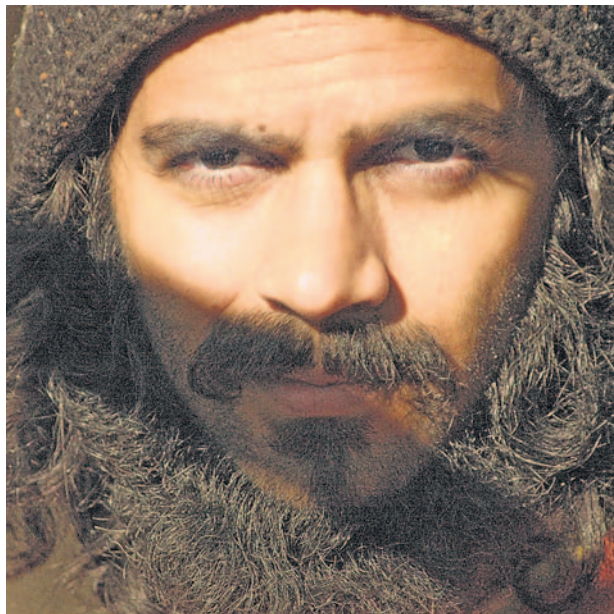
This time, I didn't just laugh but marvelled at the man's brand of irreverent humour, one that eschewed the elitism of 'fluent' English to take pride in local and cultural references.

But that was to be expected from the co-founder of Samosapedia(.com), a website that purports to be 'the biggest and most definitive guide to South Asian lingo in the world', as co-founder Vik Bhaskaran put it, in another email.

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**I think all South Asians, at some level, love their language. That understated love is apparent in the nuances of usage and the joy that people take in its creative manipulations to suit their locale, community and even family. We are a people that love inside jokes and language plays a huge role!**

Vik Bhaskaran, co-founder, Samosapedia (.com)



All in their early thirties, (clockwise from top) Arun Ranganathan (PIC/GARRETT FITZGERALD), Vik Bhaskaran, Braxton Robbason and Arvind Thyagarajan split their time between NYC, SF and Bengaluru. Collectively, they have backgrounds in entrepreneurship, writing, acting, storytelling, data mining, strategy consulting, branding, software engineering, design, art, illustration, mountain climbing and high-altitude astronomy. In their own words, "The common thread that connects us all is our love for language and South Asian culture."

**NUMBER CRUNCHING:** We (Indians) have 1,618 languages, including dialects. We have a new language being spoken every 100 kilometres. Our regional communication encompasses 31 states, 6,400 castes, 6 ethnic groups and 29 major festivals — **Manohar Naik**