



A Dictionary of South African Indian English



RAJEND MESTHRIE



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Preface

This dictionary aims to document the characteristic vocabulary of a major variety of South African English (SAE): that of South African Indian English (or SAIE), with main reference to the core variety spoken in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), though words from the Western Cape and Gauteng make an appearance too. It is based on a lifetime's experience of the dialect and of half a lifetime's academic study of its nuances. The year 2010 is a significant one in South African history, marking the 150th anniversary of the arrival of large numbers of Indians as indentured workers who were crucial in establishing and developing the plantations of Natal (now KZN). Indian languages have survived for a century and a half, and do so now with considerable difficulty, showing what linguists have called *language shift*. Since the 1960s English has become the main language of the Indian communities of South Africa in a vibrant form, retaining a great deal of important religious, cultural and culinary terminology from India as well as showing considerable creativity in adapting the English of queen and colonist to the contexts in which Indians find themselves. At the same time the dialect has imbibed influences from its African context, especially the Zulu context of KZN.

This book is aimed at linguists and lexicographers interested in seeing a new variety of English documented at length, at speakers of the dialect in question, and anyone interested in South African words and those of the Indian diaspora. As many readers are probably familiar only with more formal dictionaries dealing with established standard varieties than this one, it might be useful to stress certain tenets long held by linguists. There is nothing *wrong* about any of the items listed in this work; their difference from formal, educated usage should not be regarded as manifestations of *bad* usage, as they are perfectly acceptable within the contexts in which they occur, even more so than formal, educated usage would be. SAIE is as firmly rooted in, and appropriate to, the areas of experience of its speakers, both past and present, as any other variety of English. The dialect has a slang component of its own; but the majority of items are *not* slang in the sense of words typical of young males talking to each other which are often suppressed in formal contexts and when speaking to elders.

Do all Indian South Africans speak this way? Educated people from the community might well claim that they do not; and a small number of young people who have studied at exclusive schools since the 1990s perhaps no longer share the same English dialect with their parents. But overall, for most speakers till today, there is widespread bi-dialecticism in SAIE and more formal varieties of SAE. It is my belief, however, that there is a continuum between the broadest type of SAIE (called the *basilect* by linguists) and the kind of English promulgated in the classroom, with speakers located at various points on the scale, according to factors such as age, education, occupation, audience and — most of all — style and engagement with what one is saying. The intention of this dictionary is to describe this spectrum of vocabulary rather than concentrate on any one class of speakers. The dictionary is thus to be taken as a cultural, historical and linguistic documentation of SAIE in its full diversity.

On a lighter note, I hope that this collection of words and phrases will afford as much pleasure to the reader as it did to the compiler, for the wit inherent in

the dialect, for the glimpses of Indian experiences and cultural exchanges in SA and the discovery of the long history of usage elsewhere of many items one has always presumed to be peculiarly Indian South African. Finally, I hope that no offence is taken at some of the items characterising particular ethnic or religious groups and at the sexism and ‘vulgarity’ evident in many of the slang items. In present-day SA, as much as ever, it needs to be stressed that no offence is intended. But the dictionary maker cannot play the role of censor.

Rajend Mesthrie

Cape Town

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Method and format

Sources

This is primarily a lexicon of informal spoken dialectal usage, based upon the author's native speaker experiences in a wide range of contexts, supplemented by information from the following sources: (a) sociolinguistic interviews with speakers from diverse social, educational, regional and linguistic backgrounds over 20 years, (b) a regular scrutiny of advertisements, notices and articles in KwaZulu-Natal newspapers aimed at an Indian readership, as well as of occasional pamphlets, wedding-cards and notices, and (c) published fiction, autobiographies, memoirs and historical works, which have increased immensely since the early 1990s. Occasionally, words which are used not in SAIE but by others in relation to SAIE speakers have been included. The Internet makes an occasional appearance as a source, though it is by no means as reliable or enriching as the ordinary speech of ordinary people, many of whom have lived happy and fulfilled lives without a computer.

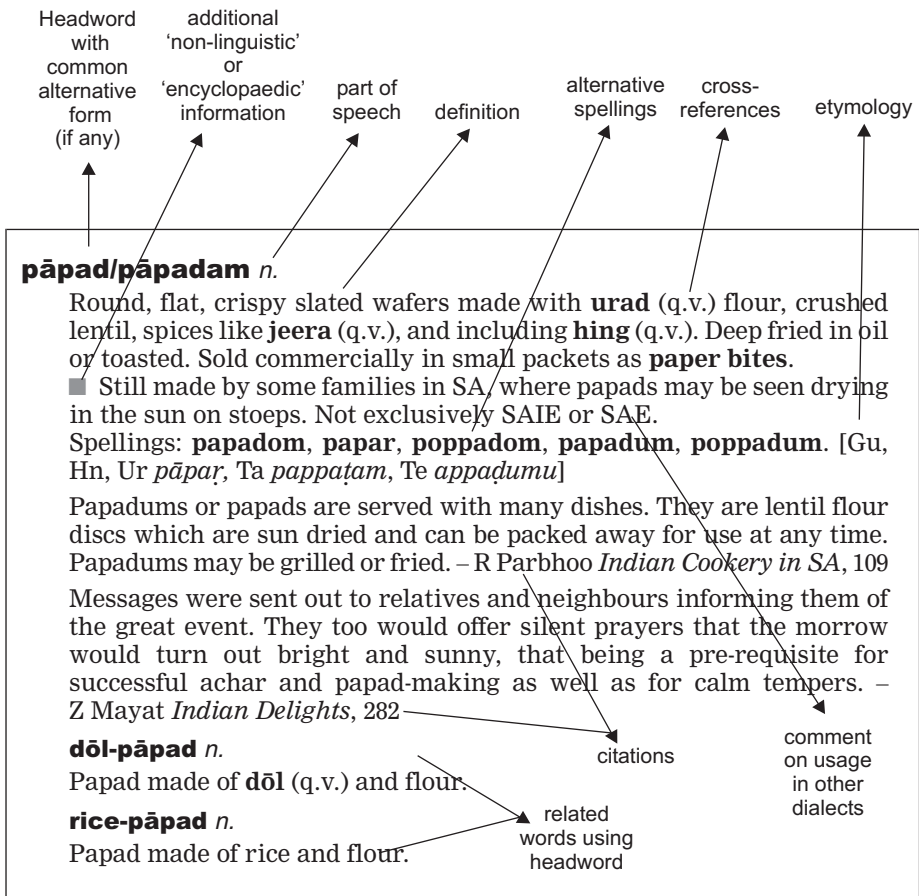
Layout of individual entries

Each entry comprises a headword, followed by a phonetic transcription if the spelling form requires further clarification, and the part of speech of the item. Phrases are classified as noun phrase, verb phrase, etc. according to their headword. If needed, a one-line description next to the headword follows, indicating any special restrictions on usage — for example, *regional, historical, children's speech, vulgar*. The meanings given are the special SAIE meanings. It can be taken for granted that the usual English meanings for words like *healthy, interested*, etc. also apply, even though the dictionary usually states only the new senses they have acquired in SAIE. Likewise, the listing of a word from an Indian language does not imply that the usual English equivalent, where one exists, is not used in SAIE. Often it is the formal English equivalent that wins out in public contexts.

Examples of two sorts are given: (a) citations from published novels or historical works, or from pamphlets and notices, and (b) where no such citations are available, example sentences taken from colloquial speech in interviews or (in a minority of cases) composed by the editor and marked with a bullet point (•). Then follow references to other items in the dictionary or to similar items in other dialects of English or other languages, and further comments on restrictions of usage, if any (*older speakers, rare*, etc.). Finally, an etymology is provided in square brackets for all words taken from a non-English source or whose English source might not be obvious. Whereas the headword is spelt in a manner to suggest the way it is pronounced in English, the etymology tries to represent the original source language(s) in English transliteration, via conventions devised in linguistics. The diagram on the next page shows this scheme:

headword (in recommended, consistent spelling) Part of speech. [Pronunciation in phonetics if needed]
 Definition of headword.
 ■ Additional ‘non-linguistic/encyclopaedic’ information.
 Comment on frequency or style, if necessary.
 Cross-reference to synonyms or related words in the dictionary.
 Reference to usage in other dialects or languages.
 Alternative spellings.
 [Etymology: i.e. immediate source of the headword.]
 Citations: i.e. written or oral sources amplifying or illustrating the definition.

This scheme can be illustrated more concretely for the entry for *pāpad*/*pāpadam* (see p 175).



Register labels

Baby talk refers to words used by parents and caregivers to little children.

Basilectal suggests that the item is characteristic of older speakers having little or no formal education, coined at a time when contacts with native speakers of English were sporadic. The item may, however, be used by younger and educated speakers in highly informal contexts. The term has been adopted from Creole studies, where it denotes one end of a Creole continuum – the ‘deep’ Creole.

Children’s speech implies that the term is a ‘nursery word’ that children stop using as they get older, but which continues with the next generation of children. (*Children’s speech* may overlap with *baby talk*.)

Derogatory means that the word is often used in a demeaning way.

Historical suggests that the item is found chiefly in historical works, old documents or newspapers, and is rarely used in colloquial speech.

In COD confirms that the item is sufficiently known internationally to have been included in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (10th ed.) and its South African edition, *SACOD* (2002).

Informal means that though the term is used by males and females of all ages, it is restricted to light-hearted banter in informal contexts.

Jocular means that an item is consciously humorous.

Not exclusively SAIE implies that the word occurs in other parts of the world where the Indian or Muslim influence is strong, or that it is a South African term shared by some other varieties in the country. However, the Indian connection is strong enough to warrant inclusion.

Offensive denotes terms that might cause offence especially across ethnic groups.

Older speakers implies that the term (or concept) is rare among younger speakers.

Possibly other varieties implies that there is a good chance that the item listed might exist in some other variety of English locally and/or internationally, even though an inspection of the major dictionaries gives no such indication.

Rare suggests infrequent usage on account of another commonly used synonym, especially from Standard English; or less commonly that the item, concept or action denoted is itself becoming obsolete. (*Rare* can overlap with *older speakers*.)

Regional denotes that the term is limited to particular provincial centres. (However, KZN usage is exempt from this label, as it is the main force behind the vocabulary in this work.)

Rural suggests that the item concerned is used and understood mainly within farming or market-gardening circles.

Slang denotes that an informal term is used only within prototypically male and younger subgroups, and rarely between children and their parents and grandparents.

Vulgar denotes terms that are explicitly sexual and not used in polite company.

Etymological labels

Archaism	— Term no longer used in international English, e.g. <i>physic</i> .
Analogy	— Term formed on grammatical model of other words, e.g. <i>maintainance</i> .
Back formation	— Term derived in an unexpected way to create a new root, e.g. <i>to mise</i> from <i>miser</i> .
Calque	— Phrase translated from another language, e.g. <i>big-father</i> .
Cognate	— Word in another language from the same historical source, e.g. English <i>sun</i> , Afrikaans <i>son</i> .
Dvandva compound	— Compound term formed by juxtaposing two terms together, e.g. <i>ginger-garlic</i> .
Euphemism	— Polite or indirect term for a direct or vulgar one, e.g. <i>goodwill</i> .
Hybrid compound	— Term made of elements from two languages, e.g. <i>kanji-water</i> .
Metathesis	— Swopping of the position of a consonant and vowel, e.g. <i>flim</i> .
Neologism	— New derivative of a word, e.g. <i>joky</i> (from <i>joke</i>).
Semantic shift	— Slight change of meaning of original word, e.g. <i>lazy</i> for 'not academically inclined'.
Solecism	— Incorrect term that is frequently used by some speakers, e.g. <i>eddication</i> for 'education'.

Cross-references

Q.v., *see*, and *Same as* direct the reader to other items in the dictionary as follows: *q.v.* (Latin: *quod vide*) signifies that a word (in bold) used in a definition is to be found elsewhere in the dictionary; *Same as* points to synonyms found in the dictionary; *See* points to further words (not exact synonyms) whose meanings amplify that of the headword, often by contrast. *Cf.* (or *compare*) refers to words from other dialects that parallel or illuminate the headword being discussed. *Also* signifies that the same item is used in another dialect of English, though no claims are made about the direction of influence.

Etymologies

The origins of a headword are supplied at the end of an entry in square brackets. Words adopted from English (and supplied with special connotations) are not given an etymology if the source is obviously the same as the headword.

Etymologies from all relevant substrate Indian languages of SA are given, even if it is probable that the SAIE item was adopted directly from one of them. The etymology of a word beyond an Indian language is given if it is of special interest, for example if it is from Turkish, Malay, Persian, etc.

Etymologies given are mostly dictionary citations of formal, educated or literary speech. As the items often derive from the colloquial South African varieties of Indian languages, there is an understandable disparity between headwords and their Indian etymological forms. Thus Hindi dictionary forms are cited, even though colloquial South African Bhojpuri is the source for many SAIE words. Only where a dictionary equivalent cannot be found is the South African form of a word from an Indian language given, in which case it is prefaced by the abbreviation SA.

Problems

The distinction between a word that is now general English and one that needs to be glossed in this work is not always clear. Thus, while words like *mosque* and *Hindu* clearly belong to international English and are therefore not given here, other terms were more difficult to decide upon. I have included some terms already listed in the COD because they do not occur widely in other varieties of SAE: *jack-fruit*, *dhothi*, *muazzin*, *raga*, *thabla*, etc. The lexical boundaries between the Indian source languages and SAIE are sometimes blurred, as is to be expected in a situation of language shift. Where there is some doubt whether a lexical item now belongs to SAIE or is, in fact, a manifestation of code-switching between an Indian language and English, the policy has been to exclude it from the dictionary. But some problem cases still persist.

The attempt to reconcile different spelling systems characteristic of different languages has been a challenge. The mixed system adopted — phonetic spellings for primarily oral forms, and orthographic forms from English and SAIE words already having an orthographic form — though resulting in a few inconsistencies, seems best to me. Where possible, Afrikaans words converted to SAIE slang by male youths were given an English spelling, except if the Afrikaans spelling is well established in SAIE writing. The Afrikaans origin is manifest in the etymology given at the end of such an entry.

The proliferation of spelling forms for certain words in advertisements and packages presents problems. Does one list all the spellings for words like *barfi* (*burfi*, *burfee*, *barfee*, *bharfi*) or *jalebi* (*jalabi*, *julebi*, *julebee*, *jalebee*)? I have given the more common alternative spelling forms under individual entries. Spelling conventions adopted for headwords are given in a separate section below. It is hoped that the suggested spellings of headwords in a consistent fashion will give guidance to future writers in the dialect and perhaps help create a standardised orthography that represents the phonetics of SAIE without looking too ‘foreign’ to be English.

Slang

The corpus of slang used extensively by young and young-at-heart SAIE males is included, although it does not belong to SAIE alone, having its origins in general SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. To compile a dictionary of SAIE without the slang corpus would be unthinkable, for many speakers believe it to be the essence of the dialect. This view is probably mistaken in view of (a) the vast similarities of slang words across ethnicities in SA since at least the 1950s and

(b) the fact that much of the characteristic lexis of SAIE pertains to food, clothing, culture and history and is patently *not* slang. There is, however, a value to recording slang words within the Indian experience in KZN since it is possible to fix a rough dating by decade for most of the items. This will help future researchers of Tsotsitaal to chart the give-and-take and the flow of such items across SA. *Vai* and *lucker* (or *lakke*), for example, were already common in SAIE slang in the 1960s. The dating of slang was done on the basis of the author's native speaker experiences and treble-checked via three independent sources in KZN. A system of asterisks is used to denote the decade of occurrence within SAIE: * for at least the 1960s; ** for the 1970s onwards; *** for the 1980s onwards; and **** for 1990s onwards. Slang from 2000 on is not generally recorded as it either has still to prove its durability or is taken from international hip-hop and similar Western trends.

Abbreviations

abbrev.	abbreviation
adj.	adjective
adj. phr.	adjectival phrase
adv.	adverb
Afrik	Afrikaans
Ar	Arabic
aux.	auxiliary
Bhoj	Bhojpuri
Br Eng	British English
c	Century
c.	about (<i>circa</i>)
cf.	compare
<i>COD</i>	<i>Concise Oxford Dictionary</i> (10th ed.)
colloq.	colloquial
conj.	conjunction
dict	dictionary
dimin.	diminutive
Du	Dutch
ed.	edited, editor, edition
Eng	English
exclam.	exclamation
fem.	feminine
Gu	Gujarati
hist.	historical
Hn	Hindi
IE	Indian English (i.e. English of India)
imp.	imperative
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
interj.	interjection
intrans.	intransitive
Ko	Konkani
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
Mal	Malayalam
Mar	Marathi
n.	noun
nom.	nominative
n. phr.	noun phrase

<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (1970 ed. with supplements & OED online)
part.	participle
pl.	plural
pron.	pronoun
pseudo.	pseudonym
Ptg	Portuguese
q.v.	<i>quod vide</i> (i.e. see elsewhere)
ref.	referential (i.e. descriptive, not vocative)
RP	Received Pronunciation
S	South
SA	South Africa(n)
SABE	South African Black English
SAE	South African English
SAIE	South African Indian English
sg.	singular
Skt	Sanskrit
Sp	Spanish
Std Eng	Standard English
Ta	Tamil
trans.	transitive
transl.	translated, translation
Te	Telugu
UK	United Kingdom
Ur	Urdu
US	United States of America
v.	verb
voc.	vocative
v. phr.	verb phrase
Zu	Zulu

Other symbols:

* slang of 1960s and possibly before

** slang of 1970s and later

*** slang of 1980s and later

**** slang of 1990s and later

' stress mark (occurs before the stressed syllable – see p. xvii)

é acute accent (indicating that the vowel is not 'silent' – see p. xvii)

■ additional information (of cultural, historical or linguistic interest – see p. x)

Symbols and spelling conventions

1. Headwords from English

Words from English or adapted from English are given in their normal spellings (e.g. *flesh*), except in cases of extreme deviation (e.g. *hava* from 'here you are'), where a phonetic spelling is given, together with a broad transcription. In relation to stress, a useful guide for most words is that vowels marked as long (e.g. *ā*) are the ones that carry the main stress. Where the stress pattern is not apparent, a phonetic transcription is given with stress mark ' before the syllable to be stressed.

2. Words from Indian languages

The few words taken from Indian languages in SAIE that occur frequently in English writing (in advertisements, menus, recipes or plays) are given in their usual spelling forms (e.g. *bunny*, *qawali*). There is, unfortunately, a great variety of spelling forms for the same item, in which case a phonetic spelling for the headword is given, and the variants listed at the end of the entry.

3. Words from oral sources

Words from Indian languages that are primarily oral forms in SAIE are given phonetic spellings, the most significant conventions of which are set out below for vowels and consonants.

Vowels

Generally the marking of vowels accords with the Indian language system, similar in their values as for European languages like French and German. Thus 'a' 'e' 'i' 'o' and 'u' occur only as the sounds in *car* (without the 'r' pronounced), *bet*, *sit*, *hot* and *good* respectively. The long versions of these occur as 'ā', 'ē', 'ī', 'ō', 'ū' as in *pa*, *gate* (Scots pronunciation), *sea*, *hole* (Scots pronunciation) and *fool* respectively. Readers familiar with Indian language spellings should assume that the system [a – ā – i – ī – u – ū – e – ē – ai – o – ō – au] is roughly in operation. This is very much like the modern linguistic IPA or International Phonetic Alphabet, though devised over five thousand years ago by Panini and other Indian grammarians. However, it is not necessary to mark length if the final vowel is long, since all vowels at the end of words are slightly lengthened in English (the exceptions are not important here). Thus, though the word *dhīya* ends with a long vowel in Hindi and is so marked in the language (and in the etymology in this dictionary), it is not necessary to mark it in SAIE.

There are no silent letters in a phonetic spelling system, especially no silent 'e' at the end of words. Therefore, other vowel sounds have to be indicated in a systematic way given below. If 'e' occurs at the end of an SAIE word from an Indian source, it is never silent. As a reminder of this the acute accent marker is used: é (as in *arené*, a three-syllable word, unlike the English name *Irene* with two syllables and a silent final 'e'). (All vowels are long if in the final position of a word.)

In summary the following system works for the spelling of headwords:

- (a) represents a vowel similar to the one in RP *cut, sun, son*. IPA [ʌ], and not the vowel in *cat, back, mat*, IPA [æ], unless so transcribed in only two or three instances throughout the dictionary. The IPA vowel in *cat, back, mat* is rarely found in the Indian languages of relevance to this work. SAIE e.g. **thanni**.
- (ā) represents a long vowel similar to the one in RP *pa, market, park*. IPA [ɑ:]. SAIE e.g. **dhāl**.
- (i) represents a short vowel similar to the one in RP or SAE *sit, hit, brick*. IPA [ɪ]. SAIE e.g. **thil**.
- (ī) represents a long vowel similar to the one in RP *beat, me, feed*. IPA [i:]. SAIE e.g. **Gīta**.
- (u) represents a vowel similar to the one in RP *good, who, look*. IPA [ʊ]. SAIE e.g. **urad**.
- (ū) represents a long vowel similar to RP *boot, lose, fool*. IPA [u:]. SAIE e.g. **chūn**.
- (e) represents a sound similar to the one in SAE *get, set, bed*. IPA [e]; or at the end of SAIE words to the vowel in RP *get, set, bed* at the end of a word. IPA [ɛ]. SAIE e.g. **perima, pāké**.
- (ē) represents a long vowel not generally found in English, except for Scots and Northern English *gate, mate, maid*. IPA [e:]. SAIE e.g. **mēthi**.
- (o) represents a vowel similar to the vowel in SAE *hall, bought, cord*, but shorter, with open or close pronunciation. IPA [o] or [ɔ]. SAIE e.g. **mochka**.
- (ō) represents a long, close equivalent of (o) as in Scots and Northern English *hole, road, cold*. IPA [o:]. SAIE e.g. **rōti**.
- (ou) represents a vowel (diphthong) similar to the one in SAE *bone, bolt, moat*. IPA [ou], not [əu]. SAIE e.g. **mousi**.
- (au) represents a vowel (diphthong) similar to the one in SAE *house, out, fowl*. IPA [au]. SAIE e.g. **periausté**.
- (ei) represents a vowel (diphthong) similar to the one in SAE *hay, pay, maid*. IPA [ei]. Rare in North Indian languages: SAIE e.g. **theili**. Slang words from Afrikaans are given an ‘ay’ spelling: e.g. SAIE **snay, skrayf**, since neither the original Afrikaans spellings (*sny, skryf*) nor the use of ‘ei’ seems appropriate here. Since the ‘ay’ spelling is also established in words from Tamil like *alayam*, and the language name *Malayalam*, it is perhaps the most appropriate choice.
- (ai) represents a vowel (diphthong) similar to the one in RP *hide, I, my*. IPA [ai]. SAIE e.g. **kaḍai**.
- ~ represents a nasalised vowel (ā, ī, etc.). These are rare in SAIE, but occur in the etymologies.

Consonants

Phonetic spellings avoid using ‘dummy’ consonants like ‘r’ and ‘h’ after vowels to indicate a vowel value, since these letters are not ‘silent’ in Indian words. Thus the middle two letters in the spelling *fard* represent a short vowel followed by a rolled ‘r’ sound. They do not represent the ‘ar’ in English *mark*, which

would ordinarily be spelt phonetically as *maak*. However, since in the SA context these would misleadingly resemble Afrikaans spellings and since there are so many such long vowels, the Indian language convention of using a bar over a vowel for long vowels has been adopted in the dictionary: the spelling *māk* reflects what in Standard English has come to be spelt *mark*.

Also, double consonants for a single sound are avoided (e.g. ‘ph’, ‘gh’ for ‘f’, or ‘ck’ for ‘k’). Thus, unless a word is an established one in international English, an ‘r’ represents a rolled sound, and an ‘h’ an aspirate. ‘Ph’ represents an aspirated ‘p’ (rarely needed) rather than ‘f’. Where double or repeated consonants occur they must be taken to indicate a genuine doubling (or lengthening of the consonant) – e.g. *akka*, *phuppa*. There is a crucial difference between the use of ‘t’ and ‘th’ in Indian languages and English that has to be resolved. These have paired counterparts in Indian languages and Indian English in ‘d’ and ‘dh’. Generally a ‘th’ spelling is given for words like English *theme*, *thick*, *path*. In contrast, a ‘dh’ spelling is given for English *weather*, *thy*, *with*. Thus SAIE *thanni* versus *dhādha*.

- (ph), (kh) represent aspirated stops, sounds similar to the initial sound in RP *pet*, *ten*, *car*, but with stronger aspiration. SAIE e.g. **phua**, **khalās**.
- (ch) represents a sound similar to RP *chap*, *chat*, IPA [tʃ]; though in a few instances it may represent an aspirated ‘ch’ [tʃʰ], especially for some older speakers. SAIE e.g. **choli**.
- (bh) and (gh) represent weakly murmured or sometimes aspirated consonants. SAIE e.g. **bhai**, **ghee**.
- (th) and (dh) represent dental stops, somewhat similar to English *theme* and *thy* (IPA [t̪] and [d̪]). SAIE e.g. **thanni**, **ghanīa**. In a few instances they may represent [t̪ʰ] or [d̪ʰ], especially for some older speakers, e.g. **thēthar**, **dhār**.
- (j) represents the affricate in English *jet*, *gem*. IPA [dʒ]. SAIE e.g. **jaldhi**.
- (jh) represents a weakly murmured affricate, [dʒʰ], especially for some older speakers. SAIE e.g. **jhandā**.
- (ṭ) and (ḍ) represent either alveolar stops or weakly retroflexed stops. IPA [t̪] or [t̪] and [d̪] or [d̪]. The variation depends on the age of speaker, formality of discourse, etc. SAIE e.g. **tōpi**, **dōsé**.
- (ṭ) represents a weakly retroflexed stop, IPA [t̪]. Rarely needed to be marked for SAIE, since alveolar English ‘t’ and retroflex ‘t’ overlap.
- (ḍ) represents a weakly retroflexed stop. IPA [d̪]. SAIE e.g. **kaḍai**. Rare in SAIE.
- (ṭh) represents a weakly retroflexed, aspirated stop. IPA [t̪ʰ]. SAIE e.g. **jeth**. Rare in SAIE.
- (ḍh) represents a weakly murmured, weakly retroflexed stop. IPA [d̪ʰ]. SAIE e.g. **ḍholak**.
- (tt̪) (dd̪h), (cch) represent geminate (i.e. doubled) consonants, [tt̪], [dd̪], [tt̪ʃ] respectively. SAIE e.g. **pattha**, **gaddha**, **baccha**.

4. Words from Zulu and Afrikaans

Words from Zulu and Afrikaans are also given in phonetic spellings, according to their SAIE pronunciations, since these often differ significantly from the Zulu and Afrikaans originals. You will see the original words in the etymology given in square brackets at the end of entries.

5. Etymological spellings

Etymologies are given in the Roman script for Zulu, Afrikaans and English dialects. For Indian languages, which involve transliteration from several different scripts, the following spelling system, common in Western grammars of Indian languages, has been employed. Note that there are differences in the spelling system above and of the etymological transliterations for Indian languages regarding ‘t’, ‘th’, ‘d’, ‘dh’ as well as ‘c’ versus ‘ch’. (This is to ensure that the headwords meet the rough norms of English spelling, whereas the etymologies have to conform to the exact Indian language script in transliteration.)

Vowels

(a), (ā), (i), (ī), (u), (ū), (e), (ē), (ai), (o), (ō), (au), with phonetic values similar to those set out in (3) above.

Consonants

Stops, affricates and flaps

Uvular:	(q)							
Velar:	(k)	(kh)	(g)	(gh)	(ŋ)			
Palatal:	(c)	(ch)	(j)	(jh)	(ñ)			
Retroflex:	(ṭ)	(ṭh)	(ḍ)	(ḍh)	(ṇ)	(ṛ)	(ṛh)	(ḷ)
Alveolar:	(t)		(d)		(n)	(r)		
Dental:	(t)	(th)	(d)	(dh)	(n)			
Labial:	(p)	(ph)	(b)	(bh)	(m)			
Sonants:	(y)					(r)	(l)	(v)

Fricatives

Sibilants:	(ś)	(s)	(ṣ)		
Other:	(f)	(z)	(kḥ)	(g)	(h)

Note that in the Tamil transcription (p) (t) (k) may represent medial voiced stops [b], [d], [g] respectively, and that (c) represents [s], [tʃ] or [dʒ].

Introduction: South African Indian English, 1860–2010

Background

The English of South Africans of Indian descent (SAIE), spoken by a population of about one million, is one of the more interesting of the new varieties of English. It has evolved differently from the English of India (IE), from other varieties of English in SA (SAE), and British English (Br Eng), which remains the most influential of the international varieties, yet shares a considerable number of features with all three of these. In addition, it shares many features with second-language varieties of English worldwide, with regional dialects of English, and with English Creoles especially in places like the Caribbean.

The existence of this social dialect is a consequence of the indentured immigration scheme instituted by Britain, which brought 152 185 Indians to SA, mainly as cheap labour to the cane fields of Natal (now KZN) starting 150 years ago in 1860 and continuing until 1911. The most significant languages spoken by these indentured Indians were Bhojpuri, Awadhi and Urdu among North Indians, and Tamil, Telugu and Dakhini (or 'southern') Urdu among South Indians. From 1875 onwards there followed merchants mainly from Gujarat and Maharashtra, bringing with them Gujarati, Urdu, Meman and Konkani. Indian immigration was not just officially stopped but individuals were prevented by law from entering the country after 1911. Moreover, it was the hope of the ruling classes from this time up to the 1960s to repatriate all Indians, or at least as many as possible (U Mesthrie 1985). In the 1930s this was mitigated somewhat provided Indians showed a readiness to be westernised, including acquiring and displaying a knowledge of English. This makes the survival of Indian culture and languages for 150 years a remarkable achievement. Indian immigration remained forbidden until the post-apartheid openness of the 1990s (and slightly earlier in the former homelands like the Transkei, which welcomed Indian professionals, notably teachers from Kerala in the 1980s). In the current era Indian languages, including Malayalam, Bengali (mainly from Bangla Desh) and Panjabi, can again be heard on SA soil. The original Indian languages mentioned above brought in the nineteenth century still exist in SA today, albeit tenuously. As in former British colonies such as Trinidad and (British) Guyana, where similar Indian communities exist, a process of language shift in the direction of English is currently nearing completion (Mesthrie 1992b). English has taken over as the usual language of the home in varying degrees. A generation of children is growing up with little or no fluency in an Indian language, but with a variety of English that nevertheless owes a great deal to the substrate Indian languages in matters of accent, turns of phrase and — as this dictionary shows — vocabulary.

The genesis of SAIE lay in plantation barracks, elementary schools and the variety of English brought from India by a few individuals. Reports of the Protector of Indian Immigrants in the 1870s allude to the acquisition of the rudiments of English by a few plantation hands. But it is clear from the oral evidence that even up to the 1940s those children who did have the opportunity of brief elementary education entered the mission schools with a knowledge of

Fanagalo (a pidgin drawing upon Zulu, English and Afrikaans) and one or more Indian languages, but not English. Insofar as SAIE arose partly on the plantations of Natal under imperfect language learning conditions and with several input languages, it shows many features reminiscent of pidgins and Creoles. But as there are many speakers whose first contact with English occurred in an educational setting (albeit briefly and not very effectively), SAIE does not fully conform to the structures found in a pidgin–Creole cycle. SAIE today is a continuum of varying styles and repertoires. The range includes at one end a single-style variety characteristic of older and less-educated speakers, which shows the influence of Indian languages at all linguistic levels and which can be equated with the basilectal end of a Creole continuum. At the other end of the scale are younger speakers who are capable of switching between various styles of English: dialect, slang and standard. The dialect does not have ‘overt prestige’ (Labov 1966) in the sense that it is seldom used in formal and public situations, where speakers generally shift to more standard ways of speaking. But it does have ‘covert prestige’ in that speaking in a standard way in contexts defined as ‘community oriented’ is not judged favourably. Thus face-to-face, in-group communication with SAIE-speaking friends, appeals for help, courtship, private expressions of condolence and funeral speeches usually require shifts in the other direction — to an SAIE style. Continuity between the old languages and SAIE can therefore be seen at all linguistic levels. In public it is the SAIE accent which is its clearest marker; but in private situations or informal situations involving SAIE speakers mainly the lexical carry-over is immense.

SAIE provides a model for the second-language English of more and more Zulu speakers in parts of KZN, in the new multiracial classrooms and playgrounds as well as in work places and some residential areas. The influence of Zulu on SAIE vocabulary is recorded in this dictionary, especially if this influence is lacking in the English of the larger SA society (see e.g. *kan-kān*, *mavōndo*). The give-and-take between SAIE and the English of Zulu speakers in KZN in the new post-apartheid society would be an interesting area for future research.

Up until the 1990s SAIE was used mainly by scriptwriters of vibrant community-oriented plays. In the last two decades the dialect has made an equally significant appearance in memoirs, autobiographies, novels and short stories. Many of these make an appearance in this dictionary in the citations that illustrate the meanings of headwords. Newspapers aimed at an Indian readership, not surprisingly, use Standard English except for lexical items of a cultural nature. At the time when Indian languages were in wide currency in KZN (up to the 1970s), relatively few lexical items from them were used in English-medium newspapers and magazines. Now that these languages are in decline and the command of English is assured, journalists feel freer to intersperse advertisements and formal articles with words from Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati and so forth. And the genre of humorous writing in SAIE slang is on the increase.

Whose words, which words?

This work, consisting of about 1 800 items, has been compiled on the basis of informal usage mainly in KZN, where the bulk of Indian South Africans still reside, though their presence in other provinces is a growing one. Research was also undertaken in four other major cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port

Elizabeth and Kimberley. In these cities Indians are not the drivers of English dialect as they are in Durban. Therefore, while the other provinces have contributed some lexical items, it is the KZN form of Indian English that tends to predominate. This variety has in fact been growing in influence in Gauteng in the past two decades as young people have moved out in search of employment or better work prospects.

Items characteristic of SAE which are not of SAIE origin, are excluded from the main section to avoid duplication of the material readily available in dictionaries such as those of Jean Branford (4th ed. 1991) and Penny Silva (1996).

It was necessary to exclude not only items that are pan-SAE rather than specifically SAIE, but also items from Indian languages which are part of International English and not consequent on the Indian presence in South Africa. Thus items such as *khaki*, *bungalow*, *shampoo*, *bandanna* and *bangle*, testimony to British-Indian contacts in the days of Empire, are not recorded here because they pass as 'normal' English words to all speakers, their Indian origin often unknown. However, some duplication is necessary with words which, though they are to be found in the *OED*, are associated only with the Indian community within SA: *Diwali*, *thabla*, *betel-nut* and *pandal*. Such words are not fully understood by other South Africans, except those with close contacts with SAIE speakers. In a few cases, terms such as *ashram* and *sari* were included because, although internationally reasonably well known, they were not very familiar to South Africans outside of KZN and Gauteng.

Two major subdivisions are still possible in characterising the SAIE lexicon: one (A) comprises words used by most speakers in informal situations, irrespective of their ancestral language; the other (B) comprises items which are still restricted to some sub-groups of Indians (depending upon their ancestral language) and which are usually not intelligible to all SAIE speakers. Words such as *agarbathi* 'incense-stick', *mēthi* 'fenugreek', *thanni* (a popular card game) and *īsel* 'a winged termite' belong to the first category. These words are now pan-SAIE though originally from different source languages (the first two from Hindu and Urdu, the last two from Tamil and Telugu). Although many of the terms in category (B) are not intelligible to all SAIE speakers, they qualify as SAIE words because they often have no precise SAE equivalents and are employed as the normal SAE term by young and old alike within certain sub-groups. A woman from a Hindi-speaking background still requests of a shop assistant to see the *achra* of a sari (the part of a sari, including part of the border, which is draped over the shoulder), whereas another, from a Tamil-speaking background, asks to see the *mundhāni*. The shopkeeper knows both terms, even though she might use the term *pālav*, *pallu* or *chēdo* if she is of Gujarati-speaking background, as is often the case.

Similar principles operate over a vast repertoire of words, chiefly from the domestic sphere, covering the registers of cooking (vegetables, grains, seasoning, meals), kinship, religion, marriage, clothing, slang, and abuse. A few further examples might illustrate the reason why so many heteronyms (different words from different sources for the same concept) are listed in the dictionary. Most SAIE speakers differentiate between food that is 'spicy' or 'chilli-hot' as opposed to merely 'hot' (in terms of its temperature), and in the family domain use one of the following terms depending upon the ancestral language: *kāro* (Tamil), *kārum* (Telugu), *thittha* (Bhojpuri-Hindi), *thikku* (Gujarati) and *thikka* (Urdu). (Konkani has the related term *tikat* but this —

sadly for English lexicography — is not used as part of Cape Town English.) These terms rarely surface in more public situations, where the favoured terms are *pungent* (KZN), *strong* (Cape Town), *hot*, etc. (Pungent is an unfortunate term: I have seen rancid cheese and cow-dung referred to as ‘pungent’ in international usage, but this is apparently not the sense used in India or SAIE, where the colonial sense of the term seems to have been narrowed simply to mean ‘chilli-hot’.) Similarly, among vegetable terms there is a type of green lentil, sometimes glossed formally as ‘oil-dol’, which has the following linguistic variants: *thaurenka* (Tamil, Telugu), *rahari* (Bhojpuri-Hindi), *thubar* (Gujarati) and *arhar* (Urdu). In the Indian markets and shops of Durban these are simply called *lentils*. Once again the disparity between public and private speech keeps these heteronyms intact and separate. A few of my younger informants from a Tamil-speaking background in the late 1980s expressed surprise that *thaurenka* could be called anything but *thaurenka* in other homes.

The same parallelism and stasis applies to kinship terms, where it is not just disrespectful but unthinkable not to refer to one’s close uncles and aunts by the traditional term from one’s ancestral language.

This distinction between category (A) and (B) words was used as the primary division of the original *Lexicon* (Mesthrie 1992a). However, I have been persuaded by the arguments of reviewers of the *Lexicon* to abandon that organisational principle in favour of one alphabetical list. The present edition also differs in that it leaves out most matters pertaining to grammar, and assimilates the sections on proverbs and slang into the unified alphabetical list.

Religion may override the language family distinction, the chief determinants this time being Islam and Hinduism. Terms pertaining to Islam which are not always known to non-Islamic SAIE speakers include *sūfi* ‘a Muslim saint; mystic’, *salāth* ‘prayers’, and *fard* ‘that which is compulsory within Islamic tenets’. This part of the SAIE lexicon is not specific to the dialect, of course, but shared by other Islamic speakers of English in SA and beyond. On the other hand, a few Islamic terms, such as *namāz* ‘prayers’ and *nika* ‘wedding ceremony’, are known to almost all SAIE speakers. Hindu religious terms often have to be drawn from English because of the spectrum of languages involved (Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati). Where special terms exist (e.g. *murthi* ‘an idol, religious image’, *sāmi* ‘God, prayers’, *samagri* ‘scented substances poured into a fire as offerings’), they run the risk of not being understood by all Hindus. A few terms from Hinduism are again widely known: *pūja* ‘prayers’, *havan* ‘prayer during which symbolic offerings are made into a fire’, and *parsādh* ‘sweetmeats and fruit distributed after prayers’.

The likelihood is great that many of the heteronyms will become obsolete with the passing of the last generation of fluent bilinguals in English and an Indian language, with an accompanying weakening of sub-ethnic differences within the South African Indian community, and with increased acculturation to outside values. It would be no surprise if terms such as *supru* ‘winnowing basket’ (from Gujarati), *chūlha* ‘open fireplace’ (from Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati), *paiye* ‘a small pouch carried by older women’ (from Tamil) and kinship terms such as *nanadh* ‘husband’s sister’ (from Hindi), and *ghar-damād* ‘a male who resides at the home of his parents-in-law’ (from Hindi, Urdu), which are favoured by older speakers mainly, are eventually discarded from the SAIE lexicon. But this has not happened yet, 50 years after language shift started to set in at a slow pace.

SAIE and other SA Englishes

For all its specialist vocabulary SAIE, must be viewed in the context of the other Englishes of SA (Black English, Afrikaaner English, Coloured English, and White SAE characteristic of speakers of mainly British descent). The ethnic focus here is regrettable, but in terms of social dialectology hardly surprising, given the hardline segregationist policies in the country in the major part of the twentieth century. Currently there is greater interchange going on in the multiracial schools, where young people often derive great pleasure in learning from one another's informal phrases and traditional slang.

SAIE shares many lexical characteristics with other varieties of SAE, chiefly the adoption of words from other languages of SA, and semantic changes to existing English words. Thus words such as *robot*, *location*, *babelaas* and *braai* have the usual SA meanings in SAIE ('traffic lights', 'residential area for Blacks, Coloureds and Indians under apartheid', 'hangover' and 'barbecue' respectively). It would be strange if such meanings were not shared by the different varieties of SAE. However, the same is not true of words adopted from other languages of the country (i.e. Afrikaans and the African languages), for here many regionalisms exist, and only if a word is adopted by the media in either a serious or a facetious vein does it transcend its regional status. Items such as the following are shared by SAIE and the other SAE varieties: *dagga* 'mud, mortar', *donga* 'drain, ravine', *indaba* 'a protracted, important meeting' (from Zulu), *braaivleis* 'barbecue', *bobbejan* 'a large monkey wrench', *stoep* 'verandah' (from Afrikaans). A few terms from Zulu occur in rural SAIE and Black English of KZN, but not in other varieties: *tebe* 'arum lily leaves', *balettha* 'a method of carrying a child by strapping it on one's back', *kankān* 'an ibis bird'. Conversely, of the hundreds of informal Afrikaans loans given in the *Dictionary of South African English* (Branford 1991) many find no place in SAIE, except among those residing in areas where Afrikaans is a major influence. Thus words common in some parts of the country — *gogga* 'any small insect', *riempie* 'soft hide used as thongs', *pap-broek* 'coward', etc. — are unknown to most SAIE speakers of KZN. In this regard SAIE accords with other varieties of English in KZN which have developed with fewer influences from Afrikaans than SAE varieties elsewhere.

It is noteworthy that SAIE speakers do use an overwhelming number of Afrikaans words in their repertoire of slang. They do this for their novelty value as the language is seldom heard in most parts of KZN, often producing in the process interesting semantic shifts. Such slang is particularly widespread among Indian youths, and is often assumed to be characteristic of Indian English. However, they are not limited to this dialect and probably have their origins elsewhere, for example, in the speech of bilingual Coloured people of KZN, or of Tsotsitaal, a slang variety of the urban Black experience. A few examples of such slang items of SAIE include *dek* 'full, satisfied, fed-up', *lank* 'plenty of, lots', *skāpie* 'a fool', *skrāl* 'hungry', etc. SAIE's connection with other varieties is most keenly felt in such urban slang. Differences between SAIE and other varieties of SAE show up most in the cultural lexis pertaining to clothing, religion and culinary terms. At the same time many food terms have crossed over into general SAE, making this the area of greatest influence from SAIE.

SAIE and Indian English

Though some Indian plantation workers were reported by the Protector of Indians to be picking up some English as early as 1878, it is unlikely that SAIE existed as a social entity during the nineteenth century. The few Indians who had a command of English were the clerks and interpreters brought from India (whose competence was often called into question by court officials), and some Christian Indians. The acquisition of English was a slow process, operating partly on the plantations (although the pidgin, Fanagalo, served as an early lingua franca) and partly in the mission schools. This process was not fully effective in rural areas even into the 1940s. On the other hand, there were a few well-educated Indians who played a prominent role in public affairs in Natal, starting with Gandhi in 1893 and continuing into the twentieth century with the likes of Gokhale, Sastri and others. The first teachers of English in the Indian Immigration School Board, set up in 1878 and reaching a small number of pupils only, were non-native speakers of English of Indian descent from Mauritius, who themselves had but little education (Kannemeyer 1943, Kuppusami 1946). Though these varieties must have had some influence on the moulding of SAIE, in general SAIE and IE are distinct entities, the former being related to the latter, but not as a transplanted variety of it. Where similarities exist, they are only partly attributable to direct influence from IE; more often they are the result of convergent developments arising from their similar substrates. These claims can be substantiated with reference to phonology and syntax, but some lexical exemplification will suffice here.

- *Common terms adopted from Indian languages in IE but not SAIE:* The following terms (from Kachru 1983) are extremely common in IE but unknown to SAIE speakers, except those who have travelled in India: *lakh* 'a hundred thousand', *crore* 'ten million', *dacoit* 'bandit', *goonda* 'hooligan', *bandh* 'a strike' and *gherao* 'a demonstration, in which a figure of authority is prevented from leaving his desk'.
- *Neologisms from English or hybrid terms used in IE but not in SAIE:* The following terms, most of whose denotations are firmly rooted in the Indian subcontinent, would not be understood by SAIE speakers: *Eve-teasing* 'teasing of a young woman', *flower-bed* 'nuptial bed', *bintu* 'one who has been abroad', *rumble strips* 'a series of thin strips of raised tarmac acting as speed breaks' and *double roti* 'a loaf of bread'.
- *Terms from Indian languages adopted by IE and SAIE:* The following are examples of terms denoting basic cultural and culinary items which have been adopted independently from Indian languages by the two dialects but which are not part of 'mainstream' varieties of international English: *agarbathi* 'incense stick', *ilāchi* 'cardamom', *bhajan* 'devotional song', *kirtan* 'devotional song', *sarangi* 'a stringed musical instrument', *sindur* 'vermillion powder used to make a dot on the forehead', *banya* 'merchant', *yajna* 'prayer involving a pledge or sacrifice', *pūja* 'prayer', *haldhi* 'pre-nuptial ceremony', *idli* 'a type of rice cake', and *dōsa* 'thin pancake'.
- *Neologisms from English in IE and SAIE:* Most of the terms in this category do appear to be examples of the early IE models on SAIE: *cousin-brother* 'a male first cousin', *cousin-sister* 'a female first cousin', *oil-bath* 'a ritual bath in oil on a religious occasion', *drumstick tree* 'horseradish tree', *head-bath* 'a bath during which one washes one's hair', *tuition(s)* 'special classes for individuals

or groups outside school which one pays for', as well as some striking phrases such as *to eat someone's head* 'to pester someone'.

- *Words of Indian origin widespread in SAIE but not widespread in IE:* The following terms are either rare in IE or occur as regionalisms, but are extremely common in SAIE: *īsel* 'a winged termite', *dabla* (or *double beans*) 'lima beans', *dhania* 'coriander leaves', *mēthi* 'fenugreek', *thanni* 'a popular card game', *samūsa* 'a small pie with a vegetable or meat filling', *dhālpuri* 'a type of roti or puri stuffed with crushed yellow lentils', *chambu* 'a tin (sometimes brass) container' and *murku* 'a crunchy, spiral snack'. *Samūsa*, which is ubiquitous in SA, may be a surprising inclusion here, but in India has close rivals such as the *pakōra*, *ghugra* and so forth.
- *English neologisms widespread in SAIE but not in IE:* The particular meanings attached to the following SAIE items in informal speech and especially in the basilect are, to my knowledge, uncharacteristic of IE: *healthy* 'fat', *raw* 'uncouth, rude', *cheeky* 'stern, harsh', *running-stomach* 'diarrhoea', *independent* 'haughty, aloof', and the neologisms *cheek* (v.) 'to be obstinate, to speak impolitely', and *last-before-week* 'the week before last'. As to be expected, SAIE has in addition a host of items from Zulu, Afrikaans and other languages of SA which form part of the general SAE lexicon but which are unknown in IE.

SAIE and still other varieties of English

Former European colonies in Natal, Suriname (Dutch Guiana), British, Guyana, Trinidad, Mauritius and Fiji drew upon Indian indentured labour from the same regions (present-day Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in North India, present-day Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in South India). The trend in these countries has been the acquisition of the pidgin/Creole languages of the colony concerned, and the gradual obsolescence (or restriction to particular domains) of the Indian languages in favour of a shift towards the colonial language (French and English in Mauritius, Dutch and English in Suriname, English elsewhere). We can therefore at least expect many shared items of lexis in these areas, not all of which might be found in the English of India. A striking example is given by the Trinidadian novelist, Sam Selvon (1981:9), who writes of his vain attempts to find an Indian restaurant in London which had even heard of *dhālpuri*, a flat Indian equivalent of bread, stuffed with crushed yellow lentils. He would not have encountered this problem in the other ex-colonies. Comprehensive information on the Indian element in the English of these parts of the Commonwealth is not available to me, though the work of Kuntie Ramdat in Guyana (1976; 1984) suggests similarity between the informal English of people of Indian descent in Natal and Guyana in respect of the carry-over from Indian languages, especially Bhojpuri. Although comparative figures are not available, it is unlikely that the proportion of words from Dravidian sources is as great in the Caribbean world as in SAIE, owing to the comparatively large number of people of South Indian descent in the SAIE speech community.

A characterisation of the SAIE lexicon would be incomplete without a consideration of features it shares with English dialects worldwide and with English-based Creoles. There are some similarities with Scots, Irish and Northern English dialects. One salient example is the use of the sentence final (and less commonly phrase-final) *but*, as an emphatic equivalent of 'though' (as in *It's nice and quiet here, but*) or as a reinforcing tag, equivalent to 'isn't it/he/she' or 'truly, really?'. The construction is probably due to the influence of

these dialects on SAIE, even though the construction does not occur in other varieties of SAE. Dialectal influence cannot, however, be invoked with an item such as *y'all* as the normal second-person plural pronoun, and *yall's* as its genitive form. Similarities with dialects such as those of the American South must be due to independent convergent developments, with respect to a once irregular paradigm.

The basilectal end of the SAIE continuum shares many similarities with English-based Creoles and second-language varieties of English (or interlanguages), especially in showing words from English being harnessed to different semantic and grammatical functions. Thus *He only eats and stays* has its equivalent in more formal English 'He eats perpetually', and *She wacked him and left him* is equivalent to 'She beat him up thoroughly'. Two other creolisms, among many others, are the use of *side* as a locational adverbial, as in *She lives Tongaat-side*, and the use of phrases such as *Nice like that* for 'That's nice/that's a nice practice' showing the absence of the verb *to be* in certain contexts. These similarities with such far-flung varieties of English as the 'Singlish' of Singapore (Platt 1980) and Hawaiian English (Glissmeyer 1973) are not entirely fortuitous, being occasioned by the similar processes involved in second-language acquisition, language shift, as well as the part-plantation pedigree of SAIE.

Conclusion: SAIE 25 years on

It is perhaps worth reflecting on what changes have taken place in the last 25 years, since I first began collecting data on SAIE. With the collapse of apartheid and a desegregation of the schools (and, more importantly, schoolgrounds) SAIE exists in a much more fluid milieu today. The dialect has lost a few speakers who attended elite private schools in which the prestige norms of White SAE have tended to dominate and who have crossed over into the 'White' accent and vocabulary space. A few speakers have become fully bidialectal in this process. But for the most part SAIE has held its own, and in working-class areas (notably the very large townships of Phoenix and Chatsworth in Durban) has remained a vibrant idiom, showing little sign of dialect disloyalty and vocabulary loss. Another force has come from globalisation, which has introduced some accent influences from Hollywood sitcoms and slang from the world of rap and youth culture. But a counterforce exists in the influence of Bollywood and Indian globalisation, which have brought new restaurants and fashions to SA. New culinary terms such as *panīr* and *rogan josh* are now part of SAIE and SAE generally. For the lexicographer, there is a greater presence of SAIE in the newspapers aimed at an Indian readership, and a greater range of literary sources to draw from (to illustrate the spoken idiom that this dictionary concentrates on). The current 150 years' celebration of the Indian heritage in SA has also kept historical terms such as *girmīt*, *indenture* and *barracks* in the limelight. I hope that the present work has captured the dynamism of SAIE, its local and international contacts with other languages and dialects, and the soul of its everyday users.

References

See the Bibliography on page 256.



abāyah *n.*

Traditional Islamic cloak or loose-fitting dress worn by females, with a scarf. Formerly known as a *cloak* by SA Muslims, but now referred to by younger speakers by its Middle Eastern designation.

■ A black outer covering extending to the knees or below, which may be worn over one's work or leisure clothes during prayer or at religious occasions. Hence may be referred to as a **salāh** (q.v.) **top** or **salāth top**. Comes with a scarf. See **burqa**, **hijāb**. [Ar 'abā'ah]

ace out *adj./adv. Slang**

One one's own, alone, isolated. Same as **one out**. Cf. SAE *on one's ace*. [Probably based on Afrik *eie* 'alone']

Everyone went away for the weekend, with the dog too. I was ace out. – Durban resident, June 2001

achār *n.*

A spiced, hot pickle, usually of sliced green mango, which is first sun-dried, immersed in freshly prepared spices and vinegar and salt, and bottled in oil. Same as SAE **atjar**, from Afrikaans *atjaar*, from Malay, ultimately from Hindi Within SAIE of KZN, however, *pickle* is the more usual term. Also spelt **atchar**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *acār*, Te *acāru*]

In this deluxe edition we have omitted many of the variations of the classic achars given in earlier impressions. The reason is that novices in achar making found it difficult to choose between the variations. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 254

achra *n.*

Decorated part of a **sāri** (q.v.), usually the part of its border that is draped over the shoulder. Used mainly in Hindi homes. Same as **chēdo**, **mundhāni**, **pālav**. [Hn *ācal*]

a'clock *adv.* [ʌ'klok]

O'clock.

- *It's eight a'clock already.*

act *v. Basilectal*

To pretend, to put on an act, overplay one's part. Also IE and Singapore English.

- *Don't act. Leave her, she's acting.*

adhān *n.* – see **azān**

after *adv. Basilectal*

Later, later on, afterwards. Also New York English and some British varieties.

- *I'll tell you after.*

agaram-bagaram *n. Informal/humorous*

Nonsense, nonsensical item, disjointed events, noisy activity. Now rare. [Hn echo-word construction *agrām-bagrām* 'junk, a disorderly heap of scraps']

- *What's all this agaram-bagaram going on here?*

agarbathi *n.*

Thin, long incense stick producing fragrance when burned. Used in homes and especially at prayers by Hindus; also by Muslims at grave monuments. Also IE. Known in Standard English as *joss stick*. [Gu, Hn, Ur *agar-battī* from *agar* 'aloe wood' plus *battī* 'wick']

Strictly, *agar* is the aromatic resinous wood of a species of the aloe tree, but today the incense is usually from an added paste of charcoal impregnated with synthetic perfume. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 2

It is a beautiful smell, he always said to himself on the few occasions this luxury had been indulged in, for the real sandalpaste agarbhati, the incense sticks, were expensive and Velli always objected to paying good money for something that got burned in any case. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 173

āi *exclam. Informal*

'No!' Expression of fellow feeling in conversation, usually sympathy, surprise, disapproval or disbelief in support of what has been said before. Not related to British English *ay*. Same as SAE *haai*. See also **where**, **how**. [Zu *hayi*]

- *A: The guy took my watch and wallet. B: (sympathetically) Āi!*

āja *n.*

Paternal grandfather. Used mainly in Hindu homes. See also **dhāda**, **nāna**, **thātha**. [Gu, Bhoj *ājā*]

āji *n.*

Paternal grandmother. Used mainly in Hindu homes. See also **dhādi**, **nāni**, **pāti**. [Gu, Bhoj *ājī*]

ajmo *n.*

1. Seeds of bishop's weed (*Carum copticum*).
2. Spice made from seeds, used medicinally, especially for stomach ailments. Similar to *thymol*.

Used mainly in Gujarati homes. [Gu *ajamo*]

akhni *n.*

Meat cooked together with masala (q.v.) and rice, usually mixed in a pot and steamed. Similar to **biryāni** (q.v.) but a less elaborate preparation. See also **palao**. [Ur *akhni*]

Breyani with akhni served on Sundays – Cape Town advert, 2008

akka *n.*

1. (Mainly voc.) Elder sister.
2. Maternal uncle's wife. See also **bahini**, **bēn**, **chella**, **dhīdhī**, **thangechi**.
Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *akkā* (voc.), *akkal* (nom.), Te *akka*]
'You talk to your friend; show him the field. I'll go home and ask your *akka* to prepare a good supper.' – N Govender *Girrmī Tales*, 21

āks *v.* ['ɑ:ks] *Basilectal*

Ask. Cf. Old English *acsian*. Middle English *axian*, and Midland and Southern English *aks*. [Metathesis]

al *exclam.* [ʌ]/[æ]

1. An exclamation designed to evoke sympathy and cooperation, similar to 'please', 'alas', 'hey'.
 - *Al, man, do me a small favour!*
2. An exclamation indicating impatience. [Eng *hell*]
 - *Al, what's wrong with you!*

alāriṣu *n.*

Introductory part of a **Bharata-nāṭyam** (q.v.) dance performance, the classical dance form of South India. [Ta *allāriṣṣu*]

ālayam *n.* ['ɑ:lɛjəm]

Temple, building of temple, temple with hall. Same as **kōvil**, the more usual term.

- *Siva Alayam 'Temple of Shiva'*. [Ta *ālayam*]

alchy *n.* [ælkɪ:] *Informal*

An alcoholic. [Abbrev. of *alcoholic*]

- *He's been an alchy for as long as I've known him.*

alhamdulilla *exclam.*

A very common Islamic invocation 'Praise be to God, thank God' usually said in response to something positive said or done. [Ar *al-Ḥamdu li'llah*]

There was this wonderful news – awaited for many a long year – of the release of the detainees, and all I could murmur was Shukar Alhamdollillah, Shukar Alhamdollillah. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 282

all the time *conj.*

In the meantime, meantime, however, all the while, but.

- *I thought he was at school studying hard, all the time he was gone to the bioscope.*

Allah

1. *n.* The Islamic term for God. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. In *COD*.
2. *exclam.* 'By God', 'Oh my God!' Colloquial, not considered proper use of the term. [Ur, Ar *allah* from Ar root *al-Ilāh*]

4 alphabets

The name Allāh is for Muslims the supreme name. Allāh is the eternal and uncreated Creator of the universe and all mankind. – IR Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*, 30–1

alphabets *n.*

The alphabet; letters of the alphabet. Now rare. Also IE, Singapore English.

- *She learnt her alphabets at a young age.*

āmli *n.*

Tamarind, fruit of *Tamarindus indica*, whose acid pulp is used in making cooling medicinal drinks, and in some dishes. Mainly Gujarati homes. Same as **chinthapandu**, **imli**, **puli**. [Gu *amli*]

amma *n.*

Mother. Same as **ami**, **bā**, **mā**. [Ta, Ur *ammā*, Te *amma*]

‘Go to the bathroom, I’ll give you a wash.’

‘I can wash myself, Amma.’ – R Govender *At the Edge*, 100

ammadio/yammadio *exclam.*

A cry of pain, surprise or anguish, equivalent to ‘oh my mother’. Now rare. [Based on Ta *ammā* (q.v.) ‘mother’]

I put one shot ... Right on his jaw. He fell down and shouted, *Yamaadio!* – R Govender *At the Edge*, 49

‘Ayoh, yammadiyoh Bommie, I was so frightened and my heart was beating so fast I didn’t know what to do.’ – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 77

ammen *n.* – see **Mariammen**

ammi *n.*

An alternative for ‘mother’ among Urdu speakers. Same as **amma**, **bā**, **mā**. [Ur *ammī*]

an’ all *tag*

And others, and such, and so forth, et cetera. Does not have the overtones of disapproval or envy one finds in British English. See **y’all**.

■ Although particularly associated with Indian speech of KZN, the phrase does occur in other varieties of English in SA, Britain and elsewhere.

Fuel an’ all – Name of petrol station-cum-takeaway run by Indian family in southern KZN.

Welcome to Durban where Vodacom covers it all, an’ all – billboard at Durban Airport, 2006–7, to which there were objections from members of the Indian community, on the grounds that their speech was being stereotyped.

Tell me ... how you make your samoosas into such perfect equilateral triangles and all? My daughter, she only can do isosceles triangles and all. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 248

anār *n.*

Pomegranate, spherical fruit with tough golden-orange outer skin containing small red gelatinous pieces (*Punica granatum*). Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *anār*]

anné ['ʌnnɛ] *n.*

1. Elder brother. See also **anni**, **bhai**, **thambi**.
2. Sister's husband. Same as **banevi**, **bhanoi**.

Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *aṇṇā* (voc.), *aṇṇan* (nom.), Te *aṇṇa*]

anni *n.*

One's brother's wife, sister-in-law. Same as **bhābi**, **vadine**. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *aṇṇi*]

Andhra *n.*

A person from the province of Andhra Pradesh in South India, a Telugu-speaker or one of Telugu background, one whose family originated from the Telugu-speaking areas of India.

■ In the c19 the state now called Andhra Pradesh was distributed over three areas: the Madras Presidency, the Central Provinces and Hyderabad. [Te *andrā*]

Besides being influenced by a lack of academic study on the Telugu language and the Andhras in South Africa, the selection of the topic was also influenced by the Andhra background of the writer. – V Prabhakaran *Language Challenged*, 2

'The bio was packed and these five ous tried to push their way in . . .'

'Ous from our district?'

'Na, from Stella Hill.'

'Definitely must be Andhra ous.' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 48

āpa *n.*

A female teacher of Urdu in a **madressa** (q.v.). [Ur *āpā* 'woman' (respectful)]
Of course, the Apa throws in a bit of ... scorching fire but it does not seem to have scared her. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 94

The Aapa had prescribed some wholesome literature for us to busy ourselves with during the break. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 178

āpo *n.*

A type of pancake, wafer or round cake of rice flour and sugar fried in ghee. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. Known in Anglo-Indian speech as *Madras hoppers*. [Ta *appam*, Te *appamu*]

This spongy pancake [appam] is made from a batter of ground rice and urad dal. Though not strictly a bread, it is served with meals in south India and used to soak up gravies. – P Wickramasinghe *Food of India*, 217

Hopper [is] a colloquial term in S. India for cakes (usually of rice flour), somewhat resembling the wheaten chupatties of Upper India. It is the Tamil

appam [from *appu*, 'to clap with the hand'. In Bombay the form used is *ap*] – H Yule & A Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 425

Hoppers are made in what are known as 'hopper chatties' — shallow earthenware pans. The fuel is generally charcoal. – E Veerasawmy *Indian Cookery*, 163

appa *n.*

Father (Tamil homes). In Telugu this is a suffix for surnames – e.g. *Chinappa*. Same as **bāba**, **bāp**, **bāpuji**, **pappa**. See **naina**. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *appan*, *appu*]

'Yes, appa,' I answered, 'but we did nothing wrong.' – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 135

appendix *n.*

Appendicitis. See **heart**, **pressure**, **sugar**. [Abbrev.]

- *He's got appendix and must go to the hospital.*

Applesammy and Naidoo *n. phr.*

Radio programme of 1940s and '50s parodying Indian life and language in Durban.

■ *Applesammy* is a South African version of the name *Appasamy* (see **appa**). *Naidoo* is a frequently occurring surname in Durban. The programme, written by Ray Rich and performed with Dusty Cracknell, typically involved misadventures of two urban Indians. See also **Bāla and Peru**, **Radio Chār-Ou**.

Arab *n. Historical*

An erroneous term, of colonial Natal, for a Muslim Indian, usually of merchant background. Now rare and considered derogatory. In previous times it drew a distinction between Muslims of the trading class and indentured workers. See **banya**, **passenger Indian**.

The merchants were known as 'coolie merchants' ... The Musalman merchant would resent this and say: 'I am not a coolie, I am an Arab,' or 'I am a merchant' and the Englishman, if courteous would apologise to him. – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 100

The 'Arab' traders ... came from the western parts of India, others came from Mauritius. They were called 'Arabs' because they wore 'kurta' and 'izaar', and probably also a 'Turkee topee' as did the inhabitants of the middle eastern world at the time. – S Bhana & J Brain *Setting Down Roots*, 65

aradh *n.*

1. Piece of yellow root of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*).
2. Crushed powder obtained from the turmeric root, used as a condiment in curries, and as a dye or stimulant. Same as **haldi**, **hardhi**, **manja** (q.v.) and as Cape Malay **borrie**. Also spelt **arad**. [Gu *harḍar*]

ārangetram *n.* [a:rəŋ'getrəm]

Graduation ceremony for classical dancers involving their first public performance as graduates, after a long period of training. Same as **rang**

pravesh. See **bharata natyam.**

■ Many successful Indian dance schools operate in SA in which young persons, mostly females, are trained in Indian arts and culture, with a main focus on classical dancing.

Congratulations on your Arangetram – greeting card

arené *n.* ['ʌrənɛ]

A small house-lizard, a skink, a gecko. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *araṇai*]

arepu *n.*

Open fireplace for cooking. Now rare. Same as **chūlha**, **down fire**. See **fire food**. [Ta *aḍappu* 'fire']

ārg *v.* ['ɑ:g]

Argue. Also British English slang from early c20 – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* Not necessarily slang in SAIE. [Abbrev.]

• *Don't waste your time arguing with him.*

arkān *n.* – see **salāt**

arré *exclam.*

'Good Lord!', 'My, my', etc. Combines with terms for 'God' or 'father' with the same effect. Hence **Arre Rāma** (q.v.); **Arre bāp**; **Arre bāba**. See also **bāp-re-bāp**. Spellings: **ade**, **adda**, **addah**, **ahre**, **arreh**. [Hn, Ur *are*, Te *arē*, related to *hare* 'God, deity']

Arre, what am I thinking of on a good night like this! *Ram, Ram.* – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 65

Addah, man, what you talking? What's in a name? – D Govender *Finishing Touch*, 100

ārthi *n.*

1. Ceremony performed in adoration of a deity, by circular movement of a lighted lamp on a brass dish around a representation of the deity. Also performed in honour of special persons, guests, etc. in their presence.
2. Title of a Hindi hymn of praise sung on such occasions, beginning with the line *Om jay Jagdish hare*. Mainly in Gujarati and Hindi homes. [Hn *ārtī*, SA Ta *ārati*, Te *haratī*]

Daily Aarti at the Vishnu Mandir at 7 pm – pamphlet *Shree Vishnu Mandir*, Cape Town, March 2010

Haarathi is an offering of respect, welcome or worship to an exalted person ... In full haarathi, incense, a ghee lamp, a conch shell with water, a cloth, flowers, a *peacock* fan and a whisk are waved before the deity. – V Latchanna *Telugu Companion*, 51

Arya Samāj *n.*

A religious order initiated by Swami Dayanand in India in c19. Considered a reform sect of older forms of Hinduism. See **Aryan Benevolent Home**, **Sai Bāba**, **Sanāthan**.

8 *Aryan Benevolent Home*

■: Among North Indians this is one of the major branches of Hinduism in SA. [Hn *aryā* ‘noble’, *samāj* ‘society, social order’]

Arya Samaj devotees, in contrast to most Hindus, do not operate with any visible images or pictorial representations of the Divine. However, the well known AUM (OM) symbol ... adorns Arya Samaj places of worship. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 3

Aryan Benevolent Home *n.*

Home for elderly Indians in Durban. See **Arya Samāj**.

■ *Aryan* was originally a Sanskrit term meaning ‘noble, of noble stock’. The term was appropriated and misused by Adolf Hitler to refer to a putative pure North European race. [Hn *aryā* ‘noble’]

The Aryan Benevolent Home founded by the Arya Yuvuk Sabha in 1921, provides support and companionship for destitute young and old. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 105

ashram *n.*

A place of religious retreat, place where Hindus gather for meditation, prayer and renunciation. In *COD*. [Skt *āśrama*, Hn *āśram*]

The Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa was founded in Durban in 1946 by Mr D Naidoo ... After Mr Naidoo took monastic vows in India he returned in 1953 as Swami Nischalananda ... This ashram was opened in 1959. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 69

Asian *n.* – see **Asiatic**

Asiatic *n.* *Historical, sometimes derogatory*

Used to refer either to South Africans of Asian origins, most often Indians and Chinese people. Hence **Asiatic bazaar** (see **Coolie Location**), **Asiatic store**, etc. See **Arab**, **chār-ou**, **coolie**.

■ In SA the term **Asian** is not as widespread as it is in places such as the UK when referring to people from India and neighbouring South Asian countries.

‘Asiatic’ means any member of a race or tribe whose national home is in Asia, other than a Turk, or a member of the Jewish or Syrian race or a person belonging to the race or class known as the Cape Malays. – *Asiatic Laws Amendment Act*, Act 47 of 1948, 390

The amended racial definitions are as follows: ... Asiatics – natives of Asia and their descendants, mainly Indian and Pakistani, with a few thousand Chinese.– *1956 Official Yearbook of the Union No. 28*, 679

After the South African War, Indians [in Pretoria], with the exception of those of ‘known respectability’, were moved to the **Asiatic Bazaar** with the approval of the Military Governor and the British High Commissioner. – S Bhana & J Brain *Setting Down Roots*, 86

athan *n.*

Paternal aunt’s husband. Rare. Older speakers. See also **fua**, **māman**, **phuppa**. [Ta *attan*]

atthē/attha *n.*

Father's younger sister, mother-in-law. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. See also **periatthe**, **phūa**, **phuppi**, **foi**. Now rare. [Ta *attai*, Te *atta*]

My mom's brother (my *mama*), another man, had to bring his wife (my *ather*) and kids to come to visit me, and she had to prepare special food for me. – N Govender *Coming-of-age Ceremony*, 24

aunty *n.*

1. (As voc.) A respectful term for an older woman, usually not a close relative (for whom a term from an Indian language is often used). Also IE, SAE and other varieties. See **uncle**.
2. (As a referential term) A respectful term for an older woman or for a relative. Also SAE, IE and other varieties.
3. (Jocular or pejorative) A girl who looks or behaves in a manner older than she really is.

- *Where's aunty?*

- *She dresses like an aunty.*

There was Rokkaya Aunty whose home was filled with Urdu and Gujarati publications. In between housework, looking after her family and helping out in the shop in her spare time, she composed poems in Gujarati and Urdu. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 189

Hey Mani, why you speaking 'bout the teacher-aunty like that? – K Govender *Stablexpense*, 254

bag-aunty *n.* – see **bag lady**

nuts-aunty *n.*

Term of respect for a woman who sells nuts or peanuts.

■ Usually used by children at school for a woman who sells salted and/or spiced fried nuts cheaply in small, cone-shaped packets made from newspaper. Similarly **nuts-lady**. The principle of using a term of respect for a seller may be generalised to other products: **chips-aunty**, **murku** (q.v.) **-aunty**, etc. but the *nuts-uncles* and *-aunties* have special status for children.

shop-aunty *n.* *Basilectal*

A respectful term for a female shopkeeper. See **babbie**.

We didn't know that the aunty from the shop was listening to what we were saying. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

suitcase-aunty *n.*

A woman who sells clothing, jewellery, and other items purchased in India, usually on a private rather than a licensed business trip.

■ The term refers to her position as an itinerant salesperson heavily reliant on a suitcase.

avekote pear *n.* ['ævəkotɛ pe:] *Basilectal*

Avocado pear. Pronounced as if one word. Possibly influenced by Tamil *koṭai* 'seed'.

avva *n.*

Granny (maternal or paternal). Used mainly in Telugu homes. Same as *āya*. [Te *avva*]

away *adv.*

Used to denote intensity or inceptive action.

- *She slept away* = ‘She fell into a sound sleep’; *They came ’way/came away* = ‘They’ve arrived/They’ve come over.’

āya *n.*

1. Granny (paternal or maternal). Mainly Tamil homes.
2. A term of respect for an old woman. Same as **āva**.
3. A children’s nurse, wet nurse. Also IE. Also in SAE via Malay. See also **āji**, **dhādhi**, **nāni**. Also spelt **ayah**. [Ta *āya*, *āyi*, Te *avā*]

Come, my child, come. Since you have become a successful business woman, you have very little time for your *Ayah* now. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 32

Not all [passengers on the *Truro*] were agricultural workers. There were carpenters, barbers, and accountants among the men, and *Ayahs*, nurses, and maids among the women. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 69

ayurvedic *adj.*

Pertaining to the traditional Indian medicinal system set out in the *Ayurvedas*, the traditional medical treatise of ancient India. Hence **ayurvedic medicine**, **ayurvedic practitioner**. In *COD*.

■ There are some ayurvedic practitioners who are also fully trained doctors. [Hn *āyurvedik*, based on *āyur* ‘life, vital force’ plus *veda* ‘knowledge’]

There is no single text, the *Ayurveda*, but instructions for medical and surgical practice are to be found scattered throughout the sacred books; these were later extracted and compiled under the name *Ayurveda*. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 10

Several thousand years ago when the Indian herbal system of medicine, *Ayurveda*, was already developed, sages would go deeper into the forests looking for newer and more effective remedies. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 118

ayyo *exclam.*

‘Good Lord’, ‘My, my’, etc.; exclamation of continuous pain, pity, sorrow, disgust, outrage, shock or sympathy. Combines with terms for ‘God’ with the same effect, hence **ayyo kadabale** (sometimes anglicised and abbreviated to **ayyo kads**), **ayyo Rama**, **ayyo Pāvi** (for the goddess, *Parvathi*), **ayyo sāmi** (see **sāmi**). See **arre**, **ayoyo**, **ammadio**. Spellings: **ayo**, **aiyo**, **ayoh**, **ayyoh**; also spelt and pronounced **ōyo**. [Ta *aiyō*, Te *ayyō*]

Ayo swami! I made so many sacrifices. Why this must happen to Nadia? – N Naidoo *Nadia*, 313

ayyoyo *exclam.*

An emphatic form of **ayyo**. [Ta, Te *ayyayyō*, emphatic form of *ayyo*]

‘Oh my God, my God, ayoyoyoh,’ he cried wordlessly to himself, unconsciously imitating his grandmother in moments of emotional stress. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 255

azān *n.*

A call to Muslims for daily prayer by the **muazzin** (q.v.) in a mosque, with the opening words *Allahu-Akbar* 'Allah is most great'. Same as **adhān**. [Ur *azān*]

This is made five times a day to the Muslim faithful by the *Mu'adhdhin*. The call consists of seven main parts, with some slight variation in the number of repetitions of each part ... There are also slight differences between the calls to prayer of the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. The *adhan* may be chanted to many different tunes and considerable variations will be heard from city to city and country to country. – IR Netton *A Popular Dict of Islam*, 20



ba *exclam.*

An expression of dismay, distaste or embarrassment. Also spelt **bah**. [Probably from Eng *bah*]

But to tell the truth, I don't mind not having children, bah! – K Govender *Women in Brown*, 294

bā *n.*

Mother. May also be used by children to refer to a grandmother. Mainly Gujarati homes. Same as **ami**, **amma**, **mā**. [Gu *bā*]

I have to go now, ba. And don't worry if I'm late. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 332

bāba *n.*

1. *n.* (Voc.) Father.
 2. *n.* (Respectful) Old man; grandfather. Hence used as a title. See **Sai Bāba**.
 3. *exclam.* 'By God'. See **appa**, **bāp**, **bāpuji**, **pappa**.
- Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn, Ur *bābā* from Turkish]

babbie *n.* [bæbi:] or [bʌbi] *Regional*

Term used in Cape Town by outsiders for an Indian shopkeeper. Can be used with offensive intent, but may also be a neutral term. See also **mochie**. [The most likely etymology is from Hn, Gu, Ko *bhābi* 'respectful term for sister-in-law or other female' – i.e. the term by which a female shopkeeper or the wife of a male shopkeeper is addressed. The male is referred to as *bhai* 'brother'. A less likely etymology, though one that fits better in terms of gender, is that of Hn *babu* 'clerk', used pejoratively in Br Eng. In Malaysia the same term *babu* means 'salesman', which might relate to Cape usage.]

- *A: We're lost! B: Let's go ask the babbie where to go.*

babbie-shop *n.*

Term used in Cape Town for a corner shop run by Indians, or less commonly for any other small business. Sometimes pejorative.

Indian businessmen in Cape Town are up in arms over statements made last week. In his interview X used the term 'babbie shop' which is regarded by Indian people in the same manner as Coloured people regard the term 'hotonot' – *Sunday Times*, 21 November 1976, cited in J Branford *Dict of SAE*

bābi *n.* Slang**

A hangover. Abbrev. of SAE *babalaas*. [Zu *ibabalazi*]

- *He's got a king-sized bābi.*

baccha *n.* [bʌtʃɑ:] *Baby talk*

A term of endearment for a child, usually in the phrase 'my baccha'. Mainly Hindi and Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *baccā*]

- *My baccha, this.*

back-answer *v.* *Basilectal*

To answer back, to retort. Also IE and some varieties of British English.

- *He was only back-answering me all the time.*

back-sari *n.*

A sari draped in such a way that the decorative section falls over the shoulder across one's upper back.

■ Traditionally Tamil women wore a back-sari over the left shoulder, while Telugu women wore it over the right. Hindi and Gujarati wore a **front-sari** (q.v.). This symbolism has largely fallen away. See **achra**, **front-sari**, **mundhāni**, **pālav**.

- *She was wearing a back-sari after a long time.*

baddha/bhadda *n.*

A fool, an incompetent, ungainly or clumsy person. [Hn, Ur *bhadda*]

- *Don't ask him to help – he's just a baddha.*

badhām *n.*

Almond.

■ Flakes of almond are used in confectionery such as **halva** (q.v.); crushed almond is used in a health drink for mothers in confinement; while whole almonds are believed to be good for the brain. Almonds are not usually used in SA Indian cooking, except in more recent influences from Mughal-style dishes or Kashmiri dishes. [Hn, Ur *badām*, Te *badam*]

Indian heroines in classical literature and mythology are described as having dark, almond-shaped eyes epitomising beauty and allure. Even in a pack of playing cards, the heart suit is referred to as *badam* or almond in many Indian languages ... The Mughals ... introduced the almond to Indian cookery and encouraged the use of the almond motif in textiles. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 146

During convalescence and to help students through periods of intense studies, special foods are served. The almond (*badham*) has traditionally been considered to top the list of nutritious foods. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 304

bāf *n.* ['bɑ:f]

Bath tub, usually a small portable one, common in former times. Also Cockney and Fanagalo.

bagaru *n.* ['bʌgəru:].

Salty residue or sediment left after **ghee** (q.v.) has been heated for use in cooking. Usually thrown away. Now rare. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *bagarū*]

bagīt *n.* ['bʌgi:t]. *Basilectal*

Bucket.

bag-aunty *n.* – see **bag-lady**

bag-lady *n.*

A midwife, so called because in previous times she carried her medicines and utensils to the house of a pregnant woman in a large bag. Alternative terms: **bag-nurse**, **bag-aunty**. Cf. **suitcase-aunty**. Still known in KZN, though rare. See **bag-man**.

Thylamah Pillay who is 96 years of age is an ex-Magazine Barracks resident. She registered as a bag nurse in the 1940s and served the area of Old Dutch Road, Berea Road and Warwick Avenue. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 132

bag-man *n.*

A travelling salesman, usually one who sells clothing, towels and bedding in rural areas. So called because of the large suitcase in which he carried his wares. Older speakers. Used in British English in c18 and c19. Pejorative in British English c19. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* See **bag-lady**.

bag-nurse *n.* – see **bag-lady**

bahini *n.*

1. (Usually voc.) Sister.
2. A term of respect for any female relative, usually older than oneself. Older speakers. See **akka**, **bāna**, **bēn**, **chella**, **thangechi**.

Mainly Hindi and Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *bahin*, Bhoj *bahinī*]

baingan *n.*

Brinjal, egg plant, aubergine. Now rare, the usual term being **branjal** (q.v.). Same as **kathrika**, **vegan**. [Hn, Ur *bāigan*]

bak/baks/buck *Slang**

1. *n.* Cheek, insolence, uncooperative or antisocial behaviour. Hence **lank baks** 'a lot of cheek'.
2. *v.* To **bak/buck**. To be insolent.

[Hn, Gu *bak* v. 'to chatter, jabber'; *bak* n. 'chattering, jabbering']

bak-bak *n.*

Noisy chatter; idle talk; back-talk. [Hn, Gu *bak-bak* n. 'chattering, jabbering']

- *Enough of that bak-bak.*

bucky/bakky *adj.*

Insolent, uncooperative, full of cheek, indulging in back-talk. See **back-answer**. [Hn, Gu *bak* n. ‘chattering, jabbering’]

- *Don't get bucky with me.*

Bakrīd/Baqr Eid *n.*

Islamic festival of sacrifice commemorating the prophets Ibrāhīm and Ishmael, celebrated in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. [Ur *baqarīd*]

I am writing this letter the day after Bakri Eid. We didn't have our usual Eid celebrations; we were taken on a little trip to see Nelson. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 269

Bāla and Peru *n. phr.*

Title of a popular comedy skit on **Radio Lotus** (q.v.) since the late 1990s in which two characters discuss domestic and other local events in broad SAIE dialect.

■ Roles played by Ray Maharaj and Vikash Mathura. See **Applesammy and Naidoo**.

For the reception, Maharaj and long-time friend and colleague, and the other half of their popular Bala and Peru comedy act, Vikash Mathura, entertained guests with their madcap on-stage antics. – C Soobramoney *Post*, 7 April 2010

balēṭha/belēṭha *n.*

The practice of strapping a child on one's back leaving one's arms free to continue working; the act of carrying a child on one's back unstrapped. Cf. English *piggy-back*, Afrikaans *abba*. [Zu *ukubeletha*]

balēṭha ride *n.*

The act of carrying a child on one's back as entertainment rather than out of necessity.

- *Let me give you a baletha ride.*

ball *v.*

To penalise an opponent in the card game **thanni** (q.v.) by adding points to one's own score. [Etymology uncertain, possibly Eng *ball*]

- *I'll ball you.*

ball-cards *n.*

Cards used to keep score in the card game **thanni** (q.v.).

four-ball *exclam.*

A call in **thanni** (q.v.) denoting the intention to penalise one's opponents, by adding four points to one's score.

After terms spent learning the art of not being four-balled – a thunnee expression that is bellowed out when a person is caught cheating and that never fails to have me in stitches – the person in charge would then yank their sorry arse out of university and park it firmly in the family business. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 138

balli *n.* ['bʌlli] *Slang**

Father, an old man. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. Also spelt **ballie**. [Probably Hn *bālig* adj. 'adult', *balī* 'strong, powerful', or *valī* 'guardian, master']

Well, there were a few other people ... a teenager with her parents and some old ballies. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 98

Just then our ballie ... and his bra, Sunny, pulled into the shop. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

balti *n.*

Style of cooking from the Baltistan region of Pakistan and India, using a *balti* or **kadai** (q.v.), a circular, deep two-handled pan, sometimes called an Indian or Pakistani wok.

■ Balti meals became very popular in Britain from the 1970s out of Kashmiri and Pakistani influence. The style of cooking is now known in SA, but is not as popular. See **kadai**. [From place name *Baltistan*, reinforced by *balti* 'bucket, pan']

bāna *n.*

1. (Usually voc.) Sister.

2. A term of respect for any female relative or other female, usually older than oneself. Older speakers, usually in Kokani homes in the Cape. See **akka**, **bahini**, **bēn**, **bāna**, **chella**, **thangechi**. [Ko *bānā*]

banana-pūri *n.*

A sweet, flaky, banana-shaped pastry made of the same dough as a **pūri** (q.v.). [*banana* plus Gu, Hn, Ur *pūrī*]

Banana puri may be frozen after Swiss rolling. Cut in 2.5 cm wide slices, flatten tops slightly to give you the length and thickness you want; then put in a plastic container, lining the layers with plastic sheets. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 351

banana-run *n.* *Rural*

An enclosure or shed in which green bananas (and other fruit) are artificially ripened by smoke in a rough underground cellar. Now rare. See also **false ripe**, **forced ripe**. [On analogy of Eng *fowl-run*]

Banaras/Banaras sari *n.*

1. A silk sari made in Benares (now Varanasi), characteristically thick in texture with a large, decorated border, worn on special occasions, usually weddings.

2. Bridal silk saris in general. See **Kanjivaram**, **Kashmiri**, **Mysuri**. [From place name *Banaras/Benares*]

banevi *n.*

One's sister's husband. Rare. See also **anne**, **bāna**, **bhanoi**. [Gu *banevī*]

bang *adj.* [bʌŋg] *Slang***

Frightened, afraid. Less common than **skrik** (q.v.). Also SAE slang. [Afrik *bang*]

- *Ey, what you're bang for?*

bāngi saheb *n.*

Muslim crier who proclaims the hours of daily prayers from a minaret. More commonly used in SAIE than **muazzin** (q.v.). See **azān**. [Ur *bāngī sāhab* from *bāng* 'call to prayer' from Persian plus *sāhab* 'gentleman']

bangy *n.* – see **bhānga****bansēla** *n.*

A small extra, usually of inexpensive sweets, given to a customer by a shopkeeper as a gesture of goodwill and recognition of custom. Same as SAE *bonsella*. [Zu *ukubansela* v. 'to express thanks in tangible form, give a small present to', *umbanselo* n. 'small gift', both based on verb root *ukubansa* 'be additional, be added above the usual']

Instruct one of the inmates to catch us some fish. They know how to do so for a bansela, though they never do so on their own account. – ARR Turnbull *Tales from Natal*, 1901, cited by P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*.

The Indians make small presents to all their customers – transl. of example sentence for *bansela*, CM Doke & BW Vilakazi *Zulu-English Dict*

banya *n.*

1. A Gujarati-speaking Indian. See **vānia**.
2. A merchant, shopkeeper. Sometimes pejorative or jocular, suggesting the quality of putting business before friendship. See **Arab**, **bunny-chow**, **banyan**, **passenger Indian**, **vānia**. [Hn, Ur *baniyā* 'a trading caste']

The term is of no great age, possibly all-India acceptance of the Gujarati *vania* (merchant) with the *v* or *w* sound changed to *b* by Europeans and the tongues of eastern India. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 15

While both families were of the bania (trader) caste, the Gandhis were of a sub-caste known as modh banyas – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 183

'That'll be the day,' Siga scoffed. 'A bunya never gives anything for free.' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 140

banyan *n.* *Historical*

An erroneous form for **banya** (q.v.) found in early documents and newspapers. Widely used in East Africa in the c19. In *COD*. First recorded in English in the c16. [Hn, Ur *baniyā* 'a trading caste']

The Hindu Baniyā who typified this group [... of petty shopkeepers, traders and money lenders ...] were known in 19th c East Africa as banyans. – R Gregory *India & East Africa*, 1971, 19

In the 17th and 18th c, the factories of the East India Company employed banyans – as they were called – for their intimate knowledge of local mercantile conditions and usefulness as commodity brokers or agents. The

practice continued in the c19 in foreign-owned firms, where the banyan often carried greater responsibility in the manner of the comprador of the Far East. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 15

bāp/bāpu *n.*

1. Father.
2. A term of affection and respect for an elderly man, the most famous being Mahatma Gandhi, known as **Bāpu** to his associates. Mainly Gujarati and Hindi homes. Same as **appa**, **bāba**, **bāpuji**, **pappa**. [Gu, Hn *bāp*, *bāpū*]

Bapu would listen and burst out in his usual hearty laughter: ‘Well children,’ he would say, ‘are you listening to what Manilal is saying?’ – L Fischer *Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, 265

As Manilal approached his seventeenth year ... he was full of questions: What class must I tell people I am in? ... Gandhi had answers to all the boy’s queries: ‘You are in Bapu’s class,’ he was told. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi’s Prisoner*, 75

Bāpuji *n.*

1. (Voc.) Father.
2. A term of respect for Gandhi, as ‘Father of the Indian nation’. See **-jī**, **appa**, **bāp re bāp**, **Gandhi Walk**, **pappa**. [*bāpū* plus Gu, Hn, Ur *-jī*, a suffix of respect]

bāp re bāp *exclam.*

Exclamation of astonishment, wonder or fear, similar to ‘Oh, my word’. Jocular when used by younger speakers. Rare. Known in Anglo-Indian English as *bobbery bob*. [Hn *bāp re bāp* ‘father, oh father’]

- A: *Vinay got 99% for his Physics exam.* B: *Bāp-re-bāp!*

barfi *n.*

A sweet rectangular milk-fudge, often spiced with slivers of **ilachi** (q.v.). Spellings: **burfee**, **burfi**, **barfee**, etc. [Gu, Hn, Ur *barfi* from Persian *barfi* ‘ice, snow’]

A North Indian delicacy, barfi ... reigns supreme on the list of sweetmeats, especially when decorated with pure silver edible paper. Burfi is a thick layer of reduced milk blended with almonds, clarified butter and syrup. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 124

When offered a square of bharfee or a laddoo, for instance, his whole face would light up! He’d smile a little, frown, hold up the sweetmeat to himself in his large hand, smile again, break off a small piece with thumb and forefinger. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 103

barishap *n.*

Fennel, usually fennel seeds, less commonly the leaves, which may be known as barishap leaf. The term has passed into Cape Malay usage. Same as **sauf**. [Ko *barishap*]

Ingredients for Dried Prawns with Potato: ... 1 tsp chilli powder; 1 tsp turmeric, Pinch of barishap, ¼ tsp fine koljana powder. – N Parker *Kokni Delights Cookbook*, 14

barracks *n.*

Long building used to house workers and their families, line of houses in plantation or urban area in which families of indentured workers lived, cluster of such lines forming a community. Also called **line(s)** (q.v.) or **line houses**. Cf. Trinidad and Fiji English *coolie lines* and Caribbean English *logies*.

■ In Britain such lines of houses are referred to as *terraces* or *terraced housing*, though these are by no means as overcrowded as the former barracks of KZN in which one family per tiny room was often the norm. Some famous large barracks or clusters of barracks in Durban, now defunct, were: **Corporation Barracks** (also known as **Magazine Barracks** because it was originally a store for ammunitions in the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902), **Railway Barracks**, **Point Barracks**, **Bombay Square barracks**, etc. Still in existence on the plantations of the South Coast of KZN are **Sezela barracks**, **Illovo Barracks**, **Esperanza Barracks**, etc. See **compound**, **kotri**. [Eng *barracks* ‘large building or set of buildings for housing soldiers’]

The ‘coolie barracks’ at Addington was not ready so they were placed in temporary barracks on the Bluff, not the ideal start after their long and difficult journey. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 68

The barracks next to the Durban Corporation stable was called Stable Barracks. The buildings where magazine powder was stored were given to the Municipal employees as accommodation in 1887. This was called Magazine Barracks. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 11

For instance, there was Soobramoney Pillay, born at Renishaw in 1909 and a resident until his death in 1990 ... On marrying, couples like the Pillays had a choice of housing: a single room in cramped wood-and-iron ‘barracks’, liable to be hot in summer and cold in winter, or a better-ventilated, four-cornered thatched hut consisting of a wattle frame daubed with mud. – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 127

Railway barracks was closely linked to Magazine Barracks through marriage – grooms from Magazine Barracks took brides from Railway Barracks and vice versa. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 146

barracks people *n. phr. Derogatory*

People born in barracks, people living on plantations, people of lower-economic rural strata. See **kotri**.

baryāt *n.*

Bridegroom’s marriage procession, procession of friends and relatives from bridegroom’s house to the bride’s house or hall where a wedding is to be held. Same as **jān**. See also **boy’s side**. Mainly Hindi and Urdu homes. [Hn *barāt*, Bhoj *baryāt*, based on *bar* ‘bridegroom’]

bāsmathi rice *n.*

Long-grained, high-quality Indian rice, relatively sweet smelling, and soft when boiled.

■ Until recently, connected with Indian cooking. Now internationally branded via the US. [Gu, Hn, Ur *bāsmati*]

The grains of basmati rice are white, long and very silky to touch ... Basmati rice grows in the foothills of the Himalayas and some parts of north India. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 180

There is no substitute for basmati rice. Although it is generally available from most Indian specialty stores, should it be unavailable, any other long grain rice may be used, but it must be remembered that the rice will look, taste and smell quite different. – R Makan SA *Indian Cookbook*, 59

batāta-vada *n.*

A **bhajia** or **wada** (q.v.) with a soft potato centre, best eaten while hot. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *batāto* ‘potato’ via Ptg, plus *vada* ‘snack’]

bath *v.*

To bathe (intrans./trans.). Also colloq. British English.

body-bath: A bath during which one does not wash one’s hair. Also IE.

head-bath: A bath during which one washes one’s hair. Also IE.

batrik *n.* [ˈbætrɪk] *Basilectal*

Battery. Now rare. Older speakers.

battle *v.* *Basilectal*

To struggle, especially financially. Also Scots and SAE.

We can’t go and stay with them in the holidays; they are battling too. – Sezela resident, July 1998

battler *n.*

Term used by market gardeners for those who buy farm produce at markets and re-sell them immediately at the marketplace for profit. The practice is sometimes known as **speculating**. Not the same as a *hawker*, who bought produce for resale to shops and suburban homes. Hence *battler-lady* ‘female equivalent of a battler’.

baz *n.* [ˈbʌz] *Basilectal*

Bus. Now rare. [Voicing of final s to z]

Bazme Adab *n.* [ˈbʌzmi: ˈʌdʌb]

An organisation dedicated to the promotion of the Urdu language and literature, with branches in the main cities of SA. [Ur from Persian *bazme* ‘gathering’, *adab* ‘culture, good manners, refinement, good writing’]

For a lecture I prepared for the monthly Bazme Adab lecture (...) I drew the parallels between Urdu and Afrikaans. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 242

bead *n.* – see **carom board**

beans-dōl *n.* – see **dōl**

beans *n.* to give someone beans

To pester or threaten someone; to chastise, to beat, defeat severely, usually at sport.

■ Not restricted to SAIE, but very common in the dialect. This informal British English phrase and its counterpart *to give someone carrots* have given rise to similar expressions in SAIE: to give someone **bhajias** (q.v.), to give someone **jalebis** (q.v.), to give someone **bhoondi** (q.v.) [Br Eng slang, first recorded in Kipling 1890] – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*

beat *n.* Slang**

Style, ‘hipness’, characteristics appropriate to the young-at-heart. See **draad**. [Probably US slang *beat*]

- *He’s got no beat.*

beauty-part *n.* Basilectal

Good side of, best part of. Also Hawaiian and other US English varieties.

- *The beauty-part of this job is that you don’t have to work on weekends.*

been *v.* [bi:n] Basilectal

Have been. Usually used only with first and second person pronouns. Not pronounced the same way as US English *bin*. Similarly *seen, done*.

- *I been there before.*

belna/belan *n.*

A rolling pin used in rolling out dough in the preparation of **puri, roti, samoosas** (q.v.), etc. Mainly in Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu homes. [Hn *belnā*, Ur *belnā, belan*]

bēlo *v.*

To roll out dough with a rolling pin (**belna** — q.v.) in the preparation of **roti** (q.v.) or certain snacks. [Hn, Ur *belnā*]

Belvedere *n.*

The name of the second ship arriving in Durban with indentured Indian labourers on board.

■ The *Belvedere* was the first ship to leave India for Natal (on 4 October 1860) with indentured passengers on board. Because of the longer journey, it arrived on 26 November 1860, after the **Truro** (q.v.) from Madras. Today popular as a name for school-clubs, halls, etc.

‘Belvedere’ refers to a gazebo commanding a magnificent view ... [but] cholera and dysentery stalked the *Belvedere*. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 72

bēn *n.*

Sister. A term of respect for any female, usually a relative older than oneself. Often attached to proper name, e.g. *Savitri-bēn*. Spellings: **bhen, behn, behen**.

■ Once linked to Gujarati homes only, this term is now spreading as the favoured term of respect for an older female in SAIE. See **akka, bahini, bāna, chella, thangechi**. [Gu *bahen*]

... and old Rana in his Gandhi cap would step in smartly, ‘Bhen, bhen, alright. I’ll give it to you for three pence less,’ which is exactly what Saraswathie

wanted, and Rana's wife would mutter under her breath, 'For a teacher she is very mean.' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 75

... she came to pay a visit and assured me that I could count her as an aunt. For had my mother 'not called her Bhen while she was a visitor at our home?' – Z Mayat & A Kathrada, *Letters* 63

bēn-chodh *n. exclam. Vulgar*

Obscenity for one who has sexual relations with his sister. Translated as *sister-sleeper* in IE. Sometimes occurs as **pēn-chodh**. May be used as a general curseword. [Gu *bahen* 'sister' *bahen chodh* 'sex addict']

After this he was drawing out his knife to strike me, and I said, 'Bhen Choodh, I will cut your throat,' after which he threatened to shoot me. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 145

betel-leaf *n.*

Leaf of the betel tree, *Piper betel*.

■ A betel leaf is wrapped around a **betel-nut** (q.v.) and chewed, often ceremonially at weddings, prayers, etc. Especially favoured by older women. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD* (as *betel*). See **pān**, **vetelu**. [Eng via Ptg from Mal *veṭṭila*]

Chewing betel leaf or paan is a concept that is wholly Indian. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 142

betel-nut *n.* [bɪtəl nʌt]

Areca nut, nut of *Areca catechu*, chewed together with **betel-leaf**.

■ Betel-nuts are contained within the coconut-like fruit of the betel palm. Chewed after a meal as a mouth freshener and to aid digestion, the nuts of the betel palm are considered sacred and play a part in religious festivals. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD* (as *betel*). See **pān**, **vetelu**. [Eng via Ptg from Mal *veṭṭila*]

... Betel-nuts are offered to priests who carry out *poojas* or worship on behalf of the *supari*-giver. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 142

Ramani Ammal in far-away India would never have guessed that her songs would one day find resonance on a home-made guitar, on the banks of the Umkumbaan river, which you can bet your last beetle-nut she would never have heard of. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 120

betel-nut mix *n.*

Betel-nut, betel leaf, lime, cardamom, other spices and sugar. Sold as a composite in packets.

bhābi/bābi *n.*

Respectful term for a sister-in-law, specifically one's brother's wife. Same as **anni**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu homes. See also **babbie shop**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *bhābhī*]

You see we only have one behn in our family. My bhabhies are 'bai', as are the wives of a number of friends. I thought I could unilaterally declare you 'behn', and join you among a few friends who I address in this manner. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 51

‘Where’s *bhabbi*?’ Sam asked, his hand lightly draped around Karan’s shoulders. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 21

Bhagavad Gita *n.*

Celebrated long philosophical Sanskrit poem in the **Mahabharata** (q.v.), literally ‘The Lord’s Song’. Often referred to simply as **The Gita**.

■ A key episode often cited in Hindu religious discourse is the philosophical discussion between **Krishna** (q.v.) and his charioteer at war, Arjun, about the meaning of life, suffering, war and death. [Skt *bhagavān* ‘God, the Lord’, *gītā* ‘song’]

The Bhagavad Gita, technically a very small part of the Mahabharata, is almost always published and studied as a separate entity. The Gita is without doubt the most widely acknowledged of all the Hindu Scriptures. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 91

bhai *n.*

1. (Usually voc.) Brother. See **anne**, **thambi**, **thammudu**.
2. A term of respect for any male, usually a relative older than oneself, following the proper name, e.g. *Sachin-bhai*. [Gu Hn, Ur *bhāi*]

‘How much for that, bhai?’

‘This guitar?’

‘Yes, how much?’ – R Govender *At the Edge*, 126

On them were assembled the greater Haveris: septuagenarian Chotty, Omar, Mamood and Amina-ma in the front ranks; Salim the butcher, Salima, Fatima, Fazel-*bhai*, Ayesha-*bibi* who had brought with a bowl of dhal specially ... – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 38

bhajan/bajan *n.*

Hindu devotional song, Hindu congregational hymn, religious song sung in a group.

■ Often starts slowly with gradual increase in tempo. Typically backed up with music from the **harmonium** (q.v.), **thālams** (cymbals – q.v.) and **tabla** (q.v.). A lead singer often sings each line for the rest of the group to repeat. [Gu, Hn *bhajan*, Ta *bajan*, Te *bajana*]

Such professional groups ... sang devotional songs – Muslim *qawwalis* or Hindu *bhajans* – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 220

bhāji/bāji *n.*

Edible herbs, leafy vegetables, spinach, herbs for the pot. In an uncooked state these are usually called **herbs**.

■ The most popular herbs used in Indian cooking in SA are **mēthi** (q.v.), also known as **mēthi bhaji** or **mēthi herbs**, **red herbs** and varieties of spinach. Watercress also falls under the category of **bhāji**. Also Trinidadian English. Same as **kīre**. Not the same as British English and some IE **bhāji** in the sense of a fried snack. The latter is known in SAIE as **bhajia** (q.v.). [Hn, Ur *bhāji*]

The various types of bhaji must be included in daily diets for they are an excellent source of roughage, vitamins and minerals. Besides being health

promoting, these vegetables are delicious, having distinctive flavours, so welcome to sensitive buds. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 128

Poor thing, widowed, children never visiting her, she was very lonely. Once she saw her mother cleaning *bhaji* for the evening meal during a slack period. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 185

bhajia/bajia *n.*

A small, round, spicy snack fried in batter with onion, finely chopped pieces of spinach, chilli, etc. Same as **chilli-bites** (q.v.). Different types of bhajia are named by their main ingredient, hence **brinjal bhajia**, **chilli bhajia**, **mealie bhajia**, **potato bhajia**, etc. Spreading in KZN English. There was a less common variant in Durban, a **leaf bhajia**, comprising a whole leaf of spinach covered in batter and fried (see **bhajia leaf**). Bhajia is known in British English as *bhāji* (as in title of film *Bhaji on the Beach*), but in SA there is a clear distinction between **bhāji** ('herbs') and **bhajia** ('chilli-bite snacks'). [Ur *bhājyā*]

The oil must be pre-heated fairly well. Turn over when bhajias are a golden brown and when second side is similar colour, remove and drain in colander. Serve while hot. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 228

Bhajia and Bhoondi *n. phr.*

Title of column in the *Post* newspaper, implying spicy tidbits of news and gossip. See **bhundhi**.

bhajia-leaf *n.*

Spinach, whose leaves are used in making **bhajia**. Rare.

to fry own's own bhajias

To sing one's own praises, to divert attention during a conversation to oneself. Rare.

to give someone bhajias

To pester someone; to chastise, to defeat severely, usually at sport; to beat up. Same as **to give someone beans/carrots/bhundis/jalēbis**.

- *They were such a weak team, we gave them bhajias.*

gundu bhajia *n.* – see **gundu**

bhāng *n.* – see **ganja**

bhānga *n.*

A shoulder-yoke, curved stick or pole slung on the shoulder(s) for carrying baskets or boxes of fruit or bucketfuls of water, equally balanced at each end. Used up to the 1960s by hawkers to sell fruit. Same as Anglo-Indian **bangy**. Also IE. [Hn *bahaṅgā* 'shoulder yoke', based on *bhāng* 'bend, curve']

The milkmaid's yoke is the nearest approach to a survival of the bangy-staff in England. – H Yule & A Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 60

bhangra *n.*

1. Up-beat fusion of celebratory Panjab music with Western and reggae disco.

2. Dancing style combining Panjab folk dance and Western disco, associated with bhangra music.

■ Popular in SA since the early 1990s, where young and old alike dance together on the disco floor. The concept took root in the UK and spread internationally. In *COD*. See also *chutney*. [Panjabi *bhāngrā*]

Supersize Thanksgiving feast. UK Bhangra singing sensation Imran Khan. Tickets are selling fast. – advertising flier, Cape Town, 21 November 2009

bhangra bash *n.*

Disco with **bhangra** music; **bhangra** party. Not exclusive to SAIE.

Unlike normal discos, a Bhangra night is not for young people. – Phylcia Oppelt *Sunday Times*, 31 August 1997

bhanoi *n.*

One's sister's husband. Older speakers. Same as **anne**, **banevi**. [Hn *bahnoī*]

bharata-nāṭyam *n.*

Classical Indian dance, taught by some local dance companies, mainly based on the *Nāṭya Śāstra* of Bharata, a large treatise on stagecraft and the performing arts. [*Bhārata* – the name of a celebrated Skt dramaturgist – plus Gu, Hn, Te *nāṭyam* 'dance', Ta *nāṭṭiyam*]

Bhārat Nāṭyam/Bharatnāṭyam [is] the classical dance style which evolved in Tamil Nadu as an act of worship in the temples of Shiva. The dance was always a solo performance, normally by a woman. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 21

bhindi/bindi *n.*

Okra (*Hibiscus esculentis*) – a small type of marrow. Also known as **slippery jack** in Natal English markets, and as **lady's finger** in IE, *lady-finger* in US and British English. Known as **bhinda** in Gujarati homes. Spreading in KZN English. [Hn, Ur *bhindī*, Te *bendakāya*, Ta *veṇḍakāi*]

Fried Bhinda (Okra) recipe: Select nice long bhindas. Wash and wipe clean, then slash through bottom to about half way up. Stuff with above masala and fry in shallow oil, very slowly till crisp. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 42

Bhojpuri *n.*

An Indic language spoken in the North Indian provinces of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and in a modified form by descendants of indentured Indian labourers in former British colonies, including Natal, Mauritius and Trinidad. Known as *Hindi* in Natal. See **Bihāri**.

■ While Hindi is used as a language of culture, religion, education, and literacy, descendants of North Indian indentured Indians in SA spoke an offshoot of Bhojpuri for well over a century. [From *Bhojpur* – an ancient town, now a district in Bihar]

Far from being unworthy of serious study, South African Bhojpuri presents a partial history of its speakers, who are otherwise silent in the history of colonial Natal. – R Mesthrie *Language in Indenture*, 2

bhūjo *v.*

To roast, especially spices, nuts etc. Now rare. [Bhoj *bhūj*]

bhundhi *n.*

Tiny pieces of sweetmeat made of flour, baking powder and reddish colouring fried in oil and then steeped in syrup; similar to tiny pieces of **jalebi** (q.v.). May be moulded together into a small ball or **bhundhi laddu** (see **laddu**) or eaten with **sev** (q.v.), fried nuts, and fried split green peas. Also spelt **bhoondi**, **boondi**. See also **Bhaja** and **Bhoondi**. [Gu *bhundī* ‘raindrop’, alluding to globules of liquid mixture used to make it.]

Drain bhoondis and put into syrup. Drain excess syrup and allow bhoondi to steep for one hour. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 232

bībi *n.*

A respectful title for a Muslim woman, equivalent to ‘wife of; mistress of household’ – e.g. Bibi Mall. [Ur *bībī*]

On them were assembled the greater Haveris: septuagenarian Chotty, Omar, Mamoos and Amina-ma in the front ranks; Salim the butcher, Salima, Fatima, Fazel-bhai, Ayesha-bibi who had brought with a bowl of dhal specially. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 38

bichāra *n. exclam.*

Sympathetic exclamation referring to a poor person, helpless person, one who is out on one’s luck. The feminine form **bichāri** is perhaps more common. *Bichāro* is used in Gujarati homes. [Hn *bichāra* ‘poor, helpless’]

- A: *Maya’s husband has passed away.* B: *Bichāri.*

Naani smiled. ‘Arreh, bechaaro.’

Poor thing?. ‘He’s not a bechaaro, Naani!’ I said ... – S Lee *Maha Ever After*, 42

bidhai/bīdha *n.*

Ceremony at which a bride is finally sent off to live at her new home a week after the wedding. Mainly Hindi and Urdu homes. [Hn *bidāī*, *bīdā*, Ur *bidā*, *vidā*]

big-brother *n.*

A (referential) term of respect for an elder brother. Now rare. Possibly other varieties, including US English. See **anne**, **bhai**, **big-sister**.

- *That’s my brother, he’s bigger than me.* – Durban resident, April 2010

big-father *n.*

A (referential) term of respect for an elder brother of one’s father. Now rare. Also SABE. See **big-mother**, **pedda-naina**, **periappa**, **perinaina**.

big fathern-law *n. phr.* – see **big mothern-law****Big Four** *n.*

Combination of the following subjects for the first year of a BSc degree: Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology – a much sought-after combination, which allowed successful candidates to transfer to medical school. The term was particularly popular at the University of Durban-Westville, where the difficulty of passing all four subjects simultaneously was well known. See **Small Four**.

- *I did the big four and plugged in my first year, so I went into law instead.* – Durban resident, 2002

big-house *n.*

1. House belonging to one's grandfather or to some other head of a joint-family. Now rare.
2. House belonging to the wealthiest person (or patron) of a locality. Now rare. Cf. SABE *great house* 'the hut of a chief'. See **house-people**.
3. Not the same as prison slang *big house* 'Pretoria Central prison'.

In the late morning, the dispersed segments of the kutum may meet for dinner at the house of the kutum heads (the big house), and take inordinate joy in each other's beautiful clothes. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 192

big-mother *n.*

A (referential) term of respect for the wife of an elder brother of one's father, i.e. one's **big-father's** wife. Now rare. Also SABE. See **peddama**, **perima**.

big mothern-law *n. phr.* [big maðənlɔ:]

Term of respect for one's mother-in-law's elder sister. Used referentially, not as vocative. Rare. Similarly **big fathern-law**. See also **big mother**, **big father**, **mothern-law**.

big-sister *n.*

A (referential) term of respect for one's elder sister. Now rare. Possibly other varieties including US English. See **akka**, **bahini**, **bēn**, **big-brother**.

Bihāri *n.*

1. A person from Bihar, or a descendant of them.
 - North Indian indentured workers in SA originated mainly from the provinces of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (this applies to the present-day names even after the recent bifurcation of these provinces). The name *Biharilal* remains a popular one in KZN.
2. (Rare). A term used for the following languages found in Bihar: **Bhojpuri** (q.v.), Awadhi, Magahi and Maithili.
 - These languages, which are intermediate in structure and vocabulary between Hindi in Central India and Bengali in the east, coalesced in KZN to form the variety called **Calcuttia** (q.v.), *Hindi* or *Bhojpuri-Hindi*.

The use of the surname Bihari indicates a man from the province of Bihar. Most of the Hindis were drawn from the Gonda and Basti districts of the UP and many from Benaras, Allahabad and Lucknow. – R Nowbath *Hindus of SA*, 18

bikhāri *n.*

A beggar, poor person, wretched person. [Gu, Hn *bikhārī*]

- *They not that badly off, but they like to act like bikhāris.*

bindhi *n.*

Dot or small circular spot on a married Hindu woman's forehead. May also be worn as an ornament by unmarried women.

■ Traditionally a red dot signified a woman's married status, a black dot an unmarried woman. Bindhis are now commercially popular global items made of paper or cloth, decorated in different colours and shapes and worn by young women of different cultures as a fashion accessory. Also spelt **bindi**. See also **boṭṭu**, **chāndlo**, **tikka**. [Hn *bindī* 'dot, mark, zero']

birth-masāla *n.* – see **masāla****biryāni/briyāni** *n.*

A dish of rice, vegetables and/or meat cooked with lentils and spices. Usually served on special occasions together with **dōl** (q.v.) and salad, or possibly pickles and **raita** (q.v.). Also spelt **biriyani**, **biriani**. Widely known in SAE as *breyani*, though this is not a pronunciation acceptable in SAIE. See also **palau**, **akhni**. [Hn, Ur *biryānī*]

The royal dish of Indian cuisine is undoubtedly the Moghul biryani. This delicately spiced basmati rice dish with a subtle hint of saffron was the food of maharajahs and maharanis. A biryani has a base of chicken, lamb, fish, prawns or vegetables, marinated in buttermilk until tender. Fried onions, lentils and golden coated potatoes are layered in an ovenproof dish, traditionally sealed securely with dough to lock in the saffron and spice aroma. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 79

She is being tactful. Visions of steak, chicken, huge plates of biriyani, tomato chutney, curried rhubarb – or, even better – cooked mango, a slice of buttered bread with cheese, and a cup of good coffee, fill my head. – I Naidoo *Island in Chains*, 270

biryāni dōl *n.*

Same as **masūr** (q.v.).

biryāni mix *n.*

Spices and seasoning used in making biryani, usually bay leaves, cinnamon sticks (**thaj**), aniseed (**saumph**), cardamom (**elachi**) and sticks of clove (**laung** or **lavang**). Sold commercially in packets. These may be roasted and ground to form **garam masala** (q.v.).

to want biryāni every day *Jocular*

To expect good fortune or success all the time, to have unrealistic expectations. Also expressed as **You can't get biryani every day**. Same as **to want fowl curry and rice every day**, **to want mutton curry and rice every day**. Cf. **to get dōl curry and rice every day**.

bismillah *exclam.*

'In the name of Allah' – an invocation undertaken by Muslims at the beginning of an undertaking, based on the opening words of the **Qur'an** (q.v.), which also begins each chapter. **Bismillah** is the first word of this invocation and may stand for the whole phrase '*Bismi'llahi r-rhemani r-rahim*' ('in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful'), though

the more correct term for this is *the basmallah*. In *COD*. See also **rakkam**, **seven-eight-six**. [Ar *bi-sm'i-llahi*]

bley/blei *v. Slang**

To stay, live, dwell. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal *blaiza*. [Afrik *bly*]

- *My uncle was from Shallcross but now he bleys in Phoenix.*

blind *adj. Slang**

1. Of persons: unpleasant, unfriendly, uncooperative.
2. Of feelings: uncomfortable, uneasy. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Eng *blind*, with semantic shift]

- *I felt blind to chase the children away, but they were being a nuisance.*

bluff *v. Basilectal*

To speak a lie, to insist that something is true, knowing it to be false. Also IE and other varieties. [A slightly different nuance from the usual British English meaning, 'a considerable assurance adopted to impress an opponent']

- *He's bluffing you. Don't bluff me.*

blumess *n.*

Women's long undergarment covering the area from the waist to halfway down to the knee, now replaced by the tighter fitting, smaller and more slender *panties*. Once a taboo term in SAIE, not spoken about openly. Now rare. See also **knickers**. [Eng *bloomers* originally 'loose-fitting knee-length trousers gathered at the ankle or knee', later 'baggy underwear reaching to just above the knee', named after Mrs Amelia J Bloomer, an American social reformer who advocated the original garment – *COD*]

bloomer: a style of female attire consisting of a short skirt and long loose trousers gathered closely round the ankles. – *OED*

At the sight of Miss Courtenay in a Bloomer he was ravished. – Reade *True Love 1868*: II, 2, IV, 154 – cited in *OED*

bob wire *n.* ['bɔ:b waijɛ]

Barbed wire. Also, less frequently, **bobbed wire**.

body-bath *n.*

A bath during which one does not wash one's hair. See **head-bath**. Also IE.

boeta *n. Regional*

Term of respect or familiar title for elder brother or any elder male, mainly in the Cape or areas influenced by Afrikaans and Malay. May also be a nickname, as in *Boeta-Boy Naidoo*. The term is widely used in SAE varieties in contact with Afrikaans, but is not known in KZN IE. The diminutive equivalent **boetie** 'younger brother, companion, friend' is widely used in SAE, but again not in KZN IE. [Afrik *boet(a)*, from Malay *boedjang*, *budjang* 'young man']

Ow, Boeta Harry, don't you trust me? – A Dangor *Forced Landing*, 163

boer-ou *n. Slang** [bu:rou]

An Afrikaner male. Sometimes derogatory. See also **bruin-ou**, **chār-ou**, **pekkie-ou**, **vet-ou**. Also SAE slang, Tsotsitaal and Cape Afrikaans slang. [Afrik *boer* 'Afrikaner' plus *ou* 'fellow']

boils *n. Basilectal*

Boiled food. On analogy of *fries*, *French fries*. Rare.

- *I don't like to eat boils.*

bok/bokkie *n. Slang**

Girl, girlfriend. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *bok* 'a flame, a beau', ultimately from *bok* 'buck']

- *He's got a powerful bok, eh!*

Bombay *n.*

One of three major ports from which Indians travelled to SA in the c19. Now known as Mumbai, though the older term is still used as a trade name (e.g. *Bombay Bazaar* in Rylands, Cape Town).

■ Bombay is looked up to as a busy commercial and cultural centre of relevance to South Africans, especially those of Gujarati and Konkani origins.

Bombay-wallah *n.*

A native of Bombay, or one with roots in Bombay and its environs. [City name plus Hn, Ur, Ko agent suffix *wālā* 'of, pertaining to']

Bombay-crush *n.*

A soft drink of milk and china grass (bits of white, dried seaweed), flavoured with slivered almonds and pistachios and rose water.

■ Especially popular amongst Muslims. Same as **falooda** or **falooda crush**. Bombayites love the colourful jellies, custards, yoghurts and cream desserts served in the restaurants set up by Parsees at the beginning of the century ... Falooda or China grass is the name given to a dessert made by dissolving agar-agar which is obtained from various seaweeds. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 220

Bombay-duck *n.*

A small dried-fish, considered a delicacy by some. Sometimes called **bumla** or **bombil** in Ko. Also IE and British English. In *COD*. [Eng from Mar *bumla*, *bombil*]

Bombay duck is a [...], flat fish that is sundried and resembles biltong, but has a strong smell. Fried Bombay duck is served as a side dish, with vegetables and lentils. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery for SA*, 70

Boomla is definitely fish and in its fresh form very much like our Kingklip. You could call it the fish biltong of India for near the fisherman's colony in Bombay you see lines and lines of boomla strips drying in the sun. The smell of boomla puts a lot of people off this delicacy. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 82

Bombay-mango *n.*

A very large, round mango, now grown in Natal, less commonly than the smaller round, fibre mangoes. See **long mango**, **paraffin mango**.

bomblimāsh *n.*

Shaddock – a large citrus fruit resembling a grapefruit. Advertised as *marsh grapefruit* in some supermarkets. Cf. French *pamplemousse*. [SAE *pampelmoes* from Afrik *pampelmoes* from Malay *pumpulmas* – J Branford *Dict of SAE*. Possibly reinterpreted in SAIE as *Bombay* plus *mās*, the Hn, Ur word for ‘meat’. Also Ta *puppellemāsa*]

boo *n.*: **to get boo** *Basilectal/Children’s speech*

To be disappointed, to have high expectations that fail to be met. See also **left: to get left**. [Possibly from Eng *boo*, *booed*, with semantic shift]

book *v. Basilectal*

To betroth, have someone betrothed via an arrangement for marriage. Also **book it and keep it** ‘to make an early engagement, arrangement for a marriage in the long rather than short term’ (informal), where *it* usually refers to a teenage girl and *keep* implies a long-term arrangement, not a mere change of residence. Now rare. See also **future, interested, proposed, word**.

- *They booked the girl from small.*

boomla *n.* – see **Bombay-duck****bophas** *n.* slang*** [‘bo:p^ha:z]

Police, a policeman or policewoman. See **poyisa**. [Zu *ukubopha* ‘to tie, handcuff’]

borrie *n. Regional*

Cape term for **hardhi** (q.v.), turmeric, a spice used widely in Indian and Malay cooking. [Afrik from Malay *boreh*]

Mussala is a mixture of spices, e.g. chillies, borrie, meti, gira etc. – H Gerber *Traditional Cookery of Cape Malays*, 36

bōr *n.*

Fruit of the jujube tree *Zizyphus*, often pickled with spices. Also sold as a children’s sweet and sour chutney-like snack in small plastic packets. Spellings: **bohr**, **borr**. [Gu *bor*]

Masala bor: made of bor, chilli pieces, oil and sucrose – wrapping on product, Cape Town 2009

The shop counter was a glass-fronted desk, the inside shelves crowded with . . . a large bottle with a pyramid of bohr in dark water . . . – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 169

If you’ve been a child in any kind of Chaarville, then you’ll know all about the pleasures of borr. The sweet fruit is picked and then soaked in a mixture of vinegar and spices so that the borr can absorb it all and become a spicy-sweet-sour taste sensation – that’s if you can hold your nose while you eat. The combination of vinegar and borr is unfortunately reminiscent of smelly toes. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 98

both *pron./adv. the both Basilectal*

Both, the two. Also other varieties, including SAE and Irish English.

Watch it – you're getting too personal, the both of you. If you don't smaaak the man's company, say so. – R Govender *Lahnee's Pleasure*, 31

bottu *n.*

Dot or round mark worn on the forehead by women as a sign of married status.

■ In Tamil and Telugu communities unmarried women wore a black bottu, while married women wore a red bottu, which was applied by the groom at the wedding ceremony for the first time. Same as **chāndlo**, **tikka**. See **kongu**. [Ta *poṭṭu*, Te *boṭṭu*]

'It was Mister Rutherford who was my real husband, and although when Murugan died I took out my thali and stopped putting bottu on my forehead, that was only for the world to see.' – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 81

bōṭhi/bōti *n.*

Pieces of sheep-tripe, cooked as curry. See **sheep-head**. [Originally a euphemism from Hn, Ur *botī*, 'pieces of meat']

boula *n.*

A home-made heater, comprising a small drum in which coal, pieces of wood, or paper is burned, a brazier. Also spelt **bowlah**.

■ Can be found at quieter street corners on winter nights when young men gather to socialise. The term is becoming rare in Durban, but is still well known in Johannesburg and Kimberley. Known as *galley/gulley* in Cape Town. Cf. Afrikaans *konka*, *tonka*. [Probably from Zu *imbawula* 'fire pot, brazier'. Perhaps related to Anglo-Indian *bowla* 'a portmanteau', Hn *bāolā* from Ptg *baul* 'a trunk', the connection being that a boula is a very basic portable heater-cum-stove. – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 108.]

'Now things are so bad we have to cook outside on the bowlah,' Auntie Indrani tuned. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

bowl *v. Slang**

To steal, indulge in petty theft. [Etymology uncertain, probably English *bowl* (v. or n.) with semantic shift or Cockney rhyming slang *bat and bowl* = 'stole']

- *I think this chap bowled my gloves, but I can't prove it.*

boy's side *n. phr.*

Bridegroom's party, close relatives accompanying groom to wedding, extended family and friends attending wedding upon invitation by the groom. See **girl's side**.

■ In the North Indian tradition the bride's family hosts the wedding, whereas in the South Indian tradition the groom's family does so. See **jān**, **baryāt**. [Special nuance of *boy* 'young man, bridegroom' based on Bhoj *chokrā*]

bra/brāzo *n. Slang***

Brother, friend, mate. Also SAE and Tsotsitaal. See **bru**. The modern form *bro* is related to this usage. [Abbrev. of *brother* plus *zo* (of uncertain reference)]

... there really is a cherry called Karmen who mails us brazzos every week. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

Brahman/brahmin *n.*

1. A Hindu priest. See **pandit**, **pujāri**.
2. A person of the priestly caste, the highest in the traditional Indian social hierarchy. Not exclusively SAIE. [Gu, Hn *brahman*, Ta *brahmin*]

Davarum had lost his caste. A Brahmin, he sat, ate, spoke and slept rolled up next to untouchables. – A Desai *Ratunya Mochi*, 110

She had said it wasn’t as bad as in India. There they wouldn’t allow you into the temples and in some districts you had to step out of the way to prevent your shadow falling over a passing Brahmin. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 25

brahman bull *n.*

Bos indicus, the humped Indian ox. Now rare. Not exclusively SAIE.

■ The term is well known in US English. [From *brahman*, on account of its appearance and presumably high pedigree]

branjol *n.* ['brændʒo:l]

Brinjal, egg-plant, aubergine. Also spelt **bringal**, **branjol**, **brinjol**. See also **baingan**. Same as **kathrika**, **vaingan**. Once known in Jamaican English as *brown jolly* (Cassidy & Le Page *Dict of Jamaican Eng*). Jocularly known as **garden chops** in KZN, when served in large pieces in **dhāl** (q.v.) with vegetable **biryani** at weddings, in reference to those disappointed at not being served meat. See **melting moments**. [SAE and IE *brinjal* via Ptg *beringella* from Hn, Ur *baingan*]

The pattern of single-mother families was a fairly common occurrence. Kassim Bee was a classic example. She told her daughter Sheriffa Bee that they were lured by tales that ‘in Africa gold could be plucked from *brinjol* bushes’. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 271

I jol, you jol, we all jol for branjol. – Children’s doggerel of the 1960s onwards

brānt *v. Slang**

To inform on someone. Same as **to burn**. Also Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *brand* *n.* ‘fire’, *v.* ‘to burn’ (intrans.)]

bread-ou *n. Slang**

A male of North Indian origin, in whose household **roti** (q.v.) or homemade flat bread is traditionally a favoured preparation. Same as **roti-ou**. See also **Calcuttia**, **porridge-ou**, **slum-ou**. Usually derogatory. [*bread* plus Afrik *ou* ‘fellow’]

brether *n.* ['brɛðɛ]

Brother. Hence **brethern-law** (voc. or ref.). See **mother-law**.

bridge-birth *n. Basilectal*

A breech birth, a birth during which a baby emerges with feet or buttocks first rather than the head. [From Eng *breech-birth* with phonetic reinterpretation]

British Indian *n. Historical*

Occasional term for Indians in the c19 and early c20, stressing their status as Br subjects in India and SA. More specifically, a term for Indians resident in the South African Republic (one of the Boer republics of the late c19), later known as the Transvaal. See **colonial-born**.

■ The term emphasised that, as British subjects, Indians expected not to be discriminated against under Afrikaner rule.

We are not, and ought not to be, Tamils or Calcutta men, Mohamedans or Hindus, Brahmans or Banyas, but simply and solely British Indians, and as such we must sink or swim together. – Editorial, *Indian Opinion* 20 August 1903, cited in S Bhana & J Hunt *Gandhi's Editor*, 6

Why then is the history of British Indians in the South African Republic, better known as the Transvaal, somewhat different from that of overseas Indians elsewhere in the Empire? First, Indians in the Transvaal were faced with a White community composed mainly of Afrikaners ... [with] clear-cut attitudes on race relations. – B Pillay *British Indians in the Transvaal*, xi

Broadcast *n.*

The popular name for an old hour-long Sunday morning radio programme of the 1960s ('The Indian Programme') playing Indian music recorded locally or in India.

On Sunday mornings at 8.30 like clockwork every mother in our district would beseech her children to put on the Broadcast as we called it and the whole valley would resound with the only Indian music to be found on South African radio in the 1960s. – Umkomaas resident, 1998

The same with Sunday broadcast – Music in the Morning presented by Ruthnam Pillay ... – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 136

brom *v. Slang**

To brag, to exaggerate, to tell tales. Hence **brommer** 'one who exaggerates, a teller of tall tales'. In SAE slang *brom* means 'to complain'. [Afrik *brom* 'to growl, to mutter']

- *That chap was bromming one way.*

bru *n. Slang**

A brother, a friend (voc.). See **lightie-bru**. Also SAE slang, Tsotsitaal and Cape Afrikaans slang. Now being overtaken by **bra**, **brazo** (q.v.) and international slang term **bro** (q.v.). [Afrik *broer* 'brother']

bruin-ou *n. [brein ou] Slang**

A Coloured man. Sometimes derogatory. Also SAE slang, Tsotsitaal and Cape

Afrikaans slang. Sometimes spelt **brain ou**. See **boer-ou**, **char-ou**, **pekkie-ou**, **vet-ou**. [Afrik *bruin* 'brown' plus *ou* 'fellow']

I look like a Pekkieuou and Maha looks like a Bruinou! – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 34

buji *n.* *Baby talk*

Any insect, or small creature that crawls or flies.

■ The word occurs in St Helenian English, where a contingent of Indian slaves once existed. Cf. SAE *gogga*. [Ta *pūci*, *pucci* 'insect, beetle, worm']

- *Take care or that buji will sting you.*

buji-bamba *n.*

A bogeyman, a wild creature, a harmful insect. Used by parents to frighten or warn children. Sometimes abbrev. to **bamba**, pl. **bambas**. [Ta *pucci* plus Zu *ukubamba* 'to catch hold of']

- *Behave or the buji-bamba will catch you.*

bum-boy *n.* *Slang**

An errand boy, one who does menial chores for another without pay, a follower or 'willing slave'. See **chub**. [Etymology unknown, probably prison homosexual associations]

- *A: Can you go to the shop for me? B: You think I'm your bum-boy?*

bun *n.:* **to take the bun** *Informal*

Said of someone who is unreasonable, demanding, foolish, naïve, persistently in error. Possibly other varieties. See also **cake**. [Special sense of Br Eng and SAE *to take the bun* 'come first in a competition']

- *I lost my cellphone again. B: Ey, but you take the bun! How can you be so careless?*

buncake *n.*

Synonym for *bun*. Now jocular. Rare.

- *My aunty used to buy buncakes for us on her payday every Friday.*

bunny *n.*

Abbreviated form for **bunny-chow** (q.v.).

... the first place we should hit a march to was Patels, to crush a mixed-dhall bunny. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010.

beans bunny *n.*

A **bunny chow** (q.v.) made with bread and **sugar beans** (q.v.).

The etymology of bunny chow is as uncertain as the identity of its inventor. Descendants of the pioneering Grey Street restaurateurs battle it out valiantly on both counts, without any expectation of settling the question at this late date. Ganda, a lifelong vegetarian, does seem to be the undisputed creator of the 'beans bunny', the version in which the loaf is stuffed with a rich, spicy stew of tomatoes and fava beans. – M Hajratwala *Leaving India*, 60

curry-bunny *n.*

A variant on **bunny-chow**. Rare.

to crush a bunny *Slang**

To eat a **bunny chow** (q.v.) in the normal way by breaking off pieces of the bread containing the curry.

Dees and me scraped some mache to crush a bunny. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

bunny-chow *n.*

A take-away meal comprising curry stuffed into the hollowed-out part of a half or quarter loaf of bread. The curry can be of meat (hence **chicken bunny**, **mutton bunny**) or vegetables (usually **sugar beans** (q.v.), hence **beans bunny**) or even **dhāl** (q.v.), hence **dhāl bunny**.

■ The merchant is the vendor, rarely the consumer of the meal, though this may have been different in former times. Bunny chow originated in Durban, though it is unclear exactly when. The bunny chow is eaten with one’s hands, without the need for any utensils, including a plate. Widespread in SAE. [Probably Hn, Ur *banya* ‘merchant’ plus Eng slang *chow* from Mandarin Chinese *chow* ‘spicy food’]

Derived from the original Indian term Bania (referring to Hindus belonging to the mercantile class, who in the majority are vegetarians), this slang term arose in the Indian restaurants which served hunks of bread filled with a saucy bean curry. Bania chow was destined to become bunny chow. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 297

In those days all Gujarati Hindu businessmen were called ‘Banias’, so we called our take-away lunches ‘Bunia Chow’. On my return to Durban in 1981 after over 25 years, I noted ‘Bunny Chow’ had become a household name. – G Varma Letter to the *Daily News*, 16 January 1984 (unsubstantiated), cited in J Branford *Dict of SAE*, 53

Prof Chandrakant Baksi’s research in SA, published as a book in Gujarati in India, includes a reference to bunny-chow based on an interview at Patel’s Vegetarian Restaurant in Grey Street, where the word had originated. According to this book, Gandhiji had asked Snr Patel (Ranchod Rama Patel) to offer take away lunch for the poor Indians who lived in barracks at minimal cost. Patel came up with bread filled with veg curry. – Dr Usha Desai, January 2010

Ganda and other restaurateurs, thinking quickly, realised they must begin to sell ‘take aways’. In search of a cheap container, in the age before Styrofoam, they hit upon the humble bread loaf. They invented what became known as the bunny chow. – M Hajratwala *Leaving India*, 59

My nephew who settled in Santa Barbara many years ago recently opened up a takeaway specialising in bunny chow. He thought he’d make his fame and fortune on this easy-to-produce take-away. What he hadn’t reckoned on was Californian animal rights activists thinking that he was dealing with rabbit meat, and eventually shutting him down. – R Mungal, Durban 2007

burqa/burka *n.*

Cape or undercape worn by Muslim women, close fitting over the head. Usually black. Covers skull but not the face. See also **purdah**, **abayah**. Also spelt **burkha**, **burqa**, **burqah**. [Ur *burqā*]

When the rest of her compatriots went around wrapped in burkhas and escorted by a son or brother, she ventured forth with an air of emancipation that could put women's lib to shame. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 20

Abubaker Jhavary's ... daughter-in-law ... found adjustment very difficult ... She missed the long afternoons spent in close companionship with her sisters and cousins-in-law ... She missed too the short visits to friends decorously concealed in her burgah and accompanied by a maid. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 19

burn *v. Slang**

1. To inform on someone. Same as **brānt**. [transl. from Afrik *brand* 'to burn']
2. To beat at sport, overtake someone by car.

bush *v. (intrans.)*

To clear bush for cultivation, usually by hand with a **bush-knife** (q.v.) or similar implement. Rural. [From Eng n. *bush*]

- *He's bushing there, by the hill.*

bush-knife *n.*

A large scythe, kept by farmers to clear wooded areas. Possibly other varieties. Pronounced as if one word in SAIE.

He once threatened his neighbour with a large knife, and ever since became known as 'Bush-knife Bobby'. – Durban resident, 2008

buskop *n.* ['busko:p]

Biskop – a large fish, *Cymatoceps nasutus*, of the Sparidae. [SAE *biskop* from Afrik *biskop* from Du *beestkop* 'animal head' or Du *bisschop*, cognate with *bishop*, alluding to its large and grave-looking head. – P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*]

but *conj./tag.*

1. 'On the contrary'. Same as Standard English, except that the word may occur at the end of a clause or sentence.
 - *Ma, there's nothing wrong with this box, but.*
2. 'Isn't it, really, truly though'. This sense only occurs at the end of a clause or sentence. Also Scots, Hiberno English, Australian English and Guyanese Creole.
 - *It's nice and quiet here, but.*

butter *n.*

As a first element of a compound this denotes a presumably superior variety or product in terms of size, texture or taste. Cf. English *butter milk*, SAE *butter lettuce*, etc.

butter-banana *n.*

A small, extremely sweet, tight-skinned banana. Also known in KZN as *lady-finger*.

butter-chilli *n.*

Green pepper, capsicum, any large green chilli, usually not as hot as small, green chillies.

butter-ghee *n.*

Synonym for **ghee** (q.v.), emphasising the use of milk over vegetable oils.

butter-pear *n.*

Large, sweet variety of avocado.

butter-silk *n.*

High-quality silk. See **resham**.

butter-bread *n.*

Bread and butter; buttered bread; buttered slices of bread.

■ Buttered slices of bread once formed a favourite snack served with tea to children returning from school. [Dvandva compound]

by-heart *v.*

To learn off by heart, to memorise study material without fully understanding it. Also IE and SABE.

In preparation I by-hearted Omar Khayyam. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 33



cab *n. Slang**

Car.

■ The US English meaning of ‘taxi’ is seldom used in SAIE. [Eng *cab, taxicab*, with semantic shift]

‘I’m happy to chill by the ballie’s shop and cruise around in my cab ...’ – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 211

cabbage *n.:* **cabbage can’t boil twice**

A refusal to repeat what one has just said when asked to do so. Possibly other varieties as well.

- *A: Tell me what you said again. B: Cabbage can’t boil twice!*

cake *n. Slang**

1. A fool, a dolt, a gull.

- *Don’t be a cake, man. He’s a proper cake.*

2. (Vulgar) Female genitals.

Also SAE slang. Cf. Guyanese Creole *patacake*. [Br Eng slang *cake* ‘a fool’]

Calcutta *n.*

City in Bengal, now known as *Kolkata*.

■ Important as port of embarkation of **indentured** (q.v.) North Indian labourers to SA, and as marker of identity, even though few originated from the city or its environs. See also **Bombay, Calcuttia, Madras**.

The Calcutta man told me 1 shilling would be deducted from my wages. – Letter by indentured worker to Protector of Indians, 1903.

Calcuttia/Kalkathia *n.*

A Hindi-speaking person of North Indian extraction, or descendant of such. Sometimes pejorative when used in connection with early minor rivalries between North and South Indians living together in KZN. Older speakers.

■ The term indicates the importance of the port cities in forming a new identity among Indian migrants. It is a misnomer in the case of places of origin of the North Indian migrants, very few of whom came from the city of Calcutta. See **Madraasi**. [Bhoj *kalkatyā* ‘one who embarked ship at Calcutta’ (for Natal or other colonies)]

Lurking in the shadows, though less pronounced than the *Kalkatia* and *Madrasi* distinction was the Tamil/Telugu division. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 177

Nithin consoled himself with the thought that Tony's indifference towards him was nothing personal – Calcuttans were normally taciturn people and not given to long conversation. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 297

calling-name *n. Basilectal*

The first name a person is generally known by, as opposed to the one sanctioned by a priest at birth, or to the official one appearing on one's birth certificate. See also **factory name**, **house-name**, **rās-name**, **school-name**. Also SABE.

The first tunes comes from the Phoenix stekkie, Ronelle Mare (calling name Ron). – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

can *aux. v.*

In addition to usual English meanings, with heavy stress on the entire verb phrase, *can* implies special abilities of the subject. Unlike Standard English, the nuance is usually pejorative.

- *Mohan can eat!* = 'Mohan eats a lot'. *Amod can talk!* = 'Amod talks a great deal?'

cane rat *n.* – see **mavōndo**

Cape Town agreement *n. phr. Historical*

A historic resolution at a conference in Cape Town in 1926–7 regarding the future of SA's Indian community.

■ An agreement was reached between representatives of the governments of India (Sir Muhammad Habibullah) and SA (Dr DF Malan) not to segregate Indians as had been envisaged but to reduce the size of the Indian population by further repatriation, and to improve the social and educational conditions of those who chose to remain.

... South African Indian politics was also on the eve of a new phase – one that would temporarily put the lid on rising anti-Indian sentiment. This came in the form of the Cape Town agreement of 1927. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 177

The Cape Town Agreement of 1927 is said to be the turning point in the provision of better facilities in education ... [It] resulted in the setting up of more primary schools, and the provision of secondary education. Sastri College, a boy's high school, was set up in 1930, with further secondary schools being established in the 1940s. – R Mesthrie *English in Language Shift*, 30

carnatic *n.* – see **karnātak**

carom/carom board *n.*

Game played in groups of two or four, with a small wooden board on which small discs (called **beads**) are flicked with a large disc by hand into one of four 'pockets'. Popular game in India. Same as *karem* or *kerem* played by Cape Malays, though here a short stick may be used as a cue. In SAIE the term *carom* is seldom used on its own, the game usually being called **carom board**. In US English *carom* is a term used in billiards 'to cannon off another ball', and *a caroms* is the game described above, based on the trademark

caroms. [Probably abbrev. from US Eng *carambole*, via Ptg, Sp *carambola*, ultimately from Mar *karambal* ‘fruit of the tropical tree *Averhoa carambola*’ – *Websters Dictionary*]

Carom [is] a game played on a square enclosed board, with corner pockets into which discs are cannoned (caromed), popular throughout India. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 78

In the wider spaces on either side people squatted against the walls and played cards and carom board. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 134

carrots *n.*: **to give someone carrots**

To pester someone; to chastise, to defeat severely, usually at sport; to beat up. Also British English. See also **beans (to give someone beans)**, **bhajias (to give someone bhajias)**.

- *Don't show off, we'll give you carrots in the final.*

case *n.*

One who behaves in a wayward, obstinate or outrageous manner. Usually jocular. [Probably abbrev. of *nut-case*]

- *He's a case. Don't be a case.*

catch *v.*

to catch a chow *Slang*

To eat, to have a meal, to eat heartily. [US slang *chow*, from Mandarin Chinese *chow* ‘hot, spicy food’]

to catch a drop *Slang*

To fall, to slip.

- *A: What happened to your hand? B: Ey, I caught a drop aksé.*

to catch a jol – see **jol**

to catch it *Slang*

To be beaten, threatened, told off. Possibly other varieties, but particularly frequent in SAIE slang and informal usage.

If the *larnie* comes here I'll catch it. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 183

to catch up *Basilectal*

To catch on, comprehend, understand.

- *I couldn't catch up what she was saying.*

cause *v.*: **to cause it**

To mess things up, to cause difficulties, to cause a stir.

When they reached Vusi[,] the barman came over and slapped his palms on the counter. ‘Jake, don't cause it.’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 183.

chācha *n.*

1. Paternal uncle.
2. A term of respect for an elderly male – e.g. *Chacha Ismail*. Mainly Urdu homes. Same as **chichi**, **kāka**. See **chinneina**, **perineina**. [Ur *cācā*]

chaddar *n.*

Sheet, bed-sheet. Older speakers. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *cādar*]

chāf *v.* [ˈtʃɑːf] *Slang**

1. To woo or court a woman.
 - *He's chaffing my sissy.* Also informal SAE.
2. To appeal to, to ask a favour.
3. To insult or rebuke someone. Also spelt **charf**. [Probably based on Br Eng *chaff* 'to banter, to rail lightly at']

Siga looked at Nithin suspiciously. 'You *charfing* me, Nits?' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 313

chalo *v. imp./interj.*

'Go, let's go, let's leave.' Said to fellow companion when it's time to depart. Mostly used by Gujarati and Hindi speakers. [Hn, Gu *cal* 'travel, go, move']
'Chalo,' she said to Nana, 'we mus' go phone all the family people ...' – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 236

chalni *n.*

Large, round sieve without a handle, used to sift grain. Now rare. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. See **morram**. [Hn, Ur *calnī*]

chamār *n.*

1. Pertaining to low castes, traditionally shoemakers, tanners and dealers in flesh and hides.
2. A term of abuse for a ne'er-do-well. Now rare. See **chandāl**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Gu *camāriya*, Hn *camār*, based on *camrā* 'leather, hide, skin']

In northern India, with the highest concentration in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the traditional leather workers; the cobblers, the flayers of dead animals and the tanners. These days since there are far more of them than can be employed in connection with leather, the majority are village and urban general labourers. By birth, harijans are members of a Scheduled Caste. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 34

chambu/chombu *n.*

A brass container, same as **lōta** (q.v.); a tin can used to carry water to labourers in the fields. Often jocular when used by younger speakers, as a consciously Indian word. Known in KZN Fanagalo as *shumbu*. Also pronounced and spelt **choombu**. [Ta *combu*, Gu *cambu*]

A guest in a Tamil Nadu household is welcomed with a 'shombu' (a pot) of cold water. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 7

Here, we have to carry water from the pond in a tin and pour water over ourselves with a chombu and we only have blue soap not even Sunlight soap. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 71

These coins were then put in a *choombu*, a small brass pot, and later given to charity. – N Govender *Coming-of-age Ceremony*, 25

chamcha *n.*

A sycophant, a 'yes man'. Usually jocular. Also IE. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *camco*, Hn, Ur *camcā*]

chamki *n.*

A show-off (female), an overdressed female. Now rare. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *camkī*]

champal *n.*

Indian sandals, usually of leather, but also possibly of rubber or plastic. Also called **chappal**.

■ Women's champals may be fashionably decorated. See also **sapāt**. [Gu *campal*, Hn, Ur *cappal*]

She unwound her sari, kicked her chappals onto the floor and opening her nightgown above her head like an envelope, slid into it. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 131

chandāl *n.*

A term of abuse for a good-for-nothing, a depraved person, etc. Originally denoting a sub-caste of the Shudras, low down in the caste hierarchy. Mainly Hindi homes. [Gu, Hn *caṇḍāl*]

chandālin *n.*

Female equivalent of a chandāl. See also **chamār**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Bhoj *caṇḍālin*]

chāndlo *n.*

Dot worn on forehead by women. Same as **bottu**, **tikka**. See also **kājar**, **kohl**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *cāndlo*]

- *Can you put my chāndlo for me?*

change *n.*: **and some change** *Informal*

Thereabouts, approximately, with a bit left over. Possibly other varieties.

- *A: How old are you? B: 43 and some change.*

channa *n.*

1. Chickpeas, whole gram (*Cicer arietinum*); also yellow split lentils.
2. A curry prepared from whole chick peas or yellow split peas. [Gu, Hn, Ur *canā*]

This lentil is second only to wheat in nutritive value. In its whole form it is known as the chickpea. Chana dhal is the split form, resembling yellow corn in shape and colour. It also resembles the yellowish split pea sold in supermarkets. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 88

channa-bathūra *n.*

A meal of curried **channa** and large, fluffy **pūri**. Mainly Gujarati homes, and not as common in SA as in India. [Gu *chanā* 'chick-peas', *bhatorā* 'slightly sour dough']

channa-dhāl/channa-dōl *n.*

1. Split gram lentils, split chick peas.

2. A curry made of split gram lentils. See *dhāl*. [Gu, Hn, Ur *canā* plus *dāl*]

Chana dhal resembles sweetcorn and is cooked in a gravy thickened with gem squash, onions and tomatoes. It is served with puri and a sweet dried fruit pickle. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 92

channa flour *n.*

Whole gram flour, used for making fried snacks like **bhajia** (q.v.) and **vadde** (q.v.)

channa-magaj *n.*

A sweetmeat made of pea-flour, or crushed channa. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *canā* ‘gram, chick-peas’, *magaz* ‘pith, kernel’]

channi *n.* [ˈtʃʰʌnni:]

A tea-strainer, sieve. Older speakers. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *channā*, Bhoj *channī*]

chanya chōli *n.* – see **chōli****chappa** *n.*

A thin mat of interwoven strips of bamboo which can be easily rolled up. Same as **chattai**. Mainly Temil homes. [Te *cappa*]

chār *adj. Slang**

Pertaining to Indian South Africans. See **chār-ou**.

Sameer was not partial to Chaar flicks, I mused. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 30

chār-number *n.*

A song sung in an Indian language, Indian instrumental music. As opposed to an *English number*. [*char* plus Eng slang *number*]

- (*to deejay*): Put one *chār-number* there.

chār-ou *n. Slang**

An Indian, i.e. a person of Indian descent in SA. Not usually derogatory, except perhaps when used by outsiders with negative intent. Often jocular or critical of over-traditional attitudes in SAIE. Cf. *Charro's Chickenland* – name of take-away in Cape Town, run by Indians. Occurs in Tsotsitaal as *charras*. Spellings: **charo**, **charra**, **churra**. See **coolie**, **Indian**, **Mary**, **Sammy** and **boer-ou**, **bruin-ou**, **pekkie-ou**, **Radio Chār-ou**.

■ Many false etymologies have been proposed for this term in SA; the following are inappropriate: *achār* (q.v.) ‘pickle’ (Hn), *char* ‘to blacken’ (Eng), *char* ‘a cleaning woman, domestic servant’ (Eng), *charras* ‘the cannabis narcotic’ (Hn). No convincing evidence has been given for any of these. The most likely etymology is given below. [From *Afrik ou* ‘fellow’ plus *char*, probably based on Anglo-Indian *charwallah*, ‘an Indian servant who brought in the morning tea to British officials’. Also used as an adj. pertaining to Indians, as in *charwallah squadron* ‘a British Air Force squadron consisting of Indian personnel’. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*. Based on *char* ‘tea’, British English from Mandarin Chinese *ch’a* (also Hn, Ur

cay) plus Hn, Ur *wālā* ‘person, agent’. A less likely possibility is Hn, Ur *cār ādmī* ‘people in general, representatives of a community’]

I felt sorry for her, what with her *super*-Chaarou parents, who didn’t think it important for a female to at least finish school. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 167

to chūn like a chār-ou *Slang*

To speak like an Indian South African, informally in dialect and/or in slang. See **char-ou**, **chūn**.

chariot *n.*

Large carved wooden frames carried by devotees at the **Kavady** festival (q.v.). Also IE.

■ The frames are decorated on the sides with three lines of ash – the mark of Shiva – and carry marigolds, peacock feathers, coconuts and small brass containers of milk hanging from their sides. [Slightly different nuance from Std Eng *chariot* ‘two-wheeled vehicle drawn by horses used in ancient warfare, transportation or racing’]

As the procession moves along the street on its way to the temple, the chariots bring up the rear. These are drawn by men with hooks in their backs ... – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 58

‘Four men carried what we called a chariot on poles, two in front and two behind. They started at the temple and went from house to house. Everybody offered a gift, perhaps bananas or eggs ... – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 251

Charlie *n.*: **to make someone a Charlie** *Slang***

To denigrate someone, to belittle in a jocular way; to tease. [Br Eng *to make a Charlie of oneself*, informal usage dating to early c19, probably based on first name *Charles* — *Encarta Dictionary*]

• *Don’t make me a Charlie, eh!*

Chassies *n.* *Slang***

Abbrev. of *Chatsworth* (q.v.), among young males.

chāt *n.* – see **chutney**

chatai *n.*

A thin mat of interwoven strips of bamboo which can be easily rolled up. Often used at **havan** (q.v.) prayers and at picnics. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. Same as **chappa**. [Hn, Ur *chaṭāī*]

Correctly, chatai refers to matting in a traditional Hindu home, woven from thin strips of palm leaves or bamboo: perhaps used when sleeping on the floor. The name has crossed over to the similar article made from plastic. Also large sheets of plaited palm leaves etc. used for temporary screens, or a roofing for huts. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 36

Nadia sat a short distance away, on the straw chatai, cleaning vegetables for the next day’s meal. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 63

Chatsworth *n.*

Large working-class suburb in south-west Durban, created in the 1960s under apartheid as an Indian group area, the largest such township until the establishment of **Phoenix** (q.v.) in north Durban. See **Chassies**.

Five months ago she was served with an expropriation notice to sell her property and vacate. ... They have offered to pay her R9,000, and as alternative accommodation, a small semi-detached cottage in Unit Seven in Chatsworth. – F Meer *Portraits of Indian S Africans*, 92

chatti *n.* [ˈtʃʰAttɪ:]

A ceremony performed six days after the birth of a child by Hindus of North Indian extraction at which a small lamp traditionally made of flour paste is lit and offerings of milk made to the Gods to bring good fortune for the child. See **naming ceremony**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu, Hn, *chathī*]

Traditionally, Hindustanis commemorate the formal acceptance of a child into society in the *chuttie* ceremony, so-called because it occurs on the sixth day after birth. – F Meer *Portraits of Indian S Africans*, 82

chauki *n.* [ˈtʃʰauki:] or [ˈtʃʰəuki:]

A rolling-board on which dough is rolled out, in the making of **dōsa**, **pūri**, **rōti** (q.v.), etc. See **belna**. Older speakers. Mainly Hindi homes. [Bhoj *chauki*]

chaurka/sōrka *n.*

Calabash, the bottle gourd, *Lagenaria vulgaris* or *Cucurbita lagenaria*. Same as **dhūdhi**, **lauki**. Rare. Older speakers. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *curai kāy*, Te *sōrakāya*, based on *kay* ‘vegetable’]

cheap-line *adj.*

1. (Of things) Cheap, of poor quality, easily worn or broken.
2. (Of people) Indulging in socially unapproved behaviour. Same as **tickey-line**. See also **common**. [Commercial term *a cheap line of goods*]

Even Rabi with his cheap-line masala can cook better than this. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

cheek *v.* *Basilectal*

To be rude. See **cheeky/chicky**.

■ Though derived from **cheeky** (q.v.), the sense is that of Standard English ‘to be impudent or full of cheek’, rather than dialect *cheeky/chicky* ‘to be stern, harsh’ [A back-formation from *cheeky*]

- *Don’t cheek with me. He was cheeking with me.*

cheeky/chicky *adj.* [ˈtʃɪkki:]

Stern, fierce, harsh. Also SABE. [Semantic shift from Eng *cheeky* ‘insolent, impudent’]

The foremen of those times were very, very, very chicky. – Sezela resident, June 2010

chebe *n.* [ˈtʃæbɛ] *Slang**

A beard. [Zu *intshebe*]

- *You'd better shave properly or else people will think you're growing a chebe.*

check *v.* *Slang**

To see, to look at, to pay a visit to. Also SAE slang. [From Eng *check* 'to examine']

- *Check that ou's cab.*

check you *exclam.* *Slang**

A way of leave-taking, equivalent to 'good-bye', 'cheerio'. Same as **sight you** (q.v.).

chēdo *n.*

Decorated part of a sari, including part of its border, that is worn over the shoulder. Same as **achra**, **mundhāni**, **pālav**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *cedo*]

chella *n.*

Younger sister. Rare. Older speakers. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. See **akka**, **bahini**, **bēn**, **thangechi**. [Te *celli*, *cellalu*, based on *cellam* 'favourite']

cherry *n.* *Slang***

A young woman. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Br Eng c19 and c20 slang *cherry* 'a young girl' – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* Perhaps linked to French *chérie* 'dear'.]

'... I kissed his best friend when he vaaied to the kitchen to get some chocolate ice cream,' she said speaking with all the laziness of a Chār-ou Cherrie. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 53

chest-draw *n.*

Chest-of-drawers.

- *A: Where's my hairbrush? B: Have you looked in the chest-draw?*

chevda/chevra *n.*

A snack comprising spicy crisps of fried rice, split grain, nuts, etc. Sold commercially in small packets as *crackles*. [Gu *cevdo*, SA Ta *ševadā*]

Even better was the tasting! One minute you were happily munching an exotic nut and experiencing the sweet flavor of aniseed blended with sesame seed, the next moment you were surprised by a bit of hot chilli. Chevra is one of the most exotic creations of the East. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 32

Fortunately there are places in Cape Town which sell packets of chevda, and other sweetmeats, so we did manage to get some traditional foods at least. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 150

chew *v.:* **to chew someone's brains**

To pester someone, to give someone a hard time.

- *Stop chewing my brains.*

chi *exclam.*

An exclamation of disgust at something dirty or defiled. Older speakers. Cf. SAE *sies*, which is also used in SAIE. Also spelt **chee**. [Hn, Ur *chī*, Ta, Te *cī*] ‘No,’ replied Anand laughing uproariously, ‘chee that’s dirty!’ – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 66.

chicha *n.*

1. Paternal uncle.
2. A term of respect for an elderly male. Same as **chācha**, **kāka**. Mainly Kokani, Urdu homes [Ko, Ur *cicā*]

chichi *n.*

1. Paternal aunt, i.e. wife of paternal uncle (**chicha**).
2. A term of respect for an elderly female. Same as **chāchi**, **chinneina**, **kāki**, **perineina**. Mainly Kokani, Urdu homes. [Ko, Ur *cicī*]

chikkan work *n.*

Fine, embroidered muslin, characteristic of Lucknow. Also British English and IE, sometimes spelt **chicken work**. See **thār work**. [Hn, Ur *cikan*, based on *chiknā* ‘smooth, pure, attractive’]

Chikan is also known as white embroidery. A Muslim household craft associated with Lucknow, although it originated in Persia where the word means ‘raised’. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 38

Chikan is worked from the back in a herringbone stitch. Only the outline stitches are visible on the right side but its guile remains in the shadow it casts on the right side and that is why in the West this type of embroidery is known as shadow work. – Z Mayat *Nanima’s Chest*, 82

childrens *n. Basilectal*

Children. [double pl. formed on analogy of regular nouns]

- *These childrens of today don’t play outside anymore.*

chilli-bite *n.*

1. **Bhajia** (q.v.).
2. Any light, spiced snack, e.g. **sēv**, **chevda**, **wompadi** (q.v.). Also in other varieties of SAE.

Vadde [is] a South Indian chilli-bite. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 231

... they enjoyed the occasional *dop* and chillie bites to warm their innards especially when the weather became biting cold. – N Govender *Girrmitt Tales*, 164

chilli-bite mix *n.*

A commercially available ready-made mixture of combined ingredients for making chilli bites, comprising gram flour, jeera, dry **dhania** (q.v.) seeds and baking powder.

chilli trees *n.*: to think money grows on chilli trees

To be lavish, to be naïve about money matters, to expect too much.

■ It is widely believed by SAIE speakers that one of the inducements offered by the recruiters in the employ of the British in India to potential **indentured** (q.v.) workers in the c19 was that Natal was a fabulous land in which money grew on chilli-trees. Other family stories less frequently mention gold hanging from **branjol** (q.v.) trees.

- *A: Dad, can I have fifty rand for school? B: You think money grows on chilli trees?*

chimta *n.*

A pair of metal tongs, used to grip burning coal or wood. Now rare. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur, Te *cimtā*, SA Ta *simtā*]

China grass *n.*

Bits of white, dried seaweed, sold as tiny, thin strips. Used in making jellies and milkshakes. Also known in India as *agar-agar*. Used in making **falooda** (q.v.).

Agar-agar is obtained from various seaweeds also known as Japanese or Ceylon moss. It is also called Bengal isinglass, but in India, most people know it as china grass. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 220

chinamma *n.*

Younger sister of one's mother, younger maternal aunt. Popular as a proper name. See **māsi**, **mousi**, **peddama**, **perima**, **pinama**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta, Te *cinna* 'small', *amma* 'mother']

chinneina *n.*

1. Younger brother of one's father, younger paternal uncle. See **chācha**, **kāka**, **perineina**.
2. Husband of one's mother's younger sister. See **chācha**, **kāka**, **perineina**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Te *cinna* 'small', *naina* 'father']

chinthapandu *n.*

Tamarind. Same as **amli**, **imli**, **puli**. Mainly Telugu homes. [Te *cintapaṇḍu*]

chōdh/chōdhu *n.* *Vulgar*

1. An expletive for one who engages in excessive sexual intercourse, a promiscuous person.
2. A fool, idiot, etc. See **bēn-chōdh**, **chuth**, **mādhār chōdh**. [Hn, Ur *codū*]

chōli *n.*

A short blouse that exposes the midriff, with tight short sleeves, worn with a sari or **ghagra** (q.v.) Also IE and other varieties. In *COD*. (Gu, Hn, Ur *colī*)

The red and pink blouses [in the illustrations] are known as cholis. They are cut and shaped like brassieres and the uplift is such that it could not require a bra underneath. They can be worn with saris and skirts or under very thin voile dresses. Kathiawadi women used to wear such cholis with white voile

dresses and elaborately embroidered pants with drawstrings. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 25

The style and the name [choli] are said to have originated with the ladies of the Chola dynasty of the south. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 40

chanya-chōli *n.*

Fashionable garment worn by young women comprising a **chanya** (long ankle-length skirt of Indian fabric and bright prints) and a **chōli**.

■ The garment is an ancient one that is particularly characteristic of Gujarat, Kacch and Rajasthan. See also **ghagra choli**, **panjabi**, **shalwar kameej**, **gharāra**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *chanyā choli*]

choli-blouse *n.*

Same as *choli*. [Hybrid compound]

chōkha *n.*

A meal of dry, boiled, mashed potato, mixed with onion, **dhania** (q.v.) and chilli. Eaten cold with **rōti** (q.v.). Less commonly made with **branjal** (q.v.). Now rare. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *cokhā*]

chommie *n. Slang**

Friend, pal, chum. Same as **maat** (q.v.). Also SAE slang. [Probably from Eng *chum*, originally university slang based on *chamber fellow*]

choombu *n.* – see **chambu**

chōr *n.* Abusive/jocular

Thief, rogue, rascal.

■ This word was reported in the press of the times to be used so commonly by Indian parliamentarians in the **House of Delegates** (q.v.) in the 1980s that it was banned from use there. [Gu, Hn, Ur *cōr*]

chow *Slang**

1. *v.* To eat, to have a meal, eat heartily.
2. *n.* A meal, food. See **bunny-chow**. [US slang *chow*, from Mandarin Chinese *chow* ‘hot, spicy’]
3. *v.* To cause an injury to an opponent by a foul in sport.

• *He chowed my ankle.*

Maariya and I were left to dine alone, which was bliss as we could chow and choon to our hearts' content. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 167

to catch a chow *Slang**

To eat, to have a meal, to eat heartily.

chub *n.* [ˈtʃʊb] *Basilectal*

Tube (of a tyre, of liquid, but not pertaining to train travel).

chub *n. Slang**

An errand boy, a young inexperienced assistant, a follower, or ‘willing slave’. Also **choobie** and the probably hypercorrect form **tube**. See **bum-boy**. [Br Eng slang from the c17 denoting an inexperienced person, a callow youth,

based on *chub*, a thick-bodied, coarse-fleshed river fish of the carp family. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

This Cohen, I know him. He's nothing ... a tube for the Hayaat family, their front man. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 401

Riaz Patel, Sameer's chief choobie and cousin, had unfortunately chosen Rozina Kareem ... as his wife. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 24

chub-lightie *n.*

Same as **chub**, emphasising the young age of the person. See **lightie**.

chuck *v. Slang**

To leave, depart. Also SAE slang. Also used in colloquial English sense of 'throw, throw away'. [Br Eng c19 and c20 slang, now obsolescent, *do a chuck* 'to effect an ejection, to depart'. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

- *Let's chuck.*

chūlha/chūla *n.*

Fireplace in a kitchen for cooking, open fireplace in a farmyard for heating water.

■ A chulha is made up of small iron rods secured horizontally on a couple of bricks at each end, or an iron tripod. Now rare, though many traditionalists swear that the chulha and coal stoves of former days produced the tastiest food. Some speakers use the term **down-fire** or **bottom-fire** instead. Also spelt **chula**, **choola**. Same as **arepu**. See also **fire-food**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *cūlhā*]

The kitchen is usually a lean-to shack at the back in which the cooking is done on an open fire, *choola*, on the ground. – F Meer *Portraits of Indian S Africans*, 109

chūn *Basilectal*

1. *v.* To tune a musical instrument.
 2. *n.* A tune, a song. Hence **chūnful** adj. [From Eng *tune*]
- *This song is quite chūnful.*

chūn *v. Slang**

1. To tell, to speak to, to talk, to ask, to ask a favour.
2. To woo a woman.

Also SAE slang. Spellings: **chune**, **choon**. The original form *tune* may also be used as a variant or hyper-elegant form. [Based on earlier SAE/SAIE *tune* 'to put in right frame of mind, usually by flattery or small bribe', from the tuning of a musical instrument. Possibly related to older SAE and now obsolete Br Eng slang *tune* 'to beat, thrash']

'When was the last time you called me just to choon, hey?' – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 190

'We were just tuning about the chow when your ma heard us.' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

chuna/chunāmbu *n.*

White limestone paste smeared on a **betel-leaf** (q.v.) before eating. See **pān**, **vethelu**. [Ta *chunāmbu*, Hn *cūnā*]

Chūsdāy *n.* [ˈtʃuːzdeɪ]

Tuesday. Also common in other English varieties. [Minor phonetic variant of Eng *Tuesday*]

chuth/chuthya *n.* *Vulgar*

Same as **chōdh**. [Hn, Ur *cūt* ‘female genitals’, *cūtiyā* ‘fool’]

chutney *n.*

1. A hot meal with a tomato base, cooked with chilli and onion, and eaten with **rotī** (q.v.), rice, bread, samp, etc. Thus **tomato chutney**, **egg chutney**, **chops chutney**, **brinjal chutney**, etc. This sense is known mainly within the SA Indian community.
2. A cold relish of **dhania** leaves (q.v.), mint, and/or crushed nuts. Thus **nuts chutney**, **green chutney**, etc. Known in Ta as **thovel/thuvaial**. The English sense of a relish or sauce made with fruit and spices was rare in SAIE, but is now also fairly common. The Indian term *cāt* (also spelt *chāt*) for spicy snacks is now becoming known in SA under the influence of new migration. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn, Ur *catnī*, from *cāt* ‘to lick’, Ta *catnī*]

chutney-nagāra *n.*

Entertainment involving **Hindi** (q.v.) or, more frequently, **Bhojpuri** (q.v.) **chutney-songs** (q.v.) accompanied by music including that of a nagara or large Indian kettle drum or tom-tom as well as comedy routines of men often playing the roles of females. [Hn *nagārā*, Ur *naqqārā*]

chutney-song *n.*

An up-beat folk-song in **Bhojpuri** (q.v.) or **Hindi** dialect. Also Trinidad English, from where this form of music gained international prominence in the 1970s, based on Indo-Caribbean adaptations of traditional Bhojpuri folk and religious songs from India. Also known as a **chutney number**. [Hn *catnī* ‘spiced relish’]

Tamil-chutney *n.*

A chutney song performed in Tamil, in the style of the Bhojpuri originals.

class-boy *n.*

Male classmate, not necessarily a close friend.

- *My class-boy’s brother’s picture was in the newspapers.*

class-girl *n.*

Female classmate, not necessarily a close friend.

clean *v.***to clean a photo/send a photo for cleaning**

To have a photograph developed; to send a film for developing.

to clean vegetables

To prepare vegetables for cooking, by shelling, removing inedible parts, cutting into pieces, and washing.

clever *adj.*

Artful, cunning (in addition to usual meaning of ‘intelligent’).

- *You’re very clever – taking the first pick every time.*

cold-touch *n. Basilectal*

A cold, a touch of cold.

- *He can’t go to school today, ’cos he’s got cold-touch.*

colonial-born *part./n. Historical*

A person of Indian descent born in SA. Usually referred to descendants of indentured immigrants. Implies some degree of westernisation. Thus ‘Colonial-Born Association’, now defunct. See **British Indian**.

1932: The Colonial Born and Indian Settlers Association [was] founded by Albert Christopher and PR Pather, who broke from the Natal Indian Congress. – F Meer *Portraits of Indian S Africans*, 43

Albert Christopher, a colonial-born Indian, was pleased that ‘the European South Africans are part of us as we are of them ...’ – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 15

All these developments were followed with considerable interest by Indians in South Africa – not only Gujaratis who had retained ties with their villages in India, but also colonial-borns of indentured descent, who found great inspiration in this unfolding anti-colonial struggle. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi’s Prisoner*, 159

colour-bar *n. Basilectal*

Prejudice, race prejudice, apartheid. Often pronounced as if one word, in the phrase *to have colour-bar*. [A slightly different nuance from the English abstract term, *the colour bar*, which also occurs in educated speech]

- *He’s always criticising me at work; he must have colour-bar.* – Durban resident, July 2000

colour-clothes *n. Basilectal*

Clothes of one’s own choice, without restriction on colour or style, as opposed to a school uniform. Known as *civvies* in English schools.

- *At university we are allowed to wear colour clothes.* – Essay by university student, Durban-Westville, April 1984

come down *v.:* **to come down**

To fail an examination (euphemism). Not the same as British English *to come down in the world*. Possibly other varieties too.

- *My son came down again – I don’t know what he’s going to do now.*

coming-time *n. Basilectal*

A return journey. See **going-time**.

- *Coming-time took longer because I was tired.*

comments *v.: to pass comments Basilectal*

To make rude, personal comments about someone, often obliquely; to be derisive. See **hint**.

- *She's so particular, and on top of that she's always passing comments.*

common *adj. Basilectal*

Of bad workmanship, easily broken. Possibly other varieties. [A slightly different nuance of Eng *common* 'ordinary', 'vulgar']

- *Don't buy that satchel – it's common.*

complicating *adj.*

Complicated. Now rare.

- *Your problems are too complicating.*

compound *n.*

In British India – the enclosed ground, whether garden or waste – that surrounded an Anglo-Indian house (Yule & Burnell 1903: 240). In SA – an enclosure where workers are housed, e.g. at the diamond mines. Sometimes used of **barracks** (q.v.) where indentured workers or their descendants were housed.

■ In KZN *barracks* implies Indian habitation, *compound* Zulu or Pondo habitation. On the sugar estates of KZN compounds are distinguished from barracks in having a communal kitchen and dining room. [IE *compound*, probably ultimately from Malay *kampung* 'settlement, village']

condai *n.* ['kɒndai]

Bus conductor, either of a large bus or of a mini-bus operating as a taxi. Also known as **skotēn** (q.v.) [Abbrev. from *conductor*]

We jumped off from Onions bus (the condii should smell like onions, that's how he got his calling name) ... – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

Congress *n.*

Abbreviation of **Natal Indian Congress** (q.v.).

- Congress says, 'Don't vote'. – pamphlet during racially selective elections of the 1980s

conjusted *adj. Basilectal*

Congested, packed with people, crowded. [Eng *congested*]

- *It was so conjusted at the post office today.*

connection *n.*

A relative, usually more distant than a sibling. Also SAE informal usage. Not necessarily informal in SAIE. [Eng *connection*, 'person connected with others by family relationship' – COD]

- *He's my connection, but he doesn't keep up with us anymore.*

a connection call

Favouritism of one's friends or family for a job, nepotism. See **connection**.

a forty-fifth connection

A distant relative. Usually disparaging of those who claim closer kinship than really exists with another. See **connection**, **a connection call**.

- *Don't tell me about your forty-fifth connections.*

coolie *n.*

An Indian. Derogatory when used by members of other ethnic groups, but occasionally used jocularly by younger SAIE speakers.

■ In North India the term refers to a porter, one belonging to the caste of porters. In colonial parlance, the term referred to any unskilled labourer. In South India the possibly related term *kuli* denotes payment for casual work, or casual hire itself. In SA and East Africa Indians objected to the term since many of them were skilled workers or traders. Misunderstanding over the difference between the Indian (Hindi) and colonial usage was evident when some Indians in Durban objected to the title of a Hindi film of the 1980s, *Kuli*, which in fact was a romanticised Bollywood love story about a humble porter. The root is found in the Zulu appellation for Indians *amakula* and in names such as *Nomakula* for a female child brought up amongst Indians. In COD. See **chār-ou**, **Indian**, **Mary**, **Sammy**. [Br Eng *coolie* 'an oriental manual labourer', Hn, Ur *kulī* 'porter, day worker', possibly related to Ta *kuli* 'wage, payment for occasional menial work', Te *kūli* *n.* 'hire']

I was hence known as a 'coolie barrister'. The merchants were known as 'coolie merchants'. The original meaning of the word 'coolie' was thus forgotten, and it became a common appellation for all Indians. The Musalman merchant would resent this and say: 'I am not a coolie, I am an Arab,' or 'I am a merchant', and the Englishman, if courteous, would apologise to him. – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 100

Durban Coolie Day School: This school is held in a wood and iron building ... adjoining the Corporation Coolie Barracks. – *Indian School Report*, 1885

Coolie No 1 is recorded on the list of the *Truro* (q.v.) as Davarum, a 30-year old Christian from Madras. He was accompanied by eighteen year old Nagium, Coolie No 2, most probably his wife. – *Indian Annual* 2000, 71

One can earn more money [in an Indian village] by taking contracts. A 'Coolie' labourer doing odd jobs is paid 10 rupees with food till 12 noon. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 144

Coolie Location *n.*

Residential area in Marabastad, Pretoria in the first half of the c20 set aside for Indian residents and businesses. Also known as the **Asiatic Bazaar**.

■ Residents were relocated from this relatively multiracial area to other parts of Pretoria. See **Laudium**.

Jerusalem St, where I was born was part of the Asiatic Bazaar and the Asiatic Bazaar was part of the Location. Of course officially the location didn't exist, but it was there all right, a mile from the city of Pretoria. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 1

coolie-store *n. Derogatory*

Store run by Indians, often used to refer to isolated stores in country districts.

Circulars called for a boycott of the 'coolie store'. 'Think White, Act White, Shop White' was the motto. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 162

The coolie trade *n. phr.*

Unofficial colonial term for indenture, shipping of Indian labourers to the colonies.

Coolie-Christmas *n. Historical*

Term formerly used by Whites in Natal for the **Moharram** festival (q.v.) celebrated by Indians in Natal. Not used in SAIE. Cf. US English *Jewish Christmas* for 'Chanukah'.

coon-ou *n. Slang**

A Black man. Also SAE slang. Cf. US slang *coon*, originally denoting a sly or shrewd person, later a Negro. Considered highly offensive in the US. Not used as a derogatory vocative in SAIE. Has the same often impolite and sometimes offensive connotations as **boer-ou**, **bruin-ou**, **chār-ou**, **pekkie-ou**, **vet-ou** (q.v).

■ Not the same as *coon* in Cape Town, which refers without offence to the Coloured minstrels and to their New Year carnival celebrations as the *Coon Carnival*, now a tourist attraction. [US Eng abbrev. of Eng *barracoon*, based on Sp *barracón* or Ptg *barracoos*, 'barracks in which slaves or convicts were formerly held in temporary confinement']

copration *n.* [kop'reiʃən]

Corporation, town-corporation, town or city council.

Copration Barracks *n. phr. Historical*

Housing in former times for Indians employed by the Municipal corporation of Durban. Also known as **Magazine Barracks** (see **barracks**).

cousin *n.*

Compounded with a kinship term to emphasise the close relation between first cousins who are virtually considered siblings.

cousin-brother *n.*

A male first cousin. Also IE, SABE and other varieties in Africa. Cf. SABE *brother* for 'male first cousin'.

Look my cousin-brother, his name's Jaybalan ... white people call him Jesse. – D Govender *Finishing Touch*, 99

cousin-brother-in-law *n.*

The husband of one's first cousin. Rare.

cousin-sister *n.*

A female first cousin. Also IE. Cf. SABE *sister* ‘female first cousin’.

coward *n./adj. Basilectal*

Treacherous, vindictive, obstinate, unhelpful. [Eng *cowardly*, with semantic shift]

- *I'll help you get a job at our firm. Why should I be a coward person?*

crackers *n.*

Fireworks, fire-crackers, traditionally lit at **Diwali** (q.v.) and at other festivals, including Guy Fawkes. Also IE. See **shurbans**.

credik *n. Basilectal*

Credit (as opposed to cash).

- *It's so hard to get things on credik now.*

create *v. Slang**

To create a disturbance, to cause trouble, to make a noise, to make a fuss. See **cause: to cause it**. [Br Eng early c20 slang *create* ‘make a fuss’. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

- *My eldest cat was quiet this morning, but the youngest was creating from six in the morning.*

crown-birthday *n. Regional*

A birthday in which one's age coincides with the date of the month in which one was born.

■ Thus a person born on 15 January celebrates a crown birthday when fifteen years old. This practice is particularly common amongst Coloured people in SA, and learned from them by Indians in some cities. A child is given a special birthday on the occasion. The origins of this custom are unknown. [Eng *crown plus birthday*]

- *For my crown birthday my parents gave me a tricycle.* – Cape Town Indian informant, June 2007

curry *n.*

As in international English, a dish of vegetables or meat cooked in an Indian style usually in a spicy gravy.

■ Not all curried dishes would be called *curry* in Indian homes. A curry is distinguished from a **chutney** (q.v.), which is a meal in which a tomato base replaces the spicy gravy; herbs cooked in spices are usually termed **bhāji** (q.v.), not curry; and pulses are termed **dhal** (q.v.) or **dōl**, even if some of them are relatively spicy. See **magni dhāl**, **mung dhāl**. [Ta *kari*]

There is a prevalent misconception amongst non-Indians that curry is an ingredient used in curries, whereas in fact the curry, or the more correct term, *Tarkari*, is the dish eaten with rotis or rice dishes. Curry powder as is sold in tins is never used by Indians and, instead, compounds of several spices mixed together make the masala. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 51

The word curry comes from *kari*, which in south India means a blend of vegetables and spices. Apparently, the 18th century British viceroy, General Clive, added water and meat to the *kari* to make what is now called Madras curry. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 208

An Indian *kari*, the genuine article, is prepared from a combination of spices, condiments and coconut, freshly ground and sautéed in oil or ghee and then cooked until the gravy thickens; no extraneous thickening agent is ever used. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 9

curry-leaf *n.*

Fragrant green leaves of the *Murraya koenigii* used as seasoning in curries. The leaves are not usually eaten.

■ Known in North India as *kari patta* ('curry leaf') or *mīthā nīm* ('sweet neem'). The *neem* or *margosa* tree, while ubiquitous in India and serving a myriad of functions, is not known in SA, where its closest relatives appear to be the **curry-leaf tree** and the *syringa* tree (see **slingeberry**). [Probably calqued on Ta *kari-vepilay* or *karapilla*]

Northern India relies on mint whereas the south uses the powerful-smelling curry leaves. No south Indian savoury is complete without this herb. It lends its lingering aroma to a dish but is not eaten. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 104

Munching on a daily dose of young curry leaves has helped a local man heal, so much so, that he has now taken it upon himself to educate and empower others about the benefits of alternative healing ... – T Langry *Post*, 28 April 2010

curry-powder *n.*

Spices used in making curry. Same as **masāla** (q.v.).

■ Sold commercially in packets.

curry-room *n.*

A small restaurant or room in a hotel serving food and drink, usually to non-residential Indian customers.

■ In apartheid times Indians and other persons of colour could not live or dine in the same places as Whites.

hurry, hurry and spoil the curry

Said in a reprimanding or jocular manner to a person in undue haste, the first verb being a counter-factual, not an imperative – i.e. 'If you hurry, the curry will be spoiled.'

cut *v.*

To slaughter an animal or a bird (e.g. to **cut a fowl** – q.v.); to kill a person by stabbing or slitting the throat (obsolete). The euphemism is probably not a conscious one. Also IE. Cf. SAE *cut* 'to castrate'. See **fowl: to jump like a cut fowl**.

• *They cut a fowl.*

He replied, 'It was I that cut my wife and I am going to die for it.' – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 17

cuzy *n.* *Slang***

Cousin, usually male; way of addressing any close friend. Possibly other varieties. See **connection**. [Abbrev. of *cousin*]

'Well *cuzzie*, this is it. It's been ten years,' Sam cried out with outstretched arms. – N Govender *Girmit Tales*, 20



dabba/dabbo *n.*

A small, usually round, metal or plastic container used to store or carry grains, snacks, etc. See **tiffin**. Mainly Gujarati, Urdu homes. [Gu *dabbo*, Ur *dabbā*]

dabla *n.*

Lima-beans, *Phaseolus limensis*, large flat beans with a white exterior dotted with pink. Curried while still green. Same as **double-beans** (q.v.).

■ Not widely known in India. [Possibly Bhoj *dablī*, *dabliyā*]

dablās *v.*

Same as **double** (q.v.). [Probably from Zu *ukudubula* ‘to give a resounding whack’, reinforced by Eng *double up*]

daffalé *pron./n. phr.* [ˈdʌflɛ]

He, that fellow. Carries a slight nuance of disrespect. See **fallé**. [Eng *that fellow*]

• *Don't waste your time talking to him, daffale won't listen to anybody.*

dāla *v. Slang***

To pick a fight, act in a contrary way, provoke, ‘mess around’ with someone. [Probably Zu *ukudala* ‘cause, create, bring into being, form’]

Ekse, don't dallah me, you know me, me I'm from the fives, right. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

don't dāla with the masāla****

Witticism equivalent to ‘Don't mess around with an Indian’. See **masāla**.

to dāla a thing***

To do something quickly.

damage *v. Slang***

To beat up, hurt someone in a fight. [Semantic widening to include persons]

Then I chooned ... ‘hold me, hold me before I damage this ou’. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

dame *n. Slang**

A woman, girl, sweetheart. Now rare. Also SAE slang. [US slang, from Scots *dame* ‘girl’, possibly reinforced by Afrik *dame* ‘lady’]

dash

1. *n.* Dilutant for liquor.

- *What dash are you using?*
- 2. *v.* To dilute liquor with water or soda.
- *Dash it with water.* [Br Eng *a dash of water/soda*, etc]

Deepavali/Divali/Diwali *n.* [ˈdi:pavali]

The major Hindu festival, celebrated on the day of the new moon in October or November, commemorating the deeds of Rama and/or Krishna and symbolising the conquest of light over darkness and good over evil.

■ The Sanskritised form *Deepavali* is favoured by Tamil and Telugu speakers, whereas *Divali* or *Diwali* are characteristic of Gujarati and Hindi speakers respectively. Also known as **The Festival of Lights**. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. See also **dhīpam**. [Bhoj, Ta *diwālī*, Gu, Hn *divālī*, Ta, Te *dīpāvali*, from Skt *dīpa* ‘lamp, light’ *avali* ‘row’, hence ‘row of lights’]

Deepavali is by far the best known and most popular Hindu festival. Known as the Festival of Lights, through the rows of lights that decorate every Hindu home, it is a festival of joy and merrymaking because of the death of Narkasura, a demon king, at the hands of Lord Krishna. – T Naidoo *The Hindu Way*, 63

She was also practical in her choice of gifts. On the birthday of every member of the family, at Diwali and at Christmas, she would buy an item of clothing as a gift. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 78

One of the great festivals was ‘Diwali’, says Manikum Govender, ‘our Festival of Lights, when we had both fireworks and dancing. We danced through Saturday night, then prayed on the Sunday.’ – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 251

degree-boots *n.* [ˈdɪgri: ‘bu:ts]

Thick-soled, hard-wearing boots used by manual labourers. The term, once commonly used in KZN, is now rare. Also used to refer to *gum boots*.

■ The term is probably based on the legal and military term *decree*. Yule & Burnell (1886) note in their entry for **diggory**, **digri**, **degree** that this is an Anglo-Hindustani term of law-court jargon for ‘decree’. [English *decree plus boots*]

dek *adj.* *Slang**

1. Fat, satiated, full. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal *dik*. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 23.
 - *A: Have another slice. B: No ways, I’m dek.*
2. Fed-up, impatient.
 - *I’m dek of having to clean your car all the time.* [Afrik *dik* ‘thick’]

dhādha *n.*

1. Paternal grandfather. See **āja**, **thātha**. See **dhādhi**.
2. An expert, an old hand. Slang. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dādā*]

‘Listen, you two,’ Ganni-dada said. ‘It’s time you spread the horizons of your knowledge a bit further ...’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 110

dhādhi *n.*

Paternal grandmother. Also **dhādhi-mā**, a more respectful term among Gujarati speakers. See **āji**, **mā**, **nāni**, **pāti**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dādī*]

She'd fallen in love for the first time, been caught snogging by her ferocious dhaadi and been banished to Cape Town as a result. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 110

dhahi/dhai/dhei *n.*

Sour-milk curds, yoghurt. Also spelled *dahi*. See **panīr**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dahī*, *Ta tayir*]

Dahi (yoghurt) is no food-fad in India. It is a staple stand-by for babies, adults and convalescents and can be consumed throughout the day with all meals. Accompanied with rice dishes it is a delicious sauce or gravy. With snacks and teas it becomes the cool and refreshing drink and when added to curries it mellows the spices. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 279

dhahi-vada/dhahi-wada/dhahi-bada *n.*

A snack comprising **wada** (q.v.) dipped in yoghurt; a **wada** (q.v.) made with yoghurt; a yoghurt biscuit-like snack or dumpling. [Gu *dahivadū*]

Dahi Wada may be made with whole mung beans for a green effect. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 169

dhāl *n.*

1. Dry, yellow split lentils.
2. Split lentil soup, usually eaten with **biryani** or rice when served with a curry that has little gravy.
3. Indian pulse. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD*. Spellings: **dhall**, **dhol**, **dhal**, **dal**, **dōl**, **doll**. See **dōl**, **mung dōl**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dāl*]

On them were assembled the greater Haveris: septuagenarian Chotty, Omar, Mamoos and Amina-ma in the front ranks; Salim the butcher, Salima, Fatima, Fazel-bhai, Ayesha-bibi who had brought with a bowl of dhal specially. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 38

Whatever you do, it's no dhal off my mutton breyani ... – N Ngcobo *Some of my Best Friends are White*, 140

dhāl bunny *n.* – see **bunny chow****dhāl-gos** *n.*

A dish of meat, usually mutton, cooked with dhāl, originally popular amongst Muslims. Advertised in some restaurants as **mutton-dōl**. [*dāl* plus Hn, Ur *gosht* or *gos* 'meat']

dhāl-pithi *n.*

A preparation made of **dhāl** and pieces of **roti** (q.v.). Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Bhoj *dāl* plus *piṭṭhī* 'boiled pudding']

dhāl-pūri/ dhalpūri *n.*

Pūri (q.v.) stuffed with boiled crushed dhāl seasoned with **dhanīa** and **jeera** (q.v.). A sweeter variety is made with sugar. Considered a much more special preparation than pūri. Also Trinidad English, Mauritius English, etc. See **dhāl-rōti**. [Bhoj *dālpūri*]

dhāl-rōti *n.*

Rōti (q.v.) stuffed with boiled crushed **dhāl** (q.v.) seasoned with **dhania** and **jeera** (q.v.). A sweeter variety is made with sugar. Considered a much more special preparation than rōti.

I brought you two dhal-roti auntie, for Diwali day, I couldnt bring curry because you know we Hindi peoples not like you Tamil peoples we don't cook mutton on Diwali day, only vegetables, thaswhy I can't bring you curry, I know you cooking chicken curry today. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 65

Well, I happen to know that Mr Ballard likes Chicken *Biryani* ... and his mouth absolutely waters for *Dhall-roti*. – D Govender *Finishing Touch*, 108

dhāls *n.*

Varieties of **dhāl** (q.v.), e.g. **mag/mug**, **mūng**, **masūr**, **split pea dhāl** (q.v.)

dhālchi/dālchi *n. Regional*

A fritter similar to a **bhajia** or a **chilli-bite** (q.v.), but usually slightly larger. Made of flour and **dhāl** (q.v.) and fried in batter with onion and finely chopped pieces of spinach. An alternative is to make it with a spicier chilli-bite mix rather than **dhāl**.

■ Common to Malay and Indian communities of Cape Town, the term appears to be Indian in origin. [Ur, Ko *dalicha* 'large fritter', *dalichi* 'small fritter']

Dalcha is prepared by most communities in India, but only the Deccanis excel in it. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 67

Mix daal bajias (dhalicha bhaja): 1 cup moong daal; 1 cup chana daal; 1 cup black eye beans. Soak above daal overnight in water ... Grind all above spices. Add one egg to combine and fry in oil like fritters. – N Parker *Kokni Delights*, 33

dhamādh *n.*

Son-in-law. Older speakers. See **ghar-dhamādh**, **marmagé**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *dāmād*]

dhandia *n.*

Dancing sticks; short, light decorated sticks for dancing.

■ Dandias are used in the Gujarati folk dance **garba** (q.v.), with a pair of sticks being struck against each other in time to the music either by an individual or by pairs dancing within a circle. [Gu *daṇḍiyā*]

dhania *n.*

Coriander, (*Coriandrum sativum*), fresh green leaves of coriander used to flavour curries and other preparations such as omelettes, salads, etc. Sometimes referred to as *Indian parsley* or *Chinese parsley*. Known in Afrikaans as *koljander* or *koljana*. Spreading in SAE. Spellings: **danya**, **dhanya**, **dhunia**, **dhunya**. [Hn, Ur *dhaniyā*, Te *dhaniyālu*]

Most Indian cooks will not allow a savoury dish to leave their kitchen without a good sprinkling of fresh, fragrant dhania coriander leaves. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 34

My very own husband selling the cucumbers and the green beans and the dhunia-jeera for all and everyone. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 153

Coriander, also known as dhanya – label of product at supermarket, Cape Town, April 2010

dhār *n.*

1. A mixture of turmeric, raisins, candy and nuts, used during Hindu prayers.
2. Offering of water in Hindu prayers.
 - Water from a brass jug without a handle (**lōta** – q.v.) is poured onto a plant, especially a **tulsi** (q.v.) plant as part of a **pūja** (q.v.). Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *dhār* ‘current, flow’, in relation to water or other items poured out of a vessel]

dharji/darjee *n.*

A tailor, member of tailor sub-caste.

■ Many members of this caste or people historically from this caste run small tailor shops. See **mōchi**, **dhōbi**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *darjī*]

The Darjees, noted for their scrupulous honesty, charged ridiculously low prices for what was nothing less than artistic excellence. An additional bonus was that they unfailingly handed over, together with the completed garment, the left over pieces of fabric which they insisted would serve a very useful purpose at some later date. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 305

dharma *n.*

Religion, faith, justice, charity, duty within a Hindu framework, social customs regarded as one’s duty, charity. Dharma literally means ‘righteousness’, i.e. ‘doing the right thing’. Hence **Hindu dharma**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu, Hn *dharm*, Ta *dharmam* ‘charity’, Te *dharmamu*]

There is no single equivalent term in English for dharma which covers moral and religious duty, universal law and order, custom, principle, justice and religion. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 39

dhauni/dauni *n.*

Light scarf or shawl worn by Muslim women. Same as **orhni**. Spellings: **dawnie**, **dhownie**. [Ur *daunī*]

The bride wears the traditional head-covering of Muslim women, dawnie, but this too is often adapted into the western veil. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 80

And she swished away with a twirl of the sarie, head bare of the traditional dhownie which was quickly pulled over the head in the presence of men, leaving only a portion of the face uncovered. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 64

dhawa/dhava/dhewa *exclam.* [ˈd̪æwɑː]/[ˈd̪ɑvɑː] *Basilectal*

There, there you are, there it is. Also spelt **thawa**, **thava**. See **hawa**. [Eng *there you are*]

My nieces and nephews ask me; ‘Aunty Pritha – How you fold [your sari] so nice?’ I say: ‘Darlings, so easy – from one corner to another corner, another

corner to another corner, and when you finished – thawa just like Papatlall's Kara.' – K Govender *Women in Brown*, 290

... thava big cut, no zaggeration. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 39

dhek/dheksha/deksha *n.*

1. A cauldron used to cook food in large quantities, usually at weddings, prayers or social occasions.
2. A large cooking pot. Spellings: **dek**, **deg**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *deg*, *degcā*, ultimately from Persian]

Traditionally some occasions call for the feasting of the clans ... On such days the huge deks (cauldrons) are scoured with sand, ashes, homegrown and dried loofah or coconut hair or steel wool. Heavy with their 50 kg of food, they steam steadily over split-wood embers under the professional eye of the male cooks who have built up great reputations in the community over the years. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 177

dhekshi/dekshi *n.*

A small cooking pot or cauldron. Rare. [Gu, Hn *degcī*, dimin. of *degcā*]

dhī-dhī *n.*

A term of respect for an elder sister or female first cousin.

- *Sharno-didi*.

Same as **akka**, **bahini**, **bēn**. See also **chella**, **thangechi**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dīdī*]

dhīpam/deepam/deebam *n.*

A small, open oil-burning lamp, traditionally earthen, lit during prayers at festivals. Same as **dhīvo**, **dhīya**. See also **veleku**. [Ta *dīpam*, Te *dīpamu*]

dhīvo *n.*

A small, open oil-burning lamp, traditionally earthen, now also brass, lit during prayers at festivals. Same as **dhīpam**, **dhīya**. See **veleku**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *dīvo*]

dhīya *n.*

A small, open oil-burning lamp, traditionally earthen, now also brass, lit during prayers at festivals. Same as **dhīvo**. See **veleku**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *dīyā*]

The boys and girls line the edge of the garden, the window sills, and the path to the house, with little clay lamps. They fuss about the weather. 'Hope it doesn't rain, hope it doesn't blow. I wonder if the diyas will stay lit.' – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 122

dhōbi *n.*

Member of the caste of washermen and launderers.

■ Some people of this background run large, successful laundries in SA, others have left the profession. Cf. Anglo-Indian term *Dhobi's Itch* for a type of skin infection similar to ringworm in the area of the groin and the

armpits, wrongly believed to have been transmitted through indiscriminate mixing of underwear by the dhobi. See also **mōchi**, **dharji**. [Hn, Ur *dhobī*]

A dhobi [is] a member of the Scheduled Castes ... born to wash and press clothes. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 87

However, certain occupations still tend to be found more in one caste than another. Among South Indians jewellers are drawn from the Pathars and among the Hindi-speaking ... most goldsmiths are Soni, most washermen Dhobi ... most barbers Nao. – H Kuper *Indian People in Natal*, 36

ḍhōlak *n.*

A small drum played on both ends by hand, usually hung from the neck and beaten with sticks. The larger version, the **dhol**, is seldom referred to as such in SAIE. See **thabla**, **molo** [Hn, Ur *ḍholak*]

Most of all she missed the weddings, when clad in festive colours she danced the garba with girls of her age to the beat of the dholak. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 19

dhōthi *n.*

Traditional garment of Indian males, especially Hindus; white loin cloth. See **lungi**.

■ No longer worn in SA. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn *dhotī*]

A piece of loin cloth about fifteen feet long, normally white, of any material from the finest muslin to the coarsest cotton may be worn in many regional and sectional styles. Often said to be a loin cloth by English writers, this may be descriptive for a farm labourer, but as worn by, say, a Bengali gentleman, the dhoti will enclose his left leg to the ankle and his right to the calf. – N Hankyn *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 53

The dhoti was the one-piece cloth that they wore on the waist, without it they were stripped bare. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 62

dhūdhi *n.*

Calabash, the bottle gourd (*Lagendria vulgaris* or *Cucurbita lagenaria*), gourd with whitish green, relatively soft outer shell. Same as **chaurka**, **lauki**. Also spelt and pronounced *dhodic*. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *dūdhī*]

The whole of Potch knows that no one can grow karelas, brinjals and dhohdi like Amina Khoda. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 163.

dhūdhu *n.* *Baby talk*

Milk, as served to a child. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dūdh*]

- Mother to child: Drink some dhudhu now.

Dhurga *n.* – see **Kāli**

dial/dials *n.* *Slang**

A face, profile. Also SAE slang. [Br Eng slang *dial* from early c19 based on the dial of a clock. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

- *He's got lucker dials, eh!*

dig *v.*: **to dig diamonds**

To pick one's nose. Used disapprovingly.

- *That's disgusting – stop digging diamonds.*

diet/dite *n.* [dait] *Slang**

A meal, a helping of food, a large snack. Despite the conventional meaning of *diet*, in slang the term refers to a meal of normal proportions. Same as **chow**. Also Cape Coloured slang. [Eng *diet*, with semantic shift]

Klipfontein Road – home of the late-nite dite. – *Athlone News*, 2007

dirty-box *n.*

1. A box used to store dirty laundry, often an old wooden box. Now rare.
2. A rubbish bin. Referred to as **dirt box** in some homes.

Marm, I'm asking by you, what they putting by the dirty box now days? My wife complaining, Marm. She saying overall smelling too much. – K Govender *Stablexpense*, 254

dish *v.*

To serve food to people, dish out food.

- *You want me to dish for you? You want me to dish out for you?*

Divāli/Diwāli *n.* [d̪i'va:li] [d̪i'wa:li] – see **Deepavali****do** *v.*

1. To behave.
 - *She's doing as if she doesn't know me.*
2. To treat.
 - *They do me like a dog.* Cf. informal US English *Don't do me like that.*

do *v.*: **what to do?** *Basilectal*

An exclamation of despair equivalent to 'What can be done?', 'It's no use', etc. Older speakers. Used jocularly by younger speakers. Possibly other varieties also.

- *A: I see you're going through a bad time, hey. B: What to do?*

dodo/dudu *n.* *Baby talk*

Sleep. Also baby talk in Mauritian Creole. Also SAE via Afrikaans. [Probably from French influence in South India or Mauritius]

- *Make dodo now.*

dokra/dokhra *n.*

A small snack made of spiced flour, cooked in steam. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *dokhrā*]

Dokra and wari ... simply mean dumpling, fritters or roti, made from any or a combination of pea, cake or maize flours, which are delicately spiced with onions, herbs and what-have-you. These dumplings are then moulded and gently lowered into a pan of half-done meat or vegetable or meat/vegetable curry and allowed to simmer therein till done. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 102

dōl *n.*

1. An anglicised form for **dhāl** (q.v.). Also IE. Spreading in Natal English. Spellings: **doll**, **dholl**.
2. Small green lentils (*Cytisus indicus* or *Cystus cajanus*). Cooked as a curry rather than as dhāl. Same as **rahari**, **tūar**, **thauranka**. See **oil-dōl**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dāl*]

You will receive rations as follows: Dhall – 2 lbs per month, Salt Fish – 2 lbs per month. Ghee or oil – 1 lb per month, Salt – 1 lb per month. – Acting Protector of Immigrants *Notice to Coolies Intending to Emigrate to Natal*, 17 August 1874

beans-dōl *n.*

A type of spicy bean-soup or **dhāl** made with whole dried **sugar beans** (q.v.) or **gadhra-beans** (q.v.) instead of lentils or peas.

■ Usually eaten as a mild curry with rice.

biryani dōl *n. phr.*

Shelled small brown lentils (**masūr** – q.v.) used in making **biryani** (q.v.).

dōl curry *n. phr.*

Same as **dhāl** (i.e. split lentil soup). A term occasionally used mainly by Tamil speakers, though *dhāl* is not generally considered a curry.

to get dōl-curry and rice everyday

To go through a humdrum, monotonous period, to experience the same uninteresting events frequently. A meal of **dōl** and rice without curry is considered unappetising and a sign of poverty.

dōl papad – see **papad****gram dōl** – see **gram****mung dōl** – see **mūng****mutton dōl** – see **dhāl-gōs****dom** *adj. Slang**

Stupid, slow to comprehend. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *dom*, cognate with Eng *dumb*]

done *v. Basilectal*

Has or have done. Not used as an auxiliary. Similarly **been**, **seen**.

- *He done it before.*

dōni/madōni *n.*

Fruit of the forest myrtle (*Syzygium gerrardii*), small, black plum-like in appearance. Hence **dōni tree**, **madōni tree**. See also **mutton-gulla**. [Zu *umdoni*, the tree, pl. *imidoni*; *indoni* the fruit, pl. *amadoni*]

In the heart of the Casbah, which was the Warwick Avenue, Wills Road and Old Dutch Road area of the ‘Grey Street Complex’, lies number 7 Douglas Lane. At the back of our home stands an umdoni tree. It grew from a seed that my grandmother planted in the early 1920s. – exhibition pamphlet, *Under the Umdoni Tree: the Art of Omar & Ebrahim Badshah*, April 2010

dop *Slang**

1. *v.* To drink, usually liquor.
 - *They were dopping the whole day.*
2. *n.* A drink, usually liquor. Also **to catch a dop, have a dop.**
Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *dop* ‘brandy, a tot’]

dos *Slang**

1. *v.* To sleep. Also **to catch a dos, have a dos.**
2. *n.* Sleep, a nap. Also SAE. Cf. British English c19 and c20 slang *doss* ‘to be on one’s back, to sleep; a bed; to knock down on the back in boxing’. British English *a sailor’s doss house* ‘a boarding house for sailors’. [Br Eng *doss, dorse*, ultimately based on Latin *dorsum* ‘the back’ – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

dōsé/dōsa *n.* [ˈd̪ɔːsɛ] or [ˈd̪ɔːsɑː]

1. SA: Thin, spongy pancakes, baked on a griddle, usually slightly sweet and eaten as a tea-time snack.
2. India (and increasingly SA): Large, unsweetened thin crisp **roti** (q.v.) or pancake made of rice and dhāl flour filled with mashed spicy potatoes, **dhāl** (q.v.), onions and various **chutneys** (q.v.), and folded over. See also **idli**. [Ta *tōcai*, Te *dōse*]

The tastiest breakfasts are served in southern India where hot dosa or pancakes are filled with oniony mashed potatoes spiced with chopped chillies. With fresh coconut chutney spread on the dosa, each mouthful is to be savoured. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery for SA*, 45

And he took me back to that 1 000 Lights restaurant where we had idli, dosai, sambar and coffee. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 138

dosh *n. Rural*

A small container for holding snuff, usually made of tin. Rural areas. Now rare. Not related to British English slang *dosh* ‘money’, a term now also used in SAE amongst younger speakers. [Zu *idosha*]

dot *n.*

A round mark on one’s forehead – either a smear of ash (religious), a paper or plastic dot or other cosmetic (decorative). Same as **bottu, chāndlo, tikka**. See also **kājar, kohl**.

double *v.*

A term used in soccer, to kick a football against an opponent usually deliberately. Cf. billiards term *double* ‘a stroke that causes ball to rebound’. Same as **dablās**. [Slightly different nuance from English *double against* ‘to rebound against’, possibly reinforced by Zu *dubula* ‘give a resounding blow, to resound, boom, shoot’]

- *He doubled me so hard, my back is still sore.*

double-beans *n.*

Lima beans (*Phaseolus limensis*). Spreading in Natal English. Same as **dabla** (q.v.). The term is not widely known in India, but limited to some southern areas – e.g. Bangalore. [Possibly anglicisation of Bhoj *dabliyā*. Perhaps enhanced by the fact that two seeds occur per pod]

double engine, to have a – see **engine****double wedding** *n.*

Wedding at which two couples are married simultaneously, where two of the four persons being married are siblings.

- Such multiple weddings occur in India, Tibet and the Middle East.

down-fire *n.* – see **chūlha****draad/draat** *n. Slang***

1. Grace, style, elegance, ‘know-how’.
2. Pompousness, pretentiousness, stand-offishness.

Usually plural **draads**, **draats**. [Afrik *draad* ‘grain of fabric, wire, thread; thread of an argument’, ultimately related to Eng term *dreadlocks*]

- *Look at the way he dresses and walks, he’s got no draads.*

Mothie ... You too clever you. You got the draat. – R Govender *Lahee’s Pleasure*, 35

dranklōp *n. Slang**

A drunkard, an alcoholic, a ‘boozer’ or ‘soak’. Same as **dronkie**. Also SAE slang *dronklap*. [Afrik *dronk* ‘drunk’, plus *lap* ‘a cloth for wiping, absorbent’]

Dravidian *adj.*

Pertaining to the south of India in terms of region, language and culture.

- In SA Dravidian influence is strong in religious and cultural practices, since the Tamil and Telugu communities form a slight majority among Indians. See **Kāvady**, **Madrāsi**, **Pongal**, **Ugādi**, **Tamil**, **Telugu**, **Malayalam**. [IE from Skt *drāvida*]

Matthew, a lean, tired-looking man with a Hitler moustache and a Dravidian tint, was a Tamil Christian. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 103

The Dravidians were the inhabitants of much of the Indian subcontinent before the Aryan invasion (in the opinion of some anthropologists, the Dravidians themselves entered India from outside in pre-historic times, perhaps from lands east of the Mediterranean, submerging earlier Austric inhabitants). – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 56

dronkie *n. Slang**

A drunkard, an alcoholic, a ‘boozer’. Also SAE slang. See **dranklop**. [Afrik *dronk* ‘drunk’ plus person suffix *-ie*]

drumstick *n.*

Long slender pod of the *Moringa pterygosperma*, often cooked with **dhāl** (q.v.) or potato. Hence **drumstick tree**. Also IE, where it is also known as the

horseradish tree. The first word of the scientific name draws on the Ta forms *murungay keeray* or *murung-keera* (colloq.).

Sir G Birdwood says: 'A marvellous tree botanically, as no one knows in what order to put it; it has links with so many; and it is evidently a "head centre" in the progressive development of forms.' The name is given because the scraped root is used in place of horse-radish, which it closely resembles in flavour. In S India the same plant is called the Drumstick-tree from the shape of the long slender fruit, which is used as a vegetable, or in curry, or made into a native pickle ... – H Yule & A Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 426

drumstick herbs *n.*

Small leaves gathered from the drumstick tree.

■ Often cooked with egg or potato. See **herbs**.

dry-fish *n.*

Dried fish. Usually cut into small pieces and cooked in a spicy chutney. See **Bombay-duck**.

dhua *n.*

Prayer, Islamic prayer. Hence **to make dhua**. Also spelt **dua**, **duah**. [Ur *duā*, from Ar]

It is our humble request that you make Duah for our well-being. – card announcing a trip to Mecca

Her Arabic duas are as clear and full of understanding as are her little recitations. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 94

dūgu *n.*

A knobkerrie, a large stout stick with a knob at one end carried by Zulus in rural areas. Same as SAE *induku*. [Zu *induku*]

dukawala/dhukānwala *n. Historical*

An Indian merchant, trader. A term formerly used in East Africa, Natal and Zimbabwe by Whites. Rare. See also **Arab**, **banya**, **passenger Indian**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *dukān* 'shop' plus *wālā* 'agent, owner'; also Swahili *duka* 'shop' from the same source]

durbar/dharbār *n.* [ˈdʌrba:]

Hall in a building, especially in a king's court. Adopted as a name by some take-away restaurants, e.g. *Delhi Durbar*. Rare. Also IE. In *COD*. [Hn, Ur *darbār*]

dwāl *n. Slang*** [dwa:l]

A daze, a state of disorientation. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *dwaal* 'to wander, roam']



edication *n.* ['edikeiʃən] *Basilectal*

Education. Also British English solecism of c19 and c20. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.*

eh *tag.* [æ:] [æ̃:] or [ɛ] *Basilectal*

Similar to colloq. English *eh*, *hey*, but because of its distinctive pronunciation (open vowel, with some nasality) and frequency is felt to be characteristically SAIE by some of its speakers.

- *You listening, eh?*

Eid/Īd *n.*

The major Muslim festival celebrated at the end of **Ramadān** (q.v.) in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar year; The Feast of Breaking the Fast of Ramadan. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. In *COD*. [Ur *Īd-ul-Fitr* from Ar, where *fitr* means ‘breakfast’]

Id-ul-Fitr is the festival of the breaking of the fast. The chief day of rejoicing of the Islamic year, commencing when the Id moon is sighted at sunset, marking the end of the month Roza/Ramadan/Ramzan, the four-week period of day-long ascetism ... Strictly, *fitr* means ‘alms’: on this day a Muslim is required to pay the *zakāt*. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 90

Eid Mubarak *exclam.*

Eid greetings, Happy Eid.

■ *Happy Eid Mubarak*, a phrase used by some advertisers and found on some posters contains a redundancy. [Ur *Id-ul-Fitr*, plus *mubāarak* ‘auspicious’]

Gifts are exchanged, trays of food pass between neighbours ... Friends and relatives seek out one another, embrace and extend the greeting *Eid Mubarak* (exalted be your Eid). – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 192

Eidy *n.*

Term used for gift given at Eid.

I hope you don’t take it amiss but please accept enclosed money as Eidy. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 50

eisteddfod *n.*

A competition of cultural groups in music, song and/or dance. Also SAE. A modification of the Welsh concept of *eisteddfod* for a musical competition involving music and poetry. [Eng from Welsh *eistedd* ‘sit’, hence *eisteddfod* ‘session, sitting’]

The origins of the Andhra Eisteddfod date back to 1932, when, in the first annual general meeting of the AMSSA, the Stella Hill **patasala** (q.v.) pupils

were requested to render some musical items. This rendition provided the necessary impetus to organize the Eisteddfod in 1939 under the distinguished patronage of Lady Rama Rao, wife of the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa ... this Eisteddfod became an annual Andhra event. – V Prabhakaran *Language Challenged*, 106

eksé/aksé *n./exclam.* ['æksɛ] *Slang**

Vocative for a young man, boy; mode of address among young males. Unlike SAE *ek sé* ('I say'), it is used only to address males, and is pronounced as one word with the stress on the first word. [Afrik *ek sé* 'I say']

'Came way eksé, give a ou one chance, please ...' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

engine *n.:* **to have a double-engine**

To have a lover in addition to one's husband or wife. Rare.

- *All these years she had a double engine and nobody knew.*

enough *adj. Informal*

More than enough, too much, plentiful (when stressed). Younger speakers.

- *There was enough food at the wedding.*

enter *v.:* **to enter one's nine (ten, etc.)**

In the SA Indian system, one enters the next age immediately after one's birthday: thus on the day of one's ninth birthday, one is said to enter one's ten. This usage is receding.

- *Today's her ninth birthday, so she's entering her ten now.*

ētu *n.*

Food or drink despoiled by someone else's having some off one's plate or glass first, food left unfinished on a plate. Now rare. Same as **juṭṭha**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *ethū*]

eyes *n.:* **to put eyes** *Basilectal*

To cast an 'evil-eye' upon someone, to cause illness by staring at someone, to spoil something by staring at it, to be envious. Same as **to put najar** (q.v).

- *The baby's looking sick. Someone must have put eyes on it.*



factory name *n.*

The name a person (usually male) is known by at work, especially if he works in a factory.

■ Usually an anglicised nickname bestowed by employers or fellow workers. See **calling-name**, **house-name**, **rās-name**, **school-name**. Rare.

fall/falls *n.*

Strip of cotton cloth attached to lower inner section of a sari, to protect it if it touches the ground and to make it drape well. Thus slightly different from a hem or a lap. Also IE. [Etymology uncertain, possibly from English *fall*]

fall-down slap *n.*

A hard smack, slap on the face whose force might cause the victim or one being punished to fall down. See **tight slap**. Rare.

• *If you don't stop whining, I'll come there and give you a fall-down slap.*

fallé/fuller *n.* ['fʌlɛ]

Fellow, person. Slightly ironic or deprecatory. Also spelt **fullah**. See **daffale**. Hey Mothie, hey! You can't bring that fuller here. – R Govender *Lahnee's Pleasure*, 5

You know, don't you, that very soon your mates will be killing innocent women and children like they did in the towns like Algeria. You know, like that Harris fullah did. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 48

falooda *n.* ['fʌlu:ɖɑ:]

1. A milk-shake or rose-milk drink containing **china-grass** (q.v.) or pieces of parched ground wheat. Also known as **falooda crush**.

2. An Indian jelly made with china-grass. [Gu, Ur *fālūdā*]

In tall glasses put a tablespoon of ice cream, add helping of falooda, fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of glass with sweetened milk, top with ice cream and nuts and pour a little rose syrup so that it trickles down the sides. If desired a few falooda seeds may be added over the falooda. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 313

Yes, yes, a tousling of the hair, two soft-ruffling palms turned this Ismet into one bowl of falooda. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 166

false ripe *adj.*

Pertaining to a fruit that has been plucked while green and artificially ripened for quicker marketing. See **forced ripe**. Considered appropriate on account of such fruit's not being as tasty as naturally ripened fruit. Mainly rural. [Reinterpretation of *forced-ripe* from Eng *to force a fruit (to ripen)*]

families *n.* *Basilectal*

Members of a family. Now rare.

- *When are your families coming over?*

faqir/faqir/fakir *n.*

A mendicant, beggar, holy man or ascetic who lives on alms. In *COD*.

■ Churchill is said to have disparagingly referred to Gandhi on a visit to England as ‘That half-naked fakir’. Though the term is seldom used in SA, it was the title of a column in the newspaper, the *Leader*. [Hn, Ur *fakīr*, from Ar *fakīr* ‘needy man’]

Properly an indigent person, but specially ‘one poor in the sight of God’, applied to a Mahomedan religious mendicant, and then loosely and inaccurately, to Hindu devotees and naked ascetics. And this last is the most ordinary Anglo-Indian use. – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 347

He turned to Aziz. ‘Have you been to India to see the fakirs and yogis?’ – A Essop *Hajji Musa and Hindu Firewalker*, 48

fard/farz *n.*

Religious duty, that which is compulsory within Islamic tenets and may not be contested (e.g. prayer, charity). See **wājib**. [Ur *farz* from Ar *fard*]

Islamic law makes a distinction between those duties incumbent upon individuals and those incumbent upon the entire community, which may be fulfilled by a representative number of persons from that community. An example of the first type of fard is the **hajj** and of the second the **jihād**. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

fast *adj.*

Precocious, unruly, rude, naughty (of children). Possibly other varieties. Also, as in international English, used to refer to someone – usually a female – considered ‘forward’ with the opposite sex.

- *Don’t be so fast: listen to your mother.*

fast *v.*

To abstain from eating. Not limited to SAIE.

■ The meanings of the term vary from community to community. Amongst Muslims it refers to abstinence from food and liquids during the day at prescribed hours during **Ramadān** (q.v.). Among vegetarians it also describes an abstinence from all food for a set period, e.g. during the day at certain religious occasions or by choice. Amongst others it refers to abstinence from meat during religious periods, e.g. during the month of **Partāsi** (q.v.), or on set days of the week. In the Tamil community Mondays and Fridays are days of abstinence from meat, others abstain on Tuesdays (for **Hanuman** – q.v.) or on Thursdays (for **Sai Baba** – q.v.). Another custom is to abstain from salt, or to eat only fruit on certain days.

father-in-law masāla *n.* – see **masāla**

Festival of Chariots *n.*

Display of floats or **chariots** (q.v.) depicting Hindu religious themes, run by ISKCON, the Society for Krishna Consciousness, also known as the *Hare Krishna Movement*.

■ The Festival of Chariots attracts a large crowd of devotees and onlookers in Durban and other cities, especially in April. See **Krishna**.

The 22nd annual Ratha-yatra (Festival of Chariots) hosted by ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) was held over the Easter weekend at the old Drive-In site ... – *Post*, 7 April 2010

Festival of Lights *n.* – see **Deepavali****Fiat Lux** *n.*

A monthly magazine brought out by the Department of Information during the apartheid era focussing on the education, development, and achievements of Indians. Now defunct.

■ The magazine, widely circulated in schools, was considered propaganda material by opponents of apartheid. [Latin *fiat lux* ‘let there be light’]

To me there is nothing more beautiful than the sari and the type of clothes worn by young girls these days. Photos of these are about the only redeeming feature of *Fiat Lux*. – Z Mayat & A Kathadra *Letters*, 41

finish *v. Informal*

To beat someone up, or threaten to beat someone up.

- *I'll finish you. We finished him and left him.*

finral *n.* [ˈfi:nrəl] *Basilectal*

Funeral. Now rare. Also spelt *findral* in humorous writing. See **funeral message**.

fire food *n. Regional*

Food prepared in a large pot on an open fire, usually **biryāni**. This term is used mainly in Cape Town.

■ Food was traditionally cooked on a **chūlha** (q.v.) or coal stove and is still considered tastier than if prepared on electric stoves.

Jalaal's Fire Food – street advert in Cape Town

firewalking ceremony *n.*

Part of a religious ceremony dedicated to the mother-goddess in her manifestation of Dhropadhi (Draupadi) during which Hindi devotees walk barefoot on burning hot coals to test and reaffirm their faith and expiate their sins. Also formerly known as **fire tramp**. Same as **thimeri** (q.v.).

Originally, firewalking in South Africa appears to have been predominantly a Tamil celebration. However, over the years, its popularity has grown, and today it has come to transcend its Tamil origins to some extent ... – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 53

Boys, fire-walking is not for me. Showmanship ... that's for magicians and crowd-pleasers . . . those seeking cheap publicity. – A Essop *Hajji Musa and Hindu Firewalker*, 49

fish-tin *n.* *Basilectal*

Tinned fish, a tin of fish, fish in a tin. See **tin-fish**. Now rare.

- *He likes to eat that fish-tin.*

fit *adj.:* **not fit** *Basilectal*

Fit for nothing, useless, no good.

- *You can't trust him, he's not fit.*

flesh *n.*

Meat. Non-vegetarian food. Also IE. Now rare. [Archaism, possibly reinforced by Afrik *vleis* 'meat']

- *A: Do you eat flesh? B: No, we're vegetarian.*

flim *n.* ['flɪm]

Film. Hence **flim-star** etc. Cf. SAE *filim* [fələm]. [Eng *film*, with metathesis]

fluk *v.* ['flʊk] *Slang**

1. To make a pass at; to talk sweetly to a member of the opposite sex. See **chāf, kūza**.
2. To pick on someone, to crack jokes at someone's expense. Not the same as English *fluke*. [Afrik *vloek* 'to curse, swear']

- *He was fluking her one way.*

foi *n.*

Paternal aunt. Same as **phūa, phuppi**. See **atthe, periatthe**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *foi*]

Saima-Foi, Zeenat's father's only sister, flew in from Cape Town and her decision to stay on for a few weeks provided us with a much-needed distraction. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 108

for true *exclam.*

Truly, really (usually interrogative). See **True's God, Sathima**.

- *A: They're giving me an increase next month. B: For true?*

forced ripe *adj.*

Pertaining to a fruit that has been plucked while green and artificially ripened for quicker marketing. See **false ripe**. [From Eng *to force a tree, fruit*, etc]

fortune *n.:* **to tell someone their fortune**

To beat, to punish by beating, give a severe telling off.

- *Just wait till your father comes, he'll tell your fortune.*

fowl *n.*

A domestic hen (but not any other bird). Also common in other English varieties.

■ Not a generic term, unlike in Standard English; nor used to refer to related domesticated birds such as turkeys and ducks. Educated speakers avoid this term, preferring *chicken* or *hen*.

fowl-curry *n.*

Curried chicken, chicken curry. Now rare.

fowl-rogue *n. Rural*

A petty thief who steals hens from farmyards at night for sale or for his own kitchen. Now rare. See **rogue**.

running-fowl *n.*

A free range hen, one that may run freely in a backyard as opposed to being kept permanently in a run. Same as **yard fowl**.

to jump like a cut-fowl

To be obstreperous but ineffectual, to be an 'empty vessel'. The usual English idiom is *to run like headless chickens*. See **jump, cut**.

- *A: We're going to need a lot of help and food and tools before we can start this job. B: Don't jump like a cut fowl; just do it.*

to want fowl-curry and rice every day *Jocular*

To expect good fortune or success all the time. Same as **to want mutton curry and rice every day**. Cf. **to get dōl curry and rice every day**.

yard-fowl *n.* – see **running-fowl**

frek *v. Slang**

To die (used of humans and animals). Also SAE slang. [Afrik *vrek* 'to die' (of animals)]

- *My neighbour's uncle frekked yesterday.*

fright *v. Basilectal*

To fear, to be afraid of. Cf. Scots *to be frightened of the dog*.

- *I fright for snakes.*

Mothie: ... Me, I don't fright for my Lahnee. My Lahnee likes me. – R Govender *Lahnee's Pleasure*, 12

frightened Jack *n. phr./exclam.*

Said of a person who is afraid. A taunt. Possibly other varieties. See **jack up**.

- *A: I don't want to go into that cave. B: Frightened Jack!*

front of *prep. phr.*

Compared to (something), in contrast to, in front of.

- *Our car looked so old front of theirs.*

front-sari *n.*

A sari draped in such a way that the decorative section falls over the shoulder across the chest, as is traditional in Gujarati and Hindi styles. See **achra**, **back-sari**, **mundhāni**, **pālav**.

frou *n. Slang**

Wife. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *vrou* ‘wife, woman’]

- *How’s your frou?*

furnitures *n. Basilectal*

Items of furniture. Also IE and other varieties of English in Africa.

- *We’re buying some new furnitures.*

fua *n.*

Uncle, specifically one’s paternal aunt’s husband, i.e. husband of one’s father’s sister. See **athan**, **māman**, **phuppa**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *fua/fuo*]

- *Satish-fua is arriving today.*

fufiyaan *n.*

Fit, seizure, mania, hysteria. Abbreviated to **fufi**, **fufis**. Hence *to have one’s fufiyaans* ‘to be hysterical, lose one’s composure, be furious’. Also spelt **fufuyan**, **fufuyaan**. [Zu *ufufunyana* ‘rapidly spreading disease which causes delirium and insanity’]

They dated for years ... despite the fact that his family had major fufuyaans and threatened to disown him. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 65

funeral *n.***funeral-message** *n.*

A message about the death of someone close, usually by telephone; a message about a funeral to be held. See **finral**.

- *I was in the bath when a funeral message came.*

to be late for one’s own funeral

Said of someone who is habitually late, a laggard, procrastinator, etc. Not exclusively SAIE, but particularly common in the dialect. See **finral**.

- *He’s always so slow – he’ll be late for his own funeral.*

further-studies *n.*

Higher education at a college or university beyond matriculation. Also IE. [Based on *to further one’s studies*]

- *He’s going for further-studies.*

future *n. Basilectal*

One’s future husband or wife, a fiancé or fiancée. Cf. British English *one’s intended*. See also **book**, **interested**, **proposed**, **word**. [Abbrev. from *future husband* or *wife*, possibly euphemistic, avoiding mention of spouse; possibly related to Victorian English usage]

- *That’s her future standing over there.*

fyuzik *n.* [ˈfju:zɪk]

Laxative, medication to stimulate evacuation of the bowels. Traditionally made from the roots of herbs (e.g. *chorai* or **sugar-cane herbs** – q.v.) plus garlic, which were chewed together. Now rare. Witticism: *Take fyuzik and make music*. [Archaic Eng *physic* ‘medicine, medicinal drugs’]



gablānders *n. Slang**

People who exaggerate or tell lies, people one considers stupid or different, people behaving badly. Rare in KZN. Still used in Cape slang. [Probably Cape slang/vernacular Afrik based on *kappielaan* ‘chaplain’]

gabrāts/gabrāz *n. Slang****

Fear, a fright, the shivers. [Hn *ghabrāhat* ‘nervousness, restlessness, panic’]

- *Ever since the cops called, he’s got the gabrāts.*

gaddha/gadhēru *n. Informal*

Fool, difficult person, obstinate person, one who meddles. Also spelt **gadha**, **gadda**. [Gu *gadheru*, *gadheri*, Hn *gaddhā* ‘donkey’]

‘*Gadha!*’ Nadia almost screamed, ‘I’m trying to tell you –.’

‘So now I’m a mule?’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 401

‘Go talk to your stupid gadheri-donkey daughter,’ he’d ordered. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 14

gadhra *n.*

Half-matured ‘green’ beans, cooked as a dry curry sometimes with their pods sliced up, or as a stew or curry with weak soup-like gravy. Also **gadhra-beans** [Hn, Ur *gaddar* ‘half-ripe’]

galley *n.* – see **boula**

Gandhi Jayanti *n.*

Anniversary of birth of Mahatma Gandhi, celebrated on 2 October.

■ Gandhi, who was born Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on 2 October 1869 in Porbander, Gujarat, lived in SA between 1893 and 1914, practising as a lawyer and becoming a community leader. His legacy in SA is celebrated in the names of streets, schools, halls and the like. See **Gandhi Walk**, **Indian Opinion**, **Nagar**, **Phoenix**, **Sarvodaya**, **Satyagraha**, **Swaraj**, **Tolstoy Farm**. [*Gāndhī* – a proper name mainly in the state of Gujarat, denoting a trading or **banya** (q.v.) caste; Hn, Gu *jayānti* ‘birth anniversary’]

Far back, the Gandhi family were retail grocers: ‘Gandhi’ means grocer. But the professional barriers between castes began to crumble generations ago, and Gandhi’s grandfather served as prime minister to the princeling of Porbander ... – L Fisher *Life of Gandhi*, 23

Gandhi Walk *n.*

Annual walk undertaken by Indian communities and other interested persons in commemoration of Gandhi’s birth anniversary.

■ In Cape Town, e.g., the walk is organised on the Sunday closest to 2 October by the Cape Hindu Cultural Society, and covers a 6 km walk along the Atlantic beach promenade between Green Point and Sea Point.

The annual Gandhi Walk in Lenasia last Sunday attracted nearly 4 000 professional and amateur athletes as the organisation marked its Silver Jubilee as well as the launch of the 1860 Legacy Foundation Gauteng. – *Post* 7 April 2010

gāné *n. Slang**

A child. Also SAE slang. Also spelt **ngane**, **ngaane**. [Zu *ingane*]

Poppy was getting ready to pop 'nuther-one ngaane. That'll be seven children altogether. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhaja & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

ganja *n.*

Dagga, hemp, *Cannabis sativa* of the *indica* variety.

■ Ganja was carried to the colonies by Indians and was a narcotic favoured by some indentured workers. Its use spread to other people in the colonies and was popularised internationally via the Reggae culture of Jamaica. Also SAE. In *COD*. The term **bhāng** for a narcotic drink made from hemp shoots was known in SA but is now obsolete in SAIE. [Hn, Ur *gānja*.]

Murugan had never drunk alcohol before. Nor had he smoked ganja. But he knew that in the barracks, though never in Madras State, some worshippers of Kali after sacrificing animals to humour the goddess, drank cane spirit and smoked ganja. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 143

In Trinidad the importation of cannabis (Gunja) is prohibited, as also its cultivation. The plant, however, grows readily in the Colony, but the toxic properties of the drug produced there are by no means so great, and its effects are less felt. – R Mitchell, Natal Emigration Agent, 16 September 1884, cited in YS Meer *Documents of Indentured Labour*, 515

gap in *v.: to gap in*

To take up a space ahead of someone else (as in parking or driving in slow traffic); hence: to enter a party or function uninvited, to find one's niche, to take advantage of a situation. Possibly other varieties. [The original sense might have begun elsewhere, perhaps general English *to find a gap*; the wider sense is probably an SAIE development]

- *This guy just gapped in without even thanking us.*

garagam/garon gon *n.*

A decorated pot carried on the head of a devotee at **Kāvady** (q.v.) representing the goddess **Mariamman** (q.v.). Also spelt **goron gon**, **garogam**.

The Garon Gon is a pot entwined with garlands, and in it is invoked the presence of the Divine Mother. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 150

Many devotees use this preparation period to construct garogams. During this time, many of those in trances are surrounded by people, including a lot of women holding babies and young children, asking to be blessed by a dot of ash being put on their foreheads. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 58

garam masala *n.*

A mixture of pounded spices, comprising ginger, garlic, bay leaves etc., dark green or brown in colour. Not as hot as **masāla** (q.v.), despite the name, since it lacks hot chilli. [Hn, Ur *garam* ‘hot’ plus *masāla* ‘curry spices’; cf. Ta *kāram*, Te *kāro* ‘spicy, chilli hot’]

Each region of India has its own special blend of masala depending on availability, climate and methods of cooking. In the north where winters are bitterly cold, a blend called *garam masala*, meaning hot spice, is preferred to chillies which cool the body by promoting perspiration ... Garam masala is used whole or ground depending on what’s cooking. The basic blend includes cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, peppercorns, bay leaf, mace, cumin and coriander seeds. When ground, the powder is slightly coarse in colour. Garam masala has a rich, warm fragrance and tastes hot and aromatic. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 86

garba *n.*

A folk-dance of Gujarat, characterised by large groups dancing in a circle and clapping hands or using sticks. Hence **to do garba** ‘to participate in a garba’. See **dhandhia**, **rās**. [Gu *garbo*]

The garba or rasra is a traditional dance still practised by Gujarati Hindus and Mehmons. A woman stands in the centre of a ring formed by all other women and plays the tambourine. The others form a ring, dancing to the rhythm of the tambourine, beating time with colourful sticks. – R Ebr-Vally *Kala Pani*, 162

gāri/ghāri *n.*

A wheel-shaped sweetmeat, with a sweet filling of dry milk (see **māwa**) vermicelli or cream, of wheat, raisins, pistachio, cardamom etc. wrapped in dough and fried in **ghee** (q.v.) or oil.

■ Despite the wheel-shape, the word has no connection with Hindi or Gujarati *gāḍī* ‘vehicle’. [Gu, Hn, Ur *ghārī*]

Roll rounds of Ghari and add filling. Pat into shape. Fry very slowly in deep oil – do not pour oil over top as this makes crust bubble. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 354

garāra *n.*

Loose female garment, comprising dress and loose-fitting, wide-bottomed pants. Sometimes spelt **gharara**. See **chanya chōli**, **Panjabi**, **shalwar kameez**, **sharara**. [Hn, Ur *garārā*]

Gararas and Saries for Diwali – advert in Cape Town, October 2007

Come in and view our exciting new classic collection of the most alluring and striking Ladies’ and Girls’ Salwaar Kameez suits, Ghagra Cholis and Ghararas. – advertising flier for Durban shop

garden chops *n.* – see **branjol****garrak** *n.* *Slang***

Fool, dupe, dolt, fall guy. [Etymology unknown]

‘He’ll have to wisen up sometime, Sandy. I don’t want him to grow up to be a garach.’ ... To be referred to as a garach in the underworld was an insult – you either retaliated physically or forever lost the respect of your equals. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 185

gat *n.* [ˈgæt] *Slang**

A gun, revolver, pistol. Originally, early c20 US slang. Now common worldwide. Also SAE. [US slang, abbrev. of *gatling gun*]

gāṭhia *n.*

Thin, long, twisted crisps, made of grain, flour and spices fried in oil. Similar to, but spicier and larger than *sēv* (q.v.). Also spelt **gaanthia**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *gāṭhia*]

gatsby *n. Regional*

A long French loaf or large roll filled with salad, fried chips and meat in the style of a burger.

■ The term seems to have originated in the 1970s amongst Malay and Indian shopowners. [Possibly after the novel *The Great Gatsby*, punning on the size of the sandwich]

It is said that the Gatsby, found only in Cape Town, originates in Athlone. – *Athlone News*, 2007

So Rashaad took a round of Portuguese loaf and filled it with chips and some fried polony, topped it with home-made atchar ... The guys loved it and Froggy said, ‘This is fantastic, it’s a real Gatsby smash!’ – Rashaad Pandey to *Cape Talk* radio, claiming invention of the gatsby in 1976

Gayathri Mantra *n.*

The most sacred Sanskritic hymn, recited by some Hindus at religious gatherings. Traditionally recited by every **Brahman** (q.v.) at morning and evening prayers. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Skt *gāyatra* ‘a hymn of the Rig-Veda’ plus *mantra* ‘hymn, sacred text’]

Gayatri mantra is a Sanskrit verse from the Rig Veda addressed to the sun-God, Savitra – who became Surya in later Hinduism: he who drives daily from the east to west across the sky in a chariot pulled by seven white horses. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 69

Gayatri or Savitri personifies the sacred *gāyatrī mantra* which is addressed to the sun and recited daily by orthodox Hindus. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 50

gazal *n.*

Love song or short, stylised love poem, usually sung in Panjabi or Urdu in which each line, composed of two hemistichs, conveys a complete idea. [Hn, Ur *gazal*]

Urdu poems are also identified by subject matter; thus serious couplets are known as *gazal*, [and] praises to ... the Prophet, *naat* ... – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 227

geeth/gīth *n.* [gi:t]

A song, vocal music. Used to refer to Indian songs, especially in Hindi or Urdu. Hence *Geeth Academy*. Also spelt **geet**. See **naath**. [Hn, Ur *gīt* 'song']

gentoo *n.* *Historical/derogatory*

1. Term used by Portuguese for Indians of Hindu faith, as opposed to *Moros* (Moors or Muslims). In particular it appears to refer to Hindus from the Telugu speaking area.
2. In Cape Town and in Afrikaans and English slang generally used to refer to a prostitute. Also spelt **jentoo**, **juntu**. [IE *gentoo*, from Ptg *gentio* 'gentile or heathen']

'Gentu' or 'Telinga' was the name for Telugu spoken over a large part of the central and southern Deccan plateau. – S Chaudhary *Foreigners & Foreign Languages in India*, 362

The *Truro* included Christians, Malabars, Gentoos, Rajputs, Pariahs, Marattas, Muslims, even an African. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 171

Named for the *Gentoo*, a ship which arrived at Cape Town in the mid c19 with a group of women passengers who became prostitutes; the countries of origin of the women and the ship, and their circumstances of arrival at the Cape, are obscure and in dispute. – P Silva *Dict SAE on Hist Principles*, 251

'I wouldn't touch him if I was an old juntu from Point Road,' Nithin replied. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 401

genuine *adj.* *Slang**

Pleasant, tasty, agreeable, of high quality. Trustworthy, reliable, unpretentious (of persons). See also **lakker/lucker**, **powerful**.

- *This chow is genuine, eh!*

get *v.*

Get away, go away, begone (imperative). Similar to SAE *voetsak*. See **go way/go away**, **gwān**. [Eng *get away*, *get out of here*]

'Now, go get from here', the aunty reckoned as she chased Mervs and Sunny from the shop with one old, dried-up broomstick. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

get in touch with *v. phr.* *Informal/euphemism*

To meet a girl or boy; have a romantic involvement, court someone. Used especially by older speakers for whom love was not to be spoken about openly. See also **interested**, **future**, **word**.

I got in touch with a girl from Umzinto, and then my mother said we must get married. – Umkomaas resident, 1997

ghagra *n.*

A long, ample, brightly coloured skirt gathered with a drawstring. See also **chanya choli**, **ghagri**, **pāvade**. [Gu *ghagarā*]

Ankle-length skirt, usually highly coloured and sometimes embroidered, tight at the waist and requiring about fifteen feet length of material:

originally worn by Rajasthani and western Indian peasant women, now adopted by the world of fashion. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 69–70

Come see our Kameez suits, Ghagra Cholis and Ghararas – invitation to customers by fashion house

ghagra-chōli *n.*

An ensemble made of **ghagra** and **chōli** (q.v.).

ghagri/gagri *n.*

Smaller version of a **ghagra** (q.v.) worn by young girls. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *ghagarī*]

ghar-dhamādh *n.*

A male who lives at the house of his parents-in-law. Often derogatory, as it is the bride who traditionally moves to the house of her parents-in-law, or in modern times lives with her husband on their own. Same as **ghar-jamai**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn, Ur *ghar* ‘house’ plus *dāmād*, ‘son-in-law’]

ghar-jamai *n.*

A male who lives at the house of his parents-in-law. Often derogatory. Same as **ghar-dhamād**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, *ghar* ‘house’ plus *jamai* ‘son-in-law’]

ghee *n.*

Clarified Indian butter used in various preparations, including sweetmeats, **kichri**, **pūri** (q.v.), etc. See **bagaru**, **butter-ghee**. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn, Ur *ghī*]

Ghee is made by converting full cream milk into yoghurt and then churning this to separate out the solid butter from the liquid which is called buttermilk ... Alternatively, ghee can be made from bought, unsalted butter. Just melt the butter in a heavy pan and simmer on low heat for about 30 minutes until all the water evaporates and the sediment settles. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 223

Ghee is milk fat free of moisture and consequently, unlike butter in a hot climate, capable of being stored for a long period without deterioration ... As a product of the cow, ghee is used for Hindu religious ceremonies and is believed to have many beneficial – almost mystical – properties not possessed by vegetable oils. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 70

ghugri *n.*

Fried whole dried lentils (**rahari/thaurenka/thuvar** – q.v.) boiled with onions, chilli and spices. Now preferred as a tea-time snack. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Bhoj *ghugurī*, Te *gugil̥lu*]

ghusl *n.* – see **wudu**

ginger-garlic *n.*

Ginger and garlic; ginger, garlic and similar spices. Often refers to a ready-made paste of ginger and garlic sold in small bottles. [Dvandva compound based on patterns found in most Indian languages, going back to Skt]

girl *n.*

1. Daughter. Also other varieties.
2. Female domestic servant. Also SAE.

big-girl *n.*

A girl who has attained puberty.

■ In Indian tradition this is usually marked by a function involving prayer and gifts from family members. See **boy's side**, **baryāt**, **jān**.

I went to tell my mum, saying, 'I think I am a big girl now', and she asked, 'Are you quite sure?' ... here was my mother phoning all her women relatives and friends and telling them about Neeli being a big girl ... Because I'm part of Tamil tradition, a special prayer had to be done to bless and mark this new time in my life. – N Govender *Coming of Age Ceremony*, 23

'You moti poyri now. Big Girl. You no more baby.' She sighed and then stroked my hair ... – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 66

girl's side *n.*

Bride's party, close relatives accompanying bride to wedding, extended family and friends attending wedding upon invitation by the bride. Also referred to as **girl's party**. See **boy's side**, **baryāt**, **jān**.

■ In the North Indian tradition the bride's family hosts the wedding, while in the South Indian tradition the groom's family does so.

wedding girl *n.*

A bride. Now rare. Mainly older Tamil and Telugu speakers.

girmit *n.*

1. A contract under **indenture** (q.v.).
2. Service under indenture.
3. Place of work under indenture. Older speakers. Historical. Also spelt **girrmet**, **girrmit**. [Bhoj *girmit*, ultimately from Eng *agreement*]

Indentured labourers, on the other hand, were just armed with a flimsy agreement (*girmit*), 10 shillings and rice per month. – P Naidoo Preface *Girmit Tales*, xi

Murugan did not work that day, the first time ever since he had come to work under the *girrmet* to Mr Rutherford at Mount Edgecombe. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 128

girmitya/girmitiya *n.*

An indentured worker. Older speakers. Historical. Sometimes pejorative, denoting one from an impoverished background, as opposed to a **merchant Indian** (q.v.). [Bhoj *girmit*, plus agent suffix *-yā*]

The indentured labourers were those who went to Natal on an agreement for five years, and came to be known there as *girmityas* from *girmit*, which was a corrupt form of the English word ‘agreement’. – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 99

Gīta/The Gīta *n.*

A short form for *Bhagavad Gita*, an ancient religious Hindu text written in Sanskrit, and part of the epic *Mahābhārata*. Also IE. [Skt *bagavad gītā* ‘The Lord’s Song’]

... if any one single work is sought that could occupy a convenient position beside the great scriptures of the world, and that could be considered a textbook for easy reference on matters pertaining to the faith of the Hindus, that book would undoubtedly be the famous *Bhagavad Gita*. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 20

Forming part six of the Mahabharata ... The Gita is a Sanskrit poem of some 700 verses, in which Prince Arjuna, one of the five Pandava brothers, seeks guidance on philosophy and dharma from Lord Krishna, his charioteer on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, between Delhi and the Hills. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 70

go

n.: to give it a go

To have a go at something; to enjoy doing something.

- *We gave the biryani a go.*

n.: to give someone a go

To beat someone at something, usually sport. Possibly other varieties.

v.: to go under an operation *Basilectal*

To undergo an operation.

goat-prayers *n.*

A religious ceremony practised by some Hindu sects involving the sacrifice of a goat to the Goddess Durga (or **Kāli**). Also known as **Kāli prayers**. See **porridge-prayers**.

Bringing the prayer to a climax was the sacrificing of seven male goats and 24 roosters as offerings to Kali, who only accepts male animals. – A Diesel *Shakti*, 193

God-lamp *n.*

A small lamp usually made of clay or more usually brass or silver lit during daily evening (sometimes morning) prayers by Hindus. Also known in Tamil and Telugu homes as the **Kāmāchi lamp**, after the goddess **Kāmāchi** (q.v.), or in short as the **Kāmāchi**. Same as **dhīya**, **dhīvo**, **veleku**.

And that she would have lighted her Kamatchi lamp and a camphor and said prayers for him. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 119

God-stand *n. Basilectal*

A prayer stand in a Hindu home, usually comprising a shelf on which religious artefacts and the **God-lamp** (q.v.) are kept. Rare.

going-time *n. Basilectal*

An onward journey. See **coming-time**.

- *Going-time, the train stopped at Umgeni.*

gōl-papadi/gōr-papadi *n.*

Square or diamond-shaped sweetmeat made of flour, jaggery, semolina, coconut and almonds. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *goḷpapḍī/gorpapḍī* from *ghor* 'jaggery', *pāpaḍī* 'sweetmeat', Hn *gol papṛī*]

good-thing *n. Slang**

A person with some special talent, a helpful person. Also abbrev. to GT. Now rare. See **thing**.

This guy's a good thing, Jake. I got him under control and his old man's loaded. A real larnie. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 184

goodwill *n.*

Large, compulsory, one-off payment extracted from tenants by some landlords or estate agents for flats in areas where accommodation is scarce. [Euphemism, from a term in accountancy]

- *How much goodwill did you have to pay for this poky flat?*

goofed *part. Slang**

Intoxicated on liquor or under the influence of dagga, as opposed to being *stoned*, which refers to the ingestion of tablets like Mandrax. Also **goofed up**. Cf. US English *goof around, goof off*; British English *goof* 'mistake, blunder, fool'. [Etymology uncertain, possibly English *goof*, ultimately English dialect *goff* 'simpleton' – *Encarta World English Dict*]

gōra *n. Slang*

A White person; one with very fair complexion.

■ In Hindi and Gujarati this is a neutral term of reference; in SAIE slang it conveys a slight disdain. See **vet ou**. [Hn, Gu *gorā* adj. 'white']

... but seeing a woman of her age dressed so differently – 'In *normal shop-bought clothes* like Goras', as Gorinani would say, made a refreshing change. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 108

It's the *Goras* that did this to him, ganged up on him. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 72

gosi *n. Baby talk*

Meat, cooked meat. See **dhāl-gōs**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *gosht*, Bhoj *gos* plus dimin. suffix -i]

go 'way/go away *v. phr.*

A phrase signalling incredulity. Cf. US English *get out of here*. See **get, gwān**.

- *A: This lawnmower cost me a thousand rand. B: Go 'way!*

grāf *Slang**

1. *v.* To work, to be in regular employment, to toil.

2. *n.* Work; a place of work. Also SAE, Australian, New Zealand English *graft*. [Br Eng *graft* ‘work, illicit work, crooked deal’. Possibly reinforced by Afrik *graaf* ‘to dig, to sink a hole’]

‘I’m not skrik of these guys, Vusi,’ Magua said ... But Jeff here *grafts* there sometimes. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 180

Saras and the rest of the crew that graaf in town reckoned their laani gave them all short time. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

gram *n.*

Chickpeas, a kind of vetch, (*Cicer arietinum*). Same as **channa dhāl**. Also IE, British English. [Eng from Ptg *grão* ‘grain’, ultimately Latin *granum* ‘grain’]

gram flour *n.*

Crushed chickpeas. Also IE, British English.

Gram flour is made from chickpeas and is used in a variety of ways in the kitchen quite often being used to enhance curries ... Not all curries are fiery. The Sindhi curry, typical of the immigrant Sindhi community from the province of Sind in pre-partition India, is a delicate medley of vegetables and spices held together by a gram flour sauce. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 208

gram-dōl/dhāl *n.*

Yellow split peas, split gram, split chickpeas. Same as **channa-dhāl** (q.v.). Also known as *gram lentils*. See **dōl**.

‘... thaswhy I can’t bring you curry, I know you cooking chicken curry today.’ And it was chicken curry and rice, with gram dhal and beans as a side dish, and pickled mangoes and the dahl-roti that Valliamma served up for Deepavali that night. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 65

grand *adj.* *Slang**

Fine, nice, good. Later used in Tsotsitaal as a response to a greeting.

- *A: How’s the chow? B: Ey, grand, eh!*

grandfather stories *n.* *Informal*

Tales of old; exaggerated and outdated tales; unconvincing excuses. Usually derogatory. Possibly other varieties.

- *Don’t come out with your grandfather stories, here.*

grandle *n.*

A granadilla plant or its fruit. Possibly other English varieties. [Abbrev. of *granadilla*]

grant *n.* *Basilectal*

Synonym for a pension. Similar to general English usage, except that this is the only meaning of the word in the basilect. See **pinchen**. [Abbrev. of *disability grant* or *state grant*]

- *He’s getting (a) grant.*

gravy soakers *n. Informal/slang***

1. Potatoes, large pieces of potato cooked in gravy with meat.
 - In previous times when meat was scarce or less affordable, potatoes were added to curries to make a meal more substantial. Also known jocularly as **melting moments** (q.v.), after a brand of biscuits.
2. (Metaphorical) Politicians on the 'gravy train' or their immediate followers who profit from such a relationship.
3. A leech, someone who sponges on richer people.

Merv's vrou Shiela brought a little beans, Mimla Mowski brought the gravy soakers (potatoes), Auntie Gerla sent some tomatoes. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

grew up in front of me *v. phr.*

Said of someone whom one has known closely from birth and in whose upbringing one has been directly or indirectly involved. Widespread in SAIE. Also used in Cape Coloured English.

- *It's so hard to believe she's getting married today, when she grew up in front of me.*

grudge *v. Basilectal*

To begrudge, to bear a grudge against someone. Possibly other varieties.

- *He grudged me for a long time.*

guār/guvār *n.*

Thin, flat, slender green beans, *Cyamopsis psoraliodes*. Same as **gwālīn**, **kothrenka**, **tiny beans**. Also spelt **goovar**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *guvār*]

Heat oil in pot – add spiced goovar and close lid of pot. Simmer slowly for 10 minutes. Open lid of pot till goovar is fried crisp. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 129

gudhra/gudhri/ghodru *n.*

An eiderdown, a thick home-made blanket usually made from old garments or blankets sewn together and covered in a new sheet. Also in Mauritian Creole for 'bedcover, quilt'. [Hn, Ur, *gudṛī* 'rags, tattered garments, quilt of the very poorest people', Gu *godadī* 'light quilt made of unrefined cotton or cotton saris as stuffing or rags by the poor']

I burrowed deep under my godhru and revelled in the feeling of being cocooned and coddled while Naani sat next to me tearfully. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 66

gugra *n.*

A snack usually filled with cream of wheat, sugar, almonds and raisins wrapped in pastry dough and fried in oil. Similar to **pōli** (q.v.). Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *ghugharo*]

Gujarati *n.*

1. A person from the Indian state of Gujarat, a person of such ancestry in SA. See **Guju**, **Banya**, **Dukawala**.
2. The language spoken by Gujaratis, ultimately descended from Sanskrit.
 - Gujaratis came to SA from 1875 onwards via the port of Bombay, as traders and clerks employed by such traders or as menial workers who were not, however, indentured. They came mainly from the districts of Kathiawad and Surat (see **Kathiawadi**, **Surti**), but also districts such as Porbander. There are as many of Hindu as of Muslim background in SA, with more Hindu Gujaratis in KZN and Eastern Cape and more Muslim Gujaratis in Gauteng and the other provinces. [Place name *Gujarat*, based on ancient peoples, *Gujars*, plus agent suffix *ī*]

We poor Gujaratis of trading and farming backgrounds have lost so much of that beauty and that repose that is really our birthright and heritage. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 156

Hence Hindu Gujaratis are divided into Kathiawadis (from Kathiawad) and Surtis (from Surat) and though there is considerable social contact between the two, they do not as a rule intermarry. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 62

Guju/Guji *n.*

A Gujarati-speaking person, usually from a trading background. Usually jocular, sometimes pejorative when pointing to stereotypes about businessmen. Also UK Asian English *Gujju*. Similar to **banya** (q.v.). [Abbrev. from *Gujarati*]

- *He's a real Guju.*

gulāb jāmun/gulāb jāmbu *n.*

A small, thin doughnut-like sweetmeat, dipped in syrup or rose water. Similar to Cape *koeksisters* but smaller. Usually made for religious ceremonies and festivals. Also referred to as **gulāb jāb**, **gulāb jām**, **jambo** (q.v.). Spellings **gulab jambo**, **gulab jamboo**, **goolab jambu**, etc. [Gu, Hn, Ur *gulāb jāmun*, *jāmun* 'plum', ultimately from Persian *gul* 'rose' plus *ab* 'water']

My children love Goolab jamuns with desiccated coconut sprinkled liberally over them as they are removed from the syrup. They find them as delicious as South African koeksusters. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 128

'Yes, yes, those goolab jamus,' she zeroed in, 'that was the root of the problem.' – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 178

gulgulla *n.*

Small, round cakes made from flour and raisins fried in oil or **ghee** (q.v.), sweet fritters. [Hn, Ur *gulgulā* from *gul* 'rose' plus *gullā* 'ball']

Gool Goolas, Bengali delights: golden fried balls with a delicious aniseed flavour, dipped in syrup – a winner with children. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 126

guli-danda *n.*

A game played by children in which a large stick is used to tip up a little one tapered at both ends into the air and strike it while in the air. Same as English *tip-cat* and Afrikaans *kennetjie*. [Hn, Ur *gillī* ‘a toggle’ plus *ḍaḍa* ‘a stick’]

As a boy, Mohandas amused himself with rubber balloons and revolving tops. He played tennis and cricket and also ‘gilli danda’, a game encountered in so many widely separated countries, which consists in striking a short, sharpened wooden peg with a long stick. – L Fisher *Life of Gandhi*, 26

gulley *n. Slang*****

Neighbourhood, corner, area where young people congregate. [Eng *gulley* ‘ravine, gutter, drain’, with semantic shift]

‘... Everybody that comes here complains about the chow. One ou reckoned we must be using dog meat ’cos he don’t check any stray dogs in the gulley anymore.’ – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

gum-tree tree *n. Basilectal/rural*

Gum; gum-tree. Now rare and mostly jocular.

Stranger: Where’s this tree?

Mothie: There by the Main Road near the school – that big gum-tree tree. – R Govender *Lanhee’s Pleasure*, 23

gundān *n.*

A rat, usually referring to a male with looks or characteristics associated with the rodent, e.g. of a soccer player with a jerky dribble. Jocular, frequently occurring as a nickname, sometimes punning on the surname *Gounden*. Now rare. See also **cane rat**, **mavōndo**. [Zu *igundane* ‘rat or mouse’]

gundu *n.*

1. A round attachment to a necklace which keeps a **thāli** (q.v.) in place. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *kuṅṭu*, Te *guṅḍu* ‘round’]
2. *Slang*. An idiot, inactive or lazy person. Also Singapore English.

gundu-bhajia *n.*

Insulting or jocular term for an overweight person or a person considered stupid. See **bhajia**. [Ta *kuṅṭu*, Te *guṅḍu* ‘round’, plus SA Ta, Te from Ur *bhajia* ‘chilli-bite snack’]

gup/gub *v. [gʌp] Slang**

To lie, exaggerate, deceive. See **bak**, **bak-bak**, **brom**, **shoot**, **thrill**. Hence **gabbing** ‘exaggerating’. [Anglo-Indian colloq. *gup* ‘gossip, scandal’ from Hn *gap* ‘tattle’. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

- *Don’t gup!*

gūr/gōr *n.*

Jaggery; unrefined cane sugar, dark brown sugar made from palm sap. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu *ghor*, Hn, Ur *gor*, Bhoj *gūr*]

Gur or jaggery is dehydrated sugar cane juice and is mostly produced by small cultivators in huge, rural crushers run by bullocks. The jaggery has all the quality of the juice itself. Jaggery is as important as sugar in Indian cookery. It has a special flavour that cannot really be substituted for by sugar, although brown or demerara sugar is the closest equivalent. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 218

guru *n.*

1. Title for a Hindu spiritual leader (e.g. *Guru Krishna*). Not exclusively SAIE.
2. A teacher of an Indian language.

■ There has been some controversy about this term when used in the popular domain, with guidelines to the SABC suggesting that terms like *fashion guru* be avoided since they devalue the deep sense of respect inherent in the Hindu (and Sikh) term. However, this more casual sense of the term is internationally established. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te *guru*]

Stage in darkness ... Lights up. A guru sits in a lotus position on stage. Enter parents with newborn. – N Naidoo *Nadia*, 303

Guruji *n.*

Title of respect, usually voc., but may be used referentially as well. [Gu, Hn *guru* plus *-ji*, a suffix of respect]

- *Guruji thinks that we should continue with building schools for rural children.*

gutli/gutli-mango *n. Rural*

A mango that has matured and ripened without growing to full size. Popular with children on account of its sweetness. [Hn, Ur *guṭhlī* ‘hard seed of a fruit’]

guzzy *n. Slang*

Friend, mate, pal. Spellings: **gazi**, **guzzi**. Reported in Cape Town Tsotsitaal as *gazlam* ‘my companion’, literally ‘my blood’. [Zu/Xh *igazi* ‘blood’, short for ‘blood relative’]

You check! Chaar ous are sharp ous my guzzi. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

gwān *v. (imperative) Basilectal*

Go away, get away, be gone. Also Cape Coloured English slang. See **get, go** ‘way’. [Eng *go on*]

- A: *Can I borrow twenty rand?* B: *Gwān from here!*

gwālīn *n.*

Thin, flat, slender green beans, *Cyamopsis psoraliodes*. Same as **guār**, **kothrenka**, **tiny-beans**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Bhoj *gwālīn*]



ha *exclam.* [ˈhæ] *Informal*

‘Yes’; ‘go on’. Signals attention to and extreme interest in what speaker is saying. Similar to English *hmm*, and like *hmm* also occurs as a ‘back channel’ – i.e. simultaneously with the other speakers’ speech. Also spelt **har**. [Probably Hn, Ur *hā* ‘yes’]

Naani smiled. ‘Har. Some of Nana’s work friends coming for tea. After mosque.’ – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 194

hā *exclam.* [ˈhæɛ] *Informal*

‘Yes’ (ironical); ‘no’, ‘we’ll see’. Signals disbelief in or disagreement with what the speaker is saying. Also spelt **hah**. [Possibly Hn, Ur *hā* ‘yes’]

hadīs/hadīth *n.*

1. A book of quotations from the Prophet Muhammed.
2. The Prophetic tradition in Islam. In *COD* as *hadith* [Ur *hadīs* from Ar *ḥadīth*]

This Arabic word has a large number of meanings including ‘speech’, ‘report’ and ‘narrative’. It also has the very important specialist sense of tradition, i.e. a record of the sayings and doings of the prophet Muhammad and his companions, and as such is regarded by Muslims as a source of Islamic law, dogma and ritual second only in importance to the **Qur’an** itself. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*, 90.

haj *n.*

Pilgrimage to Mecca made by Muslims. One of the five pillars of Islam. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. Also spelt **hadj**, **hajj**. In *COD*. [Ur *haj*]

All Muslims, provided a number of conditions including good health and financial ability are present, have a duty to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetimes. This major pilgrimage must be made in the Month of Pilgrimage ... the last month of the Muslim lunar calendar, between the 8th day of the month and the 12th or 13th. (A minor pilgrimage to Mecca, which does not count towards fulfilment of the religious duty and is called in Arabic an **‘umra**, may be made at any time and requires less ceremonial.) – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*, 91–2.

hajji *n.*

A title for a Muslim who has been on pilgrimage. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. Spelt **hadji**, **hajji**. In *COD*. [Ur *hājī* from Ar *ḥājīj*]

When the telephone rang several times one evening and his wife did not attend to it as she usually did, Hajji Hassen, seated on a settee in the lounge,

cross-legged and sipping tea, shouted: ‘Salima, are you deaf?’ – A Essop *The Hajji & Other Stories*, 1

hak/huck *v. Slang**

To steal, to ‘pinch’.

To embrace, to embrace intimately, to elope with. Also SAE slang. [Probably Afrik *hak* ‘to pursue someone closely’]

All the more reason why we should *huck* the lot. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 316

hakke *exclam.* [ˈhæɛ]

‘No’ (emphatic). [Possibly based on Eng *uh-uh*]

halāl *adj.*

Lawful, legitimate, usually pertaining to meat prepared in conformity with Islamic religious rites; may also refer to other foods and non-dietary matters. Also pure, wholesome, good, allowed, permissible. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. Also spelt **halal**, **hallal**. Antonym of **harām** (q.v.). Cf. Jewish *kosher*. [Ur *halāl* ‘lawful’ from Ar *ḥalāl*]

He had chosen, as his topic of the day, the normally simple topic of what was considered as halaal – suitable for consumption by a Muslim. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 166

He went past the jewellery stores . . . the halaal butchers selling cold meats and sausages, the Butterworth hotel. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 176

And what of those boers who took him hunting so that we too could enjoy *halaal* venison and *biltong*. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 204

haldhi/haldi *n.* – see **hardhi**

haleem/halīm *n.*

Thick broth made of meat, bone and wheat, barley or lentils. Usually prepared during **Ramadan** (q.v.) [Ur *halim*]

Cook meat till tender and add ground dhals. Cook till all is well blended and haleem is consistency of broth. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 54

halva/halwa *n.*

1. A rich dessert made of milk and nuts or cereal, carrots etc., usually cut up into blocks as fudge. Also Jewish and Muslim preparation. In *COD*.
2. A sweet, flat wafer-like sweetmeat.
3. A sweet porridge-like dessert often prepared on religious occasions. [Gu, Ta, Te *halva*, Hn, Ur *halwā* ultimately from Ar]

hamdulila *exclam.* – see **alhamdulila**

hananaha *n.* – see **jananda**

hand-made bread *n.*

A synonym for **roti** (q.v.), i.e. unleavened bread made by hand in the home as opposed to bread bought in a store, known as **shop-bread** (q.v.). See also **dhālpūri**, **naan**, **parāṭha**, **rōti-roll**.

Hanumān Chalisa *n.*

Epic poem in Hindi sung in honour of Hanumān, the monkey-deity of Hinduism, honoured widely by Hindus in SA.

■ Hanumān is the monkey-God of the Ramayana, a faithful follower of Lord Rām, and is worshipped by Hindus for this. [Hn *Hanuman* from *hanu* ‘jaw, chin’, hence ‘large jawed, he of the chin’, *chālisa* ‘an aggregate of forty verses’ from *chālis* ‘forty’]

Hanumān is the monkey-chief, son of Vāyu and Añjanā, who is portrayed as a dwarfish human being with a monkey’s head and long powerful tail ... Sometimes the faithful ape is depicted kneeling on one knee before his master the solar hero Rāma, whom he accompanied in the war against Rāvaṇa, the demon king of Lanka (Ceylon). – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 53

11 recitals of Shree Hanuman Chalisa – pamphlet *Shree Vishnu Mandir*, Cape Town March 2010

Hanumān Jayanthi *n.*

Anniversary of the birth of Hanumān; the monkey-deity of Hinduism, honoured widely by Hindus in SA. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Skt *hanumān* plus *jayantī* ‘birth anniversary, jubilee’]

Hanuman was born on a Tuesday, hence he is also known as Mangal, and is especially worshipped on that day, when large crowds flock to temples dedicated to him [in India]. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 80

Hanuman Jayanti at the Shree Vishnu Mandir 27th Anniversary – pamphlet *Shree Vishnu Mandir*, Cape Town March 2010

harām *adj.*

That which is forbidden, improper within Islamic tenets, unlawful, illegitimate, taboo, sinful. Opposite of **halāl** (q.v.). Just as **halāl** may be translated into English as ‘pure’, **harām** is translated as ‘forbidden’. [Gu, Hn, Ur *harām* from Ar *ḥaram*]

‘The money earned from the Castle Tests is not pure, according to our Islamic beliefs, and as such I also am forbidden to use it.’ – H Amla, cited in *Daily News* 28 December 2009

harāmi *n.*

Term of abuse for a male, transgressor of norms or code of conduct, unprincipled person, equivalent to English ‘bastard, rascal, scoundrel’. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *harāmī*]

harāmīn *n.*

A term of abuse for a female. Female equivalent of **harāmi** (q.v.). Mainly Hn, Urdu homes. [Bhoj *harāmīn*]

haram chōdh *n.*

Term of abuse, equivalent to English ‘bastard’. See **madhar chōdh**, Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *harām* plus *codū*, ‘one who indulges in excessive sexual activities’]

haram khōr *n.*

Term of abuse levelled at an ingrate, a wicked person etc. Mainly Gujarati, Urdu homes. [Gu, Ur, *haramkhor*, based on *haram* plus *khōr* 'eating, consuming, partaking of', from Persian *khordan*]

hard liver *n.*

Liver and similar portions of sheep's offal which, when cooked, are hard in comparison to other offal. See **soft liver**. Now rare.

hardhi *n.*

1. Piece of yellow root or rhizome of turmeric, *Curcuma longa*. Also spelt **hardi**. Same as **haldhi/haldi**.
2. Crushed powder obtained from the turmeric root, used as a condiment in curries, and used as a dye or stimulant. Same as **aradh, haldi**.
3. Pre-nuptial ceremony, held a day before a wedding, during which bride or groom is anointed with turmeric powder which is rubbed over the body. It is also an occasion of giving gifts. See **māndvo, mehndhi, nālengu, piṭhi**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *haldī*, Bhoj *hardī*]

Haldi or hardhi is a relative of the ginger plant. Requires cooking before use: pieces may be added to pickles, but mostly haldi is dried and ground to an orange-yellow powder. By Hindus, the powder is considered auspicious (as of the colour of gold and the sun). – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 79

hardies/harties *exclam. Slang**

An exclamation of sympathy equivalent to 'hard luck', 'sorry' etc. Also Cape Coloured English. [Probably from *hard luck*]

hārés *n. Slang** ['hɑ:rəz]

Hair. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *haar*, with double pl.: -e from Afrik, -s from Eng]

Hare Krishna *n.* – see **Krishna****harkat/hārekat** *adj. Slang***

Difficult to get on with, obstinate, troublesome, a 'pain-in-the-ass'. SAE slang and Tsotstiaal *hardegat*. [Afrik *hardegat* from *harde* 'hard' plus *gat* 'hole, rear orifice']

- *Don't expect any help from him, he's such a harkat ou.*

harmonium/harmunium *n.* [hAR¹mŏnjəm]

A keyboard instrument in which the notes are produced by air driven through metal reeds by foot-operated bellows. Introduced in India by French missionaries in the c19 and more popular in India than in the West today. The Indian harmonium is portable, and played with one hand on the keyboard and one controlling the bellows. Essential instrument accompanying **qawālis, bhajans, chutney** (q.v.), and other songs. [Origin c19 from Greek *harmonikos*]

Nadas, the truck driver, played the harmonium, and Mr Thaver played the violin. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 89

He learnt Harmonium and Violin on his own initiative. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 104

The harmonium, besides being a Victorian English instrument, is also extremely popular in India in the smaller table-top hand-pumped version. – <http://free-reed.net/essays/beatles.html>

Authors: Lennon, McCartney; Lead vocal: McCartney ... Recorded: October 20, 1965 at Abbey Road, London, England. John Lennon – acoustic guitar, harmonium, harmony vocal ... – *Credits to 'We can work it out'*. – www.dmbeatles.com/25 April 2010

havan/hāwan *n.*

Hindu prayers during which scented symbolic offerings of **ghee**, **samagri** (q.v.), etc. are made into a small fire. See **yajna**. [Gu *havan*, Hn *hawan*, Bhoj *hāwan*]

The Chauhan family cordially invites you and your family to a special thanksgiving havan in celebration of the 80th birthday of Shree Jamnadasbhai Chauhan – invitation card, Cape Town March 2010

Havan today is a modification of an extremely ancient Vedic fire ceremony, which historically predates the now familiar image- veneration of Hinduism. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 24

havan kund/hāwan kund *n.*

A portable metal receptacle open at the top in which a fire is lit and offerings poured during a **havan**. [*havan/hāwan* plus Gu, Hn *kuṇḍ* 'a sacrificial pit']

The devotees invoked God in the sacrificial fire, which they kindled in the fire receptacle, havan khund, which stood at the entrance of the temple ... – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 151

hawa/hava *exclam.* [hæwa:]/[hava:] *Basilectal*

'Here', 'here you are'. An expression which conveys nuances like 'don't you know, can't you see, surely'. Also spelt **herewa**. See **dhawa**. [From *here you are*]

Herewa, see here, see here. (Indicates wet patch from shoulders down to his buttocks.) – K Govender *Stablexpense*, 254

hawubo *exclam.* – see **how**

head *n.:* **to sit on someone's head**

To pester someone, to make demands on someone, to supervise closely. Usually said of unruly children by parents. Cf. IE *To stand on someone's head; to sit on someone's neck*.

headache *n.:* **to have a headache in one's toes**

Used to express disbelief in a malingerer's illness, usually a child wishing to be excused from school. See also **toes**, **your toes**.

- A: *I don't think I can do this job, I'm not feeling too well.* B: *What's wrong, you got a headache in your toes?*

head-bath *n.*

A bath during which one washes one's hair. See **body-bath**. Also IE.

healthy *adj.*

Fat, overweight. Older speakers. The euphemism is not a conscious one, perhaps reflecting an earlier belief that 'thin' was unhealthy. Cf. US Jewish English *husky*.

He wasn't healthy, he was thin; so how could he get a heart attack? – Durban resident, 1987

heart *n. Basilectal*

An ailment of the heart, a heart condition, angina. More usually **heart-trouble**. See **nerve**, **pressure**, **sugar**.

- *He's got heart, and has to go for a check-up.*

heavy speeches *n.*

A scolding by an elder, a dressing down, a telling off. Sometimes shortened to **speeches**. [Br Eng, US slang *heavy* 'obstinate, pompous, domineering' plus *speeches*]

herbs *n.*

In SAIE this usually refers to edible leafy vegetables or **bhāji** (q.v.), i.e. herbs for the pot, and not usually to dried leaves that are used as flavouring or seasoning as in the Standard English phrase *herbs and spices*. The chief types of herb that constitute a main meal (with *rōti* or rice or equivalents) are: **sugar cane herbs** (Hn *chorāi ke bhāji*), which grow as weeds between rows of sugar cane but which may also be cultivated; **red herbs** (having red or velvet leaves); **green herbs** (similar to sugar cane herbs); **mustard herbs** (see **sarso**); **drumstick** (q.v.) **herbs**, which grow on a large tree; **sour herbs** [Ta *kāslakīre*] and **chansūr** (a herb that resembles coriander or **dhania** – q.v.).

Vellama was in the kitchen and as she entered the front door which was always open she caught the aroma of red herbs being braised with dry chillies. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 32

here *exclam.* [hʃæ]

'Indeed'. Denotes anger or impatience, when it occurs in the final position in a sentence.

- *You know I hate raisins, here.*

Also possibly British English, when it occurs in the initial position in a sentence, as in *Here, you wouldn't be putting me on, would you?*

[Probably from *hear, do you hear*, reinforced by *here*, with no interrogative force today]

Hīdru – see **Hyderabadī****Highway Sheila** *n.*

1. Female ghost said to haunt the Higginson highway near Chatsworth, Durban since the 1970s.

■ Sheila is said to thumb a lift from motorists before disappearing into the night.

2. More recently extended to refer to any prostitute or 'lady of the night' [*Sheila* is an Indian name, an abbrev. of *Prashilla*, *Sushilla*, etc.]

The famous Highway Sheila has hitched a lift to Verulam under disguise ... According to several locals 'the woman in black' has been seen doing her rounds in the area on the KZN North Coast over the past few days ... A still terrified Jane Rajpaul, 42 ... said she'd encountered Sheila ... on two consecutive nights and has been having sleepless nights. – *Post* 22 December 2004

hijāb *n.*

1. Veil worn by Muslim women. See also **abāyah**, **orhni**, **parda**.
2. Traditional Islamic female ensemble made of long, loose dress (see **abāyah**) and tight headscarf (see **burka**), sometimes with the veil (see **parda**). [Ar *ḥijāb*]

Worn by many Muslim women out of modesty, the veil (*hijāb*) is also a striking symbol of pride in being a Muslim. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Perhaps, I thought, she was waiting for what I considered the toughest thing – for me to transcend my love of clothes and step out into the *hijaab* that reduced all females to the same blob-like, Baba-Papa form. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 202

Hindi *n.*

The main official language of India, and one of the largest with over 400 million speakers, descended ultimately from Sanskrit. A large part of SA's Indian population identifies with Hindi, as a language of heritage and culture. See also **Bhojpuri**, **Hindustani**.

The paper was and is called *Indian Opinion*. It was formerly published in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. But the Hindi and Tamil sections were eventually discontinued. – MK Gandhi *Satyagraha in SA*, 141

Hindi Shiksha Sangh – see **Sangh**

Hindustani *n.* [hɪndu'stæni:]

1. Alternative name for Hindi, often a more colloquial, less literary form.
 - Pronounced in an anglicised way in SA.
2. The sub-community in SA of North Indian origins from the former provinces of Agra, Oudh (later Uttar Pradesh) and Bihar. Hence **Hindustani people**, **Hindustanians**.
 - Hindustani was a colonial term known from the c19 on in Natal, Burma and elsewhere. Hindustanians in Burma were distinguished from Bengalis, Tamils, Oriyas, etc.

Thambi Naidoo ... understood and spoke Hindustani fairly well and he had some knowledge of Telugu too, though he did not know the alphabets of these languages. – MK Gandhi *Satyagraha in SA*, 147

hing *n.*

Asafoetida – bitter, strongly odoured slab of gum-resin used in cooking and medicinal preparations. Used in **dāl** (q.v.) and **sugar-beans** (q.v.) as digestive curd. Same as Afrikaans and SAE *duiwelsdrek*. – J Branford *Dict of SA Eng* [Gu, Hn *hing*, Te *inguva*]

A reddish brown dried resin, derived from the roots of various plants from western Kashmir, East India and Iran. It has a strong, even foetid, odour and a garlicky taste. Since asafoetida is a digestive, it is chiefly used in lentil and bean dishes ... Asafoetida is one of the best remedies for flatulence. It is used in digestive powders and in the East as an antidote for opium. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 14

hint *v.* *Basilectal*

To speak ill of, indirectly but forcefully. Mainly used by females. See **comments: to pass comments**.

- *They were hinting about you.*

Holi *n.*

Indian spring festival, at which among numerous festivities participants douse one another with coloured water.

■ Not as widely or intensely celebrated as in India, though there have been recent attempts to heighten awareness of the festival. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu *holī*, Hn *holī*]

Holi is a spring festival with obvious fertility connotations, dedicated to Krishna and the *gopīs*. It includes erotic games, songs and obscenities, jumping over bonfires and throwing red powder and coloured water over friends and neighbours. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 56

... an occasion unique for colour and exuberant gaiety: when all, master and servant, Brahman and harijan, male and female, forget their everyday separateness ... Holi can mean a number of things ... but underlying all is the licence of the vernal fertility festivals of the Indo-Europeans – Holi is ignored in the Dravidian south. The spring lupercalia and bacchanalia of the Romans, the pre-Lenten carnivals of the Latin world and the jollifications on the village green of the traditional English May Day ... – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 87

home-name *n.* – see **house-name****honey-banana** *n.*

Large, sweet banana, softer and more honey-coloured than others when ripe. Rural areas. See **butter-banana**.

hot *adj.* *Slang**

Knowledgeable. Now being superseded by other international meanings pertaining to sex appeal, wellness, etc. See also **dhādha**, **master**. [A slightly different nuance from international informal usage, e.g. US English *not so hot at maths*]

- A: (Recites list of horses in a race.) B: *Ey, you're hot! He's hot in Arithmetic.*

house-house game *n.*

To play 'houses'. Term used mainly by children for play involving a make-believe house. Also IE.

After this round of house-house game in the mountain, the young couple return to start a new life in the city. – NDTV presenter, New Delhi 8 August 2009

house-name *n.*

The first-name a person is known by in his home, especially where this differs from the name he is known by at school. Same as **home-name**. See also **calling-name**, **factory name**, **rās-name**, **school-name**.

House of Delegates *n.*

The Indian section of the tricameral parliament instituted under apartheid between 1984 and 1994.

■ The other sections were the House of Representatives for Coloureds and the House of Assembly for Whites. As Blacks were excluded, the system had very little support from the Coloured and Indian communities.

Our boycott has proved very successful but we have landed with a sorry bunch of delegates for the Indian house. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 127

house-people *n. Basilectal*

Members of a family, usually an extended family, people living under the same roof. See **big-house**, **kutum**.

- *We have to invite all the house-people; you can't leave anyone out.*

how *interrog.*

1. In a negative manner, used in rhetorical questions referring to unpleasant events. See also **āi**. [Extension of Eng rhetorical interrogative *how*, as in 'how we used to love walking in the forest']

- *How they said!* = 'They said unpleasant things'.

Nantha was a beautiful gifted personality ... We have lost such a unique personality. How he sat and accompanied every musician, great singers of his time. – JR Devar *Tribute to Nantha Sadayan*, cited in P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 102

2. An exclamation of surprise or exasperation. May also be said in full as **hawubo**. See also **where**. [Zu *hau*, *hawubo*]

'Hawubo, Maha. You don't know to have Surti, Guji friends only?' she slapped my back playfully. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 103

'How ekse! I scheme Mimla Mowsie cooks better than this', reckoned Dees. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

how's the goings?

An informal greeting, equivalent to 'How are you?' May be used together with, or instead of, the ubiquitous SAE *How's it*, *howzit*. Cf. Trinidad English *How you going?*

huk *n.* ['hʊk]

A back problem, a crick in one's back. Also expressed as *my back is caught*. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *hūk* 'a shooting pain, agony', possibly reinforced by Eng *hook*]

hull/hal *exclam.* ['hʌl] *Slang*

An exclamation meant to invoke sympathy, or mark impatience. Same as **al**. [Probably from Eng *hell*]

- *Hull, ekse, I nevva chowed a swak bunny in my life ... Salam Bombay* (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

hum *v.* *Slang**

To stink, to emit an unpleasant odour. Also SAE slang. See **naar**. [Br Eng slang from late c19 *hum*]

- *There was a helluva hum in the room. I sniffed and I see this guy's shoes are really humming.*

hustle *v.* *Slang**

1. To be down and out, to struggle financially, to experience difficulty.
 - *Me, I was hustling that time, no idea where to get some money.*
2. To beg, to wheedle. Also SAE. [Br Eng slang *hustle* 'to obtain by force, to swindle'; US Eng slang 'engage or solicit customers in shady deals, prostitution, etc.'. Related to Std Eng *hustle* 'to do something hurriedly', ultimately Dutch *hutselen* 'to shake or toss']

Hyderabādhi *n.*

A person of Muslim descent from South India. Now rare. Also spelt **Hydrabadee**. Known as **Hīdru**, **Hedru**, **Hedroo** among Gujarati Muslims. [Place name *Hyderabad*, city in the former Madras Presidency, now part of Andhra Pradesh]

Urdu-speaking Muslims, though drawn from such diverse regions as Gujarat ... Hyderabad and Madras (jointly recognised as Hyderabadis), the North West frontier ... and the United Province ... have become integrated into a common community. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 63

While this [change] provided commonality among indentured Muslims and their descendants, the gap between them and Muslim traders was vast ... [T]his was reflected in practices of endogamy within linguistic groups, dress codes, and attachment of the label 'Hydrabadee', which was used derogatively to refer to indentured Muslims and their descendants, even though few of them were from Hyderabad. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 286
Sameer's chief ... cousin ... had unfortunately chosen the daughter of a Hedroo gangster, as his wife. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 24



iddat *n.*

Period before a divorced or widowed woman may remarry in Islamic practice, a legal 'waiting period'. [Gu, Ur *iddat*, Ar *'idda*]

The rules ... governing *'idda* are complex but basically derive from the Qur'ān. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

For the rest of the year, post-iddat, I was blessed with silent hostility from all around me. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 145

idli *n.*

A type of rice cake, made by steaming semi-solid dough made of rice and black grain.

■ Previously not very common in South Africa, now being reintroduced via new restaurants with chefs from India. Often eaten as a starter to a **dōsa** (q.v.) main course, hence the term **idli-dōsa**. [Ta *iṭṭali*, Te *iḍli*]

As the chapatti is to the north, so the dosa and the idli is to all south India. A dough of rice and urad gram flours, allowed to stand for some hours (often overnight) and so rise by self fermentation – no yeast is added. Made into thin circular cakes and steam cooked. Often a breakfast dish eaten with chutney and sambar. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 90

And he took me back to that 1 000 Lights restaurant where we had idli, dosai, sambar and coffee. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 138

ijār/izār *n.*

Long pants worn under a skirt by Muslim women in conformity with Islamic traditions of dress. [Ur *izār*, *ijār*]

Were her legs too slim? Did she look funny in the ijaar? What were the boys thinking of her? – A Sam *Well Loved Woman*, 64

The two sisters caused a sensation the day they arrived to live in the yard. They wore robe-like dresses with ijars (trousers). – A Essop *Two Sisters*, 30

ilāchi/ilaichi *n.*

Cardamon (or cardamom), *Elettaria cardomomum*. Sometimes spelt **elachi**, **elaichi**. [Hn, Ur *ilāycī*, Ta *yelakāi*]

One of the most popular spices in the world, elaichi or cardamom is called the 'queen of spices', second only to black pepper, the king ... Cardamoms are the dried fruits of a herbaceous perennial of the ginger family, growing up to 5m tall. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 46

imām *n.*

An Islamic priest who leads the prayer at a congregation. Also a title of respect for other prominent followers of Islam. Not exclusively SAIE. In COD. [Ur, Ar *imām*]

Deriving as it does from an Arabic word meaning ‘to head’, ‘to lead in prayer’, *imām* has the primary meaning of prayer leader. Islam has no priests and thus the *imam* attached to a mosque is not ordained. However, any male Muslim may lead the prayer in the absence of a mosque *imām*. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

By the time the next-town imam arrived, summoned in the greatest haste to perform the nika’a, everyone was involved in one way or another in the wedding. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 62

imbrication office *n.* [ˈɪmbrikeɪʃən ɔːfɪs] *Basilectal*

Immigration Office. Now rare or jocular. Known from the 1960s on as Dept of Indian Affairs and House of Delegates offices, from which Indians in KZN obtained birth certificates, identity documents, and passports. The offices were often metonymically called *Stanger Street*, after the street in which the building was situated. See **Mason-kot**, **immrigants**. [Solecism, *imbrication* being an overlapping arrangement of items, as in tiles of a roof.]

imli *n.*

Tamarind.

■ Used in some curries, especially fish curry, and in a solution to soothe upset stomachs. Same as **amli**, **chinthapandu**, **puli**. [Hn, Ur *imlī*]

Most Indians remember eating tamarind (imli) pulp with childhood friends, hidden away from disapproving adults, on hot, lazy afternoons. Its sour sweetness is all the more tasty with a sprinkling of coarse salt. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 124

immrigants *n.* *Basilectal*

Immigrants. Older speakers. Now rare. This particular pronunciation may be linked for some speakers to the form **girmīt** (q.v.), the older word among indentured labourers for *agreement*, i.e. the contract of **indenture** (q.v.). See also **imbrication office**. [Double metathesis]

inchie *n.* *Slang**

A small, unsmoked piece of cigarette, a cigarette-butt. From SAE and Cape Town slang.

■ The Afrikaans origin is generally unknown in SAIE, where the word is linked to English *inch* in terms of size. See **stompie**. [Afrik *eindjie* ‘a little end’]

indenture *n.*

A system of labour in which a worker was bonded to an employer for a fixed period, earning a wage, accommodation and food rations. Freedom of movement was not permitted during the term of indenture. Although the term could also be used generally for an agreement binding an apprentice to a master, the specific colonial usage referred to a contract by which an individual agreed to work for a fixed period for a colonial landowner in exchange for passage to the colony.

■ Indians arrived in large numbers in Durban between 1860 and 1911 under contracts of indenture lasting five or ten years. They were employed in the plantations being developed in colonial Natal, preparing the land for and planting tea, coffee, tobacco and, above all, sugar. Some indentured workers were employed on the Natal Railways, the first in Africa; others worked for the municipality of Durban. See **barracks**, **girmit**, **Mason-kot**. Not exclusive to SAIE. In *COD*. [English *indenture*, from the root *dent* ‘a mark’, itself from Latin *dens* ‘tooth’ – originally referring to the indented edges of the contract, which separated original and duplicate copy.]

The contract stipulated that the indentured were to work between sunrise and sunset six days per week, nine hours per day. Polkinghorne [concluded] ‘I am firmly of the opinion that Indians indentured to this company have been overworked’. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 134

independent *adj.* *Basilectal*

Haughty, aloof. See **proud**.

- *She can be very independent, she'll hardly talk to you.*

Indian *n.*

1. A person born in India, or one who claims descent and affinity with India. In SA people of Indian origins call themselves both South Africans and Indians. At one time **South African Indian** was a term for this dual identity (e.g. the now defunct *South African Indian Council*). The term **Indian South African** is increasingly used, stressing the South African identity, with the term *Indian* being a descriptor.

■ Although pre-partition India of the c19 was a bigger territory than that of the present day, the entire ‘Indian’ population of SA originated in what came to be India, rather than Pakistan or Bangla Desh. Since 1994 the country’s more open immigration policy has resulted in new immigrants from greater South Asia (mainly Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangla Desh as well as India). See **British Indian**, **chār-ou**, **coolie**, **indenture**.

2. Occasionally used by SAIE speakers as a term of mild abuse for an obstinate or stupid person. Also jocular. See **chār-ou**, **coolie**, **Sammy**.

... Some of the indentured having completed their contracts, returned to India, married, or made their way back as ‘free Indians’ or sometimes reindentured. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 26

Indian parsley *n. phr.*

A term used in some recipe books for **dhania** (q.v.). Also known as **Chinese parsley**.

Indian rice *n. phr.*

A term found in advertisements for **biryāni** (q.v.) or for the rice used in preparing it. Rare.

Indian time *n. phr.:* **to run on Indian time**

To be behind schedule. Usually said of weddings, prayers and public functions, which often used to begin a good half-hour after the advertised commencing time. Cf. *CMT* (‘Coloured Mean Time’) in the Cape and *African Time* in KZN.

Indian Opinion *n. Historical*

Newspaper started by Mahatma Gandhi at Phoenix Settlement, Durban.

■ The newspaper ran from 1903 to 1961. It originally carried articles in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil and English, focusing on world events as well as news affecting the Indian communities of SA. Other newspapers of the time run by Indians were *African Chronicle* (founded 1908), run by PS Aiyar, and *Indian Views*, an English-Gujarati weekly run by Mahommed Anglia.

The founding of *Indian Opinion* would become very important ... It was not the first Indian newspaper; in 1898 *Indian World* had had a shaky, short-lived debut. PS Aiyar, a journalist from Madras, did not let this defeat him and in May 1901 published *Colonial Indian News* from Pietermaritzburg. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 51

inji *n.*

Ginger, a hot fragrant spice made from the rhizome of a herbaceous plant; the root is either crushed or cut into very thin strips for Indian cooking. Mainly Tamil homes; though the more common term in SAIE is *ginger* (*adrak* in Hindi, Gujarati). See **ginger-garlic**.

■ *Inji* is the original Dravidian form from which the word was borrowed into Sanskrit (*singabera*), then Latin and Old English; hence the similarity with the first part of the botanical name *Zingiber officinale*. [Ta *iñci*]

inshallah *exclam.*

An Islamic exclamation 'if God wills', uttered when someone mentions a future action. Similar to Latin *deo volente*. [Ur, Ar *In Shā'a Allāh*]

Vv. 23–24 of Surat al Kahf counsel that one should not say that one will do something tomorrow but rather 'If God wills'. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

'Umm, I'll find out properly tomorrow ... umm ... inshallah,' I added hastily, before he could remind me. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 103

... Sam said. 'I used to keep repeating, 'God willing they won't break through' ...' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 467

intappears/itappears *adv.* [ɪntə'piəz]/[ɪtə'piəz] *Basilectal*

Apparently; it appears that. Not followed by *that*. Pronounced as one word, not as formal as the English *it appears* from which it derives.

- *Intappears the doctor said she's working too hard and her pressure is too high.*

interested *part.*

Euphemism for 'in love with'. Mainly older speakers, for whom love was not a subject to be discussed openly. Possibly other varieties. See also **book**, **future**, **proposed**, **word**. [Probably abbrev. of *interested in marrying*]

While I was going through all these torments over Mr Andrews, I found that another young man had become interested in me. – N Govender *Acacia Thorn in my Heart*, 93

interfere *v.* *Basilectal/euphemism*

To molest, harass, make a pass at. Possibly other varieties of SAE.

- *That old man was interfering with a schoolgirl.*

isel *n.*

A large flying ant or winged termite that appears from a hole in the ground, greatly attracted by lights. [Ta *īcal*, Te *isul̩lu*]

I miss Diwali and Durban in October, all the fun and fireworks and the isels coming out of the ground attracted by all the lights. – V Singh letter from Santa Barbara, August 2003

Isikula *n.* – see **Low Zulu****isn't it** *tag.*

A tag equivalent to 'didn't she/he/it/we/they' or 'aren't I/you/we/they'. Same as IE *isn't it*. Also spreading in international English. In SAIE the form may be further reduced in informal speech to **isn't**.

Babs slurped loudly on his tea and finally turned to me. 'You're a teacher, isn't?' – S Lee *Maha, Forever After*, 212

izzat/ijjat *n.*

Prestige, honour, respect, earned through acts of righteousness within an Islamic framework. In *COD* as *izzat*. [Ur *izzat* from Ar *izzah*]

She subscribed nonetheless, to the highly valued concept of izzat – which not only governed an individual's standing in the community, but also determined the rules of respect and deference towards an older person. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 19



jack-fruit *n.*

Usual name for *jack*, fruit of *Artocarpus integrifolia* or *heterophyllas*, a large fruit, related to the breadfruit of south-east Asia, having many large seeds covered in sheaths which are extremely tasty when ripe.

■ Also curried while still green or fried as jackfruit fritters. Also IE. In *COD* as *jack*. Hence *jack-fruit tree*. [Eng from Ptg *jaca* from Mal *cakka*]

To the layman, the jack seems to be the largest fruit in the world, weights of up to sixty pounds have been claimed (but to a botanist an even heavier pumpkin is also a fruit). So great that the clusters cannot be carried on the branch tips in the usual way of a fruit tree, but hang direct from the trunk and even from exposed roots at ground level where, it is said, they are much enjoyed by jackals. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 98

... to Elias and his Cato Manor fellows the pungent aroma of the curry leaf mingling with the subtle almost musk-like wisps from mango flowers, or the tantalising smell of ripening jack-fruit was as natural as daylight. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 121

jack up *v.:* **to jack someone up**

To scold, reprimand, bring someone to order. Cf. general English *to jack something up* ‘increase something by a considerable amount’, hence *to be jacked-up* ‘to be alert, awake, knowledgeable’; North American English **to jack someone around** ‘cause someone inconvenience or problems’; British English slang **to jack up** ‘to give way, collapse, become bankrupt’ – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* [Probably from **jack** *n.* ‘device for lifting heavy objects’]

- *My ma jacked me up again for not cleaning my shoes.*

jādhu *n.*

Magic, a spell, use of a charm or witchcraft. Hence **to put jādhu** or **to do jādhu**. See also **medicine: to put medicine**, **eyes: to put eyes**, **najar**, **tagāti**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *jādū* from Persian]

‘Someone did jaadhu on my brother,’ the old man had caught Zeenat’s eye ... ‘They tried to kill him, but it wasn’t his time ... but he got so sick, I tell you.’ – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 53

jā’iz *adj.*

That which is permissible practice within Islam. Unlike **halāl** (q.v.), this is not as doctrinal or legal a concept. [Ar *ja’iz*, Ur *jaiz*]

jaldhi *exclam.*

Exclamation conveying sense of ‘hurry’, ‘be quick’, ‘do it quickly’. Usually jocular, used as a consciously Indian word. May occur in the full form **jaldi kar**, where *kar* is the verb ‘to do’. [Gu, Hn, Ur *jaldī*, Ta *jalti*]

‘Open door!’ she bellowed. ‘Nana came way ... Jaldi kar!’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 166

jalēbi/jelēbi *n.*

A sweet, spiral-like (or pretzel-shaped), orange-coloured snack made from a batter of yeast and cake flour deep-fried in oil and dipped in rose water or syrup. Spellings: **julebi**, **julebee**, etc. [Gu, Hn, Ur *jalebī*]

In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, jalebis are often eaten with milk for breakfast. This brilliantly coloured sweet is one of the most popular of Indian sweetmeats, particularly on festive occasions. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 125

to give someone jalebis *Informal*

To chastise or chide. See **beans/carrots/bhajias: to give someone beans/carrots/bhajias**.

- *He’s behaving so badly, but he doesn’t know that his father will give him jalebis when he comes home.*

jaksi *adj. Slang***

Lecherous, ‘randy’, excited. May be abbreviated to **jaks/jux**. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *jags* ‘pertaining to an animal on heat, lecherous’]

I squealed with delight – I didn’t care if I appeared jux – and walked straight into his embrace. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 230

jamāl/jamāl-gota/jamāl kote *n.*

Croton tiglium, a purgative nut. Cf. title of comic play *The Jamal Syndrome*. [Hn, Ur *jamāl goṭā*, Ta *jamāl koṭṭai*]

jamāl *v. Informal*

To provoke diarrhoea by sneaking **jamal** into someone’s food.

- *In the film the waiter jamāled the crooks.*

jambo *n.* [ˈdʒʌmbʊ]

Same as **gulāb jāmun**, **gulāb jāmbu** (q.v.). A neologism used by younger speakers. Rare.

jān *n.*

Procession from bridegroom’s house to the bride’s house or hall where a wedding is to be held. See also **boy’s side**. Mainly Gujarati homes. Same as **baryāt**. [Gu *jān*]

Post-Wedding, our first night together was planned by the jaan and therefore not our concern. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 247

janāza *n.*

1. Prayer for the dead. Also known as **janāza namāz**. Mainly associated with Islam in SA.

2. The corpse wrapped in a coffin cloth or bier with the corpse laid on it. [Hn, Ur *janazah* from Ar *janāzah*]

... which insists that at least one member of the community must perform certain duties or obligations and this will exonerate the entire community from that particular responsibility. For example, the Janaza Namaaz. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 23–4

Then the mourners' chants amplified as the men lifted the janaaza and faced the exit. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 265

jangli/junglee *n.*

An unsophisticated person, a person of wild or unkempt appearance, a person – often a child – who behaves wildly.

■ From the root *jaṅgal*, origin of the English word *jungle*. [Hn, Ur *jaṅglī* 'of the forest, wild, uncivilised']

I started with a basic Gorinani shriek of 'Ey, junglee ... what you doing?' – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 45

jāro *n.*

A kitchen utensil, resembling a grater, used to make thin, twisted strips of dough for *sēv* (q.v.). [Gu *jhāro*]

jāth/jāthi/jādhi *n.*

1. Caste. Sub-caste, caste-grouping, ethnic group, characteristics of a linguistic, caste or ethnic group. See also **nation, low nation**. The term is not generally used in SAIE, but is used to represent the use of a Tamil or Hindi term used by older speakers in creative writing or sociological work.

2. Personal or group characteristics. Often derogatory. Older speakers. Often spelt **jat**. [Hn *jāt*, Ta *jāti*, Te *jātī*]

'Poobathie, it's time you got married. I know a boy from a nice family from the same *jathi* as you. I can speak to his mother ...' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 32

jau *n.*

A mixture of barley and similar grains used during some Hindu prayers, often in commemoration of the dead, and at birth ceremonies. Spelt **jow, jaw**. [Hn *jau*]

jāz *n.* ['dʒɑːz]

A thick overcoat. Same as SAE and Tsotsitaal *jas*. [Zu *ijazi*, Fanagalo *jaaz*, from Afrik *jas*]

jazakāla *exclam.*

Respectful expression of thanks in Islam, equivalent to 'May Allah reward you'. Also spelt **jazakallah**. [Ar *jazaka allah*]

I reached out and clutched at it. 'Jazakallah, Nana. I'd love to wear naani's chain!' – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 273

jenānder *n.* [dʒe'nændə] *Slang/derogatory*

Term used by Coloured and Black youths for Indians. Not widely known in SAIE. Also spelt **jananada**, **jenanda**.

■ Molamu (*Tsotsi-taal*) also cites the synonyms **mememe** and **hananah**. [Possibly from **jhanda** (q.v.) 'red flag hoisted in yard after certain Hindu prayers']

Jananda [is] a pejorative term for the descendants of indentured Indian labourers who first came to South Africa in the nineteenth century. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 46

jēṭh *n.*

A woman's husband's elder brother, senior male. The term is especially used in connection with weddings, where the **jēṭh** plays a special role, as future guide and arbiter between the married couple. See **jeṭhāni**. [Gu, Hn *jeṭh*]

jeṭhāni *n.*

A woman's husband's elder brother's wife, that is, wife of one's **jēṭh** (q.v.). See **nanadh**. Older speakers. [Gu *jeṭhāṇī*, Hn *jeṭhānī*]

jhanda *n.*

1. A small red flag, usually containing the Hindu symbol **Ōm** (q.v.), hoisted on a bamboo pole in a prayer corner of a yard by Hindus at religious ceremonies honouring **Hanumān** (q.v.) and other deities.

2. A religious ceremony at which a red flag is hoisted. Mainly Hindi homes. Also Trinidad English *jandhi*. See **katha and jhanda ceremony**. [Hn *jhaṇḍā*]

Ready-made jhanda available at our store – General Dealer advert in Durban, 2008

Katha and jhanda – Saturday 10 am – wedding invitation, Durban June 2000

jhinga/jinga *n.*

Shrimps, usually freshwater shrimps, prawns. Hence **jhinga curry**.

■ The term survives more in Gauteng than in KZN. [Hn, Ur *jhīngā*]

jī/jee

1. *exclam.* A polite affirmative when answering to elders or a signal that one is paying attention. Mostly Gujarati, Hindi, Kokani, Urdu homes.

2. *suffix.* A marker of respect e.g. *bhaijī* 'brother', *bahinjī* 'sister' *panditjī*/*pandijī*, *Gandhijī*. [Gu, Hn, Ko, Ur-*jī*]

'Nithin, did you get enough sleep?' 'Ji, ba,' Nithin answered. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 319

jīga *v. Slang**

1. To turn, move left and right in a deft movement, dribble at soccer.

2. To fool around, to turn this way and that. Also Tsotsitaal. [Zulu *ukujika* 'to turn']

jīra/jīro *n.*

Cumin seed, an important ingredient in curry spices and in digestives. Spelt **jeera**, **jeero**. See also **birth-masala**. [Hn *jīrā*, Ur *zīrā*, Gu *jīrū*, Ta *ciragam*]

Cumin or jeera is the seed of a small, slender annual herb of the coriander family, native to the Nile valley ... Cumin seeds are really the fruits of the herb. These are elongated, oval and 5 to 6 mm long. They range from sage-green to tobacco-brown in colour and have longitudinal ridges. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 42

jōdi *exclam.*

A call in the card-game **thanni** (q.v.) indicating a Jack-King-Queen sequence (**thirty jōdi**) or a King-Queen sequence (**twenty jōdi**). See also **four-ball**, **kanak**. [Gu, Hn *joṛī* ‘a matching set or pair’, Ta *coḍi* ‘double, romantic couple’]

joky *adj. Basilectal*

Jovial, pertaining to a humorous person or a practical joker. Possibly other varieties.

- *He's a really joky fellow.* [Neologism based on *joke n.*]

jōl *Slang**

1. *v.* To play a game or sport; to have fun, to make merry.
 2. *n.* A party, fun, merriment, an entertainment. Hence *wedding jol* ‘entertainment with music and dance on the eve of a wedding’. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *jol* ‘to make merry’ cognate with Std Eng *jolly*]
- *Those days we should jōl football every day.*

to catch a jōl

To have a good time, to have an easy time, to be idle when one should be working.

to have a jōl

To hold a party.

‘But do you really want to have the nikah and a big family jol on New Year’s Eve? ...’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 254

jondōl *n.*

Shack, informal dwelling, shanty. Probably originates in SABE. May less commonly be applied to refer to the shack dwellers. Not exclusively SAIE. [Zu neologism *umjondolo*]

‘We want the Municipality to build us all houses, Africans and Indians, on the land that they own here in Motala Heights, the land where the jondols are now.’ – Shack residents in Durban, *Abahlali baseMjondolo* Press Release 10 September 2007

‘You know that Sameer’s friend Ba, with the nice car? I see him by the jondols also.’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 15

The term comes from a Zulu word which meant ‘to stay overnight’ and the word was then used to denote temporary housing, squatters. My source was the poet Mafika Gwala. I cannot remember his precise words but it was to

describe someone who was travelling or on the move and who found a place to rest. – Omar Badshah 17 May 2010

juleit *v. Slang**

1. To work, be employed as part of a gang. Now rare. Also spelt **julate**. From Tsotsitaal.
2. To dress up, prepare for a date or an evening out. Also rare. [Etymology unknown, the latter sense seems influenced by **jōl** – q.v.]

‘You know a guy called Choppers, from Acorn Road?’

‘Sure. Used to julate with the Dutchenes [gang] until Dicky threw him out ...’

– A Hassim *Lotus People*, 338

jumping *part.*

Describes a state of being worked up, of being angry or meddling in someone else’s disagreement. See also **kūdhō**. [Probably from *to jump into (a situation)*]

- *What you’re jumping here for?*

jungle *n./adj.* – see **jangli**

juṭṭha *n.*

Food or drink touched or partially eaten by someone else; food or drink considered despoiled by someone else taking food off one’s plate or drinking from one’s glass first. Now rare. The caste connotations of this practice are almost forgotten. Same as **ētu**. [Hn *jūthā*, Bhoj *juṭṭha*]

- (Brother to sister on being offered her leftovers): *Don’t expect me to eat your juṭṭha.*



kabāb *n.*

1. Tender pieces of meat cooked in round balls with gravy; meat balls threaded onto a stick and grilled. Also IE. Same as SAE and international English *kebab*. **Seekh kabāb** refers to ones made of mince balls.
2. A fool, dolt. Slang. Also spelt **kebab**, **kabab**. [Ur *kabāb* from Ar]

In Delhi there is a famous street entirely devoted to kababs of every size, shape and flavour . . . People flock to the 'kabab street' and eat their way from one end to the other. Seekh kababs are one of the most popular dishes served there. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 65

Gently simmer to a brown colour and when moisture from meat has been evaporated add the tomato and let simmer till kabaabs are cooked and gravy is thick. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 97

kachōri *n.*

A snack resembling a **samoosa** (q.v.) stuffed with **dhāl** (q.v.) potato or peas. Mostly Gujarati homes. [Gu *kacorī*, Hn *kacaurī*]

Frozen peas may be used straight from the packet. They swell beautifully when used in kachoris. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 224

kaḍai *n.*

A large curved griddle made of cast iron used for deep-frying snacks and sweetmeats in oil. Larger than a **thava/thāwa** (q.v.) and usually used over an open fire or hearth. [Hn, Ur *karhai*, Ta, Te *kaḍāi*]

A kadai, or Indian wok, is found in every kitchen. Ideal in shape and thickness, it can be used for stir frying or deep-frying and ensures even, non-stick cooking. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 11

Then the mealie rice going *koosh* on the stove, and my mother putting fresh *dhania* on top of the *dhall* and then cooking the dry-fish on the *kadaai* on the open fire; we'll be just waiting to eat. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 38

kaḍi *n.*

A thick soup or seasoned sauce made with sour-milk, gram flour and spices, including curry leaves. Also spelt **kari**, **khuri**, **kuri**.

■ The term is probably related to the original word for **curry** (q.v.), namely, Tamil and Malayalam **kari**, especially in connection with the **curry leaf** (q.v.) *kari-vepilay*, which is an essential ingredient of the dish. [Gu *kaḍhi*, Hn *karhi*, Ta *kari*]

Gujarati kadhi (yoghurt curry): Serves 4, preparation time 15 minutes; cooking time 15 minutes. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 81

kājar *n.*

Black mascara, ointment, applied around the eyes of women or children, for beauty enhancement or as medication. Used by brides and sometimes by bridegrooms. Same as **kōl/kohl**, the term favoured by Muslims. [Bhoj *kājar*, Hn *kājal*]

kāka *n.*

Paternal uncle. Referential and vocative. See **chācha**, **chicha**, **perineina**. [Gu *kāko*, *kākā*, Hn *kākā*]

- *Vijay-kāka is arriving tomorrow.*

kakūs/kakoose *n.*

An outside toilet, lavatory. Now rare. [Probably a Northern English or Scots SA form *kak-hoose* based on Afrik *kak-huis*, literally ‘excrement house’. The lack of ‘h’ suggests a Ta version of the Eng term.]

kāki *n.*

Paternal uncle’s wife. Referential and vocative. See **chāchi**, **chichi**. [Gu, Hn *kākī*]

Heera’s husband had come over and said woodenly, ‘Kantha kaki had gone over to visit your mother. When the trouble broke out they all decided to come here ...’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 154

Kāla Pāni *n.*

The waters of the Indian Ocean, the ocean, the sea. Literally ‘dark waters’.

■ Popular title of books and films. In traditional Hinduism one lost membership of caste and community by travelling across the oceans; one could be reintegrated only by a cleansing ritual on return. [Hn *kāla* ‘dark, black’, *pāni* ‘water’]

The immigrants’ loss of caste status through the crossing of the *kala pani* represented only one part of the immigration process. – R Ebr-Vally *Kala Pani*, 21

It must have been an incredible passage for these young men, unsure of what awaited them across the *kala pani*. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 14

kalaunji *n.*

A snack made from a vegetable, usually **karela**, **bhindi** or **branjol** (q.v.), that is stuffed with spices and fried. The term refers to the use of nigella, or black seeds of the *Nigella sativa*, that gives a particular nutty and bitter taste to the spices. [Hn, Ur *kalāūjī*]

kalchūl *n.*

A large ladle. Older speakers. [Hn, Ur *kalchī*, Bhoj *kalchul*]

Kāli *n.*

All-powerful mother goddess in her fiercest manifestation, consort of Shiva, ‘Mother Time’. See also **Mariamman, Durga, Lakshmi**.

‘You must come to our Kali prayer; we’d love to have you there.’ I did not realise that in accepting their invitation, I would witness one of the world’s most primal rituals, reaching back to the roots of human religious experience. – A Diesel *Shakti*, 191

The Goddess can be regarded as manifesting herself in a great variety of forms, both benign (e.g. Lakshmi and Sarasvati) and fierce (e.g. Durga, Kali and Mariamman). – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 18

kalli *n.*

A thick semi-solid porridge made with mealie meal, gruel. Sometimes eaten with curry. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *kaḷi*]

kalya *n.*

A dish of spiced chicken or mutton cooked with **dhahi** (q.v.). [Ur *kalyā*]

A few whole prunes added at the last ten minutes of cooking, or a dozen whole blanched almonds, or both, if preferred, makes it really into an exotic kalya. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 76

Kāmāchi *n.*

Goddess of wealth and well-being worshipped by South Indians, to whom a lamp (see **veleku**) is lit and prayers are said daily. The lamp is called the *Kāmāchi-amman vilakku* in Tamil or simply **the Kāmāchi**. Same as **Lakshmi**. See **God Lamp**.

Behind the lamp there was a portrait of the goddess Luxmi, which is another name for Kamatchi. There was another one of Sarasvathi and a third one yet, the dancing god Nataraja. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 173

kanak *exclam.*

A term in the card-game **thanni** (q.v.) when a player calls out **kanak** to claim that the sum of points in his team surpasses that of their opponents sufficiently so as to earn bonus points. [Ta *kanak* ‘a figure, sum’]

kanaked *part.* [ˈkʌnʌkt]

Outclassed, beaten, annihilated (in sport or metaphorically).

kanalla *Regional*

- n.* Care, charity, caring, community spirit.
- exclam.* Appeal for charity, equivalent to ‘please’ or ‘please help’.

Common term in the Cape Malay community, thence into the Indian community. Also spelt **kanala**. [Malay *kanallah* ‘to help’, probably containing allusion to Allah]

There is a strong camaraderie among the Malays, and when one builds a house he calls among the craftsmen of his house to help him. This is called ‘Kanalawerk’ or done to please a friend. (‘Kanalā’ is the Malay word for ‘please’). – L Green *Grow Lovely, Grow Old*, 177

kandi *n.*

Stone mortar used to grind spices. See **okhari**, **khal**. Also spelt **kundi**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *khāṇḍaṇī*]

The pounding mortar stone, used by Indian housewives is known as a *kundi*. The pestle that goes with it is made of a hardy type of wood and both are obtainable from stockists of Indian utensils. In most instances a mincer can be substituted for a *kundi*, and people who own blenders will hardly have to resort to a *kundi* at all. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 12

kāni *n.*

Cheek, insolence, stubbornness. See also **bak/buck**. [Regional Hn *kānī* ‘resentment, rancour’. – RS McGregor *Oxford Hindi-English Dict*]

He told his mother she’s got so much *kaani*, that’s why they took her *kaan* (‘ear’) out! – child’s punning anecdote concerning friend whose mother’s ear was removed, October 2008

kanji-water *n. Historical*

The water in which rice has been boiled, used as a supplement to a meal by the poor, especially during era of indenture in KZN. Also spelt **kunji**, **khunjee**, etc. [Ta *kañcī* ‘rice-water, water poured off rice’ – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 245]

‘... The farmer’s wife used to give me *khunjee* for breakfast. The cooked rice she fed to her own children ...’ – N Govender *Girmit Tales*, 26

People do not have porridge (*khoozh*) or rice water (*kanji*), they eat curry and rice now. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 144

Kanjivaram/Kanjivaram sari *n.*

A sari made in the city of Kanchipuram, characteristically of thick silk and a wide border, with little or no thread work. Worn on formal occasions, and sometimes called the **wedding sari**.

■ Kanchipuram, about 80 km from Chennai (Madras) and one of the seven sacred cities of India, is famous for its hand-woven silk fabrics and saris. See also **Banaras**, **Kashmiri**, **Mysūri**, **sari**. [Place name *Kanchipuram*]

kanjūs *n. Slang***

A miser, a stingy person. Also IE. [Hn, Ur *kanjūs*]

- *Don’t be a kanjūs.*

kan-kān *n. Rural*

Bostrychia hagedash, a large ibis bird.

■ Dark brown or greyish brown with a strident call. Known as *hadeda* in SAE. [Zu *ingangane*]

On a cloudy afternoon, when the *kan-kāns* fly off in a flock crying ‘ah-ah-aah-ah’ everyone knows that rain is about to come. – Umkomaas resident, July 2000

kanné *n.*

A term of affection usually for a child, equivalent to English ‘darling’. Also an epithet for **Krishna** (q.v.). Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Also spelt **kanna**. [Ta *kaṇṇa*, *kaṇṇu*]

‘You see, Kanna, God is Black just like our Indian and our Tamil people – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 59

That’s why I’m telling you the story, kanna. – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 42

kanyādhān *n.*

Part of a Hindu wedding during which the bride is ceremonially given away. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. Known as **thare vako** in Tamil. Also spelt **kanya daan**. [Gu, Hn *kanyādān*, from *kanyā* ‘maiden, young girl’ plus *dān* ‘giving away’, Ta, Te *kaniya danam*]

The severing of links with her family and the forming of new ones with those of her husband’s family is symbolised among Hindus in the ceremony of ... *kanya daan* or *thare vako*, when the bride is given as a gift to the groom to treasure and love for the rest of his life. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 63

karanteen *n.*

A type of seabream of the *Sparidae* family, silver or striped in colour. Conjectured to be an Indian word. – P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*. [Etymology unknown]

Crenidens crenidens ... Karanteen comes from Indian waters, extends to Durban, rarely as far as East London. – JLB Smith *Sea Fishes of Southern Africa*, 275

karek *n.*

A type of dried fig or date-fruit sold in shops. Similar to **kārka** (q.v.). Spellings: **kareck**, **karek**. [Gu *khārek*]

karel *n.* [ˈkærəl] *Slang**

A policeman; an old man, one’s father. Also spelt: **kerel**, **carol**. [Afrik *kêrel* ‘fellow, chap’]

Durban Indians have a different slang from us here in Lenasia. They call policemen ‘carols’; I don’t know what policemen have to do with Christmas carols. – Johannesburg resident, 2008

‘You sure he’s not a *kerel*, Candy?’ Vusi asked suspiciously. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 183

karela *n.* [ˈkʌrəla:] or [kaˈre:lɑ:]

A thin, small bitter gourd, with rough, spiny green surface (*Momordica charantia*).

■ May be sliced and fried in oil or stuffed with spices and then fried. Favoured by older people as a healthy vegetable for those with high blood pressure and other ailments. See **kalaunji**. [Hn, Ur *karelā*]

Karela is a ridge gourd, which is stuffed and fried then served in a sweet/sour methi sauce. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 126

The Indian karela or bitter gourd makes a special dish, particularly when it is cooked with the ghor or sugar jaggery typical of Gujarati cuisine. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 107

The whole of Potch knows that no one can grow karelas, brinjals and dhodi like Amina Khala. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada, *Letters* 163

kārka *n.*

A type of edible fig or date-fruit, growing wild, eaten by children in rural areas. Similar to **karek** (q.v.). [Ta *karukkāy*]

karma *n.*

Fate, destiny, spiritual cause and effect in Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, turn of events arising out of good or evil actions in present or past life. In *COD*. [Skt *karma*, Hn *karm*, Ta *karumam*, *karma*]

Strictly karma means just actions or deeds, but the word has come to be used for the principle that through many lifetimes, as one sows so shall one reap. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 87

Yet her own preparation for a calamity enabled her to accept what had happened as the operation of karma. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 146

karnātak/carnatic *n.*

1. Pertaining to the classical style of South Indian arts, especially music.
 - This is traditional devotional music and songs in praise of Lord Rām, the classical style of which was developed by Tyagaraj, a **Telugu** (q.v.) composer of Tiruvaiyaru, near Tanjore.
2. Of the Kanarese country, i.e. the Kannada-speaking area South India, present-day Karnataka. [Ta *karnātakam*, Te *karnaṭākamu*]

The ancient Carnatic (or Karnatak) is the Canara/Kanarese/Kannada speaking area of the southern Deccan, the country above the ghats, approximately the area of the present Karnataka state (in British and early post-independence days, the princely state of Mysore). – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 87

... Mr Thaver played the violin, while Mr Odayar laboured on with sonorous carnatic raags. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 89

kāro/kāram *adj.*

Spicy, curry-hot, chilli-hot. Same as **thikku**, **thikka**, **thitta**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes, with a tendency for Tamil homes to use *kāram* and Telugu homes *kāro*. [Ta *kāram*, Te *kāramu*]

- *Don't make the curry too kāro or else the children will fuss.*

karpai *n.*

A very dark-skinned Indian; a demon. Usually jocular. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. [Ta *karuppan*, *karuppi* based on *karu* 'black']

kārya *n.*

A dark-skinned person, including an Indian; a Black person. Usually derogatory. Also spelt **karia**, **karria**. [Gu *kāryā*]

Nowadays girls and boys don't want to work like in the old days. I'm telling you, these karrias are getting too big for their boots. – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 29

kasbin *n.*

1. A woman considered to be of ill repute, a prostitute.
2. A general term of abuse for a female. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *kasbī*, Bhoj *kasbīn*]

Kashmiri/Kashmiri sari *n.*

A sari made in Kashmir, characteristically light and patterned without gold thread-work. See also **Banaras**, **Kanjivaram**, **Mysūri**. [From place name *Kashmir* plus Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu suffix *-ī* denoting origin]

kassam *exclam.*

An oath, equivalent to 'upon my word, truly, by God', etc. See **oath**, **sathima**, **True's God**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn *kasam*, Ur *qasam*]

You can go West Street. You never get it for seven pounds. Kasam! Ten pounds, not a shilling cheaper.' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 127

'... But I haven't been with her since then!' He looked up and met my gaze. 'It's true. Kassam!' he swore – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 240

katha *n.*

Religious. Mainly Hindi homes. Gathering at which tales from Hindu scriptures are recited by a priest. [Gu, Hn *kathā* from *kath* 'to say, tell, narrate']

Any important event, like recovering from illness, moving house etc., may be marked by holding a katha (a North Indian custom), when a priest, after making offerings to the main deities, tells a number of stories, each illustrating a relevant ethical value. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 144

Katha and Jhanda ceremony *n.*

A katha accompanied by the hoisting of a **jhanda** (q.v.). Usually conducted by Gujarati and Hindi households on moving in to a new home or new business premises.

It is in Hanuman's honour that the flag is raised during the Katha and Jhanda ceremony ... The flag is often red because this is Hanuman's colour. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 24

kathak *n.*

Originally North Indian style of dancing, involving narration, music and love themes. Kathak is marked by quick movement and action. [Hn *kathā* 'narration, religious tale', *kathak* 'dance with narration']

In general kathak is more folksy and far less esoteric than the formalised dances of the south. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 111

Kathiawādi *n.*

One whose family origins are in the Kathiawad district in Gujarat.

■ Amongst Gujaratis in SA the three main districts of origin were Surat, Valsad and Kathiawad. [Gu *kathiawād* plus *-ī*, suffix denoting origin]

Kathiawar was the third major source of passenger Indians. The immigrants came from towns and villages between Jamnagar near the Gulf of Kutch and Porbandar on the coast of the Arabian Sea. – S Bhana & J Brain *Setting Down Roots*, 37

The Mashruwalas were not Kathiawadis like the Gandhis; they originally hailed from Surat. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 183

kathri *n.* [ˈkaʈʰriː]

A thick, home-made blanket, made from old clothes, a patchwork quilt. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. Same as **gudhra** (q.v.). [Hn *kathrī*]

kathrika *n.*

Brinjal, eggplant, aubergine. Rare. Same as **baingan**, **vegan**. See **branjol**, **garden chops**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *kattarikāy*]

kauchi *adj.*

Unpleasant smell associated with meat, cabbage or other food being cooked. Smell of fresh game, which needs spices to temper it. Mainly Tamil homes. Spellings: **cowchie**, **kowtchi**. [Ta *kauchi*]

There is for instance, no real English or European equivalent of cowchie to indicate that unpleasant smell left by meat or egg improperly spiced or cooked or by cutlery improperly washed. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 46

They don't know nothing about jeera or garam masala. They only eat kowtchi food – meat, meat, boiled meat all the time. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 39

Kāvady *n.*

Festival celebrated by South Indians twice a year in the months of *Thai* (January/February) and *Sithiray/Chitra* (April/May) in honour of the Hindu deity **Muruga** (q.v.).

■ Features include prayer and acts of penance including **fire-walking** ceremonies. The chief act of expiation is the carrying of a decorated arch (called a **kāvady**) laden with fruit, especially lime, brass cups of milk and garlands as a yoke on the shoulders. Other acts of penance include piercing the tongue, cheeks, back, arms or chest with long needles and hooks from which fresh limes are hung. Sometimes the devotee pulls a chariot attached to the hooks on his back. Hence **to carry Kāvady**. See also **Mariammen**, **garagam**. Spellings: **Kavadi**, **Kaavadi**. [Ta *kāvaṭi*]

After days of strict abstinence, they carry Kavady ... and they may walk on live coals to expiate their sins and re-affirm their bodies with divinity. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 150

Now that's a good trick. But what about the Kavady, is that a trick? When they put pins through their cheeks, is that not real? – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 45

Some of the residents from Railway Barracks carried Kavadis at the Magazine Barracks temple. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 146

Kendra *n.*

Centre. Middle part. (In India) pertaining to central government and administration.

■ Used in names of organisations or halls, e.g. *Kendra Hall* in Durban. [Gu, Hn *kendrā*]

Keralite *n.* – see **Malayālam****khachra/kachra** *adj.*

1. Rubbish, dirt.

2. A term of abuse for an obstinate, despicable, untrustworthy person. Also spelt **kachara**, **kachada**. [Ta *kacaṭu* ‘uncleanliness, dirtiness, dregs’, SA Gu, Bhoj *khacrā*, Hn *khacchar*, Ur *ḥacchar*]

‘... When is he ever sober? Don’t talk to me about that kachra, that rubbish.’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 120

In view of the nature of the operations here Bamboo Square Barracks was also known as ‘Kachara’ Barracks, a vernacular term meaning ‘filthy’ or ‘dirty’. – G Pillay *Come to the Point*, 15

khakōro *v.*

To scrape and clean a pot. Rare. See **khangāro**. [Bhoj *khakor*]

• *If you khakōro and I khangāro, the washing will go quickly.*

khal *n.*

A mortar for pounding spices. See **okhri**, **kandi**. [Gu *khal*]

khāla *n.*

Aunt, maternal aunt, mother’s sister. Used mainly by Muslims of different language backgrounds. See **khālu**. See also **māsi**, **mousi**, **atthé**. [Ko, Ur *khālā* from Persian, Ar *khālah*]

Checking up on me, are you? So you don’t believe that I cooked everything, hey? Checking to see if there’s a khaala in the kitchen? – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 224

khalās *exclam. Jocular*

Exclamation signifying ‘it’s over, complete, finished’. [Gu, Hn *khalās*, Ur *ḥhalās* from Ar]

‘Oh, no, Mr. Patel!’ I jabbed his arm. ‘We are over! Kaput! Finito! Khalaas! Finish and klaar!’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 112

‘It is not a matter that concerns him. We decide, we select the girl, we set a date. Then we tell him. Kalaas! End of discussion.’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 63

khālu/khalei *n.*

Maternal uncle, mother’s sister’s husband. Used mainly by Muslims of different language backgrounds. **Khalei** is the term used by Konkani

speakers, **khalu** tends to be used by other Muslims. See **khāla**. [Ko *khalei*, Ur *khālū* from Persian *khāl*]

khangāro *v.*

To rinse dishes. Rare. See **khakōro**. [Bhoj *khangār*]

khas-khas *n.*

Poppy seeds, seeds of *Andropogon muricatus*, put into sweetmeats like **pōli** (q.v.). Also spelt **khus-khus**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *khas khas* from Persian]

khatam *n.* [ˈxʌtʌm]

Joint reading of the Qurʾān. [Ar *khatm*, *khātām*]

Not only do separate congregations of men and women gather to offer the liturgical *salaat*, but they also gather to *make khatams*, that is, read co-operatively from the Quran, each member contributing an individual chapter, *sipara*, to the whole effect. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 191
Tomorrow is the third Thursday we're having khatam at our house. – Cape Town resident 2009

khichri *n.*

A meal of yellow rice and lentils or dhal cooked together with **ghee** (q.v.).

■ Khichri may also be cooked with mealie rice, a popular rice substitute made of chopped-up pieces of mealie (maize) grain. It is eaten with **kadi** (q.v.) in Gujarati homes, hence **khichri-kadi** (a Dvandva compound meaning 'khichri and kadi'), though khichri is avoided in these homes on auspicious occasions, as it may signify bad luck. In other homes it is usually eaten with cooked **chutney** (q.v.), usually of tomato and onion or brinjal and tomato. Khichri is part of a wedding tradition in Hindi families, with the bridegroom and his senior male members served a dish of khichri after the wedding ceremony, and given money for as long as they keep eating. Spellings: **kitcheri**, **khitchri**. Known as *kedgere* in Br English. [Hn, Ur *khicrī*, *Ta kichāḍī*]

There is the classic joke about khitchris, that one serves it to house guests who have sort of overstayed their welcome, and that upon being served khitchri they should take the hint and start packing. However ... it can be relegated to the file of classic jokes, for young and old all love khitchri and its inseparable accompaniment khuri, made of sour milk. Together with toasted papads, brinjal chutney and perhaps some sort of a fish dish, it can have pride of place in any home. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 39

to make khichri *Jocular*

To make a mess, a hotch-potch, a medley; to cause confusion.

- *What a mess! Don't make khichri here.*

khīma/kheema *n.*

Minced meat. Mainly Gujarati Muslim homes. [Gu *khīmo* from Ar *kimah*]

If using sprouts then braise khīma and spices and cook till khīma is fine like breadcrumbs. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 97

khīr/kheer *n.*

A sweetened preparation of rice, milk and cereal boiled together; milk pudding, confection of basmati rice, milk, sugar, spices and nuts cooked on a slow heat until it resembles condensed cream. Also spelt **keer**. Hence **Instant keer** 'ready-made, pre-packed preparation of **khīr**'. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. See **sweet rice**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *khīr*]

Rice kheer is specially popular: traditionally it is the first dish offered by a bride to her new in-laws. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 115

And keer, swollen with cream and raisin, chevra new with nut, a pot of Ceylon tea made with unseparated milk and seven tablespoons of white sugar. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 174

On the fourth day, I sat in the kitchen shovelling spoonfuls of Majra the caterer's kheer into my mouth – pondering the presence of kheer at funerals. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*; 265

kīch *n.*

Discharge which collects at the ends of one's eyes. Older speakers. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *kīc*]

to take someone's kīch out *v. phr.*

To overwork someone, to harass severely. Now rare. Restricted to Hindi, Urdu homes.

- *There's so much I have to do; you're really taking my kīch out.*

kidney mango *n.*

A long, stringless kidney-shaped mango, less common than the small, round fibre mangoes of KZN. Same as **long mango**, **sugar mango**. See also **Bombay mango**, **gutli**, **paraffin mango**.

kif *adj. Slang****

Beautiful, having sex appeal; nice, appealing. Also SAE slang. [Possibly c19 Ar and Hn *kef* or *kyyfe* denoting well-being, enjoyment, state of drowsiness or dreamy intoxication, an enjoyment of idleness. It also denotes the Indian hemp, *Cannabis indica* or *C. sativa*. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs & Boxwallahs*, 144. Also possibly Afrik *gif* 'poison, venom'.]

kill *v.:* **to kill it**

1. To laugh excessively, to 'kill oneself laughing', especially at someone else's expense.

- *When the girls saw his underwear through his torn shorts, they were killing it.*

2. To make merry. See **maja**, **jōl**.

- *When the teacher left to go to the office, we were killing it one way.*

kind *n. Basilectal*

Type, sort, kind. Used in compounds having as first element one of a few adjectives denoting quality. Hence **nice-kind**, **colour-kind**, **funny-kind**. Similar to Hawaiian English.

- *Nice-kind clothes they sell here.*

kind *n.*: **what kind?/what kind now?/what kind with you?** *Slang***

An exclamation equivalent to ‘What’s the matter?’, ‘What’s up?’, ‘How are things?’ Also SAE slang.

King-soup *n.*

Strong, tangy soup made with hot medicinal spices, usually prepared for people with colds. Also known as **rassam** or **rasso** (q.v.). Not the same as English *King soup*. [Neologism]

The traditional rice and variety of vegetable curries, King soup (rasam) and ghee ... were served at Thamizh and Telegu weddings. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 74

kīré *n.*

Any edible herb, greens, leafy vegetables. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Same as **bhāji**.

■ Among the herbs eaten are **mēthi** (q.v.), **drumstick** herbs (or leaves of the **drumstick tree**), sugar cane herbs (growing wild between rows of cultivated cane), red herbs, pumpkin herbs, beetroot leaves, water cress etc. [Ta *kīrai*, Te *kīre*]

Keerai (spinach curry): India is blessed with over a dozen variety of green leafy vegetables and at least one is included daily [in cooking]. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 72

kirthan/kirtan *n.*

Hindu devotional song. A devotional song with a moral theme. See **bhajan**. [Gu, Hn *kīrtan*]

From *sankirtan*, an assembly for the purpose of group singing or chanting of bhajans (hymns or devotional folk songs), either Hindu, Sikh or Christian: there is often a leader and chorus and perhaps an accompaniment of cymbals. Participants, particularly women, appear to achieve moments of religious ecstasy. In the Punjab, the hymns themselves are also known as kirtan. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 116

The event concluded with a cultural dance, bhajan and kirtan singing and refreshments. – *Post* 7 April 2010

kismet *n.*

Destiny, fate within an Islamic framework. Popular name in SA for buildings, clubs etc. In *COD*. See also **karma**. [Ar *qismah* ‘division, portion, lot’]

‘It is God’s law, my son. Some of us call it kismet, the Hindus call it karma, the Christians something called fate. It is all the same.’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 60

Kitchen Hindi *n.* *Derogatory*

Term used to describe the form of **Hindi** (q.v.) that evolved in KZN, technically a koiné (or blend) of many dialects such as Eastern Hindi, **Bhojpuri** (q.v.), Awadhi, similar to those that evolved in Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean.

■ The term draws attention to the difference between the KZN form of

Bhojpuri-Hindi and the higher-status written forms of Hindi, the national language of India. *Kitchen X* was a common and disparaging way of referring to languages in the colonies that were not the standard forms, implying that they were fit only for use in the kitchen by womenfolk or for use with domestic servants: *Kitchen Dutch* (for Afrikaans in the c19), *Kitchen Zulu* (for Fanakalo pidgin – see **Low Zulu**), etc.

Most priests wish to dissociate themselves from the ‘kitchen Hindi’ of the people. More than one priest interviewed professed not to be able to speak Bhojpuri or to find it very difficult to do so, yet went ahead and used it minutes after the interview, in (secular) communication with acquaintances when they were not conscious of being observed. – R Mesthrie *Language in Indenture*, 134

kithāb *n.*

A book written in Arabic, Urdu or Persian, usually of a religious nature, pertaining to Islam. [Ur *kitāb* from Ar]

klaar *v.* [ˈklaː] *Slang**

To finish, to complete. Also SAE slang. Hence past part. *klaared* ‘finished’.

■ The Afrikaans and SAE sense of ‘ready’.

- *The coffee is klaar* does not apply in SAIE. [Afrik *klaar* ‘ready, finished, done’, cognate Eng *clear*]

He klaared the second ticket and put it on the windscreen. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

finish(ed) and klaar *Slang**

All complete, over and done. See **khalās**. Same as in SAE.

‘Oh, no, Mr. Patel!’ I jabbed his arm. ‘We are over! Kaput! Finito! Khalaas! Finish and klaar!’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 112

klap *Slang** [ˈklʌp]

1. *v.* To smack, clout, etc.

2. *n.* A smack, clout, etc. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *klap* ‘cuff, smack’, cognate Eng *clap*]

What – just now I klapped her nicely, she’s sitting in the kitchen and crying. – K Govender *Women in Brown*, 297

klarés *n.* [ˈklærəz] *Slang**

Clothes, men’s trousers. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *kleure* ‘clothes’ plus (double) Eng pl. -s]

- *Those are smart klares eh!*

knickers *n.*

Men’s shorts, men’s underpants. Now rare. In British English *knickers* denotes a women’s undergarment. Also IE. See **blumess**. [Abbrev. of *knickerbockers*, after pseudo. D Knickerbocker – author of a book on the history of New York, including breeches worn by Dutch settlers.]

kobé *n.* [ˈkɔːbe]

Samp, a meal of boiled mealies, other grains and whole beans cooked with chilli and onions. Rural areas. [Zu *ukhobe*]

kochila *n.*

Spiced, grated mango pickle. [Hn, Ur *kucilā*, based on *kūṭ* ‘to grind, pound, crush’]

kohl/kol *n.*

Black mascara, ointment, applied around the eyes of women or children, for beauty enhancement or as medication. Used by brides and sometimes by bridegrooms. Same as **kājar/kājal**. [Gu *kol*]

I scurried to my bathroom where I used Naani’s kohl stick to draw beard and moustache on my face. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 45

koi *v. Slang**

1. To throw down, fling, keep aside, put down. Also SAE slang.
 2. To have sexual intercourse with a woman. Now rare. [Afrik *gōoi* ‘to fling, throw’]
- A: *Where should I leave this cap?* B: *Just koi it on the bed.*

Kokani/Konkani *n.*

1. A language of South Maharashtra, spoken by some SA Muslims. Sometimes erroneously called *Cockney*. Also spelt **Kokni**.
 - Konkani is an Indo-Aryan language that is historically closely related to Marathi. It derives its name from the **Konkan** coast from Bombay to Goa.
2. A speaker of Konkani, sometimes erroneously known as a *Cockney*.
 - The largest group of Konkani speakers and their descendants within SA is to be found in Cape Town. [Place name *Konkan* plus person suffix *-i*]

In Bombay the stories of Cape Town and the mining boom in SA were heard from Konkani sailors working on British vessels. The Cape was a British Colony and this facilitated the emigration from Konkan to the shores of Cape Town by several Konkanis escaping the social and economic situation in Konkan. Though initially many Konkanis worked as manual labourers and hawkers, as soon as they were capable, however, they went into business independently or worked as shop assistants ... Today, Konkani is spoken in India and countries overseas by nearly five million people belonging to no less than three religions, with a multitude of sub-dialects and variations. Recognition for the Konkani language has come with the Indian Government having included Konkani in the 8th Schedule of the constitution of India and having awarded it the status of a national language. – Bazmé Adab (Cape) *A Heritage of Inspiration*, iii, 138

koljāna *n.* [kɔlˈdʒɑːnɑː] *Regional*

Cape word for **dhania** (q.v.), coriander. Applies to the fresh green leaves used as garnishing and to flavour curries, or to tiny brown seeds, which may be crushed into **koljana powder**. [Afrik *koljander*, equivalent of Eng *coriander*]

Ingredients for Dried Prawns with Potato: ... 1 tsp chilli powder; 1 tsp turmeric, pinch of barishap, ¼ tsp fine koljana powder. – N Parker *Kokni Delights Cookbook*, 14

kondé *n.*

Style of dressing hair among women in a large coil at the back of the head, a bun. [Ta *koṅṭai*, Te *koṅḍa* literally ‘mountain’]

kongu *n.*

Powder, usually saffron, used to make a bright dot on a woman’s forehead. See also **bottu**, **kumkum**, **tikka**. [Ta, Te *kunkam*]

konka *n. Rural*

Male bushbuck, usually light brown in colour. [Zu *unkonka*]

‘Prince Arthur shot a great big *nkonka*,’ says Vi Poynton – (an *nkonka* being a bushbuck ram). And when hunting was over, we womenfolk joined the men with a wagon for a picnic in the bush.’ – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 126

kothrenka *n.*

Tiny-beans, small, slender, flat green beans (*Cyamopsis psoraliodes*). Same as **gwālīn**, **tiny beans**, **guar**. [Ta *kotrankkāy*]

kotri *n. Historical*

Barracks, line of houses in plantation in which families of indentured workers lived, cluster of such lines forming a rural community. Related historical words from sugar plantations: *kuṭṭr* ‘cottage’, *koṭ* ‘castle, fort, mansion’. [Hn *koṭhrī* ‘small or dark room of house, store-room, shed, prison-cell’]

‘Never forget’, said Mr Iyer the headmaster, ‘you live in a small *kottrie*, a village. The others come from big towns.’ – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 163

kotri people *n. Derogatory*

People from the plantation barracks, considered uneducated or rough.

kovil *n.*

A temple. Used with proper names. Similar to **ālayam** (q.v.), which more usually denotes the temple building itself. [Ta *kōvilu*]

- *Shri Murugan Kovil* ‘The temple of Lord Muruga’.

kramat *n. Regional*

An Islamic shrine, usually the tomb of a holy man. Mainly Cape Malay usage. Also used in the Muslim Indian community of Cape Town, together with the Ur term *mazār* (from Ar), which is the more usual term elsewhere. [Hn, Ur *karāmat* ‘miracle performed by a saint’, Ma *keramat* ‘holy place or person’ n., ‘of a miraculous nature’ adj., from Ar *karamat* ‘miracle worked by a holy man other than a prophet’]

Cape Town is ringed in with Malay tombs, the kramats which protect all within the circle from flood and famine. – L Green *Growing Lovely, Growing Old*, 188

The Cape Mazaar (Kramat) Society (est. 1982) wishes to inform the public the above named society is the only official body maintaining most of the kramats/mazaars including the kramat on Robben Island. – *Cape Times* advertisement 17.10.1984, cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

Badshah Pir is reputed to have been a Malayalam who came to Natal as an indentured labourer ... The story goes that he never did any work himself, and that at a certain time each day his cane knife rose on its own accord and slashed down the stalks. There are many other stories about his miracles, *karamat*. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 202

Krishna *n.*

Major Hindu deity, an incarnation of Vishnu. Portrayed as a playful child and teaser of village women, later a demon-tyrant slayer and hero-cum-religious philosopher in the **Bhagavad Gita** (q.v.). Also commonly referred to as **Lord Krishna**. The inspiration of many religious cults, including **Hare Krishna**, which is a Western adaptation of the worship of Krishna. See **Radha-Krishna**, **kanna**.

Probably in India generally and certainly in the north, Krishna is the most worshipped of all Hindu deities: many see him not merely as a form of Vishnu but as the Lord of the universe himself who came to earth in human form. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 119

Kantha cried, 'She's worse than I thought. May the Lord Krishna protect her.' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 87

Krishna Asthami *n. phr.*

Celebration by Hindus of the birth of Krishna. [Skt *Kṛṣṇa* plus *aṣṭama* 'eighth day of the lunar fortnight']

kronk *adj. Slang**

Mad, insane, eccentric, of a difficult temperament. Similar to English *crank* n., *cranky* adj. [German, Afrik *krank*]

- *You must be kronk if you think I've got a hundred rand to lend you.*

kshatriya *n.*

Member of the Hindu warrior caste, from which rulers normally came; the second highest caste in the traditional hierarchy behind **Brahmins** (q.v.) and above the business people (see **vānia**).

Her people were *kshatriyas* (that is of the soldier caste), she said and as only the *brahmins* (the priestly caste) knew how to read and write, she could not keep in touch with her family and lost all connection with them. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 58–59

kūdho *v.*

To gallivant. Usually jocular. Rare. Mostly Hindi, Urdu homes. See **jumping**. Participial form: **kūdhing**. [Hn, Ur *kūdnā* 'to jump, skip']

- *Where have y'all being kūdhing?*

kufia *n.*

Small white skull-cap worn by Muslim men, especially to mosque. More usually known as **tōpi** (q.v.). [Ar *kūfiyyā*]

kumāri *n.*

Title of young woman involved in Hindu cultural or religious activities, usually dance. The male equivalent **kumār** is rarely used in SAIE, except as part of a first name. [Hn *kumārī* ‘maiden, virgin, unmarried woman’]

Dancer Kumari Humeshni Naidoo will perform a Bharata Natyam item ... at the iZulu theatre ... – *Post* 28 April 2010

kum-kum *n.*

Vermillion powder, mercuric sulphide used to make a **tilak** (q.v.) during worship or a decorative **bindhi** (q.v.) mark on the forehead. See **bottu**, **tikka**, **sendhur**. [Hn *kumkum* ‘vermillion powder, saffron’]

Then carefully, he put only his forefinger into the adjacent bowl of *kumkum*, vermillion powder draws from flower stamens, and with that, even without benefit of mirror he made the sign of the *namum*, the trident, over the smeared white ash. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 133

The Hindu bride is luxuriously decorated with jewels and flowers ... Her brow is marked with the sacred *kumkum*. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 78

She smeared her face with *kum-kum* paste, and threw her arms outward, shrieking as the wild goddess possessed her. – A Diesel *Shakti* 194

kurbāni/qurbāni *n.*

Sacrifice in Islam, especially the sacrifice of a goat or other animal at **Bakrīd** (**Baqr Eid**) (q.v.). Also IE. [Ur *qurbānī* ‘sacrifice’]

Qurbān: This word has the specialist ritual sense of sacrifice, and denotes in particular what is sacrificed on ‘Id al-Adha’. – I Netton *Dict of Islam*, 208

Eid is a time of joy and celebration for all Muslims around the world. However, many people are still suffering ... Let us in South Africa keep them close to your hearts and share with them at this time of Qurbani. – pamphlet, *Muslim Hands*, Cape Town, November 2009

kurbāni-meat *n.*

Meat of an animal sacrificed at **Bakrīd** (q.v.). Eaten as ceremonial food and also handed out to the poor. Also IE.

Operation Kurbāni *n.*

Charitable work involving the distribution of kurbani meat to feed the poor.

kurkit *adj.* [ˈkurkit]/[ˈkurkət] *Basilectal*

Crooked, bent. Now rare. [Eng *crooked*, with metathesis and final devoicing]

kurtha/kurta *n.*

Long, loose Indian-styled shirt, worn by men. Usually worn to just above the knee, though the traditional Muslim kurtha shirt reaches well below the knees to the ankles. See also **kameez**. Also spelt **koortah**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Ur *kurtā*]

Mr Joosub was an eccentric who was always clad in koortah (white cotton smock), even on cold days. His head was always shaved and his beard bushy and long. – A Essop *Two Sisters*, 34

She . . . hadn't even grumbled about her brother's attendance in a brand new *kurta* with cream-colored silk stripes. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 68

kussu *n.* Slang/derogatory

A dolt, weak person, a person who is 'uncool', one who is unpleasant, boring or irritating. [Ta *kussu* 'released intestinal gas']

kutum *n.*

Household, family line, lineage, extended family, members of a joint family through the patrilineal system. [Hn *kuṭumb*, Ta *kuṭi*]

Irrespective of the composition of his immediate household (nuclear or otherwise) the average Indian is firmly rooted to his *kutum*. His *kutum* consists of all those with whom he can trace consanguinity through a common paternal grandfather or grandfather's brother. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 66

Structurally the *kutum* must be envisaged as a hierarchy with the eldest living patriarch at the apex, and constituting with his wife the highest authority. – H Kuper *Indian People in Natal*, 98

kūza *v.* Slang

1. (KZN): To needle, start an argument or fight, enquire persistently. Same as **fluk**. Spellings: **kooza**, **koosa**.
2. (Gauteng): To cheer, urge on. [Zu *ukukhuza* 'to express surprise, wonder; to command, give orders, reprove']

'... When our Pretoria boys play against the Jo'burg fellows we kooza our boys, not the Jo'burg fellows. Well, don't we?' – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 108
'Ya, man, ja. You already koosaad me about her.' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 285



labours *n. Basilectal*

Labourers.

- *Today's labours don't work like we used to.*

laddu *n.*

1. A soft, round sweetmeat consisting of a ball of sugar and ghee, mixed with wheat, grain flour, etc. Also spelt **ludhoo**, **laddoo**.
2. By extension, a well-fed chubby child. Also IE. *Informal, humorous.*
3. A soft person, a fool. Jocular or derogatory. [Hn, Ur *laḍḍū*, Gu *lāḍū*, Ta, Te *laḍḍu*]

Mould handful of ludhoos into golf size balls. Set into tiny cup cake cases or on a tray. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 159.

A large round of laddoo rising like the sun on its own saucer, orange-proud, rolled about in sweet coloured sticks, smooth and close-packed. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 174

On my first trip to Durban my uncle kept calling his son – my cousin – a laddu. I had no idea what he meant. – Cape Town resident, 2008

lady *n.*

A referential term for any adult female. Often has polite connotations. Not used as a voc., unlike SAE. Thus **lady-driver**, **lady-teacher**, **lady-policeman**, etc. Also SAE, especially Cape Coloured English, IE and other English varieties.

lahanga *n.*

A loose, ankle-length skirt worn under a sari. In India the term refers mainly to a long, loose skirt, not an underskirt. Same as **ghagri**, **pāvade**. See also **sari skirt**, **nāri**. Cf. IE *in-skirt*. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *lahangā*, Te *langā*]

lahnee/lāni *n.* ['lɑ:ni:] *Slang**

1. *n.* One's employer, usually in a shop, factory or other business, a rich person (often male), a person of means, a White man.
2. *adj.* Rich, exceedingly rich. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. Spellings: **larney**, **larny**, **larnie**, **lahny**, **laanie**. [Originally Cape Coloured Afrik *oulana* 'Hollander, rich person', in contrast to a local Afrikaner. The latter appears to have passed into African languages such as Sotho and also into Tsotsitaal. Popularised via Durban Indian and Coloured usage of the late 1950s and 1960s onwards. In the Cape Town context the word may

have been reinforced by an abbrev. of Afrik *kappielaanie* ‘chaplain’ – Stone 1991]

He smiled and, moved to pity, said: ‘I am not a Transvaaler. I am a Hollander. I appreciate your feelings, and you have my sympathy ...’ – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 108

Stranger: ... in another twelve and a half years you might get yourself a gold watch. *Sunny*: My lahnee will give it to me, man. – R Govender *Lahnee’s Pleasure*, 4

Sushilla – everyone called her Suzy – was a junior school teacher, real sophisticated, light skinned, spoke like a *laanie*, was actually more European than the Europeans. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 104

lakker/lucker *adj.* [ˈlʌkkɛ] *Slang**

1. Pleasant, tasty, agreeable. Same as SAE slang *lekker*, *lekkers*, except for the distinctive SAIE pronunciation, characteristic of the Indian community’s slang of the 1960s, now passed on to general SAE slang. Also spelt **lakkar**.

2. A way of saying goodbye. [Afrik *lekker* *adj.* ‘delicious’, *n.* ‘sweet’]

I could not park any longer, so I chooned him, ‘Lakkar my gazi ...’ – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

Lakshmi/Laxmi/Lachmi *n.*

1. Hindu Goddess of fortune and prosperity, for whom a lamp is lit during daily prayer.

■ The first day of **Deepavali** (q.v.) is especially sacred to Hindus as a day of penance and prayer propitiating Lakshmi. See **dhīya**, **dhīvo**, **Kamāchi**, **pūja**, **veleku**.

2. The lamp itself (e.g. *Light the Lachmi at six.*). [Gu, Hn *lakshmi*, Ta, Te *lacmi*. From a Skt root cognate with Latin *luxor*, the root of Eng *luxury*]

In some texts Lakshmi was born from the churning of the ocean ... and in others, from divine parents on land. She is particularly worshipped on the occasion of **Divali** (q.v.) and weekly, on Fridays. For the purpose of worship, some hold that a coconut can represent an image of Lakshmi. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 87

She is known far and wide as the giver of wealth. The earliest of Indian coins had inscribed on them the image of Lakshmi. She is described ... as either standing or seated on a lotus flower ready to listen to the pleas of her many devotees. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 54

Behind the lamp there was a portrait of the goddess Luxmi, which is another name for Kamatchi. There was another one of Sarasvathi and a third one yet, the dancing god Nataraja. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 173

Lakshmi pūja *n.*

A formal prayer or **pūja** (q.v.) devoted to Lakshmi.

Lakshmi string *n.*

Red string given out at Lakshmi prayers, worn around the left wrist for good luck.

lame *v. Basilectal*

To limp, walk with a limp. [Eng adj. *lame*]

- *He's only liming since the accident.*

languages n.: to use languages *Basilectal*

To swear, use obscenities, use bad language. The humour or irony is not generally intended. Same as **to use F's and B's**.

- *He's so raw – how can you use languages in front of the priest?*

lank *adj.* ['lʌŋk] *Slang**

Lots, much. Also SAE slang, where the pronunciation is different – [læŋk]. [Afrik *lank* 'tall, long', cognate with Eng *long, lanky*]

lank baks – see **bak/baks/buck**

lapsi *n.*

A crushed-wheat porridge usually eaten as dessert, savoury porridge made of cracked or broken wheat. Hence **lapsi-kheer** 'broken wheat pudding' (see **khīr**). Rare. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, Hn *lāpsī*]

Braise *baath* or lapsi in ghee till golden brown. Add **elachi, tuj** and **saunmf** (q.v.). Add two cups of boiling water and cook very slowly till crushed wheat is soft and cooked. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 324

lāri *n.* – see **rahari****lascar** *n. Historical*

An Indian or south-east Asian sailor, army servant or artilleryman.

■ The lascar sometimes performed security duties on ship. [Eng *lascar*, from Persian *lashkari* 'soldier', thence into Ar and Swahili *askari* 'soldier'; Hn, Ur *lashkar* 'cantonment, army encampment, irregular army']

John Kotayya (28146) arrived in Durban in December 1882 on the *Umvoti*. He and nineteen others joined the Natal Harbour Board as lascars, a Persian word adopted by the British to refer to Indian seamen. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 151

lassi *n.*

A cool sour-milk or yoghurt drink, aerated buttermilk, cold beverage made of churned curd or milk and mixed with sugar, ice and sometimes scent or essence. Less common in SA than India, but now available commercially. [Hn *lassī*]

Lassi recipe: Roast jeero and crush fine. Whip up curds until mixture is smooth and add crushed ice and water to consistency preferred. Add pepper and salt and serve cold in glasses. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 313

Another popular Indian drink is lassi, a cool yoghurt drink. Whipped yoghurt is either gently spiced or sweetened with sugar and flavoured with nuts and raisins. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 139

. . . Yusuf would be 170 rupees in pocket, deducting the cost of the lassi and the imam's fee. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 62

last-before-week *n.*

The week before last.

■ Older expression showing word order of Indian languages in which qualifying phrases precede a head noun, and prepositions occur after the noun they qualify (i.e. as postpositions). Same as SABE *last-of-last week*.

- *My brother came back last-before-week.*

lastik *n./adj.* [ˈlæstɪk] *Basilectal*

Elastic. Now rare, older speakers. Elision of the initial syllable also occurs in words like **'leven**, **'namel**, **'spensive** (for 'eleven', 'enamel', 'expensive'). See **'mount of**.

lathās *adj./n.*

A shoddy job, a job hastily and badly done. Hence a **lathās job**, **to make latās**, **do latās**. [SA Bhoj. *latās mār* 'to do a shoddy job', from French *la tâche* 'the task', via Mauritian Creole, which drew a distinction between *latas* 'a job to be done properly' and *tap latas* 'do a piece of work quickly and shoddily', from *tap* v. 'to bang, knock, bump into'. – P Baker & V Hookoomsing, *Dict of Mauritian Creole*]

- *Take your time – don't make latās here.*

Lathās in our days referred to the task for the day in the sugar-cane fields, like planting, ploughing or weeding. Today the word means something different. – Sezela resident, June 2010

late *adj.*

Deceased, dead. Respectful usage. While this meaning occurs in Standard English, it does so only attributively:

- *My late uncle*. In SAIE and SABE it occurs predicatively as well:
- *My father is late.*

Laudium *n.*

Suburb in Pretoria developed under apartheid in the 1960s as a segregated area for Indians, who were relocated from the old and relatively multiracial **Coolie Location** (q.v.) at Marabastad. Now part of Centurion in Tshwane Municipality. [Latin *laudium* 'praise' – name of a farm on which the area was subsequently developed]

Those last weeks in Laudium were days of wine and roses. I had nothing to do but bide my time, savour the sunny early winter days and discover Laudium. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 225

lauki *n.*

Calabash, bottle gourd, large green gourd with whitish green, relatively soft shell (*Lagenaria vulgaris* or *Curcubita lagenaria*). Mainly Hindi and Urdu homes. Same as **chaurka**, **dhūdhi**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *laukī*]

This recipe is for bottle gourd halwa. This pale green, bottle-shaped or long vegetable is easily available from Indian grocery shops and is called lauki or doodhi. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 117

laung/lavang *n.*

Clove (*Eugenia caryophyllatus* or *Syzygium aromaticum*). Known as **laung** in Hindi, Urdu homes and **lavang** in Gujarati homes.

■ Used as an essential spice in **garam masāla** (q.v.) and in rice dishes such as **biryani** (q.v.). Also has medicinal uses, e.g. as a palliative or local anaesthetic for toothache. May be used as a mouth freshener and in keeping insects away from linen cupboards. [Gu *lavang*, Hn, Ur *lawañg*, *lauñg*, Ta *launko*, *ilavankam*]

Cloves (laung) are the most ancient and valuable spices of the Orient. Early references to them can be found in Chinese literature dating back to 266 BC ... The word ‘clove’ is derived from the French ‘clou’ and the English ‘clout’, both broadly meaning nail, from the likeness of the spice to a large-headed nail. – M Baradwaj *Indian Pantry*, 48

Small dark brown spikes resembling nails, cloves (lavang) are the dried flower buds of the tropical clove tree. They contain a highly-scented oil. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 15

lāwa *n.*

Popped rice, similar to popcorn, prepared at some Hindu weddings for use in one of the rituals of the *vivah* ceremony. Mainly Hindi homes. Popcorn is prepared by each family of the bride and groom, and poured out together into a container on the wedding stage as a symbol of coming together. See **saibāla**. [Hn *lāvā*, Bhoj *lāwā*]

lazy *adj. Basilectal*

Used to describe someone not performing well at school, one not academically inclined (in addition to usual meanings relating to being inactive). Not a conscious euphemism.

- *Is he clever or lazy?*

Leader-Graphic *n.*

The *Leader* and *Graphic*; newspapers aimed at an Indian readership in Natal; Indian newspapers in general.

■ The *Leader* and the now defunct *Graphic* are two separate newspapers. Older speakers. See also **Indian Opinion**, **Indian Views**. [Dvandva compound]

Do you get *Graphic* and *Leader*? *Graphic* has always been ultra moderate. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 48

leaf-dinner *n.*

Meal served at functions on a large leaf, usually that of a banana plant. The leaf is known in IE as a **dining leaf**. The term *banana luncheon* may be used for the meal.

■ Once a common practice at Indian weddings, for reasons of cost and convenience, obviating the need to hire and wash plates. Now rare except as a nostalgic and consciously gentrified practice.

Leaf dinner for members next Saturday – sign at Cape Town temple, April 2010

leak *v.*

Used to describe a runny nose.

... You know these Memons, *they* eat sooo thiku [hot] your nose even leaks. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 259

least *n.* [li:st] *Basilectal*

A lease. Rural. Older speakers. Hence **leasting** ‘to hold a lease’.

- *A: Have you got a least for this farm? B: We’ve been leasting this farm since 1954.*

leave

1. *v.* Ignore, leave alone.

2. *aux.* A completive marker. Basilectal. See also **stay**.

- *We hit him and left him* = ‘We beat him up completely/badly’; *She filled the bottle and left it* = ‘She completely filled the bottle’.

left *part.: to get left* *Basilectal/Children’s speech*

To be unsuccessful where others have been successful, to be disappointed. See **to get boo**. [Probably from *to get left behind*]

Lenasia *n.*

Suburb in south-west Johannesburg built under apartheid as a segregated area for Indians relocated from Vrededorp (aka Fietas), Fordsburg and central Johannesburg. Has the largest population of Indians in SA outside KZN. Also known as **Lens** or **Lenz**.

■ Lenasia is close to Soweto and the Coloured suburb of Eldorado Park. [Probably from *Lens military base*, named after original owner, Captain Lens, plus *Asia*]

In Johannesburg, where almost half of the Transvaal Indian population resides, mainly in the Indian group area of Lenasia, 500 traders have already been evicted from the city centre, and the same fate awaits another 1 350. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 89

Life-book/Life-of book *n.* *Basilectal*

‘Book of Life’ – the SA term for a comprehensive identity document.

■ This reversal of the usual English word order shows the influence of Indic and Dravidian language syntax, in which the qualifying noun (or possessor) precedes the head noun (or possessed), and a postposition is used rather than a preposition: hence **Life-of book**. Rare.

lightie/laitie *n.* *Slang**

A young boy, a son. Also spelt **lightee**. Also SAE slang. See **chub-lightie**. [Eng *light* (adj.) plus dimin. suffix *-ie*]

It was the Location way for us *lightees* to associate ourselves with someone three to five years older than ourselves. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 25

lightie-bru *n.* *Slang**

A younger brother. [*lightie* plus Afrik *broer* ‘brother’]

I checked this chick standing with her lightie bro. She was buying plastic bangles. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 134

like *adv.*

A sentence-final focus element with approximative meaning, ‘as it were’, ‘in a way’, ‘as if’. Also Scots, and English dialect, recorded since early c19. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* Also SAE, but usually phrase-initially.

■ The use of *like* as a quotative does not occur in SAIE, except by younger speakers drawing on international trends.

- *He’s a messenger, like* = ‘He’s something like a messenger, He’s a messenger, as it were’; *He’ll be crying, like* = ‘He’ll be crying or fussing or causing a bother’.

line *n.*

Long building used to house workers and their families, line of attached houses in plantation or urban area in which families of **indentured** (q.v.) workers lived. Also called **line**, **lines** or **line houses**. Cf. Trinidad and Fiji English *coolie lines*. Same as **barracks**.

■ In Britain such lines of houses are referred to as *terraces* or *terraced housing*.

... for indeed the lines of Natal indentured coolies are cast in pleasant places ... – *Natal Mercury*, November 1882, cited in R Osborn *Valiant Harvest*, 143

lingam *n.*

The symbol of the Hindu God, Shiva – a stone or pillar of cylindrical or phallic shape. Hence also known as **Shivalingam/Sivalingam**. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn *lĩng*, Ta, Te *lĩngam*]

The linga of Shiva is especially worshipped in the form of a stone or marble column and represents the undivided causal principle of the universe and transcendental power, the subtle body which is not divided by death. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 80

Strictly, *lingam* is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word, where its original meaning was of a symbol, a device ... [later] ... the phallic emblem of Lord Shiva as creator ... Occasionally explicit but usually seen as a squat stone cylinder ... placed within the yoni, the vaginal symbol of female power (shakti), and no more recognisable as a carnal object than a maypole on an English village green ... A small egg-shaped stone, all white or all black, polished from a river bed, may serve a household for a Shivalingam. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 125

live *v.*: **you’ll live long**

Said of someone who by coincidence phones or calls in person just as one mentions their name.

The intercom buzzed. ‘Speak of the devil!’ I grinned. ‘Ai, ... she’ll live long!’, Sabah countered. A minute later Farah staggered in under the weight of what looked like even more food. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 214

lobān *n.*

Fragrant aromatic resin in a crystallised form, used at Hindu prayer ceremonies, or to safeguard the home from disease, evil, etc. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *lobān*]

long cut *n.*

The long way, the long road. [On analogy of *short cut*]

But I wasn't convinced; the reasoning struck me as being long cut and topsy turvy. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 150

long mango *n.*

Same as **kidney-mango** (q.v.).

look-after *v.*

To look after.

■ Used as a single fused unit in SAIE, so that the verb ending occurs at the end of the unit.

- *She look-aftered me when I was young; I couldn't come because I was look-aftering the baby.*

loose *n. Slang**

A cigarette sold singly in shops. [Abbrev. of a *loose cigarette*]

- *(Male to shopkeeper) Two loose, please.*

los *v. Slang**

To leave, leave behind, let go, to place down. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *los* 'to loosen']

- *Los it, let's go; Los it over there.*

lōt *adj.* [lɔ:t] *Basilectal*

Lots of, a lot of. [Eng *lot*, with long vowel]

- *He's got lot money.*

lōta *n.*

Round, brass water-jug without a handle, water pot now used mainly during Hindu ceremonies. Formerly used as a jug. See also **thariya**. [Gu, Hn *lōtā*]

Protector Mason advised the Colonial Secretary that his actions were illegal and that many indentured Indians could not afford *lotas*. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 121

lottery *n.*

A scheme popular in the 1950s to 1970s when people formed small savings clubs by contributing a regular amount for one member at a time to take in full.

■ No interest was involved, the rationale being that it was a forced savings scheme with no risk, making it possible to do more with the lump sum than the individual instalments. Known in SABE as a *stokvel*. [Eng *lottery*, with semantic shift]

lotus *n.*

Large water lily with pink scented flowers, considered sacred by Hindus, the national flower of India, *Nelumbo nucifera*.

■ A common motif in art and poetry, associated especially with the goddess **Lakshmi** (q.v.). A popular name for halls, suburbs, sports teams, etc. See **Radio Lotus**, whose byline *In the Lotus position* punned on the station's frequency and the yoga position of cross-locked legs during meditation. Proper names referring to the lotus remain popular in SA: *Kamal, Kamala, Padma, Padmini, Nalini, Saroj* and *Sarojini*.

The pink lotus (Brahma kamal) appears in almost all Hindu and Buddhist art as a symbol of purity and beauty, to suggest divine origin and association with the sun, water and fertility. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 127

The Lotus grows in muddy waters, yet its beauty and purity serve as a residing place for the deities. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 8

lounge *n.*

1. A take-away shop usually specialising in Indian snacks and sweetmeats.
2. A licensed restaurant, usually in a hotel. Only used with proper names.
[Eng *lounge*, with semantic shift]

• *Goodwill Lounge, Victory Lounge.*

love-marriage *n.*

Marriage of a couple who have chosen each other, as opposed to a traditional marriage arranged by elders on the basis of caste, linguistic group, wealth, etc. Possibly IE as well. See **marry out**.

'It is better this way than a love marriage. When you marry at 16 or 18 what you know how to choose? Parents know better'. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 116

There were love marriages, sometimes across the caste barrier. When this happened, a girl from the high caste would be barred from the family. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 74

low nation *n. Basilectal*

People of low status or class, people descendant from the lowest castes. Usually refers vaguely to subgroups of Indians whose characteristics one disapproves of. Also **low nation people**. Rare.

If she's high nation, you're low nation and you want to get married, what you going to do? – Older Umkomaas resident, 1989

Low Zulu *n. phr.*

The simple Zulu spoken by a majority of Indians in KZN, technically a pidgin called Fanakalo. Also known as **Isikula** (Zulu for 'Indian language, Coolie language').

We can't speak proper Zulu, what we manage is Low Zulu. – Sezela resident, 1984

luck/a luck *n. Slang***

1. Of females: someone considered 'loose'.
 - *She's a luck.*
2. Of males: a naïve person, someone to be taken advantage of, a 'soft touch'.
 - *You think I'm a luck?*

to hit a luck *Slang**

To be lucky, unexpectedly successful, usually with winning something. Also metaphorical for good fortune with something. Same as general English *to get lucky*. Sexual innuendo also possible in SAIE, i.e. to be looked on favourably by a woman.

- *I hear you hit a luck at the racecourse yesterday.*

to take someone for a luck *Slang**

To take advantage of someone's good nature, to consider someone naïve, to consider someone a soft 'touch'.

- *A: Can I borrow R200 till month-end? B: You take me for a luck?*

lufus *n.*

Term used in Indian markets in KZN for *Luffa acutangula*, a long gourd with a rough-ridged outer shell. More usually known as **tharoi** or **pikenka** (q.v.). The abrasive bath sponge obtained from the gourd, known as *loofah* in English, is not known by this term in SAIE, except by educated speakers. It is simply called *coir* or *sponge*. [Eng *loofah*, from Ur, Ar *lūfa*]

Loofah is an Anglicism from *lūffa* (Urdu), the vegetable sponge vine of the gourd family growing wild in the Indian plains. The familiar loofah sponge is the fibrous network of the fruit after the pulp has rotted away. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 126

Luhāna/Luānia *n.*

A **Gujarati** (q.v.) Hindu business or merchant caste, originally from north-west India, who moved to Panjab, later Kach and Kathiawad. See also **vānia**.

- Prominent in business and historically related to **Mehmons** (q.v.) who converted to Islam. [Gu *luhāno*]

lungi *n.*

A long garment wrapped around the waist; long, colourful skirt.

- Not common in SA. In India a **lungi** may also be worn by men in the fashion of a **dhōthi** (q.v.), but is not tucked between the legs. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te, Ur *lungī*]

In the 1920s the lungis, dhoti, kurta, turban and Indian cap (all Indian male attire) were giving way to western clothing. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 171



mā *n.*

1. Mother (referential and voc.). Also respectful term for any older Indian woman. Same as **amma**, **ami**, **bā**.
2. A term of endearment for a child. Baby talk. See **naina**, **Nine boy**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *mā*]
3. (With low tone) Granny, old lady (respectful and voc.). More common among Tamil speakers.

You know when the ma starts nagging about wife and babies then you just have to vaai with it. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 211

... he reckoned he will vie and tune with his ma not to use old spices. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2008

maaf/māf *exclam.*

A plea for forgiveness, to ask to be excused for a fault or an error. Hence to **make māf** 'to make amends, tender an apology'. Mainly used by Muslims. [Ur *māf kar* 'to forgive, excuse' from Ar *muāf*]

'*Maaf, bhai,*' he said, spreading his hands. I honestly did not know of this – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 220

ma'am *n.* [mæm]

Usual term for a female schoolteacher. Similar to other varieties of SAE in the vocative response *Yes ma'am*. The teacher is seldom addressed directly as *Miss* or *Mrs X* in SAIE and **ma'am** may be used as a referential term. – *She's my ma'am*.

■ Similarly, male teachers are addressed as *Sir*, and some schoolchildren use this referentially. – *That's my sir walking on the road*. [Eng *ma'am*, abbrev. of *madam*]

maat/māt *n. Slang**

Friend, mate, pal. See **chommie**. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *maat* cognak with Eng *mate*]

Fair, my *maat*. You can trust me. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 321

māché *n. Slang**

Money, cash. See **start**. Also SAE slang.

Spellings **maarche**, **marcha**, **maache**. [Zu *itshe* 'stone', pl. *amatshe*]

You graft fast you'll easily clear maybe five square yards in a coupla hours. That's five bob, Nits. A few days a week and you'll make good *marcha*. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 322

... I didn't want to vaai to varsity and all. Don't get me wrong, we got plenty maaché for that ... – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 53

machēni *n.* [mΛ'tʃe:ni:] *Informal*

Busy or chaotic place, noisy and crowded place. Originally the Zulu beerhall next to the Fish Market in Durban. May refer to beerhalls or crowded places in other cities. Now rare. [Zu *imakethe* 'market', *emacheni* 'at the marketplace']

- *It was so busy there, like a machēni.*
- *You think this is a machēni?* Once a common reprimand by teachers to noisy pupils.

madhar chōdh/mādhār *exclam. Vulgar*

An obscenity, equivalent to English *mother-fucker*. See **chōd**, **chuth**.

Also spelt **maadar**, **mader chodh**. [Hn, Ur *mādhār* 'mother', *chodh* 'one who indulges excessively in sexual activities']

'You are not Naran,' the main said gruffly in Hindi. 'We want that *mader chod!* Now!' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 37

I snorted. 'Give me a break. I was happy to leave that lying maadar!' – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 183

madōni *n.* – see **dōni**

Madras *n.*

Port city in south-east India from which South Indians mainly from the Madras Presidency (now Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh) embarked ship in the period of **indenture** (q.v.) to Natal and other British and European colonies. Now known as Chennai.

■ Although the **Tamil** (q.v.) community takes Madras as a kind of home city, the majority of Tamil speakers in SA originated in villages from North Arcot, Chingleput and South Arcot districts.

Madrāsi/Madrāji/Mandrāji *n.*

Person of South Indian extraction, usually **Tamil** (q.v.) or **Telugu** speaking. So-called because they were transported from the port of **Madras** (q.v.) to Durban by the British government as **indentured** (q.v.) labourers. Sometimes pejorative in the context of early rivalry between North and South Indians living together in Natal, especially the Bhojpuri-Hindi pronunciation **Mandrāji**. Older speakers.

■ The number of people shipped from Madras to Durban between 1860 and 1911 was higher than that from Calcutta or Bombay. See **Calcuttia**, **indenture**, **passenger Indian**, **Truro**. [Gu, Hn, Te, Ur *Madrāsi*, Bhoj *Mandrāji*, from *Madras*, the port from which South Indian indentured workers were shipped out to the colonies, now known as *Chennai*]

... caste was beginning to mutate into two very broad regional identities, *Kalkatia* and *Madrasi*, which reflected origin from the Aryan North or Dravidian South India – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 174

Never mind worrying about caste, they're now busy chasing Tamils and Muslims and making fools of themselves. Which nice boy will want to marry a girl that's been with a Madraji? – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 30

madressa *n.*

School at which Islamic instruction is offered, usually attached to or associated with a mosque. See **āpa**. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. [Ur *madarsā* from Ar *madrasah*]

Weekdays we were pretty occupied with school and madressa work, but on Saturdays we had to report early for duty. The horse-driven carriages needed attention while the farmer and his wife shopped. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 185

Madtown *n. Jocular*

Reference to Pietermaritzburg, usually humorously by people from neighbouring towns and cities, especially Durban. Refers to hospitals at Town Hill and Fort Napier to which mental patients from all over KZN were sent.

- *What can you expect from someone from Madtown?*

mag/mug *n.* [mʌg]

Small green lentils (*Phaseolus mungo*). Same as **mūng**, **mung dhāl/dōl**. Also spelt **magh**, **mugh**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *mag*]

After a heavy Sunday meal, plain and satisfying mugh is perfect for Monday. Eat it with hot roti, onion salad and spicy fried fish. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 92

Magazine Barracks *n.* – see **barracks**

maghrīb/maghreb *n.*

Islamic post-evening or sunset prayer. One of the five daily prayers or **salāt** (q.v.): morning prayer, midday prayer, afternoon prayer, evening prayer, night prayer. See also **namāz**. [Ar *al-Maghrib* 'the place of sunset', hence 'sunset prayer']

The Maghreb: literally 'the place of sunset', 'the West'. Loosely the word denotes in Arabic, the whole of North-West Africa. Specifically, it designates Morocco. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Fortunately, it was time for Maghrib and so Nana was preparing to head back to the mosque. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 197

Maharaj *n.*

1. A priest.
 2. Surname in SA associated with **Brahman** (q.v.) descent, that is, people with priestly ancestry. Not usually associated with princely title as in India.
- People with the surname Maharaj tend to be of Hindi-speaking, North Indian ancestry and often have strong links to traditional Hinduism. They

are still considered at the upper end of the very loose and almost defunct caste system in SA. See **Singh** [Gu, Hn, Ur *mahārāj*, *mahā* ‘great’ plus *raja* ‘ruler, sovereign’]

Mahātma *n.*

‘Great soul or spirit’. Honorific title for a Hindu saint or ascetic. Best known example is that of Gandhi, upon whom the title is said to have been bestowed by Rabindranath Tagore. See **Gandhi Jayanti**. [Hn, Skt *mahā* ‘great’, *ātman* ‘soul’]

maila *n.*

Refuse of sugar-cane stalks after being processed in a mill. After the juice has been extracted the remains are further crushed, forming a black powder which is sold as compost.

■ This rare example of an Indian word being used widely in the English of the sugar industry, at least in southern KZN, is possibly due to the influence of Bhojpuri speakers from India and/or Mauritius in the early plantations. [Bhoj, Hn, Ur *mailā* adj. ‘dirty’, *n.* ‘refuse, excrement’]

At Renishaw the cycle started with ‘defecation’, in which juice was strained, treated with lime and heated to isolate impurities. After a settling period the clear juice was drawn off and the residual mud was pressed in filters to catch any juice remaining. (The ‘filter cake’ left over was used for wax extraction or spread as ‘maila’ fertilizer during planting ...) – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 145 ... the juice goes into two sedimentary troughs ... it is boiled by steam, much of the impurities removed in the form of scum (which dirty stuff is carefully laid by for future metamorphosis). – *Natal Mercury*, November 1882, cited in R Osborn *Valiant Harvest*, 143

maila bin *n.*

The receptacle or bin used to hold the **maila** in sugar mills.

maila truck *n.*

Truck for transporting **maila** from the mills to the fields or to a yard for resale.

main-actor *n.*

Leading actor in a film, the hero, less commonly the heroine. Possibly other varieties. See **main-ou**.

main-ou *n.* *Slang***

1. Same as **main-actor**.
2. A macho man, hero, leader of a gang. [Eng *main*, plus Afrik *ou* ‘fellow, chap’]

maintainance *n.* [men‘teməns] *Basilectal*

Maintenance (usually in the context of divorce), alimony. [Analogy of verb root *maintain*]

maja/maza *n.*

Fun, merriment, an easy time. Also Mauritian Creole **maja** ‘exciting’. [Gu, Hn, *majā*, Ur *mazā*]

to make maja

To make merry, to have a good time at someone else's expense, to have an easy time at work while the boss is away. See **jōl**.

makōti *n.*

A respectful or neutral term for a Black female domestic servant, an older or married woman serving as a maid. Referential or voc. [Zu *umakoti* 'bride, newly married woman']

mal *adj.* ['mΛl] *Slang**

Angry, cross, upset. Does not mean *mad* except in sense of 'angry'. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. See **markōp**. [Afrik *mal* 'mad, insane']

- *I'm warning you, don't make me mal.*

māla/mālē *n.*

A garland usually of beads, a rosary. [Gu, Hn *mālā*, Ta *mālai*, Te *māla*]

Malabar *n.* ['mΛləbɑ:]

1. Suburb of Port Elizabeth, built under apartheid as a segregated area for Indians in the 1960s.
2. Based on Indian name for the south-west coast, along the Arabian Sea, now the state of Kerala, formerly a district within the **Madras** (q.v.) Presidency. [Hn, Mal *malabar*, based on Ta, Mal *malay* 'hill, mountain' plus *bar* 'region']

The word [Malabar] was applied by the Portuguese to the inhabitants of Malabar and to the language of the region, though it was also used for Tamil as well. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 159

Malayālam *n.*

A **Dravidian** (q.v.) language of South India, the official language of the state of Kerala on the south-eastern seaboard. Its speakers are called **Malayalees** or **Keralites**.

■ Historically related to Tamil, Malayalam has long been considered an independent language. It is estimated that unlike Tamil, it has absorbed and retained about 80 per cent of its current vocabulary from Sanskrit, though its grammatical structure is shared with other Dravidian languages. Although Malayalees of the **indentured** (q.v.) period (1860–1911) were absorbed into the Tamil community in Natal, the migration of professionals to SA since the 1980s has resulted in a fledgling Keralite community. [Mal *malay* 'hill, mountain' *alam* 'land, locality']

Migrants to Natal spoke languages belonging to either the Dravidian or Indic families ... From the South, via Madras, came the Dravidian languages Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam, the last having only a few score speakers. – R Mesthrie *Language in Indenture*, 15

māma *n.*

Maternal uncle, i.e. mother's brother. The preferred term in addressing a maternal uncle (e.g. *Satish-māma*), and expressing the usually close

relationship between a child and a maternal uncle, though in public the English term *uncle* is used. Same as **māmu**. [Gu, Hn, Ta *māmā*, Te *māma*]

māman *n.*

Paternal aunt's husband. Also father-in-law. Older speakers. Mainly Tamil homes. Same as **athan**, **fua**, **phuppa**. [Ta *māman*]

mamba *n. Slang**

An expert, helpful person, an old hand. Same as **māmu**, **master**. [Eng *mamba* 'snake', possibly punning on *māmā*, *māmu* (q.v.)]

- Ask Kevin to fix your bike – he's a mamba.

māmi *n.*

Maternal uncle's wife, wife of one's **māma** (q.v.). Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *māmī*]

māmu *n.*

1. Maternal uncle. Same as **māma**.
 2. *Slang**. An expert, an old hand, an agreeable, helpful person. See also **mamba**, **master**, **dhadha**. [Ur *māmu* 'maternal uncle']
- He's my *māmu*. He's a *māmu*.

mandal *n.*

Circle, organisation, society. [Gu, Hn *maṅḍal*]

- *Gujarati Mahila Mandal* – 'Gujarati Women's Circle'.

mandhīr/mandīr *n.*

Temple, house, school. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. See **ālayam**, **kōvil**. [Gu, Hn *mandīr*]

The Mandir can be visited at any hour seven days a week – pamphlet of Shree Vishnu Mandir, Cape Town, March 2010

mandrīn/mandrine *n.* – see **nāchis**

māndvo *n.*

1. Pre-nuptial ceremony, held a day before a wedding during which bride or groom is anointed with turmeric powder which is rubbed over the body. It is also an occasion of giving gifts. Same as **pīṭhi**. See **hardhi**, **mehndhi**, **nālengu**. Mainly Gujarati homes.
2. The enclosed area where such a ceremony takes place. Also known as **mandāp**. Same as **pandal**. [Gu *māṅḍvo*]

mangal sutra *n.*

Necklace of tiny black beads or thread worn by some Hindu brides from the time of marriage until the death of the husband. See **thāli**. [Gu *maṅgal* 'auspicious', *sūtra* 'thread', Hn *maṅgal sūtra*, Te *maṅgala sūtram*]

manja

1. *n.* Turmeric powder (see **tameric**). Sometimes called **manja powder** or **manja-tool** ('turmeric spice'). Used to flavour or add colour to a curry or rice. Also used in anointing ceremony of bride and groom before a wedding (see **nalengu**).
2. *adj.* Bright yellow; the colour of turmeric powder. Same as **manja-colour**. See **aradh**, **hardhi**, **haldhi**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *maṅca!*]

I noticed quite early in life that Fridays were exceptional ... my mother – and aunties – had baths and covered their bodies with manjatool, the vulva was cleaned and lit ... – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 13

manja-pāl *n.*

Milk with a touch of turmeric, given to persons with a cold, flu, etc. [Ta *maṅca!* plus *pāl* 'milk']

manzil *n.*

A large building, storied house, block of flats. Used as name for large houses or blocks of flats (e.g. *Shaad Manzil*). Mainly Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *manzil*]

Mariamman/Mariama *n.*

South Indian folk goddess, the Mother Goddess believed to be the cause and curer of pox and bringer of rain, worshipped daily by her devotees and especially at **Kavady** (q.v.). Also known reverentially as **Ammen** ('mother').

Spellings: **Mariamman**, **Mariamman**.

■ Many Mariamman temples exist in SA. [Ta *mari* 'rain' plus *amma* 'mother']

The extremely fierce looking elderly woman in a yellow and white sari, her face smeared with yellow turmeric paste indicating that she is possessed by the goddess Mariamman, and holding a pot of ashes in her hand, keeps advancing aggressively on groups of people gathered at the goddess festival in Cato Manor in Durban. – A Diesel *Shakti*, 186

Many Hindus believe that the Divine Mother as Mariaman, is closer to man at Isipingo during the week of Good Friday, than she is at any other place or time in South Africa. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 156

Hundreds of devotees flocked to the Shri Mariamman Temple in Siphosethu Road, Mount Edgecombe, on Good Friday, to perform the Ammen (Mother Worship) prayers, where they offered fruit, milk and sweetmeats to the Mother. – *Post* 7 April 2010

marumagé *n.*

Son-in-law. Mainly Tamil homes. Same as **dhamādh**. [Ta *marumakan* from *maru* 'alternative', *magan* 'son']

markōp/malkōp *n. Slang**

An idiot, fool, lunatic. Also SAE. [Afrik *mal* 'mad' plus *kop* 'head']

- *He's a real markōp.*

marry out *v.*

To marry outside of one's traditional community or linguistic group. Not looked upon favourably by elders. Mainly Gujarati speakers. See **love-marriage**.

■ Unlike in India, marrying within one's caste is not as strongly prescribed as it once was. However, for a long time in SA endogamy (marriage within a group) was practised according to one's Indian linguistic or regional affiliations. Even this proscription against marrying out is currently weakening.

Mary *n.* *Historical/offensive*

A term once used by Whites for a young Indian woman, especially a female fruit or vegetable hawker. Now rare. Not used by SAIE speakers. See **coolie**, **Sammy**. Cf. *Sheila's Day*, the SAE term for the day off for a Black female domestic worker. [Probably from Australian and New Zealand slang *Mary* 'an aboriginal woman', possibly ultimately from *Maori*]

Indian hawkers, just out of indenture, were a ubiquitous feature of economic life in Natal well into the twentieth century. Commonly referred to as 'vegetable Sammy' and 'coolie Mary' by Whites, they piled their fruits and vegetables in baskets which they carried on their heads from house to house. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 323

māsa *n.*

Maternal aunt's husband, i.e. husband of one's **māsi** (q.v.). See **mousa**, **periappa**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *māso* (sg.) *māsā* (pl.) and respectful sg.]

masāla *n.*

Spices used in curries, curry powder. See also **garam masāla**. Names for varieties according to spiciness, originally created in jest in KZN, but now commonly used nationally – **mother-in-law masāla** (hot and bitter – widespread in Indian spice shops); **father-in-law masāla** (mild); **daughter-in-law masāla** (neutral), **hell fire**, **atomic bomb**, etc. [Gu, Hn, Ur *masālā*]

Wherever the term masala appears it indicates the collective spices in that particular recipe, either blended together and then smeared, or added to the main ingredient. The Western equivalent of masala is marinade. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 12

A masala is a powdered mixture of the principal ingredients necessary for any particular dish. It can be made of fresh ingredients such as chillies, ginger and garlic, or from dried roasted spices. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 20

Yes the lowly masala has made a tremendous impact on the history of geography of the world. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada, *Letters* 278

birth-masala *n.*

Special masāla given to one who has given birth from three days after the event, prepared from traditional ingredients including **jīra** (q.v.).

■ This crushed masāla is now available commercially.

masāla-tea *n.*

Tea made by boiling milk with ground spices (cardamom, peppercorn, ginger, cinnamon and cloves) and lemon grass, adding tea leaves, water and sugar. Made mainly in Gujarati households. Also known as **chai** (q.v.).

mix masāla/mixed masāla *n.*

A mixture or blend of anything – e.g. people, language, dress. Now widely used in SAE. [Based on literal term *mixed masala*]

A lot of the slang in the Cape has a mix of Malay, Afrikaans, English and every other mix-masala language you can find. – Student essay, UCT

My grandmother was Tamil, my grandfather Telugu and my father Hindi, so I'm a real mixed masala. – Durban resident, April 2010

mutton masāla *n.*

Masāla especially prepared for currying mutton. Similarly **chicken masāla**, **fish masāla**, etc.

tea-masāla *n.*

Special **masāla** used in **chai** (q.v.) or spiced Indian tea, comprising cardamom, ginger, cinnamon and cloves.

thikka masāla *n.*

Masāla that is especially spicy. See **thikka**. Also spelt **tikka masāla**. [Hn, Ur *tikkā* 'spicy']

to add masāla

To add 'spice' to a story, to embroider or embellish a story.

- *Don't believe him – he's adding masala to the story.*

mashallah *exclam.*

Expression of approval or wonderment among Muslims. See **inshallah**. [Ar *māša allah* 'that which Allah wills/desires']

Salaams. Oh! Sooo mashallah you looking. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 43

māsi *n.*

Maternal aunt, i.e. one's mother's sister. See **mousi**, **perima**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *māsī*]

masjid *n.*

Mosque. Usually used in proper names (e.g. Jami' Masjid 'Grand Mosque'). Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. Also spelt **musjid**. See **madressa**. [Ur *masjid*, from Ar, literally 'place of prostration']

The word literally means 'a place of bowing down'. The word *masjid* on its own often indicates a fairly simple mosque. A *jāmi'* or *masjid jāmi'* indicates a rather larger mosque in a central location which often has a public function as a focus and place for the Friday prayer. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Mason-kot/Mason court *n.*

Offices of the Department of Indian Affairs in Durban, later **House of Delegates** (q.v.) until 1994. The term was still used by older speakers up till the 1990s, over a hundred years since LH Mason first took over as Protector.

It later became known as **Stanger Street**, after the street in which the building stood. See **Imbrication Office**. [From Mason, LH, Protector of Indian Immigrants in Natal, appointed in 1882, and Hn *koṭ* 'building, mansion, fort, palace', possibly later influenced in SAIE by Eng *court*]

master *n. Informal*

Expert, one knowledgeable in a certain topic, or skilled in a certain area. Same as **māmu**, **mamba**. Similar to international usage, except that the noun can occur on its own. [Based on Eng *master class*, *master craftsman*, etc]

- *He's a master!*

masthi *n.*

Trouble, mischief, naughtiness, lack of restraint. Hence **to make masthi** 'to be mischievous'. The original sense of **masthi** (or **mast**) was a condition of intoxication from drugs or alcohol; lust or sexual excitement; or just unrestrained joy. In SAIE the term usually refers to children's mischief. [Gu, Hn, Ur *masṭī* 'intoxication, passion, exuberance']

- *Don't make masthi here.*
- *Masthi and Magic* – title of show, Cape Town 2010

masūr *n.*

Lens esculenta, small brown or reddish lentils. Known as **biryāni dōl** when shelled and used in making **biryāni** (q.v.). Also spelt **masoor**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *masūr*]

Masoor dhal [or] brown lentils ... are round flat lentils ... used specifically for biryanis or rice dishes, and may be made into a soup. Their earthy flavour can be dull unless well spiced – I use curry leaves and fresh chillies to improve the flavour of these lentils. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 89

mathlabi *n.*

A person who uses others for his own ends, one who hangs around others and pretends not to understand. [Hn, Gu, Ur *matlabī* 'self-interested or self-seeking person or friend', based on *matlab* 'meaning' – referring to a pretence of not knowing or understanding]

'... And just for the record, you're a muthlabee!' I scrunched up my face against the sun and sea spray. 'What the hell's that?' I asked innocently. 'A user,' she snorted. 'Someone who is nice because of ulterior motives ... like you ...'. S Lee *Story of Maha*, 190

matkōr/matikor *n.*

Pre-wedding ceremony among North Indians involving the burial of certain symbols of good fortune (**betel-nut** (q.v.), a coin, etc) and accompanied by songs, music and merriment. [Bhoj *matkōr*, from *matṭi* 'soil', *khod* 'to dig']

mattering *part. Basilectal*

The appearance of pus or discharge, usually from around the eye. [Neologism from Eng *matter* n. 'pus or bodily discharge']

- *His eyes are only mattering.*

maulāna *n.*

Honorific title for Islamic scholar, especially in India and Pakistan, having higher qualifications than a *shaikh*. Same as **maulvi** (q.v.). Also spelt **moulana**. [Ur *maulānā*, from Ar *maulānā* ‘our master’]

‘Yah, as I’m sure you know your ex-husband Sameer comes to talk to Moulana practically every night.’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 141

maulūdh *n.*

A religious occasion during which Muslims celebrate the birth of the Prophet. In KZN the term **mīlad** or **meelad** is more common, based on the same Arabic root. [Ur *maulūd*, Ar *mawlid*]

Mawlid al-Nabī [denotes] the birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is celebrated with much festivity in the Islamic world on the twelfth day of the Islamic lunar month of *Rab’ al-Awwal*. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

The *Mawlood nama* is also recited on other occasions, for it is good to remember the Prophet, and such family festivities as a marriage ceremony may also be preceded by a *mawlood*. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 193

maulvi *n.*

Islamic theologian, Islamic religious leader or great scholar.

Spellings: **molvi**, **moulvie**. Same as **maulana**. [Ur *maulvī*]

The beard, the Molvi declared, was the mark of a Muslim and the beardless ones should not scoff at those who were devout enough to cultivate beards. – A Essop ‘*Aziz Khan*’, 56

mavōndo *n.*

Large rodent resembling a porcupine found mainly in cane fields (*Aulacodus swinderianus*). Also known as **cane rat**. See **gundān**. [Zu *ivondwe*]

‘They’re large rodents, the size of rabbits and living in the cane’ ... There was no fur. Instead it was covered in soft quills, something like a porcupine’s. ... Indians enjoyed cane rats as well ... – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 214

At primary school when we misbehaved the teacher would call us cane rats. – Umkomaas resident, 1998

māwa *n.*

Hard lump of milk obtained by boiling milk and water and adding sugar as required. Used to make **barfi**, **gāri** (q.v.) and other **sweetmeats** (q.v.) [Gu *māvo*]

In sweetmeats and desserts the use of mawa is often called for. To make mawa boil ½ litre of milk at a time in a thick based enamel saucepan. The milk in the initial stages will have to be stirred continuously, but once it starts boiling, the heat can be slightly lowered and watched for scorching and discolouring. The lump of fudgy mass to which the milk has been reduced is known as mawa. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 12

mazār *n.* – see **kramat**

meatarian *n.*

One who eats meat. Usually used by vegetarians, for whom vegetarianism is the norm, and requires no special term. Often jocular when used by others. [An analogy of *vegetarian*]

medicine *n.*: to put medicine

To use black magic on someone, to cause illness in someone by resorting to black magic. See also **jādhū**, **najar**, **tagāti**.

- *You have to be careful, those people are too good at putting medicine.*

Mehmon/Memon *n.*

1. A sub-group of Indian Muslims, usually of merchant background, originating from Kacch, a province in Gujarat whose chief port is Porbander. Also spelt **Meman**.
2. Their language, a dialect of Sindhi much influenced by Gujarati (also known as *Kacchi*).

A well-known firm of Porbander Memans then carried on trade in Durban under the name of Dada Abdulla. – MK Gandhi, *Satyagraha in SA*, 37

Even in the beginning, couldn't bring myself to trust this Memon chap with his big-big talk, I remember clearly. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 52

mehndhi/mendhi *n.*

1. Orange dye extracted from the leaves of the *Lawsonia inermis* or henna tree, used to decorate a bride's palms and feet. Now used as a fashionable decoration in Western culture. Also spelt **mehendi**.
2. Pre-nuptial ceremony at which a Muslim or Hindu bride's palms and feet are decorated using **mehndi** paste. [Hn, Ur *mēhḍī*, Gu *mahendī*]

The shrub known as henna in Persia or mehendi in India is native to the African coast of the Mediterranean Sea. As a cosmetic henna has been used in Egypt since ancient times ... Cleopatra is said to have used it to enhance her beauty ... A few nights before [a bride's] wedding a party is arranged when the in-laws come loaded with gifts for their future daughter-in-law. She is treated to a long session with mehendi paste when her hands and feet are designed with an intricate pattern. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 77

mehndi artist *n.*

One skilled in making henna decorations on the hands of clients.

mēla *n.*

A fair, festival. Rare, except in the compound *Mela-India* denoting a fair at which Indian merchants advertise their goods and Indian arts are exhibited. Also IE. [Gu *meḷā*, Hn, Ur *melā*]

melting moments *n. phr. Jocular*

Originally said of a large piece of potato added to a meat dish and soaked in gravy to the extent that it becomes very soft. Now applied to any such soft cooked vegetable. See also **gravy soakers**, **garden chops**. [Based on the brand name of a biscuit, *Melting Moments*]

memēme *n.* – see **jenānder**

menses *n.* ['mensəz] *Slang*

Older people, older family members, group of people. Less commonly **mense**. [Afrik *mense* ‘people’ plus English pl. suffix -s]

... when it gets lukka and cold in the night, the menses burn big-big fires everywhere. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

mēs *n.* ['mæs] *Slang**

A knife. Also SAE slang. [Zu *ummese* from Afrik *mes*]

- *Have you got a mēs, I want to cut this rope?*

merchant Indian *n.* *Historical*

Term for those Indians who arrived as ‘free’ traders in SA and not under indenture. Merchant Indians usually arrived via the port of Bombay (now Mumbai) from the Bombay Presidency, i.e. the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Many of them are more properly described as traders and free workers, rather than rich merchants. See **Arab**, **banya**, **British Indian**, **passenger Indian**.

mēthi *n.* ['me:tʰi:] / ['me:ʈi:]

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), the small, young leaves of which are cooked in oil as a **bhāji** (q.v.). Methi seeds are also used in Indian cooking. Spreading in SAE. Also known as **mēthi-herbs** or **mēthi-bhāji**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *methī*]

Methi (or fenugreek) seeds are associated with childbirth and a new mother is given sugared balls, or laddoos, of nuts, seeds and dried fruits flavoured with fenugreek for a period of 40 days after the birth. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 80

If using methi seeds, soak overnight in cold water. Wash in several rinsings of water, then boil till soft. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 97

Like methi bhaji, those were our delicacies. Mahmoud Bawa from Durban would each year rail us boxes full of litchis, avocados and mangoes. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 188

mēthi rōti *n.* *phr.*

Same as **thepla** (q.v.). See **rōti**.

So Ismet bought a nan, an aloo paratha, and methi roti, a tea cake with pink frosting. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 78

mind *v.* *Basilectal*

A brusque imperative for ‘move out of the way’. Not used with direct objects as in British English.

- *Mind from there. Mind!*

mindrel/mineral *n.* ['mindrəl] *Archaism*

Soft drink, cold drink, flavoured and sweetened fizzy drink. Not usually applied to mineral water or soda water.

■ The meaning ‘soft drink’ is now dated in international English, but

persists in KZN. The pronunciation with a [d] is associated with the Indian community. [Eng *mineral* ‘solid organic substance’]

Mineral: of beverages – dated, usually used in pl. – *Encarta Dictionary*.

We’d be sitting around the dinner table and I’d be asked to pass the mindrel. And then I’d look at my buddy and wait for the translation. And then I would be educated that mindrel was a mineral drink – usually Sparletta, Sparberry, Iron Brew or Cream Soda. – N Ngcobo *Some of My Best Friends are White*, 133

mines *pron. Basilectal*

Mine, my (on analogy of *hers, ours, yours*). Also Scots.

- *It’s mines; get your own sweet.*

mirdingam/mridingam/mirdinga *n.*

A barrel-shaped drum of South Indian origin, played at both ends by hand. Formerly made of clay, now usually of wood, with two halves to the barrel. The playing surface is of skin, whose tension can be adjusted by small pegs to produce different sound qualities. See **molo**, **thabla**. [Hn *mridang*, Ta *miru-dankam*, *mridankam*]

mise *v.* [marz] *Informal*

To be a miser, to be stingy. Younger speakers. [A back-formation from *miser*]

- *A: I can’t lend you my bicycle. B: Don’t mise.*

missed *v.*

Equivalent of ‘almost’ or ‘nearly’ before an infinitive. Possibly other varieties of English.

- *He missed to get knocked by a bus yesterday.*

miswāk *n.*

A stick or twig used by some Muslims to brush teeth in the orthodox way. Originally an aromatic dried twig from a desert shrub (Ar *arāk*) used extensively by early Muslims for oral hygiene. [Ur *miswāk*, based on Ar *siwāk*]

mithai *n.*

1. **Sēv** (q.v.), nuts and **bhundhi** (or tiny sweets – q.v.).
2. Sweetmeats in general. [Gu, Hn, Ur *miṭhāī*, Te *miṭhāyī*]

To our great regret a parcel of a mithai (as Eidy) sent for you accompanied by the enclosed card was returned with a note. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 122

Under the stern eye of his older brother ... Lalloo was required to rise at 2 o’clock in the morning to help with the preparation of ‘mithai’ and ‘papad’. – S Bhana & J Brain *Setting Down Roots*, 166

mithai samoosa *n. phr.*

A **samoosa** (q.v.) with a sweet filling. Rare.

mōchi *n. Regional*

1. Indian caste of workers in hide and leather, shoemakers, Indians who formerly belonged to the shoemaker caste. The term survives more in Cape Town than elsewhere in SA. See **dharji**, **dhōbi**.
2. Slang term for Indian shopkeeper in Cape Town. Also spelt **mochie**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *mocī*]

mochka *n.*

A type of flat bean, hyacinth bean. Mainly Tamil and Telugu homes. Similar to **sēm**, **valor**. [Ta *moccaikāy*]

mock *n.: to run a mock*

To flirt with someone, to take advantage of someone, to have a good time instead of working, to be noisy and jolly. *Amok* is treated as two words (*a* plus *mock*) in basilect. Based on, but not equivalent to, the English phrase *to run amuck/amok* ‘to run about in a frenzy’. [Eng *amok* or *amuck*, from Malay *amok* ‘to run about in a frenzied search for blood’]

She was running a big mock there. – Durban resident, 1988

We usually behaved in class, but when the teacher wasn’t there, some of the guys used to run a mock. – Pietermaritzburg resident, 1987

moer *v. Slang**

To beat up, to thrash. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *moer* ‘womb’]

- *I’ll moer you, hey.*

moer-all *n. Slang*

Nothing, nothing at all. On analogy of *bugger-all*, etc. [Afrik *moer* ‘womb’]

- *For all that work I did for her, she paid me moer-all.*

moeren *adj.*

Angry, cross, vexed. [Afrik *die moer in* (vulgar) ‘to have one’s temper up’, based on *moer* ‘womb’]

- *Don’t make him moeren.*

moffie *n. Slang* Derogatory*

A homosexual, an effeminate male, reticent male not part of a peer group. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. See **pottemari**. [Br Eng slang *moff/moph*, from *hermaphrodite* – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

Johnny this fuller’s a moffie. He can’t talk. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 42

Moharram/Muharram *n.*

Holy day (10th day of the month of Muharram) among Shia Muslims commemorating the martyrdom of two grandsons of the Prophet Mohammed, Hassan and his brother Hussain (AD 669 and 680), traditionally a day of mourning. Known as *Coolie Christmas* in Natal in former times, becoming both a religious occasion and a carnival for workers. See **thajia**. [Ur *muharram* from Ar *muharran* ‘first month of Islamic calendar’]

In many Indian cities, mourning passionate processions are taken out in which zealous participants flagellate themselves causing open wounds,

crying 'Ya Hasan, Ya Husain' [heard by Br soldiers as Hobson-Jobson]. Tall bamboo and paper structures, **tazia** (q.v.), from the Arabic word for condolence, said to be replicas of the tombs of the martyrs (often red for Hassan and green for Hussain), are carried or trundled on trolleys as part of the procession to a local burial ground given the name of Karbala. These tazias are unique to the subcontinent. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 142

Muharram was the first communal indentured event to be observed in Natal. Indentured workers were granted three days annual leave for the festival ... During the Muharram festival, Indians from various plantations gathered to dance, play music, parade, and make merry. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture* 215–6

Bakri Eid has just been; Muharram is around the corner and soon Xmas will be here. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 39

molo *n.*

A large musical drum, played at one end. See **thabla**, **wurke**. [Ta *mēlam*, Te *mēla*]

momra/mamra *n.*

Parched rice, roasted or fried and puffed. Mainly Gujarati homes. Also spelt **mumra**. See **lāwa**. [Gu *mamrā*]

monkey *n.*: **the monkey and the moon are getting married**

Expression used in connection with the simultaneous occurrence of sunshine with a light shower. The more usual phrase in SAE is *a monkey's wedding*, which is probably the model for the SAE expression. [Probably from Ptg *casamento de rapôsa* 'vixen's wedding'. – P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*]

It's raining and sunny: the monkey and the moon must be getting married. – Durban resident, 1998

Just for a joke in Zulu we call it *Umshado we Zinkawu* 'wedding for monkeys', if the sun comes out in the rain. – 1973 KZN resident cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

The Peninsula had a 'monkey's wedding' rainfall yesterday with the sun shining at intervals and rain falling intermittently. – *Cape Times*, 29 November 1949, 16, cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

monkey lands *n. phr. Rural*

Used to describe extremely hilly areas, often with steep cliff-like face and wild growth designated by apartheid law as farming land for Indians, in KZN. So-called because farmers believe that only monkeys could be expected to thrive there.

It's not economical or safe to do farming in most of those monkey lands. – Stanger resident 1993

monogram *n.*

A school badge made of cloth and sewn onto the upper coat pocket. Known as **schoolbadge** in SAE. [Slight semantic shift from Eng *monogram* 'a motif of two or more interwoven letters, typically a person's initials' – *COD*]

mooked/mooked up *adj./part. Slang*

High from alcohol or drugs. In a more advanced stage of intoxication than **goofed** (q.v.). [Etymology uncertain, perhaps related to Tsotsitaal from Afrik *moeg* ‘tired, weary, exhausted’]

moré *n.* [ˈmɔːrɛ]

Kinship or matrimonial lines, relationship by blood or marriage. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *muṛai*]

The older generation were always concerned about checking the morés before consenting to a possible marriage. – Durban resident, 1996

moro *n.*

A winnowing tray made of bamboo strips. Now rare. Same as **sūp**, **supru**. [Ta *muram*, Te *murammu*]

morram *n.*

Large round sieve without a handle, used to sift grain. Now rare. Mainly Tamil homes. See **chalni**. [Ta *morram*]

mōta *Slang***

1. *adj.* exceedingly rich, wealthy. See **lahnee**.
2. *n.* man of influence, a ‘big shot’, rich underworld leader. [Gu, Hn, Ur *moṭā* ‘fat’, hence metaphorically ‘rich, powerful’]

The only guys we need to worry about are the Motas, and they’re not into this. Requires too much personal attention. They’re happy to leave it to the small fry. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 332

mother-father *n.*

Mother and father, parents. Older speakers. [Dvandva compound]

mother-in-law masāla *n.* – see **masāla****mother-in-law** *n.* [mʌðɛnlɔː]

Mother-in-law. Similarly **sistern-law**, **brethern-law/brothern-law**, **fathern-law**.

‘Now, see! You upset my motherinlaw and she’s *so* sick also!’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 151

’mount *n.: the ’mount of*

Large number of, large amount of. Usually used as a rhetorical expression not needing to be fully specified. [From Eng *amount*, with elision of initial vowel]

- *The ’mount of cars that was parked there! The ’mount of problem we had!*

mousa *n.*

Maternal aunt’s husband. See **māsa**, **periappa**. [Hn *mausā*]

mousi *n.*

Maternal aunt, i.e. one's mother's sister or her female cousins. Also spelt **mowsi**, **mausi**. See **māsi**, **perima**. [Hn *maustī*]

... Mimla Mowsi brought the gravy soakers (potatoes), Auntie Gerla sent some tomatoes and someone sent green bananas. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajaia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

muazzin *n.*

Muslim crier who proclaims the hours of prayers daily from a minaret. Not exclusively SAIE. Spelt **muezzin** in *COD*. Same as **bāngi saheb**. See **azān**. [Ur *muezzin* from same root as *adhān/azān* ultimately from Ar *mu'adhdhin*]

The first *mu'adhdhin* was Bilāl b. Rabāh ... appointed by the Prophet Muḥammad himself. The Arabic word *mu'adhdhin* has been Anglicised as *muezzin*. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

When he reached the mosque the Somali muezzin in the ivory-domed minaret began to intone the call for prayers. After prayers he remained behind to read the Koran in the company of two other men. – A Essop *the Hajji*, 2

mukku *n. Slang***

A fool, a dupe, a thick head. Cf. Tsotsitaal *moegoe* 'one who is not streetwise, a country bumpkin'. [Possibly Ta *makku* 'fool', *mukkarum* 'obstinacy', Te *mokkaṭidu* 'an obstinate male'; equally possibly from Tsotsitaal *moegoe*]

mulligatawny *n.* – see **rasso****mundhāni** *n.*

Decorated part of a sari, usually part of its border, that is draped over the shoulder. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Same as **achra**, **chēdo**, **pālav**. [Ta *mundānī*]

mūng/mūng-dōl/mūng-dāl *n.*

Small green lentils (*Phaseolus mungo*, *Phaseolus aureus*). Also known as *mung beans* in IE. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. Same as **mag/mug**. See **dōl**. [Hn, Ta, Ur *mūng*]

The small mung bean plant grows all over India as a rainfed crop. The beans, which grow inside pods, are threshed out after the pods are dried – either on the plant or in the sun. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 168

murku *n.*

A crunchy, spiral-shaped snack made of spiced gram or rice flour. Also spelt **moorkhoo**, **moorkoo**. [Ta *muṛukku* 'to twist, spin']

Dough should be soft enough to push through a murku machine. With the murku machine make one or two dozen murkus on clean table top. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 248

... Before she could say anything, Sonny-Boy yelled from his room, 'Ma give him some tea while he's waiting ... and put some music on please ... and give him some moorkoo!' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 20

murku bend *n.* *Jocular*

A sharp turn, a hair-pin bend. Now rare. [Hybrid term drawing on twists and spirals of the *murku*]

murthi *n.*

An idol, image or likeness of a god or goddess. Either a large one in a Hindu temple or a smaller one in a prayer place at home. Also spelt **murti**, **murthee**, **moorthee**, etc.

■ Before a murthi is installed in a temple there is a large prayer to sanctify it. The most usual murthis in temples are those of Krishna and Radha, Lakshmi, Rām and Sita, Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati and others. [Gu, Hn, Te *mūrti*]

A murthi [is] a three-dimensional representation in any medium, of any size, of deity, man or animal. A statue, a figurine, a rock carving, an image in a temple or church. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 143

Although the main deity to whom the temple is dedicated is always found in the main sanctuary (cella), images (murtis) of gods from other Hindu traditions are invariably found somewhere in the temple building. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 91

Muruga *n.*

Tamil name for **Subrahmanya**, son of **Shiva** (q.v.). Major deity among South Indians, to whom the festival **Kāvady** (q.v.) is devoted. [Ta *muruka*]

The [Kāvady] festival is held in honour of the God Muruga (Subrahmanya), the son of Shiva, who is believed to have great power to heal and to dispel misfortune ... For those Hindus who ‘carry kavadi’ today, self-inflicted pain is believed to be another sign of devotion to Muruga. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 42

mushaira *n.*

A gathering of Islamic poets for discussion and recitals of Urdu and Persian compositions. This tradition continues in major SA cities annually.

Spellings: **mushaera**, **mushayra**. [Ur *mushāira*]

I continued studying under Farooqui Mehtan and soon he had me contributing poems to the local Mushaeras. Have you ever attended a Mushaera? – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 30

mūṭhia *n.*

Cylindrical or fist-shaped fritter made of spiced flour. Also spelt **moothia**. [Gu *mūṭhiyu* from *mūṭhī* ‘fist’]

Moothia means fist shaped – that is, the lump of dough is placed in the palm of one’s hand, the fingers closing over it and with gentle natural pressure the dough is allowed to form into a sausage shape. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 102

mutton *n.* *Basilectal*

Sometimes used for the meat of a goat. In the Indian subcontinent goat meat is reckoned as mutton. Thus **goat-mutton**, **sheep-mutton**.

To expect good fortune or success all the time. See **biryani**, **fowl**.

mutton-bunny *n.* – see **bunny-chow**

mutton-dol *n.* – see **dhāl-gos**

mutton-masala *n.* – see **masāla**

to want mutton curry and rice every day

mutton-gulla *n.*

Small, round fruit of the *Carissa macrocarpa*, red when ripe with milky-white juice, fruit of a thorny shrub grown as hedges. Also known in SAE as a *Natal Plum*. Hence **mutton-gulla tree**. Also spelt **Martingula**, **martingola**. [From SAE *matungula* from Zu *ithungulu* (sg.), *amathungulu* (pl.), possibly reinterpreted as *mutton* plus Hn *gulla* ‘a round ball’]

Growing, in wild profusion, the huge cactus, the deep crimson martingola, starch and castor-oil plants. – GH Mason *Life among Zulus*, 70

The kitchen garden is extensive, the English vegetables thriving remarkably well. There are in different parts of the ground hedges of fig (martingoola, amatungulu or Natal plum), pomegranates, quince ... – D Child *Diaries and Letters of Joseph and Marianne Churchhill 1850–80*, 29

Fatty butcher, mutton-gulla, six pence a pound. – KZN children’s doggerel of the 1960s

myself *exclam.*

Me too. A phrase expressing agreement with a personal statement that a previous speaker has just made. Also IE.

- *A: I feel like having a swim. B: Myself!*

Mysūri/Mysūri sari *n.*

A sari made in Mysore, characteristically of light silk and ornamented with gold or silver threads. See **Banaras**, **Kanjivaram**, **Kashmiri**. [Place name *Mysore*, a city in Karnataka state, South India]



naan/nān *n.*

1. Round, soft, thin leavened yeast-bread baked in an oven, containing **jeera** (q.v.) and topped with sesame seeds. Usually sold in shops, often as a special bread for Sundays. Spreading in KZN English. Sometimes called **naan bread** to distinguish it from sense 2. Also spelt **nan**.
2. A thick variant of a **rōti** (q.v.) made in a **tandoori** (q.v.) oven (in contrast to rōtis made on a griddle. Popularised by new India-based restaurants in SA. The chief variants are **butter naan** and **garlic naan**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *nān*]

Butter naan is the most popular naan in all Indian restaurants. It is baked in a special clay oven called the tandoor. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 145

Where was community to be found if not in the breaking of a nan, the passing round of a pickle dish? – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 158

naath/nāth *n.*

A recital of traditional poems and songs dedicated to the prophet Muhammad, sung in Urdu, without musical accompaniment. Also spelt **naat**. See **geeth**. [Ur *na'at*]

Learn the popular art of reciting Na'at at the Na'at Academy – advert in Rylands, Cape Town, 2007

nachaniya dance *n.*

Dancing sequence in a **Riverside** (q.v.) dramatic performance performed by males participating as females, usually in comic scenes. The dancer is known in Bhojpuri as a **nachaniya**. Hence **nachaniya jōl** (informal) 'a dramatic recital involving nachaniya dancing', **nachaniya music** 'music accompanying the dance'. See **chutney nagāra**, **jōl**, **six-foot dance**, **tiger dance**. Spellings: **natchannia**, **natchunya**, **natchania**. [Gu, Hn, Ur, Bhoj *nācnā* 'to dance', Bhoj *nacaniyā* 'a female dancer']

The brothers looked forward to the weekend. Friday night! The sounds of the lively natchannia music. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 41

A popular form of song was the natchania, sung in Hindi and accompanied by the kettle drum and harmonium. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 295

nāchis *n.* [nɑ:tʃɪs]/[nɑ:tʃəs]

Citrus nobilis, a type of citron fruit closely resembling a mandarin orange, tangerine. Derived from the SAE word *naartjie*, the original plural form with -s is regularly used in singular, e.g. *This nachis tastes sour*. An alternative older pronunciation in SAIE for the sg. or pl. is **nachīz** [nɑ:thi:z].

■ In SAIE a distinction is drawn between a **mandrīn/mandrine** [mændri:n], which is sweet, and a **naartjie** (or **nāchis**), which is sour. The **mandrine** is known in Standard English as a *mandarin* or *mandarin orange*. [SAE from Afrik *naartjie*, which some etymologists linked to Ta *nārattai*. This is, in fact, the form in Sri Lankan Ta, meaning 'lemon', which forms the basis for the sweet versus sour distinction in SAIE. The SAIE form, however, comes not directly from this source but via its transformed sense and form in Afrik]

The citrons ... and the oranges, especially the kind called neretyes, are excellent. – translated from French *Le Vaillant's Travels* 1790: I, 34, cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

The mandarine apple, called at the Cape narretjes is a sort of sweet orange unknown in Europe. – A Plumtre, translation of *Lichtenstein's Travels in Southern Africa*, 1812, cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

nagar *n.*

Suburb, residential area. Used with proper names (e.g. *Desai-nagar*, *Hari-nagar*). Occasional place name for suburbs with a large Indian population, literally 'city, town', but necessarily of smaller scale in the SA context. Hence *Desai Nagar*, a housing development on the north coast of KZN, *Gandhi Nagar* in Umzinto on the South Coast of KZN, *Hari Nagar* in Shallcross, Durban. [Gu, Hn, Ur *nagar* 'city, town, municipality', Ta *nakar*, Te *nakaram* 'town']

nagāra *n.* – see **chutney nagāra****nai** *Slang*/vulgar*

1. *v.* To browbeat, to beat, defeat at sport; to have sexual intercourse. Also in Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *naai* 'to sew, stitch, have sexual intercourse']
2. *n.* A beautiful woman, a woman with 'sex appeal'. Also SAE slang, Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *nooi* 'young lady, sweetheart, mistress of a household']

If ever there was a vomit-inducing word, it was *naai*. I abhorred it – and those near and dear, who knew this, grabbed any opportunity to wind me up with the use of this repulsive word. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 89

naina *n.*

1. Father. Same as **appa**, **bāpu**, **pappa**.
2. Young man, boy (an affectionate vocative used by older speakers for a boy, especially a son). Also **naini**. Spellings: **naйна**, **nayanah**. See **Nine**. [Te *naina*]

Ayoh, what can I say, my nayanah, my kannna, my sweetheart boy. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 288

'*Nayna*,' you are breaking early today – it's only five o'clock?' Sam thus addressed his father. – N Govender *Girrmitt Tales*, 21

najar *n.*

1. Envy or admiration that causes its object to become ill, the influence of an evil eye. See **eyes; to put eyes**.
2. Ill-will. [Gu, Hn *najar*, Ur *nazar*]

When my son was little we put a tiny dot of mascara on his forehead to keep out najar. – Pietermaritzburg resident, 2009

to put najar

To cast an 'evil-eye' upon someone, to cause illness by staring at someone, to spoil something by staring at it, to be envious. Same as **to put eyes**. Restricted to Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes.

- *The baby's looking sick. Someone must have put najar for it.*

to take out najar

To remove the effects of an 'evil-eye'. This is done by waving salt and **rai** (q.v. – mustard seeds) in one's fist three times around the person involved (usually a child) and consigning it to flames, usually in North Indian homes. In South Indian tradition the equivalent is to wave a brass tray with a turmeric-chilli powder mixture in water three times in a circular motion in front of the person affected – the procedure is called *drishti* (from Skt).

- *They were staring at the baby so much; as soon as we go home we must take out najar.*

nalengu/nalangu *n.* ['naləŋgu:]

Pre-nuptial anointing ceremony, held a day before a wedding, at which sandalwood paste and turmeric powder (see **manja**) are rubbed over a bride or groom's body. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Same as **hardhi**, **māndvo**, **pīṭhi**. [Ta *nalanku*, Te *nalegu*]

In the *Nalengu* ceremony the South Indian bride walks three times round the marriage canopy, *Pandal*, and then sits within it on her bridal stool, surrounded by symbols of good omen, wealth, fertility and happiness – fruit, rice, flowers, lamps, camphor, coconuts and sweet meats. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 77

namaskār/namaskāram *exclam.*

Greetings exchanged mainly by Hindus of South Indian descent upon meeting or leave-taking at any time of day. Also spelt **namaskarum**.

■ Also used by younger speakers first as a token of respect to elders. Rarely used by young people to each other. Accompanied by placing palms of the hands flat together in front of one's chest. [Gu, Hn *namaskār*, Te *namaskāram*]

'Hello, Dara,' he said in his soft cultured voice. 'Namaskarum, *tata*. Are you okay?' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 145

namasthé *exclam.*

Greetings exchanged mainly by Hindus of North Indian descent, upon meeting or leave-taking at any time of day. Also used by younger speakers first as a token of respect.

■ Rarely used by young people to each other. Accompanied by placing palms of the hands flat together in front of one's chest. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi

homes. Same as **namaskār**, **vānekum**. [Gu, Hn *namaste*, from Skt *namah* ‘reverence’ plus *te* ‘you’ (dative)]

The Pathan embraced him and, in a voice as soft as melted butter, said ‘*Namaste bhai*’. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 3

namāz *n.*

Daily Islamic prayers. These are the five prayers of the day: a morning prayer, midday prayer, afternoon prayer, evening or sunset prayer and night prayer (see **Maghreb**). Hence **to do namāz**, ‘perform Islamic prayer’. Same as **salāth**. See also **bāngi sahib**, **muazzin**. [Ur *namāz*]

He was very late and barely had time to doff his shoes, squeeze his way in, and say his namaaz. – I Coovadia, *The Wedding*, 80

namel *n./adj.* [ˈnæməl]

Enamel. Made of enamel. See **lastik**. [Elision of initial vowel]

naming ceremony *n.*

Ceremony held according to South Indian custom nine days after the birth of a child, at which a name traditionally chosen by one of the grandmothers and sanctioned by a priest is bestowed upon it after a prayer. See **chatti**, **home name**.

But of course the naming ceremony or the *naam sanskaar* is rather like the christening. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 161

nammain *exclam.* [ˈnɑmmɑɪn] *Basilectal*

Never mind, no matter, it’s okay. [Eng *never mind*]

- A: *I can’t find the hammer I borrowed from you.* B: *Nammain.*

nāna *n.*

1. Maternal grandfather. See **āja**, **dhāda**, **nāni**, **thātha**. [Gu *nāno*, *nānā* (respectful), Hn, Ur *nānā*]
2. Father. [Te *nānā*]

Zeenat followed later – after she’d finished her supper, helped to clear away and made Naani and Nana some tea. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 103

nanadh/nanandh *n.*

One’s husband’s sister. Older speakers. See **nāthi**, **nandhoi**. [Gu, Ur *naṇand*, Hn *nanad*]

nandhoi *n.*

One’s husband’s sister’s husband; **nanadh**’s husband. Older speakers. See **nāthenār**, **sādu-bhai**. [Gu *ṇandhoi*, Hn, Ur *nandhoī*]

nāni *n.*

Maternal grandmother; wife of one’s *nāna*. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. A more respectful term in Gujarati homes of **Kathiawādi** (q.v.) background is **nānima**. See **āji**, **mā**, **pāti**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *nānī*]

‘Ahré Motilall’, she shouted ... run quickly, call your father, Anand he sick and Valli naani not talking. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 61

Dedicated to our nanimas and dadimas who with great love and much concern preserved in their chests a way of life. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 3

nān-katai *n.*

A type of rich Indian biscuit, similar to Scottish shortbread. Usually round and topped with an **elāchi** (q.v. – cardamom) or pieces thereof. Also spelt **naan khataay**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *nānkhaṭāī*]

Finally incorporate as much flour as is needed to make a soft biscuit dough. Form into naan khataay shapes and bake in 200 °C oven for 10 minutes. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 362

nār *v. Slang**

To stink, emit a bad odour. See **hum**. [Ta *nāru* ‘to stink’, perhaps reinforced by Afrik *naar* adj. ‘queasy’]

- *This rotten fruit is nāring.*

nāri *n.*

The drawstrings of a skirt worn under a sari. See **ghagri**, **lahanga**, **pāvade**, **sari skirt**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu *nāḍī*, Hn *nārā*]

Natal Indian Congress *n.*

Political organisation started by Gandhi in 1894, modelled on the Indian Congress which was started in 1885, opposed to the discriminatory policies of the SA government of the time. Also known by the abbreviation *NIC* or as *Congress*. The organisation closed after the disbanding of the ANC in 1994. Similarly, **Transvaal Indian Congress** (TIC).

The name ‘Congress’, I knew, was in bad odour with the Conservatives in England, and yet the Congress was the very life of India. I wanted to popularise it in Natal ... Therefore ... I recommended that the organisation should be called the Natal Indian Congress and on 22nd May the Natal Indian Congress came into being. – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 137

Nataraj/Nataraja *n.*

Lord Shiva in his role as cosmic or divine dancer playing out the creation and destruction of the universe; usually represented in iconic dancing posture dating to the tenth century in Tamil Nadu.

Nataraj/Shiva in a stylised dance posture of rage with a left hand carrying fire capable of destroying the world of man ... but, simultaneously, a right hand indicates the mudra, or gesture, of reassurance. The dance is within a circle ... of fire representing the bounds of the universe: one foot is on the body of a demon dwarf. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 147

Behind the lamp there was a portrait of the goddess Luxmi, which is another name for Kamatchi. There was another one of Sarasvathi and a third one yet, the dancing god Nataraja. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 173

nāthi/nāthenār *n.*

One's husband's sister. Older speakers. See **nanadh**, **nandhoi**, **vadhina**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *nāttanār*]

nation *n.* *Basilectal*

A vague term for an out-group defined in terms of shifting boundaries involving caste, ethnic or religious grouping. Hence **our nation** among lesser-educated people refers to the Indian South African ethnic group, without any claims to autonomy. Cf. SAE usage for different traditional African ethnic groups. See **low-nation**.

- *If he wants to marry another-nation girl, leave him.*

Navrātri/Navaratri *n.*

Hindu festival of nine days and nights dedicated to Durga, the Mother Goddess. Accompanied by periods of fasting and austerity, and by prayer and dancing in temples. [Gu, Hn *navaratri* from *nau* ‘nine’ plus *rāt* ‘night’]

So it is that each year, at the beginning of Summer, Devi, the Goddess, is worshipped for nine days and nine nights (Navaratri), in her three composite manifestations – first as Kali, then as Lakshmi and in the last three days as Sarasvati – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 147

neem – see **curry leaf, slingeberry**

Nehru-suit *n.*

Traditional formal Indian style of dress for men, with trousers and long narrow jacket with a high stand-up collar. Named after Jawaharlal Nehru, first prime minister of India (1947–1964), who often favoured such suits. The jacket is sometimes called a **Nehru jacket**. From IE. Also known in British and US English. See also **sherwāni** [Proper name *Nehru*]

nerve *n.* *Basilectal*

Shortened form for a nervous disorder, edginess, stress, etc. Cf. SAE *on one’s nerve, to live on one’s nerve* ‘tense, edgy’. See also **heart, pressure, sugar**.

- *He’s got nerve. He’s got nerve trouble.*

new pinch *n.*

Children’s custom of pinching a friend usually on the upper arm for wearing something new for the first time or acquiring something new.

- *She gave me a new pinch for my coat.*

nice and – *adj. phr.*

Though not limited to SAIE, this pattern is generalised to a full range of adjectives alongside more usual English forms like *nice-and-easy*.

- *Nice and spoilt* = ‘Very spoilt’; *Nice and dirty* = ‘Very dirty’; *Nice and burnt* = ‘Badly burnt’.

After the chow, when we were nice and dik (full), we should march all over town ... – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

nikah *n.*

Islamic marriage, marriage contract, wedding ceremony. Also spelt **nika**, **nika’a**. [Ur *nikāh*, from Ar *nikāḥ*]

The marriage need not be contracted in a mosque nor does it have to be in the presence of a religious official. It is thus more a civil than a religious affair. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*, 193

So we have arranged for the nika'a tonight. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 57

to make nikah *Colloq.*

To perform a marriage contract, to get married in the Muslim way.

The young people of today can even make nikah via SMS. – Cape Town resident, 2009

Nine *n.*

Nickname for boy of South Indian – usually Telugu – background. Hence **Nine-boy**, an affectionate hybrid term, from Te **naina** (q.v.) plus English *boy*. Also **Niney**, based on the diminutive form of *naina*. [Te *naina* literally 'father', whence 'boy, son']

A: How old is Nine-boy, now? B: Nine-boy is ten! – **Bāla and Peru** (q.v.) joke, *Radio Lotus*, 2008.

nix/niks *exclam. Slang**

Nothing, zero, nothing at all. Also SAE slang. [Br Eng mid-c19 slang *nix*, *nicks* from Dutch, German. Also Afrik *niks*]

no ways *exclam. Slang***

A forceful rebuttal, not at all, certainly not. Also SAE.

- A: *Could you lend me five bob?* B: *No ways!*

nuisance *n.* ['nju:nsəns]

Nuisance. [On analogy of *nonsense*]

nunya *n. Derogatory*

An unimportant person, a simpleton, person of no consequence, effeminate male. Rare. [Probably Bhoj *nuniyā* 'a caste of salt makers', from *non* 'salt']

- *What you bothering with that nunya fellow for?*

The list from the Belvedere is even more varied. Dosadh ... Brahmin, Chutree, Gowala, Musulman ... Dhobi, Noniya are some of the labels the indentured Indians attached to themselves. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 171



oath *exclam.*

Equivalent of ‘honestly’, ‘upon my word’, ‘truly’, etc. Younger speakers. Same as **kassam**, **sathima**, **true’s God**. [Abbrev. from *I swear an oath*]

- *A: I’ll give you these pens if you don’t tell anyone. B: Oath!*

of-course-yes *exclam.* [ɒfˈkɔːzjəs]

Yes, of course. An emphatic rejoinder, pronounced as one word. Also SABE.

- *A: Do you like pizza? B: Of-course-yes!*

off *v. Basilectal*

To switch off. Also IE. See **on**.

- *I offed the radio to save some battery.*

oil *n.*

go and put oil in your ears

A reprimand, usually to a youngster who will not hear or who feigns not to have heard an order or relevant piece of information.

oil-bath *n.*

A ritual bath during which one is anointed with oil performed by Hindus of South Indian origin on the morning of **Deepavali** (q.v.).

■ A heated mixture of mustard seed oil and coconut oil was applied to the crown of the head, eyes, ears and navel.

oil-dōl *n.*

Small dry lentils (*Cytisus indicus* or *cajanus*), split, dipped in castor oil to preserve for an extended period of use. Translucent and bright brownish yellow in appearance. Cooked as a variant of **dōl** (q.v.). See **rahari**, **thahrenka**, **tuvar**. [From *oiled* plus Gu, Hn, Ur *dāl*]

ōja/ōjha *n.*

An exorcist, sorcerer, one who cures by magical charms. Older speakers. Mainly Hindi homes. See **thabīj/taweez**. [Hn *ojhā*]

If a child cries too much, the ojha drives out the evil spirit with a simple broom or light feather-duster. – Durban resident, 1998

okay *exclam.*

One of the ways of leave-taking, equivalent to good-bye. Similar to **right** (q.v.), which it sometimes follows.

He said, ‘Okay ma, okay father’ and left. – Durban child, 1986

okhri/okhli *n.*

Mortar, usually made of wood, used for pounding spices. See **kandi**, **khal**. [Hn, Ur *okhli*, Bhoj *okhrī*]

Om/Aum *exclam.*

The sacred word in Hinduism, symbolising God.

■ Used at beginning and end of mantras (or sacred verses). Written in Indian script, it can be found on some entrances to homes, greeting cards, Indian-owned buses, etc. The symbol is made of the vowel ‘au’ plus a mark of the nasal ‘m’. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te *om*]

... the symbol of Om can be seen on buildings and is often placed at the head of a literary work, in the way Christian monks began their manuscripts ‘Laus Deo’ and Muslims with the Bismillah. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 152

‘You see,’ said Anand, ‘the first syllable, which is really a word on its own is ‘Om’. That is the cosmic sound. It is said that when Siva, in his guise as Nataraja danced, vibrations were given off ...’ – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 32

on *adj. Slang**

Drunk, tipsy. Hence **a bit on** ‘slightly drunk’, **nice and on** ‘quite drunk’. See **shut**, **tanned**. [c19 and c20 Br Eng slang *on*, probably from *on the booze*. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

on *v. Basilectal*

To switch on. Also IE. See **off**.

- *On the stove when I’m gone.*

one out *adj./adv. Informal*

On one’s own, alone, isolated. Same as **ace out**.

I had to move to Joburg to stay with my daughter after my wife died, or else I would’ve been one out, you see. – Former Umkomaas resident, June 2010

one shot *adv. Slang*

In one go, at once, in one quick act or movement. Usually said of drinking liquids. [Based on Eng *like a shot*. Also *shot* (informal) ‘a small alcoholic drink’]

- *She gave me so little coke that I drank it one shot.*

one time *adv. Informal*

In one go, at once, in one quick act or movement. Said with emphasis on the first word. See **same time**.

- *She gave me so little coke that I drank it one time.*

one way *adv. Informal*

Consistently, at length, intensely.

- *They were drinking one way!*

only *adv.*

1. (Before a verb) Persistently, constantly.
2. (After a noun) A marker of focus or emphasis equivalent to 'exactly'. Also IE.
 - *He was only shouting. A: Where do you live? B: Maritzburg only!*

open *v. Basilectal*

To untie, let out, let loose.

- *Why you opened the dog?*

orhni/orni *n.*

A light scarf worn around the head or neck; head-dress worn by women. See **dhauni**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. Also spelt **odni**, **orhni**. [Gu *oḍhṇī*, Hn, Ur *oṛhṇī*]

When going out of doors, Muslim women wear sheet-sized shawls. If they are made of wool they are known as *shaal* but the cotton and silk ones are known as *chadar* in Pakistan and *odhnee* in India. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 20

... my comments, fortunately, went straight over her orhni-clad head ... – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 176

ou *n. Slang**

A man, a young man. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *ou* 'person, fellow']

'Hey ekse hold me, hold me before I damage this ou!' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

oukie/okie *n.* ['ouki:] *Slang**

A young boy, a young chap, a bloke. Also SAE slang *oke*. [Afrik *ou* 'fellow' plus dimin. suffix *-kie*]

outie *n. Slang***

Young man (rarely a woman) considered one of the 'gang' or in-group. Related to older SAE sense of one who is down-and-out, a vagrant. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Probably from Australian Eng *on the outer* 'penniless'. – J Branford *Dict of SAE*. Possibly from Eng *outlaw*. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*]

Thanks to Vinod Ramiah, Reshmi Singh ... and Vikash Ramlal. I hope that's all the outees! – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

overseas *n.*

1. Equivalent of British English *abroad*. Same as SAE and international English.
2. For some speakers referring specifically to India or Pakistan.
 - *'He's gone overseas,' 'He's from overseas'*.

ownership-house *n.*

A council home which may be purchased after a certain period of residence, rather than rented indefinitely. Similar to IE *ownership flats*. Cf. SAE **loan-house** 'house purchased via a bank loan (mortgage bond), rather than rented'. See also **schemes**, **scheming-houses**.

- *Are you renting or in an ownership-house?*



pachadi *n.* ['pʌtʃədi:]

A yoghurt-based sauce. Prepared on special occasions such as **Ugādhi** (q.v.) as well as ordinary occasions. Same as **raitha**. [Te *pacchadi*]

Chutneys and pickles enhance mild dishes and *pacchadis*, which are cooling mixtures of yoghurt, herbs and vegetables, subdue spicy ones ... *Pacchadi* is not an easily recognisable name in the west, as Indian restaurants and recipes always use the term *raitha*. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 78

A special feature of the *Ugaadhi* celebration is the *Ugaadhi pacchadi*, a preparation of tender flowers of margosa, jaggery or sugar, salt, new tamarind, small pieces of tender mangoes and ghee. It is a mixture producing a concoction of different tastes. – V Latchanna *Telugu Companion*, 61

paḍ *n.* ['pʌḍ]

Dough in an uncooked state, rolled out, cut in strips and prepared for making **samosas** or other snacks. Now available commercially.

Spellings: **padd**, **pur**, **purr**. See also **rōti balls**. [Gu, Ut *paḍ* 'layer, cover, fold']

pagla *n.*

A fool, mad person, idiot, one acting in a contrary manner. Cf. British English slang *poggle*, *puggle*, *puggly*. [Gu *pāgal*, Hn, Ur *paglā* 'mad']

- *Don't act like a pagla.*

paining *part.*

Hurting, hurts, is painful, sore.

■ *Pain* is not usually a verb and never a participle in SAE and British English. It occurs only as a verb in the literary, causative sense of experiencing sadness or grief.

- *It pains me to hear you speak in that way.*
- *My leg is paining.*

paiyé *n.*

A pouch in which older women carried money, **betel-nuts** (q.v.) and other items. Now rare. See **sanchi**. [Ta *pai*]

pāk *n.*

Something that is cooked, a snack, a sweetmeat. Thus **ginger-pāk** ‘a snack whose main ingredient is ginger’, **kopra-pāk** ‘a sweetmeat whose main ingredient is dried coconut (*copra*)’, **lime-pāk**, **mēthi** (q.v.) **pāk**, etc. [Gu, Hn, Ur *pāk* *n.* from verb root *pak* ‘to cook’]

Methi Paak is a definite preventive against backache, so the old people say. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 301

Doodh Pak ... [is] ... a delicious warm milk pudding thickened with rice and flavoured with nuts. In Gujerat it is served as a first course with fried puri. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 131

pāké/pāku *n.*

Betel-nut, Areca nut, (*Areca catechu*). Same as **supāri**, **vakka**. See **vethelu**. [Ta *pākkū*, Te *vakka*]

pakka *adj.*

Proper, complete, ripe, absolute, confirmed, incorrigible, genuine. Not very common in SAIE, perhaps because the local Bhojpuri-Hindi form is *pakkal*. Also IE. In *COD* as *pukka*. Also spelt **pucca**. [Hn *pakkā* ‘cooked, ripe, mature’]

• *He’s a pakka rogue, a real thief.* – Durban resident, October 1997

Before the third Agent came on the scene all the laws were in force and like a *pucca* [true] official he came with a stick to see that the Indians like good children submitted to the laws. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie, *Gandhi’s Prisoner*, 228

pakōra *n.*

A snack resembling a **samosa** (q.v.), though more puffed out and usually larger, made of plain dough with savoury or vegetable filling.

■ Not as well known in SA as the ubiquitous *samosa*. [Hn *pakaurā*]

Pakorras ... [are] small tasty morsels of vegetables, cheese (*panir*), cooked egg or fish, dipped in dal flour batter and deep fried until light brown, in the way of a fritter. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 155

palao/pilau *n.* [pɒlɑʊ]

Dish of spiced rice or spiced rice with vegetables or meat cooked in layers. Especially popular in India among Muslims and Anglo-Indians. Spellings: **palau**, **pilaau**. [Hn, Ur *pilāu* from Turkish *pilāv* via Persian]

Plain white boiled rice (Indian fashion) is known as *dhaan*, and if a distinctive feature is added to it, it is known as a *pilaau*. Rice for *pilaau*s are always the long grained variety. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 32

In *pilaus*, the rice is first fried in ghee and then steamed, with the addition of spices and other ingredients being the cook’s prerogative. – R Makan *SA Indian Cookbook*, 59

Always used cold rice when making a *pulao*. This prevents the rice from becoming sticky. – Y Sujnani ‘Delectable Delights’, *Post* 7 April 2010

pallu/pālav *n.*

Extremity of a sari used as a covering for the head. Rare. Mainly Gujarati homes. See **achra**, **chēdo**, **mundhāni**. [Gu *pālav*, *pālu*, Hn *pallū*]

pān *n.*

Betel-leaf (q.v.), leaf of the *Piper betel* chewed with lime and areca-nut parings after dinner and on special occasions. Also IE and other varieties. In *COD*. See **supāri**. Same as **vethelu**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *pān*]

At this the women broke into a gale of chuckles, exposing orange, gappy teeth stained by paan-chewing ... – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 21

The fenugreek herbs, chockfull of iron and vitamins, had arrived by post, specially packed by our uncle who had a fresh produce shop in Johannesburg, together with other Indian vegetables in season and my parent's standing order of *paan*. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 185

pān-supāri *n. phr.*

Pān and **supāri** (q.v.), i.e. betel leaf and nut (and other substances such as lime). [Dvandva compound]

panchayat *n. Historical*

1. A village council of elders, an assembly of elected representatives, a body of arbitrators. Once active in SA, but no longer.
2. Extended discussion, negotiations. Also spelt **panchaath**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *pañcāyat*, based on *pānch* 'five']

The panchayat is the group of five: the age old council of elders of a village ... In theory of five members, in practice usually more, perhaps even a meeting of the whole village, but in this event the correct title is *gram sabha*. Caste or sub-caste council (e.g. of all the **dhobis** in the area) – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 156

Charlie Nulliah ... was leader of a local community in Maritzburg, and head of a *panchayat* that decided on matters affecting the religious-cum-caste group of Telugus ... As head of the *panchayat*, protocol demanded that Poonsamy ask Nulliah first for the 'girl's hand'. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 168

I grunted. 'Come now Zee ... enough panchaath! Make me look like a happy bride ...' – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 274

pandal *n.*

1. A large tent or canopy used as a temporary shelter at special gatherings – prayers, weddings, etc. Also spelt **pundal**.
2. The special area within such a shelter where the religious or nuptial ceremony is performed by the priest. [Hn *paṇḍāl* 'a huge pavilion, marquee', related to c18 Ta *pendal* 'a booth for marriages', probably from Skt *bandh* 'to bind' – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 184]

As it turned out she had no say in her marriage. It was all arranged by her parents and the only time she saw the boy was in the *pundal*. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 71

pandit *n.* [pʌndi:t̩]

1. A Hindu priest.
2. A title for one well-versed in Hinduism. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. In *COD*. The increasingly general English use of **pandit** for an educated secular person jocularly, derogatorily or neutrally is rare in SAIE. Also spelt **pundit**. [Gu, Hn *paṇḍit̩*]

A pundit [is] one well-versed in Sanskrit, philosophy, religion and Hindu law. The pundit of the Supreme Court was a Hindu law-officer who advised the British judges on questions of Hindu law. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 195

Rambharos was buried near his home the next morning and Bhai performed the rites, as instructed by the Pandit, but did so without understanding the significance of what he was doing. – K Singh *World of a Child*, 183

pandita *n.* [pʌndi:t̩:ʔa:]

Female priest.

■ A relatively new phenomenon in South Africa, many *pandita* now officiate at prayers (see **puja**). [Hn *paṇḍit̩* ‘priest’ plus fem. suffix *-ā*]

panditji/pandijji *n.*

Respectful mode of address to a **pandit**. See **-ji**. [*pandit* plus *-ji*, suffix of respect]

- (*Announcement*): *Pandijji will now start the prayers.*

paneer/panīr *n.*

Indian cottage cheese made by curdling hot milk with lemon juice, strained and pressed into a solid cube.

■ Acceptable to vegetarians as no animal enzymes are used in their making. Paneer is a late arrival in SA, and was not used in traditional SA Indian cooking until the appearance of globalised Indian restaurants from the 1990s onwards. [Hn, Ur *panīr̩*]

Panjābi *n./adj.*

1. Pertaining to the Panjab (e.g. Panjabi music). Especially a person from the Panjab. In *COD*.
 - Unlike most countries to which Indians have migrated very few people originally from the Panjab came to SA. Their influence nevertheless is to be found via fashions in music and clothing, via trends in India or globally. – See **bhangra**.
2. Women’s wear, now very popular in SA among women, comprising long shirt-like dress, scarf and tight pants, originating in the Panjab. Also spelt **Punjabi**, pl. **Panjabis**, **Panjabies**. In India these are referred to as **Salwār Kameez** (q.v.) **Panjābi dress** or **Panjābi sets**, whereas *Panjabi* on its own could only refer to a person from the Panjab or of such background. [Gu, Hn, Ur *panjābi*]

She glanced at me with a small frown. ‘Why you dorn [= don’t] wear nice Punjabi?’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 114

Dressed in a Punjabi, the graphic designer ... said living in a democracy afforded more opportunities to women. – J Marriah, *Post* 28 April 2010

panty *n.*

Women's underwear. As in US English, this is the usual sg. form, with *panties* being the pl. Now becoming used in SAE. See **blumess**, **knickers**. [Br Eng *panties*, a pair of *panties*]

pāpa/pappa *n.*

1. Father. Same as **appa**, **bāba**, **bāpu**, **Bāpuji**. Mainly Urdu homes.
2. A term of endearment for a child or a doll. [Ta, Te *pāpā* 'child', Ur *pāpā* 'father']

pāpad/pāpadam *n.*

Round, flat, crispy slated wafers made with **urad** (q.v.) flour, crushed lentil, and spices like **jeera** (q.v.), including **hing** (q.v.). Deep fried in oil or toasted. Sold commercially in small packets as **paper bites**.

■ Still made by some families in SA, where papads may be seen drying in the sun on stoeps. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE.

Spellings: **papadom**, **papar**, **poppadom**, **papadum**, **pappadum**, **poppadum**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *pāpaṛ*, Ta *pappaṭam*, Te *appadumu*]

Papadums or papads are served with many dishes. They are lentil flour discs which are sun dried and can be packed away for use at any time. Papadums may be grilled or fried – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 109.

Messages were sent out to relatives and neighbours informing them of the great event. They too would offer silent prayers that the morrow would turn out bright and sunny, that being a pre-requisite for successful achar and papad-making as well as for calm tempers. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 282

dōl-pāpad *n.*

Papad made of **dōl** (q.v.) and flour.

rice-pāpad *n.*

Papad made of rice and flour.

pāpadi *n.*

A type of flat kidney-shaped bean (*Dolichos lablab*), a winter crop cooked when mature, or cooked with its pod while still immature. Mainly Gujarati homes. Same as **sēm** (q.v.). Similar to **mochka**, **valor**. [Gu *pāpaḍī*]

paraffin mango *n. Rural*

A long, stringless mango grown in Natal, which when green has an odour and taste reminiscent of paraffin. See **Bombay mango**, **kidney mango**, **long mango**.

parāṭha/parēṭha *n.*

A thicker variant of **rōti**, also made on a thava or griddle but brushed with a little **ghee** on each side. The Indian equivalent may also be baked in a **tandoori** (q.v.) oven. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *parāṭhā*, Bhoj *pareṭhā*]

Paratha [is] rich, flaky unleavened bread. If you are thinking of cholesterol, perhaps you should stay away from this flaky butter-enriched bread. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 42

... Jorthi who – for two *rupees* and English lessons – typed with one hand between rolling out *parathas* on a chopping board. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 191

parcel *n.* *Euphemism*

1. Food, **parsādh** (q.v.) or snacks wrapped to take away from the home of one's host; a 'doggy bag'.
 2. *Slang**** Packet of money.
 3. *Slang**** Consignment of drugs concealed in a packet.
- A: *Why don't you take some bhajia with you?* B: *Okay, tie me a parcel.*

parda/purdah *n.*

A veil worn by Muslim women, covering the face except for area around the eyes. In *COD*, though the general sense of 'enveloping dress' and 'the practice of screening off women from men in Hindu and Muslim societies' is not the primary meaning in SAIE. See also **burqa**, **abāya**. [Hn, Ur *pardā* 'veil, curtain' from Persian]

pariah *n.* [ˈpɑrjɑ:]

Member of outcast group in South Indian tradition. In *COD*. Now rare in SA, occasionally used as a term of abuse rather than of caste affiliation or lack of it. [Ta *paraiyar* perhaps ultimately from *parai* 'drum', colloq. Ta *parya*]

Throughout India, those without caste have their role to play in caste Hindu festivals, often as drummers and musicians – only they had nothing to lose from touching the leather drumskins. The Paraiyan are now known as Adi-Dravidian, the original Dravidians or inhabitants. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 158

One Pariah said to a Brahmin: 'I have taken off my caste and left it with the Port Officer. I won't put it on again till I come back.' – S Bhana *Indentured Emigrants to Natal*, 16, citing H Tinker *New System of Slavery*, 155

When Cassythevan (34171) deserted, his employer Sherwood told the Protector ... 'he is of the Pariah caste and the other Coolies will not associate with him'. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 173

parishad *n.*

Council, association, educational association. Mainly Gujarati homes.

- *Gujarati Parishad* – 'Gujarati Language Association'. See **sabha**. [Gu, Hn *pariṣhad*]

park *v.* *Slang**

To sit down and relax, to stay a while. Also SAE. See **pull out**. [Br Eng and US Eng slang from early c20, *park* 'to place oneself, to sit']

The ouens were just parking ...'cos there was nothing much to do. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

parré *n.* [ˈpæ:rɛ] *Slang**

A fight, an altercation. Also SAE slang.

Spellings: **para, pare, parrer**. [Afrik *pareer* ‘to parry, ward off’, *parering* ‘act of warding off’]

The brothers looked forward to the weekend. Friday night! The sounds of the lively natchannia music and the inevitable aftermath – a *paré* or family feud – interspersed with screams and yells. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 41

On the Sunday ... all they talked about was the big parrer in town and how the Crimson League had wiped out some guys that were getting too big for their boots. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 198

Now he is checking me with contempt like he wants to para with me – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 May 2008

to smaak a parré

To look for a fight, to look for trouble. See **smaak**.

- *You smaak a parré?* = ‘Are you looking for a fight?’

parsādh/prasādh *n.*

Holy food, **sweetmeats** (q.v.) and fruit prepared on religious occasions, first offered to the gods, blessed and then to guests, usually in small packets. Also spelt **prasad, prasadh**. See **rōt**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te *prasād*, Bhoj *parsād*]

Due to ongoing requests for prasadh recipes from the community I have included this section. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 232

One evening, after they had finished their prayers and were standing under the syringa tree nibbling at the *prasad*, not a word passed between them for some time. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 32

Partāsi *n.*

Month between mid-September to mid-October, during which Lord Venketaswara (or Vishnu), as known in Telugu, or Govindha or Perumal-sāmi (in Tamil tradition) is worshipped by people of South Indian descent. Accompanied by month-long abstention from all forms of meat and entertainment. A large prayer is held on each Saturday of the **Partāsi** month, in homes or temples. Hence **Partāsi prayers**. [Ta *purattāsi*]

passenger Indian *n. Historical*

An Indian who arrived in South Africa as a trader, paying his own passage, rather than as an **indentured** (q.v.) worker.

■ The majority of passenger Indians came from Gujarat and Maharashtra via the port of Bombay (now Mumbai). See **Arab, banya, merchant Indian**.

Passenger Indians arrived in Table Bay from the 1880 onwards, taking up employment in Cape Town itself and in the surrounding areas. – S Bhana & J Brain *Setting Down Roots*, 121

The term passenger Indian imported into writings about the Cape ... requires redefinition ... The term needs to embrace workers and in terms of regional origins to include not just those from west India and certainly not just Gujarat but also those from other parts of India such as the Punjab. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Passenger Indian as Worker*, 129

path *n.*

Parting of the hair. Also some varieties of SAE. [A phonological reinterpretation of Eng *part*]

centre-path *n.*

A parting of the hair at the centre of one's head.

middle-path *n.*

Same as centre-path.

side-path *n.*

Parting of the hair at one side of one's head. See **side-part**.

Paṭhān *n.*

A Pushtu-speaking Muslim whose origins are in what used to be called the northwest frontier, i.e. the mountainous and barren lands on either side of the Pakistan–Afghanistan border.

■ In British India Pathāns were renowned as tough fighters and therefore good recruits for the army. A small number of Pathans formed part of SA's Muslim community, switching to Urdu or Gujarati as their language.

Aziz Khan, a Pathan, came to Natal in the same year as Gandhi, but one ship later. He had left Peshawar to take up an appointment in Bombay as a doorman in one of the large hotels, and had changed his mind. Supporters of Gandhi engaged him in Natal to act as his body-guard, but Gandhi soon found more useful work for him, and eventually helped him to marry and settle down to the vocation he had learnt back home – that of umbrella making. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 19

pāti *n.*

1. Grandmother.
2. A respectful term for an old woman. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. See **āji**, **dhādhi**, **nāni**.

Spellings: **paarti**, **paatie**. [Ta patti]

'When will you take me to Kanchipur ... to that place, *Paarti*?' – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 59

pātshala/patasala *n.*

School offering instruction in an Indian language, formerly covering a range of subjects, today restricted mainly to language, culture and religion. Now solely on a part-time basis. See **madressa**. [Gu, Hn *pāṭhśālā*, from *paṭh* 'lesson', *śālā* 'house, school', Ta *pāṭasālei*, Te *paṭasala*]

One of the main aims of staging this social drama was to exhibit the talents of the aforementioned patasala students and to promote the [Telugu] language in South Africa. – V Prabhakaran *Language Challenged*, 102

pattha *n.* ['pʌt̪t̪ɑː]

A snack made from the leaves of the madumbi plant (*Arum esculentum*), which is stuffed with spices, rolled out and fried in oil. See **pūri-pattha**. [Gu *pātrān*, Hn, Ur *pattā* 'leaf']

pattha-leaves *n.*

Leaves of the madumbi plant, used to make **pattha**. [Hybrid doubling]

pauwa *n.*

Rice or flour crisps flattened and parched, used in making **chevda** (q.v.). Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *pāūwa*]

pāvade *n.*

Long skirt worn under a sari. Same as **ghagri**, **lahanga**. Also known as **sari-skirt**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *pavaḍai*]

paying and coming *v. phr. Basilectal*

Paying an account or money owing in instalments. Now rare.

- *They said ‘Buy now, pay later’, so I’m still paying and coming.* – Durban resident, December 2009.

payasam *n.* [ˈpaɪjəsəm]

A sweet dish of milk and rice or similar starch, served hot or cold. [Ta *payacam*]

A very popular sweet which Hindus call ‘payasam’ ... When prepared by Hindus it is first offered to Lord Krishna and only cow’s milk is used. Rice payasam is the most common version but payasams are also made with sago, fruits, lentils and vegetables like sweet potato. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 90

... and also some puree and some papadums. Followed by some nice *piasum*, vermicelli pudding. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 137

peddamma *n.*

One’s mother’s elder sister. May be used as a more general term for ‘aunt’. Same as **perima**. See also **chinamma**, **māsi**, **mousi**. Mainly Telugu homes. [Te *peḍḍamma*]

peddanaina *n.*

Father’s elder brother. Same as **perineina**. See **big-father**, **naina**, **Nine**. Mainly Telugu homes. [Te *peḍḍanaina*]

pekkie-ou *n. Slang**

A Black man. See **boer-ou**, **bruin-ou**, **chār-ou**, **ou**, **rāwan**, **vet-ou**. Also SAE slang. [Probably abbrev. of Afrik, Fanagalo *piccanin(i)* ‘a child, a Black child’, plus *ou* ‘fellow’]

penālty *n.* [penˈɑːlti]

A fine, penalty at football. Same as SAE and international English, except for pronunciation, which places stress on the second rather than first syllable.

penda *n.*

Sweetmeat made of powdered milk or **māwa** (lump of condensed boiled milk and water – q.v.), icing sugar, rose water and cardamom. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *peṇḍo*]

Penda can be moulded into fruit shapes. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 163

periappa *n.*

Husband of one's mother's elder sister. Older speakers. See **big-father**, **peddanaina**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *peri* 'big' *appan* 'father']

periatthé/periattha *n.*

One's father's elder sister. See **big-mother**, **atthe**, **foi**, **phua**, **phuppi**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *peri* 'great' plus *attai* 'father's sister']

periausté *n.*

1. Exclamation of exasperation signalling a big personal problem, or domestic difficulty.
2. Now also used to refer to a wastrel, unreliable person, ne'er-do-well, i.e. a cause of difficulty. [Ta *periausta* from *peri* 'big' plus *avastei* 'problematic situation']

perima *n.*

One's mother's elder sister. See **big-mother**, **chinamma**, **māsi**, **mousi**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *peri* 'big', *ammā* 'mother']

perinaina *n.*

One's father's elder brother. See **big-father**, **chācha**, **chinneina**, **peddanaina**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *peri* 'big' plus *naina* 'father']

peripatetic *adj.*

Term used by teachers pertaining to a class of pupils which, on account of shortage of space in some schools, has no set classroom and has to move into different classrooms as they are vacated during the day by other pupils for sessions in the laboratory, playground, etc. Not jocular, as it usually is in British English. See also **platoon school**. [Literally 'belonging to the school of Aristotle, walking about in connection with one's calling, the practice of walking about']

peri-vai *n.*

A braggart, a 'big-mouth'. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *peri* 'big', *vāy* 'mouth']

pēti *n.*

Trunk, chest. Used for keeping clothes or jewellery. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *peṭī* 'box, case, bundle']

Amina Aunt's *peti* was made of zinc, as I discovered to my dismay years later, but hammered out in an all-over pattern of mini-stars and moons and with the weekly polish of lemon and silvo it received, it had acquired a beautiful silvery face. – Z Mayat *Nanima's Chest*, 8

I'm in no doubt that Gorinani was also looking forward to adding to her *peti* of jewels – custom dictated that my Nana Maal would have to present jewellery to his sisters and sisters-in-law, not to mention his wife's sisters

and sisters-in-law and, of course, the female relatives of the groom. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 10

Phoenix *n.*

1. Large settlement in Durban founded by Gandhi in 1904, as a commune and home for his ideas on non-violence, peaceful struggle, community living and the dignity of labour.

■ The Estate, about 20 km north-west of the city centre, comprised his house, a farming area and the printing press for *Indian Opinion* (q.v.). Although burned down in civil unrest in the city in 1983, the main part of the estate has since been restored. Also known as **Phoenix Settlement** (q.v.). See **Sarvodaya**.

2. A large, mainly working-class suburb, with enclaves of high-quality housing, built as an Indian township in 1976.

■ Taking its name from Gandhi's settlement, this is now the largest township in SA with a mainly Indian population. Often pronounced 'Finnix' [ˈfɪnɪks] [From *Phoenix Settlement*]

Phoenix is no longer the settlement in the wilderness that it was when first established in 1912. The only access to it was until recently through potholed paths in the tall cane. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 51

Phoenix Settlement, that space for all races and faiths, represented the antithesis of apartheid – the first executive meeting of the UDF was held here in 1983. But the settlement did not escape violence. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 21

phōran *n.*

An onion, **jīra** (q.v.) and mustard seed mix fried lightly as preparation used in curries. Also used for **dhāl** (q.v.) and **khichri** (q.v.) but not for **bhāji** (q.v.). Same as **vagār**, **vadavum**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Bhoj *phoran*, Bengali *panch phoron* from *pānc* 'five' plus *phoran*]

Bengal lies in the north-east of India. The most popular blend of spices here is *panch phoron* – Bengal's equivalent of the Chinese five-spice powder. Panch phoron is a colourful blend of green fennel seeds, black mustard seeds, black nigella, yellow fenugreek seeds and sage-coloured cumin seeds ... It is added to hot oil before adding vegetables, lentils or pulses. As it begins to splutter, the rest of the ingredients are dropped in. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 94

phua *n.*

Paternal aunt, i.e. father's sister or, by extension, father's female cousin. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. See **foi**, **periathe**, **phuppi**. [Bhoj *phūā*]

• *I've got three phuas, all married and living in Port Shepstone.* – Umkomaas resident, 1989

phuphi *n.*

Paternal aunt, i.e. father's sister or, by extension father's female cousin. Mainly Urdu homes. See **foi**, **periathe**, **phua**. [Hn, Ur *phūphī*]

phuppa *n.*

Paternal aunt's husband, i.e. husband of one's father's sister. See **athan**, **fua**, **maman**, **phua**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *phūphā*, Bhoj *phuppā*]

pichāchi *n.*

Devil, she-demon, frightful spirit, devilish person, abhorrent person. Usually jocular when referring to persons. Rare. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Also spelt **peechachi**. [Ta, Te *paicācam*, *picācu*]

Like one peechachi (devil) she shrieked from behind the counter: 'You fellas only know to complain and stay'. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

pickle *v.*: **to pickle something**

Used metaphorically to suggest the stinginess of someone unwilling to use something they own or to lend it out. Similar to English idiom *dog in a manger*. See **achār**.

- *A: Can we use your new football for our game? B: No, it'll get dirty. A: Why are you pickling it?*

pick out *v.*

To denigrate, speak ill of. Not the same as SAE sense of 'to scold, reprimand'.

- *They were picking us out. Don't pick me out.*

pig-sty *n.*

The usual term for a *stye* – a temporary inflamed swelling on the edge of the eyelid. The association with the sty of a pig is a historically incorrect one which has become the norm in SAIE. [Eng *stye*, from Old Eng *stigan* 'to arise' plus *ye* 'eye'; c17 folk etymology *styanye* 'sty-on-eye']

pikenka *n.*

A long gourd with a rough ridged shell (*Luffa acutangula*). Mainly Tamil homes. Same as **lufus**, **tharoi**, **thuriya**. [Ta *pirkkankkāy*]

pimp *v.* *Children's speech*

To tell tales, to carry tales. Possibly related to SABE *pimp* 'to spy', Zulu *impimpi* 'informer', SAE prison slang *piemp* 'to squeal on'. – J Branford *Dict of SAE*. Hence **pimper** (n.) 'One who carries tales.' [Eng *pimp* 'to solicit clients for a prostitute']

- *Whenever I do something wrong, she goes and pimps to the teacher.*

pinama *n.*

Younger sister of one's mother. Mainly Telugu homes. See **chinamma**, **māsi**, **mousi**. [Te *pinama*]

pinchen *n.* ['pintʃən] *Basilectal*

Pension. Rare. Usually called a **grant** (q.v.).

Pithar Pak *n.*

Period of commemoration of one's ancestors with rituals, prayers and offerings of food usually around September by Hindus of North Indian origin. Mainly Hindi homes. [Skt, Hn *pitr*, 'ancestor, male ancestor', *paksh* 'fortnight, dark half of a lunar month']

The youngsters who've moved to Jo'burg keep up most of our customs – they even do Pithar Pak an' all. – Ladysmith resident, 2009

pīṭhi *n.*

Pre-nuptial ceremony held a day before a wedding at which turmeric powder is rubbed over a bride's or a groom's body. Mainly Gujarati homes. Same as **hardhi**, **mandvo**, **nalengu**. [Gu *pīṭhī*]

plaas *n. Slang**

Farm. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *plaas*, cognate with English *place*]

- *This ou is from the plaas.*

platoon-school *n.*

A school system in which, on account of a shortage of space, students are taught in two shifts (a morning session for one group, an afternoon shift for another). Hence **platoon-class** – 'a class of pupils operating within a platoon-school system.' Also used in SABE. See also **peripatetic**. [Based on *platoon* 'a squad or set of people who move as a group']

There has been a considerable reduction in numbers of children in platoon schools (11 000 in 1970 and there should be none in the foreseeable future). – AD Lazarus *Standard Encyclopaedia of SA*, VI

plough *v. Slang**

To fail an examination. Also SAE slang. See **plug**. [Br Eng slang *plough*]

Sattar had passed but he wasn't entirely satisfied with his results ... Raymond Ernest, unfortunately, ploughed in English. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 159

plug *v. Slang**

To fail an examination. Also SAE slang. See **plough**. [Probably from British English *pluck* 'to fail a student in an examination' (now archaic)]

- *I made Maths, but I plugged Physics.*

pō *v.*

To go. Usually imperative, used with children and people of lower socioeconomic rank. [Ta, Te *pō*]

pōli *n.*

A snack comprising grated coconut, raisins and spices (poppy seeds, sesame and cardamom) wrapped in pastry dough and fried in oil. Made in most Hindi homes at **Diwali** (q.v.) or other festivals. [Ta, Te *pōlī*]

Roll each puri into 60 mm diameter and fill with a tablespoon of filling. Fold pastry in half and crimp edges closed. Deep fry polis in hot oil over medium

heat until golden brown and crisp. Drain on a rack. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 154

Poli [is a] ... Hindu festival pastry. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 317.

Pongal *n.*

Harvest festival originally celebrated over three days in January by Hindus of South Indian origin. [Ta *poṅkal*]

Pongal ... is the harvest festival and is usually celebrated on the first day in the month of Thai (January). The festival is known to last three days in rural areas. The first day of festivities is marked by pongal (cooked rice from a freshly harvested field) offered to God. This day is known as Pongal Day. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 69

Pongal [is] a preparation of rice, dal, milk and sugar or jaggery ... the annual four-day festival of Tamil Nadu, with the main day on the 14 or 15 January. The pongal, cooking in a cauldron in each household, on this day must boil over, signifying plenty following the harvest. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 164

porridge-prayers *n.*

Prayers for well-being and strength to **Shakti** (q.v.) and **Mariamman** (q.v.) held twice a year by some Hindus of South Indian extraction. So called because **sour porridge** (q.v.) is served in the morning or with mixed vegetables at noon. May be accompanied by the sacrifice of a goat or a domestic fowl. The proper (and less demeaning) term for these prayers in Tamil is *Mariamman Poosay* 'pūja' (q.v.) for the Mother Goddess. See **goat-prayers**, **Mariamman**.

Special porridge, kulu, made from fermented maize, sour milk, and onions, is placed in buckets with syringe leaves tied around them. Both the porridge (which is fed to the patients) and the syringe leaves (which are placed in the sick room) are believed to have a cooling effect on the hot fever. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 49

Some festivals were picturesque. 'For instance, we Tamils had Porridge Prayers,' said Soobramoney Naidoo. – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 251

porridge-ou *n. Slang*

A person, usually male, of South Indian origin, in whose household porridge was a traditionally favoured preparation. Pl. **porridge-ous**, **porridge people**. Usually derogatory or jocular in the context of earlier slight rivalries between North and South Indians in KZN. See also **banya**, **bread-ou**, **porridge-prayers**, **rōti-ou**, **slum-ou**, **sulla**.

pottemāri *n.*

An effeminate male. May be applied as a mild insult to any male who is not considered 'cool'. Sometimes abbreviated to **Potter**. Also spelt **Potter Marie**. [Ta *poṭṭemāri* from *potte* 'silly', *mari* 'fellow']

So what do they think? That I only like you because I might be a pottemari and I like your body? – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 2

Hey you Potter Marie, what you skryfing there? ... The more I swore him, the more tickets he wrote. 'POTTER!', I screamed at him. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

powerful *adj. Slang**

Pleasant, agreeable, tasty.

- *Ey, this chow is powerful, eh!*

poyisa *n. Slang**

A policeman, guard, night watchman. Also SAE slang. See **bophas**. Also spelt **phoyisa**. [Zu *amaphoyisa* from Eng *police*]

George, the phoyisa, stepped out of his hut, rolling a newspaper into a tight scroll. 'Sawubona, Maha. Howzit?' he said, waving it in greeting. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 13

pōzi *n. Slang**

Home, a house. Early c20 Australian and New Zealand slang *pozzy*, originally British colonial army slang, denoting a dug-out or shelter. Also SAE and Tsotsitaal, with additional meaning of 'hiding place' in the latter. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*.

Spellings: **pozzy**, **possie**, **pozzi**, **posi**. [Abbrev. from *position* – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]

The aunties all clubbed whatever food they had by the pozzi and they were cooking one big pot 'London-mix' outside on the fire. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

'Akkie in the pozzy?'

'Sure. He expecting you?' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 209

to vai pōzi

To go home. See **vai**.

prasādh *n.* – see **parsādh**

pressure *n.*

A shortened form for *high blood pressure* or hypertension. See also **heart**, **nerve**, **sugar**.

proposed *part./adj.*

Engaged to be married, referring to a female whose family has received and accepted a proposal of marriage e.g. *She is proposed*.

Thus **proposal** 'engagement, proposal of marriage'. See also **book**, **future**, **word**, **interested**.

■ Although similar to British English and SAE, the syntax in SAIE is different: Br English 'He proposed to her' vs SAIE 'She is proposed'; Br Eng 'She received a proposal of marriage' vs SAIE 'Proposal came for her'.

proud *adj. Basilectal*

Arrogant, haughty, aloof. A slightly different nuance from Standard English *proud of someone*. See **independent**.

- *She's such a proud person that she won't even look at you.*

pudhina *n.*

The mint plant, or its leaves (*Mentha sativa*), used to make some types of **chutney** (q.v.). Mint or **pudhina chutney** is a combination of grated mint and crushed monkey nuts. Also spelt **poodhina**, **pudina**, **puhina**. See **thovel**. [Hn, Ur *pudīnā*, Gu *phūdino*]

Most Indians associate mint (*pudina*) with chutneys and the snacks that are served with them. Mint is used more in north India than in the south. It was probably introduced into Indian cookery by the Muslim rulers of Delhi. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 102

She had also made chutney made of *puhina* (mint) and tamarind and salt spiced with some dried chillies. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 157

pūja *n.*

Hindu prayers, act of worship, rites, ceremonies held in a temple or at one's home, e.g. *Durga Pūja*, *Sarasvathi Pūja* or *Lakshmi Pūja*. Also spelt **poosay**, **poojay**. [Hn *pūjā*, Ta *pucaī*]

More narrowly, puja has to do with worship of and ritual service to a deity and its visible image in an atmosphere of devotion. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 23

Velli had obviously spent much time and care on her preparations, more than she did for Sarasvathi poojays in other years. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 174

pūja-goods *n.*

Camphor, incense sticks, **ghee** (q.v.), **samagri** (q.v.) and other items used for prayers. Also known as **temple goods**.

pujāri/pusāli *n.*

An officiating priest in a temple, a temple attendant, one who assists at a **pūja**. Now rare. [Hn *pūjārī*, Ta *pusālī*]

Someone suggested that she visit the poosalie (temple attendant) at the Marieaman temple. He had cured her sister-in-law's husband of his acute backache. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 150

puli *n.*

1. Points in the card game **thanni** (q.v.). The tiger is possibly chosen as an iconic concept, like the name of the game (**thanni** or water), the *king*, etc. See also **jōdi**, **kanak**. [Ta, Te *puli* 'tiger']

2. Tamarind. Same as **amli**, **cintapandu**, **imli**. Also spelt **pullie**, **pulli**, **pullu**. [Ta *puḷi*].

Pullie curry [or] ... mixed vegetable with tamarind. – *Pakco Indian Cookbook*, 79.

pull out *v. Slang**

To depart, leave, leave in a hurry. Not necessarily by vehicle as in the original English idiom. See **park**. [From *to pull out of a station* (of trains)]

Sunny: Me too. That day my father hit me with a sjambok I wanted to pull out from the pozzie. – R Govender *Lahnee's Pleasure*, 15

pulled up *adj.*

Sulky, having a sour face, upset. Refers to the contortion of one's face muscles when upset without resorting to an argument.

Only last night I was telling your mother how I suspected you would come morningtime not downcast and sulking and pulled up at all. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 56

pulling veins *n.*

Severe cramps, usually of the calf muscles, a spasm.

■ Cramping of the muscles was mistaken by lesser educated people for problems with arteries and veins. See also **shifted navel**, **huk**.

Some of my older patients still complain of pulling veins. – doctor, Umkomaas, April 2010

pūri *n.*

A circular, flat or puffed out, slightly crisp pastry fried in oil. Considered a more special form of **rōti** (q.v.) and often prepared on religious or special occasions. Usually eaten with curry, beans and **rōti**, being a special fare among North Indians at festivals or days before a wedding. Also spelt **puree**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *pūri*, Ta, Te *pūri*]

banana-pūri *n.*

A sweet, flaky, banana-shaped pastry made of the same dough as a **pūri** (q.v.). [Hybrid compound]

Banana puri may be frozen after Swiss rolling. Cut in 2.5 cm wide slices, flatten tops slightly to give you the length and thickness you want; then put in a plastic container, lining the layers with plastic sheets – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 351

pūri-pattha *n.*

A sandwich made of **pattha** (q.v.) and one or two **pūris**. Also spelt **puri-patha**.

Premy got so cross, she said, 'Bhai, what you think this is, puri-patha?' – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 17

pusāli *n.* – see **pujāri****put** *v.*

Covers a greater range of senses than in British English, especially in the basilect. May be followed by a noun without a following prepositional phrase, as in SAE slang usage. [Based on Ta *podu* 'to put']

put (a) dot *v. phr.*

To wear a dot on one's forehead, to make a dot on one's forehead. See **dot**, **bottu**, **tikka**, **chāndlo**.

put brakes *v. phr. Basilectal*

To apply brakes.

put chillies *v. phr. Basilectal*

To punish a child for swearing or other misdemeanours by forcing hot chillies into its mouth or, less commonly, the eyes. More usually, to threaten such punishment.

put eyes *v. phr. Basilectal*

To cast an 'evil-eye' upon someone, to cause illness by staring at someone, to spoil something by staring at it, to be envious. Same as **to put najar**. See **to take out najar** (q.v.).

- *The baby's looking sick. Someone must have put eyes on it.*

put fire *v. phr. Basilectal*

To set fire to, set alight. Also metaphorically to tell tales so as to put someone in trouble. See **brand, burn**.

put food *v. phr. Basilectal*

To serve food to a large crowd of guests at weddings, parties, etc. Sometimes jocular.

put for someone *v. phr. Slang**

To beat someone up.

puttu/pittu *n.*

A mound of earth as in an anthill or a snake's dwelling. Treated as a shrine, the cobra being sacred to followers of Shiva. Hence **puttu-house**. [Probably Ka *puttu*, Te *putta* 'anthill, snake's hole, heap', Ta *puṛru*, SA Ta *puṭtu*]

According to legend, a *Puthu*, a mound similar to an anthill in appearance and which is regarded as home to the sacred Snake Goddess, materialised on the present temple site [in Mt. Edgecombe]. For believers this was a sure sign that the temple was located on an auspicious spot. The *Puthu* has been growing each year, and stands at over two metres. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 234

puzzling *part. Slang***

1. Eking a living, leading a hand-to-mouth existence.
 - *I'm puzzling for a long time.*
2. Hesitating, working things out mentally, wondering about something said. [A slight semantic shift from *puzzle over* 'think hard over something difficult to understand']

... check, this cab, the ou is puzzling. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008



qawāli *n.*

Vibrant folk singing. Spirited Urdu devotional song with musical accompaniment, performed by a small group of musicians.

Spellings: **qawaali**, **qawwali**, **quawali**. [Ur *qavvālī*]

The origin of Qawwali is traced to the latter part of the twelfth century ... as the Muslim equivalent of Hindu devotional singing (Bhajans and Kirtans) ... In South Africa in the past, Islamic orthodoxy ... tended to reject Qawwalis as un-Islamic, and their expression remained almost entirely restricted to the poor Urdu-speaking Muslims. The situation has changed considerably now. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 223

She went over to the window, opened it, and, looking out into the darkened street, she sang a bitter-sweet qawali. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 175

queen *n.*

The white disc (often called a *bead*) in the game of **carom** (q.v.) which one shoots into a pocket to open or close a game. See **striker**.

Qur'ān/Korān *n.*

Sacred book of Islam, a collection of the oral revelations of Muhammad written in Arabic. Not exclusively SAIE or SAE. Spelt **Koran** in *COD*. [Ur *Qur'ān* from Ar]

The Kor'ān is the Muslim sacred book written in the Arabic language: the title has the meaning of recitation or reading, and derives from the origin of the work, the recitations of the eternal word of God by the Angel Gabriel to the Holy Prophet, Mohammed, some in Medina and some in Mecca, over a period of twenty three years. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 117

The Qur'ān is Islam's holiest book, being the *uncreated* word of God revealed through Jibrīl to the Prophet Muḥammad. The text consists of 114 chapters, each called a *sūra* in Arabic, arranged so that the longest ones come first. Each *sūra* is classified as Meccan or Medinan according to whether that *sūra* was revealed to Muhammad in Mecca or Medina. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*



rās/raas *n.*

1. A noise, racket; a scolding. Also SAE slang*.
 2. The word *rās* occurs in Hindi and Gujarati homes referring either to noise and jollity or to the round dance of cowherds as depicted in the **Krishna** (q.v.) festival (cf. **garba-rās**). [Afrik *raas* 'noise, scolding', possibly related to and derived from Gu, Hn *rās*]
- *Don't make a raas here. What you're making a raas here for?*

garba-rās *n.*

Enactment of the round-dance of Krishna and the milk maidens with **garba** (q.v.) sticks (see **dhandiya**).

Radha-Krishna *n.*

Radha and Krishna, referring to the relationship of Radha, a village woman, with **Krishna** (q.v.).

■ Although enamoured of by many village women, Krishna's particular love was for Radha. This love theme is pervasive in Indian religion, art, music and dance, having both a sensual as well as a religious aspect, insofar as it 'symbolises woman's spiritual desire to merge with the godhead' – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*: 119.

In South Africa a popular name for temples, halls, etc. (e.g. *Radha-Krishna Mandir* in Cape Town). [Dvandva compound]

Radio Chār-ou *n.*

Comedy series by youth social group in the early 1980s in Durban satirising Indian life in Natal, in which many characters use basilectal or broad older SAIE. A pun on **Radio Truro**, a KZN-based radio station of the 1970s and '80s aimed at an Indian listenership. See **chār-ou**, **Truro**. [SAIE slang *chār* 'Indian', *ou* 'person']

Radio Lotus *n.*

A radio station aimed primarily at an Indian listenership broadcasting from Durban to the major cities of SA. See also **Lotus**, **Truro**.

■ The station was established in the 1970s, and broadcasts mainly in English, with songs in the different Indian languages, chiefly Hindi and Tamil. It includes news broadcasts of a general nature as well as pertaining to the SA Indian community. Programmes aimed at teaching Indian languages were introduced in the 1990s. [Eng *lotus*, a type of water lily, a sacred flower in India, and the national flower]

I have been listening for the past few weeks to the Radio Lotus programme on Sunday nights. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 177

rāga/rāg *n.*

A pattern of notes which provides the basis for improvisation in Indian music; a system of ascending and descending notes comprising a set combination of seven notes, the parent *rāga*, and a set of daughter notes that admit other combinations in the thousands. Also IE. [Gu, Hn, Ur *rāg*, Ta *rāgam*, literally ‘colour’]

In Indian classical music, a melodic structure with a fixed sequence of notes. In vocalising, generally the voice deep from the throat is used as a musical instrument, expressing moods and emotions rather than for conveying a verbal meaning. A strictly disciplined improvisation on just seven or fewer [...] vowel sounds flowing on and on without interval ... Almost all ragas are associated with one of the six seasons of the year and with certain periods of the day or night: performance of a particular raga, except during its assigned season and time, would be against all musical tradition. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 172

Mr Thaver played the violin, while Mr Odayar laboured on with sonorous carnatic raags. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 89

to pull rāgam

Musician’s colloquial term for a singer’s holding on to a note for an extended period.

rahari/rāri *n.*

Small green lentils, pulse (*Cytisus indicus* or *Cajanus indicus*). Known simply as *lentils* in KZN Indian markets. Sometimes pronounced *lāri* by younger speakers (phonetic dissimilation).

■ Cooked as curry when green; dried it is made into a tea-time snack called **ghugri** (q.v.). Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. Same as **thauranka**, **thubar**. See also **oil-dōl**. [Bhoj *rahar(i)*, Hn *arhar*]

rai *n.*

A type of black mustard, part of the larger brassica family together with **sarso** (q.v.) and rape oil seeds.

■ The seeds are crushed to produce mustard oil, used in cooking and application to the body. Not the same as English *rye*. See **najar**: **to take out najar**. [Gu, Hn *rāī*]

raitha/raithu *n.*

A sauce made of yoghurt with mint, green chilli or sliced fruit, usually cucumber or banana.

■ Usually served with **biryāni** (q.v.) and rice dishes. Not exclusively SAIE. Same as **pacchadi**. [Hn *raitā*, Gu *raitū*]

A raita has a base of yoghurt, which is usually spiced with freshly roasted cumin seeds, black peppercorns and freshly chopped chillies. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 109

rajma *n.* – see **sugar beans**

rakham/rakkam *n.* *Regional*

Decorative Arabic writing of a religious nature framed and hung on walls, involving calligraphy and intricate geometric designs. Term used mainly in the Western Cape, under Malay influence. Known simply as a **frame** in KZN.

■ Since Islam does not encourage the exhibition of pictorial images, this may be all that is hung in a household's lounge. The writing is often the **Bismillah** (q.v.) or the opening words of the **Qur'ān** (q.v.). [Ar *raqam* 'to write, imprint, record']

rākhi *n.*

A sacred thread tied around the wrist of a brother by a girl during **Raksha Bandhan** (q.v.).

■ The colour red is particularly favoured as propitious for warding off evil or calamity. Commercially produced rakhis are more elaborate, with plastic or paper designs attached to the thread. [Hn *rākhī*, Gu *rākhīdī*]

The Rakhi is a silken cord made of many colours and tied to the wrist to ward off evil and any form of disaster ... The custom in present times is for sisters to present Rakhi to their brothers as a symbol of affection. She applies a tilak [dot, holy mark] to his forehead and he in turn gives her a gift. This marks similar events which are supposed to have occurred in Vedic and post-Vedic times. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 70

Raksha Bandhan *n.*

North Indian festival at which Hindu siblings honour each other, the sister by tying a **rākhi** (q.v.) around the brother's right wrist, he by offering a small gift and the promise of protection. [Gu, Hn *raksha* 'protection', *bandhan* 'act of tying, bond', cognate with Eng *bind*, *bond*]

Raksha Bandhan is an ancient festival celebrated in many parts of North India ... [It] is observed on the full moon of Sawan (July–August). – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 70

Ramadān/Ramzān *n.*

Islamic month of penance, including fasting, held in the ninth month of the Muslim lunar year. In *COD*. [Ar *ramadan*, Ur *ramzān*]

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar and also the Muslim month of fasting. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar rather than solar, Ramadan falls at different times every year. By fasting ... Muslims mark the revelation of the **Qur'ān** (q.v.) in that month. The fast lasts every day technically, according to the **Qur'ān** from the time that a believer can distinguish between a white and a black thread (or, according to another interpretation, when he can perceive the first white streak of dawn on a black sky). During the fast the believer must abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse. Those who are sick, women who are pregnant and those making long journeys are exempted from fasting. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Ramadan is so easy this year, it's virtually like having breakfast and early dinner at 5:10. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 69

'... She must help her granny. Ramzan starting too and Naani can't manage everything herself.' – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 155

Ramāyan *n.* [rʌ'mam]

Shortened form for **Ramayana**, a religious Hindu epic, recounting the deeds of Rama: his exile from his kingdom with his wife, **Sita** (q.v.) and brother Lakshman, his subsequent life in the forest, his association with the monkey-god Hanuman, the abduction of Sita by **Ravan** and the subsequent war with Lanka. His successful return to Ayodhya is one of the reasons for the celebration of **Diwali** (q.v.).

■ The original Ramayana was that of Valmiki, composed in Sanskrit in seven books. A c16 medieval rendition into the Awadhi dialect of Hindi is by Tulasi Das, which remains popular in India and SA. [Skt *rāmāyaṇa*, literally 'Rama's path']

For Harilall was a hard-working millhand in the sugar mill, and by dint of reading and re-reading with his limited Hindi, he had read the *Ramayan* and the *Bhagavat Gita*. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 63

Devotees from temples across Durban gathered at the ... Hindu Centre ... last week to recite the Ramayan at a public recital. – *Post* 7 April 2010

Rām Naumi *n.*

Celebration of the birth of the Hindu deity, Rama, hero of the epic **Ramāyan** (q.v.) in March/April on the ninth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Chaitra. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Skt *rāma* plus Hn *naumī/navami* 'ninth day of the lunar fortnight']

Ramachandra or Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu [and] the embodiment of righteousness and the ideal hero ... represents the ideal cultured man of the Epic period, highly skilled in law, polity, logic, music, military science, and the training of elephants and horses. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 116

Lord Rama was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and was, as all Incarnations of God were, born to fulfill a divine mission – to establish righteous rule on the earth. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 67

Rang Pravesh *n.*

Graduation ceremony for classical dancers involving their first public performance as graduates, after a long period of training. See **Bharata Nātyam**. Same as **Arangetram**. [Hn *raṅg* 'colour, stage, achievement' *pravesh* 'entry, admission']

rangōli *n.*

Traditional Gujarati artwork involving the making of designs usually on a floor with coloured powder or small lentils, beads, etc. The design is made at the entrance to a Hindu home or hall for important religious or social functions. [Gu *raṅgōḷī* from *raṅg* 'colour' and *oli* 'line design']

Whenever a lentil rangoli or pattern is created, red lentils feature prominently because of their vibrancy and ability to offset the other yellow, brown or black ones. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 160

rās-name/rāsi *n.*

The name of a child, the first syllable of which is given by a priest, depending upon the prevailing constellation at birth.

■ Among Gujaratis this is the child's first name; among other North Indians this is kept secret, as a private name. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. See also **home-name, calling name, school-name**. [Gu, Hn *rāsi* 'constellation']

rasso/rassam *n.*

Strong and tangy soup, made with hot medicinal spices, usually served to people suffering from colds.

■ The main ingredients are mustard seeds, **curry leaves** (q.v.), onion, red chillies, tamarind, garlic, tomatoes, black pepper and **jeera** (q.v.). Rassam is a speciality of Tamil and Telugu households. When sieved it is referred to on restaurant menus as **South Indian Clear Soup**. In British India **rasso** was made more famous by its close equivalent, **mulligatawny**, an anglicisation of Tamil *molaku* ‘pepper, chilli’ plus *tanni* ‘water’ (i.e. pepper water). Also known as **King-soup** (q.v.) in SAIE. Also spelt **russum**, **rasam**. See **R.S.V.P.** [Hn *rasa* ‘juice, gravy’, Ta, Te *rasam*]

Madrasi Rasam – a South Indian favourite that is usually served hot with main meals and makes an excellent appetizer. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 141

Russum may be sieved before serving, in which event a very thin and clear consommé will result. However, since it is a lovely soup for people recovering from colds, it is advised that the spices be retained when serving. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 56

Chicken Mulligatawni Anglo-Indian Style: A large number of Anglo-Indians live in Cochin and they originally adopted and adapted the traditional ‘rasam’ (pepper water), a South Indian favourite, into this meat based soup. – R Fernandez, *Cooking of Southern India*, 34

Ratnagiri *n.*

District in the Konkan area of Maharashtra, around 300 km south of Bombay.

■ A large proportion of Cape Town’s Indian population comes from Ratnagiri and neighbouring districts. See **Kokani**.

raw *adj.*

Uncouth, wild, rude. Possibly SAE as well. [A slightly different nuance from Std Eng *raw* ‘inexperienced’]

- *He’s so raw.*
- *Don’t act raw.*

rāwan/rāvan *n. Slang**

A Black person. Usually derogatory in intent, unlike **coon ou** and **pekkie-ou** (q.v.) See **Ramayān**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te *rāvan*, Bhoj *rāwan* ‘villain in the Hindu epic Ramayan’]

reckon *v. Slang**

To say, to speak. Also SAE slang. [Based on Eng *reckon* ‘to conclude after calculation, to be of the confident opinion’]

‘Now, go and get from here,’ the aunty reckoned. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

red-beans *n.* – see **sugar-beans****rēsham** *adj.*

Silky, of silk. Rare. [Gu, Hn, Ur *resham*]

- *Resham sari; Resham silk sari.*

review *adj.* ['ri:vju:]

Rear-view. Usually short for *rear-view mirror*. See also **stering**.

- *This review mirror's got a slight crack.*

right *exclam.*

Good-bye. Once the usual way of taking leave of someone. See **okay**, **namasté**.

- *Right, mā, I'm going.*

ring *v. Informal*

To outplay an opponent or team at sport, usually soccer; to run rings around an opponent or opponents, to dribble skilfully past a defender at soccer. Past tense: **ringed**. See also **to give someone carrots/bhajias/ jalēbis**. [Eng *to run rings round someone*]

- *That guy ringed me for the whole game, but I chowed him in the end.*

ripe *adj.*

Used to describe a sore containing pus and ready to burst.

- Like a ripe fruit the skin turns unusually reddish. [Possibly calqued on Bhoj *pakkal ghāū* 'a ripe sore']

Riverside *n.*

A long, dramatic performance of tales from scriptures in Hindi, mingled with scenes of local comedy. See also **six-foot dance**, **nachaniya dance**, **tiger dancing**. [From *Riverside Sanathan Dancing Company*, a dramatic group originating from the old Riverside area in Durban, once home to a large North Indian community]

rogan josh *n.*

Meat dish of pieces of mutton cooked in ghee as a curry, with rich brown gravy.

- This is a new term in SA occurring only with the new globalised Indian restaurants of the 1990s. The preparation is not very different from traditional mutton curry of SA, which is more influenced by Madras cooking. [Hn, Ur *rōgan* 'butter oil', *jos* 'pleasure, excitement', or perhaps *gošt* 'meat', all from Persian, possibly via Kashmiri or Panjabi].

Rogan Gosh originated in Kashmir and is one of the most popular lamb dishes served in restaurants. This is my South African version of the dish and it has been accepted very well in the community. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 81

rogue *n.*

Robber, burglar, thief, cheat who steals. Although these meanings are possible in general English, the usual English meaning of 'rascal, scamp, someone unscrupulous and dishonest but likeable' is not generally used in SAIE. [Eng *rogue*, with slight semantic shift]

- *He's a bloody rogue, that fellow.*
- *Ey, rogues are bad, hey!*

fowl rogue *n. Rural*

A petty thief who steals hens from farmyards at night for sale or for his own kitchen. Now rare. See **fowl**.

rooker *n.* ['rʊkɛ] *Slang***

One who smokes dagga. Hence **dagga-rooker**. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *roker* 'smoker']

rooti *n.* ['ru:ti:] *Regional*

Cape Town term for **rōti** (q.v.) Cf. Anglo-Indian form of c19, as in *rooty gong* 'long service medal'. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 203. [Probably Bengali *rūtī*]

Roshni *n.*

Indian township in Vereeniging, Gauteng, established in the 1960s as part of the Group Areas planning under apartheid. [Hn *rośnī* 'light, illumination']

rōt *n.*

Thick, circular, fried sweet-bread prepared on religious occasions by Hindus as **parsādh/prasādh** (q.v.). Also spelt **roht**. [Hn, SA *Te roṭ*]

Rōht is deep fried holy biscuit – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 232

rōti *n.*

Flat, circular, unleavened Indian bread, made on a hot griddle (see **thāwa**). Now widely known in SAE. Same as *chapāti*, a term not used in SAIE, however. Also Trinidad English, British army slang, and other varieties. See also **naan**, **pūri**, **rooti**, **rōtla**, **rōtli**. [Hn, Ur *roṭī*, *Te roṭṭe*]

Rōtis are flat, unleavened Indian bread that are prepared almost daily in an Indian home; rōtis are also known as chappati. To eat rōti, you break off a piece and wrap it around a little curry or tarkhari. Rōtis are served with most Indian dishes. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 42

On the other half of the table she was busy rolling out another roti, meanwhile checking and turning the one that was half done on the grilling plate. This way she replenished his roti plate with as many hot rotis as his massive appetite required. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 288

'Your wife will be well in a few days,' Hajji Musa assured the anxious man. 'And you will have your daily roti again ...' – A Essop *Hajji Musa and the Hindu Firewalker*, 42

He set off for the hut where he'd been offered a bed. Some water, a curry, maybe a *roti* or two, a nice cup of tea and he'd be restored, no doubt. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 34

rōti balls *n.*

Ready-made balls of dough suitable for making **rōti**. Rare.

rōti gatsby *n.* *Regional*

A **gatsby** (q.v.) with a large **rōti** wrap rather than French bread or a large roll.

The biggest rōti in the world – advert for Rōti Gatsby, Cape Town, 2009

rōti-ou *n.* *Slang**

A male of North Indian origin in whose household **rōti** (q.v.) is traditionally a favoured preparation. Jocular or mildly derogatory in connection with earlier rivalry between North and South Indians in KZN. Same as **bread-ou**. See also **banya**, **Calcuttia-ou**, **porridge-ou**, **slum-ou**, **sulla**. [Hn, Ur *roti* plus Afrik *ou* 'fellow']

In our boyhood days of the 1950s and '60s in our banter and rivalry as boys, especially in the heat of a soccer game when there was a dispute, jocular terms such as *gudda-gudda thani* (to refer to Tamils) and *roti* (to denote the Hindi speakers) flew fast and thick. – Bavanathan Pillay, Durban 2010

rōṭi-roll *n.*

A sandwich made of curry, placed on a **rōṭi**, which is then rolled up. Now known internationally as a *wrap*. Same as Cape Malay *salomi*. Known in Bhojpuri as *lapet ke roṭī*.

round rōṭi *n. Jocular*

Term for a young girl who has taken fully to domestic duties upon marriage, involving cooking, making of rotis and perhaps putting on weight herself.

As the historic year wound down, I acknowledged that I had become a bona fide Round Roti; I had indisputably morphed into the type of female I had derided as a teenager. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 62

rōṭla *n.*

Thick **rōṭi** (q.v.) made with mealie meal, millet flour (Gu *bājrā*) or sorghum flour (Gu *juwār*). Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *roṭlo*]

See also mealie meal casserole where rotla dough is placed over curry and then baked in oven. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 290

rōṭli *n.*

Same as **rōṭi** (q.v.), a smaller version of a **rōṭla** (q.v.) Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *roṭlī*]

round *n.*

A helping of food. Thus **first round** 'first helping', **second round** 'seconds, second helping'. Possibly other varieties. [Generalisation of Std Eng *a round (of drinks)*]

R.S.V.P. *Jocular*

Traditionally written on bottom left corner of wedding invitations, but seldom adhered to by invitees. In the 1950s the English abbreviation was little known, and urban legend grew that it stood for **R**asso, **S**ādho, **V**āri, **P**oda (Tamil for 'rasso, rice, take up in quantity, put'), implying that rice and **rasso** (q.v.) would be served plentifully. This was later anglicised and adapted to 'Rice served very plentifully' or 'Rice served very politely'.

running-stomach *n.*

Diarrhoea. Also SABE and SA English. [A hyper-elegant version of *runny-tummy*]

- *I had such a running-stomach this morning.*

ry/ray *n. ['rei] Slang**

A ride. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *ry* 'a ride']

- *Lucky you gave me a ry, or else I would have had to walk in the dark.*



Sabha/Mahā-Sabha *n.*

Cultural association, usually drawing upon specific subgroups of Indians according to religion or regions of origin (e.g. *Andhra Maha Sabha*, ‘Telegu Cultural Association’; *Hindu Maha Sabha* ‘Great Hindu Association’). See also **Mandal**, **Samaj**, **Sangh**. [Skt *mahā* ‘great’, Gu, Hn, Te *sabhā* ‘association’, Ta *sabei*]

sādu-bhai/sādu-bai *n.*

The husband of one’s wife’s sister; brother-in-law. Older speakers. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. Same as **sagalapadi**. Known in IE as *co-brother*. See **bhai**. [Gu, Hn *sāṛhu* ‘wife’s sister’s husband’, *bhāt* ‘brother’]

sagalapadi *n.* [ˈsʌgələpˈɑdi]

The husband of one’s wife’s sister; brother-in-law. Older speakers. Mainly Tamil homes. Same as **sādu-bhai**. Known in IE as *co-brother*. [Ta *sakalāpati*]

Sai Bāba *n.*

Religious leader based in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, with a large following internationally and in SA where there are many **Sai devotees**. Full name and title: *Shri Satya Sai Baba*. [Based on the name of a c19 saint, Sai Baba of Shirdi, from *bābā* a title, literally ‘father’]

The first Sai Baba group was apparently established in Durban in 1969. The groups hold weekly devotional services and meditation classes, organise children’s and youth groups, and engage in service to the community. The devotees place particular emphasis on the miraculous healings and manifestations performed by Sai Baba. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 77

saibāla *n.*

A young boy who accompanies a groom or bride at a Hindu wedding ceremony.

■ The *saibāla* plays a role in pouring out the **lāwa** (popcorn) in one of the wedding rituals. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *sahabālā* from *sah-* ‘together with’ plus *bālā* ‘child, boy’]

saigo *n.* [ˈsɑrgo] or [ˈsɑːgou]

Sago, sago pudding. Same as *sago*, edible starch of palm, dried to produce flour or processed into a granular form.

■ In SAIE *saigo* occurs as a dessert made of starch and milk. Similar to *tapioca*. Sago is obtained from palms that grow in freshwater swamps in SE Asia and India. Known in India as *sabudana*. In COD as *sago*. See **payasam**. [Eng *sago* from c16 Mal *sagu*]

Sago is made from the viscous sap of a tall shady tree. The tree thrives in hot, dry conditions. As with rubber trees, a groove is cut in the trunk of the sago palm at intervals and the sap which oozes out is collected. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 216

saitān/seitān/shaitān *n.*

The devil, a demon, a devilish person. May be used to chastise a naughty child. Older speakers. Same source as English *Satan*. [Hn, Ur *shaitān*, Gu *shetān*, Ta *sāttān*, ultimately from Ar *al-Shaytan*]

‘And do you know why that wall will always grow back each night? Because the shaitaan does not have faith in God ...’ – A Hassim, *Lotus People*, 467

Saivite [ˈsarvart]

1. *n.* A follower of Lord **Shiva** (q.v.). Hence **Saivism** ‘the system of belief surrounding Shiva’. See also **sangam wedding**.

2. *adj.* pertaining to Shiva.

... South Indian temples are usually broadly Shaivite in orientation, and have traditionally catered for the Tamil and Telugu communities. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 21

sake of *conj.* [ˈsækɒf] *Basilectal*

For the sake of, on account of, because of.

- *Sake of you I got in trouble.*

sāla *n.*

Brother-in-law, specifically a man’s wife’s brother. More usually a term of abuse by one male for another, especially someone who is not a relative. May occasionally be used as a generic swear word by females.

■ The insult among males pertains to the inference that the sister of the person being insulted is sexually available to the speaker. Intonation and attitude make it clear which sense is intended. See also the truncated insult **sister: your sister**. [Hn, Ur *sālā* ‘brother-in-law, son-of-a-bitch’]

‘How? How? Sala! You always knew how ...’ – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 47

salām/salaam *exclam.*

Traditional Muslim greetings exchanged upon meeting or leave-taking, in full *as-salaamu-alaykum*, ‘peace be upon you’. The traditional reply is *Walai kum, ussalam*, ‘upon you, be peace’. Hence **to make salām, to offer one’s salāms**. [Abbrev. of Ur *as-salamu-’alaikum*, ultimately from Ar *al-salamu-’alaykum*]

I grinned and made salaam. Startled by my good cheer, she grinned back. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 56

salām bābu *n.*

A praying mantis, so called on account of the gesture of its long forelegs which are raised when at rest.

■ The term *mantis*, from Greek for ‘prophet’, itself captures this resemblance to one in prayer. [Ur *salām* ‘greetings’ plus *bābū* ‘Lord, sir, gentleman’]

salāth *n.*

Islamic prayers. Same as **namāz**.

■ These are the five prayers of the day: a morning prayer, midday prayer, afternoon prayer, evening or sunset prayer and night prayer (see **Maghreb**). [Ur *salāt* from Ar *ṣalah*, pl. *ṣalawāt*]

Salāt ... [is] the prayer and its accompanying ritual performed by the practising Muslim five times a day. This should not take place at the time of the actual rising or setting of the sun. Although the Qūr'an (q.v.) mentions prayer many times, the obligation to pray five times per day derives from hadith (q.v.) rather than the Qūr'an. The Prayer Ritual is one of the five arkān (q.v.) or pillars of Islam. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Salāth facilities will be available during the lunch break of today's tournament. – announcement at cricket match, Rylands, Cape Town February 2010

sāli *n.*

Sister-in-law, specifically a man's wife's sister. Can be used as a term of abuse by one female for another, especially one who is not a relative. See **sāla**. [Hu, Ur *sālī* 'sister-in-law']

salwār-kameez *n.*

Indian dress consisting of loose cotton trousers and shirt worn over it. The salwaar is the loose trousers tied with a drawstring and contoured to the leg like a pantaloon. The kameez is the shirt-like upper garment, worn outside the salwaar, with short slits at the bottom end of each side. Now usually worn by females, especially young women, in colourful and fashionable styles. However, there are shalwaar sets for men too, made of **kurta** (q.v.) plus baggy pants. More commonly known in SA as punjabi (q.v.).

■ Originally, the Muslim costume worn by the male or female artisan and similar classes of pre-independence Punjab (Hankin: 183).

Spellings: **shalwaar kameez**, **salwaar kamiz**, **sholwar kamiz**, etc. [Hn, Ur *shalwār* 'loose trousers' plus *kamīz* 'shirt']

Come in and view our exciting new classic collection of the most alluring and striking Ladies' and Girls' Salwaar Kameez sets. – fashion house advert, Durban July 2000

Ramu ... responded to the summons, followed closely by the lean and rangy Pathan who was attired in the everyday dress of his people: long shirt, short waistcoat and the loose fitting *shalwar*. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 3

samagri *n.* ['SAMʌgri:]

Mixture of pieces of dried bark (usually sandalwood) with flowers and spices poured as scented offerings into a fire, together with **ghee** (q.v.) during Hindu prayers. See **havan**. [Gu, Te *sāmagrī*, Hn *sāmaggrī*, Ta *sāmāngal*]

Fire offerings (of samagree, grains, ghee, petals) can form part of puja. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 24

samāj *n.*

Association, society, religious or cultural body, assembly or congregation. Hence *Arya Samaj*, 'Reform Hindu Association' (literally 'Society of noble

people'), *Gujarati Samaj* 'Gujarati Association', etc. See **sabha**, **sangh**. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu, Hn *samāj*, Te *samājam* based on *sam* 'together' and *āj* 'to drive']

samandhi *n.* [sʌ'mʌnɖi]

Male or female parent of one's son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Known in IE as *co-parents*. See **samdhi**, **samdhīn**. [Ta, Te *samandi*, Gu *sambandhī* 'related persons' from *sam* 'together', *bandh* 'ties']

When she had finished her song, she leaned over, pressed some vibuthi (white ash) from the prayer tray, and smeared this on the boy's forehead and kissed him on his head, and between his brows, and on each cheek and then, looking at all her friends and at her sambhandi, the in-laws of her daughter, and their relatives, shyly said 'My name I give fo-rim is Ananadan!' – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 158

sambal *n.* – see **sambār**

sambār/sambhār *n.*

A highly seasoned sauce made of lentils, vegetables, spices and tamarind juice, eaten with **idli** and **dosa** (q.v.).

■ In SAIE and SAE *sambal* ['sæmbəl] is the term for a light salad made of finely chopped onion, tomato and **dhania** (q.v.), with some people adding finely chopped green chilli. This appears to be based on Cape Malay usage. *Sambhār* is the Indian term, possibly from the same source, for the spicy dhal-based condiment. [c20 Ta *sambhar*; c19 Malay *sambal*]

And he took me back to that 1 000 Lights restaurant where we had idli, dosai, sambar and coffee. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 138

The modern Cape Malay sambal is a cool salad eaten with curry; but a strong condiment which included red pepper used to be known as a *sambal*. – L Green *Old Men Say*, 131

By the time it was over Mandela had been sworn in. I'd watched the historic event while chopping coriander for sambals. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 62

samdhi *n.*

Male to whose son or daughter one's own son or daughter is married. Older speakers. See **samdhin**, **samandhi**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *samdhī*]

samdhīn *n.*

Female to whose son or daughter one's own son or daughter is married; wife of one's **samdhi** (q.v.). See **samandi**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *samdhīn*]

same place *adv.* *Slang***

'There'. Said as a stalling or rhetorical response to an enquiry about location, when one does not wish to give the location, or if it is obvious.

- A: *Where do you stay?* B: *Same place!*

same time *adv.*

At once, immediately, without delay, then and there. See **one-time, one-shot**.

- *Same time she opened the present!* (said with heavy stress on the opening phrase).

Sāmi *n.*

1. God.

2. Prayers. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. See **Sammy**. [Ta, Te *cāmi*]

You are lecturing to me, huh? ... Where's my bloody belt? Get in the Sami room now! – R Govender *At the Edge*, 92

Sammy *n. Offensive*

Term used by some Whites for an Indian male, particularly a fruit or vegetable hawker. Now rare.

■ Not used in SAIE, except ironically, as in title of play *Sammy Joins the Circus*, concerning Indian politicians in the former tricameral parliament. See **coolie, Indian, Mary, Sāmi**. [Probably from Ta *cāmi* 'god', frequently occurring in names like *Ramsamy, Narainsamy, Munsamy*. Possibly related to Br Eng army slang *Sammy* 'a Hindu-idol' from Hn *swāmi*, Ta *cāmi*]

... all Indians were called 'coolies' or 'samis'. 'Sami' is a Tamil suffix occurring after many Tamil names, and it is nothing else than Sanskrit *Swami*, meaning a master. Whenever, therefore, an Indian resented being addressed as a 'sami' and had enough wit in him, he would try to return the compliment in this wise: 'You may call me *sami*, but you forget that *sami* means a master. I am not your master!' – MK Gandhi *Autobiography*, 100

samoosa *n.* [sɑ'mu:sɑ]

Small, crispy triangular pie, containing minced meat or vegetables (usually potato, peas or soya) and fried in oil. Widely used in SAE.

Spellings: **samosa, samusa**. Usually known in India as *samōsa*. See **mithai-samoosa, paḍ**. [Hn, Ur *samosa*]

Samoosas are without doubt the most popular Indian savoury in the Western world. Samoosa-making is an art, demanding paper thin pur or pastry. The thinnest pastry reaches perfection as it fries into a crispy, many layered covering for the mouth-watering mince filling. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 27

As for samoosas, which were called *Koelie drie hoekies* [Coolie three-corners] these could persuade even the traffic cop or licensing officer to overlook certain trespasses! Our *samoosa diplomacy* always worked wonders with recalcitrant officials. – Z Mayat *Behind Shop Counters*, 188

He hadn't even looked one of them up for a tea and a samoosa. – I Coovadia *The Wedding*, 111

samoosa pur *n.* – see **paḍ**

Sanāthan *n.*

Adherents to one orthodox form of Hinduism, among North Indians. The literal meaning of the term in Hindi is ‘eternal’. See **Vedic**. [Hn *sanātan* from Skt *sanātan* ‘eternal’]

Some of the most interesting features of Sanāthanist temples include the images (murtis) and sculptures of the various divine manifestations. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 20

Sanāthan dharam *n.*

The traditionalist, Sanathan sect of Hinduism among North Hindus. See **dharmā**. [Hn *sanātan* plus *dharam* ‘religion, righteousness’]

Sanāthan wedding *n.*

Hindu wedding conforming to traditionalist North Indian Sanāthan ritual. See **sangam wedding**.

sanchi *n.*

A pouch in which older women carry money, **betel-nuts** (q.v.) and other items. Now rare. Same as **paiye**. [Te *sanci*]

sangh/sangam *n.*

Association, cultural or religious body, society, union (e.g. *Sathie Sanmarka Sangam* ‘Society for Righteousness through Shakti’; *Hindi Shiksha Sangh* ‘Hindi-teaching Association’). See **sabha**, **samāj**. [Gu, Hn *saṅgh* ‘society, association’, Hn, Ta, Te *saṅgam* ‘union, club, society’]

A sangam [is] a club or society, particularly in the south. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 184

The Saiva Sithantha Sangam is another movement to have been started in Southern Africa and which has been ... influential in bringing about reforms. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 80

The Hindi Shiksha Sangh of South Africa held its second Ratna Awards, after its biennial general meeting in which elections were held, at the Sangh’s headquarters in Oak Avenue, Kharwastan, recently. – *Post* 7 April 2010

sangam wedding *n.*

Wedding performed by Tamil groups following the reformist principles espoused by the *Saiva Sithāndha Sangam*, a major religious group of **Saivites** (q.v.).

sangati *n.*

A thick semi-solid porridge made with mealie meal, gruel. Sometimes eaten with curry. Mainly Telugu homes. Same as **kalli**. [Te *sangati*]

sānji *n.*

One of the wedding ceremonies in Gujarati custom, performed on the evening before the final wedding ceremony, involving songs and the **garba** (q.v.) dance. At this time the bride is first decorated with henna paste or **mendhi** (q.v.). See also **hardhi**, **pīthi**, **thilak**. [Gu *sānji* ‘evening wedding ceremony’, based on *sānj* ‘evening’]

sānsi *n.*

Metal tongs used in the kitchen to grip heated pots and pans. Same as **chimta**. [Gu *sāṅsī*]

sanyāsi *n.*

An ascetic, one who has renounced the world. [Hn *sanyāsī*]

A sannyasi (male) and sannyasini (female) [is] one who has cast off home and worldly ties, and who single-mindedly cultivates God-consciousness. – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 104

sapāt *n.* (sg. or pl.)

Flat Indian sandals. Also known internationally via Ptg *sapāt*, itself from Hn. See also **champal**. [Hn, Ur *sapāt* 'flat, level, smooth']

sarang *n.* *Slang**

One in authority, gang-leader, a 'big shot', a 'big wig'.

■ First recorded in English in 1643, as *sarang*, an Anglo-Indian term for 'native boatman or head of a lascar crew'. – Rao, *Indian Words in English*. Also c19 nautical slang and c20 general slang **serag**, **serang**, **head-serag** 'an overseer, a big-wig'. – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng.* [Eng *serang* from Benagali Eng colloq. and nautical slang (1864), later general slang c19, from Persian **sarhang** 'an overseer, a commander']

'That's them!' Nits cut in hoarsely. 'In front of Smuggies. The guy in the blue jeans is the sarang.' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 297

sarangi *n.*

A stringed musical instrument played with a bow, an Indian violin. In *COD*. See **harmonium**, **thabla**. [Hn *sāraṅgī*]

A sarangi [is] a box-shaped, violin type instrument, with some times as many as forty strings, of which, perhaps not more than three are touched by the bow – the others vibrate in sympathy. Usually played as an accompaniment to a vocalist or a kathak dancer. The sarangi is particularly suited to slow time and the mournful music associated with death. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 186

Saraswathi pūja *n.*

Prayer honouring Saraswathi, the Hindu goddess of the arts and learning. Also spelt and pronounced **Sarasvathi**. See **pūja**. [Gu, Hn *pūjā*, Ta *pucai* 'prayer' plus *Sarasvati* literally 'flowing one']

Saraswathi is the queen of speech, and the Patron Saint of the arts and learning. She is worshipped for her purity which makes speech and learning and all the performing arts possible. She knows music as is evidenced by the musical instruments she plays. One prays to her for spiritual solace ... Sarasvathi Puja is the day specially reserved for worshipping her. – T Naidoo *Hindu Way*, 55

Sarasvatī is originally the name of an ancient river of north-west India personified as a goddess of the same name ... Sarasvati is also popular among Buddhists and Jains. She is the tutelary deity of writers, artists and poets, and embodies the spirit of all fine arts. – M Stutley *Hindu Iconography*, 125–6

Behind the lamp there was a portrait of the goddess Luxmi ... There was another one of Sarasvathi. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 173

sari *n.*

A long wrapping garment worn by Indian women, especially but not exclusively by Hindus. One end is wrapped several times around the waist, the other end thrown over the shoulder and sometimes over the head as a veil. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. Also spelt **saree**, **sarrie**.

■ A white sari is the traditional colour worn by widows. Bright saris, often red, are favoured for auspicious occasions like weddings. See **achra**, **Banaras sari**, **chēdo**, **chikkan work**, **chōli**, **fall**, **Kanjivaram sari**, **lahanga**, **mundāni**, **pālav**, **pāvade**, **sari-queen**, **sari-skirt**. [Hn *sārī*]

The old woman nodded and as she watched her go back in again, she thought how good and obedient a daughter-in-law she had been. She always wore a sari and her hair was still long and worn in a simple plait. – J Reddy *Spirit of Two Worlds*, 25

Christian weddings were held in the church and the reception was at the nearest hall. The brides wore white sarries, later changed to wedding gowns. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 75

There were many ... competitions: sack race, three legged race ... sarrie race for the women. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 34

sari-queen *n.*

The winner of a beauty contest in which participants wear saris. Hence **Sari-queen Contest**.

■ Such contests have been held since the 1960s in SA, and have no analogue in India. Sari-Queen contests have recently been held in Malaysia. [Analogy of *beauty-queen*]

Scores of young South African women are in the race to be the first provincial Sari Queen, in a contest organised by a local cultural organisation in the town of Springs, about 50 km east of Johannesburg. – F Hassen *Indo-Asian News Service* 20 August 2001

sari-skirt *n.*

Long skirt worn under a **sari**. See **ghagri**, **lahanga**, **pāvade**.

sarōd *n.*

A lute, a sitar-like solo stringed instrument played with a plectrum. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn, Ur *sarod*]

sarso *n.*

Mustard (*Brassica campestris*), whose leaves are eaten as **herbs** (q.v.) and whose seeds are used as a spice in braising curries, similar to oilseed rape. Older speakers.

■ The seeds may be crushed to produce mustard oil, used in cooking and as an application to the body in an **oil bath** (q.v.). Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. Same as **rai**. [Hn, Ur *sarsō*]

Known to Victorian Britain as colza oil, a fuel for lamps. The leaves of the plant are eaten as spinach [*sarsō ke bhājī*]. English mustard is the cleaned, dried and powdered seed, particularly of the variety known as white

mustard, with wheat flour added to absorb the oil, also sometimes turmeric (see *hardhi*) for the same purpose and to give colour. India has the largest area under mustard in the world, but with other spicy condiments available, table mustard has no customary use. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 186–7

sarvodaya *n.*

Universal upliftment of the poor and underclasses as espoused by Gandhi. Also the name of Gandhi's home in Phoenix settlement, Durban. See also **Satyagraha**. [Coined from Skt *sarvo* 'for all', *dāyā* 'compassion, uplift']

... the cottage in which Mahatma Gandhi lived ... was rebuilt in its original form and named Sarvodaya (welfare of all), and was opened by Pandit Kunzru in February 1950 ... – Golden Jubilee Phoenix Settlement, *Brochure* 1954

sassy *n. Slang**

Sixpence, the coin in the old British currency equivalent to five cents. The old sixpence was a silver coin larger than a *tickey* (old SAE term for the silver coin worth three pence). Probably not restricted to SAIE. [Etymology unknown, probably based on *sixpence*.]

Sam nodded, not sure what was expected of him.

'Gimme a sassy, scarpie, shine up!' he snarled. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 174

Sastri College *n.*

First high school (and teacher training centre) built specifically for Indians in SA.

■ Built as a boys' school in Warwick Avenue, Durban in 1929. Named after the founder of the scheme for such a college, Sir Srinivasa Sastri, first Indian agent-general to South Africa. Now a technical school. See **Cape Town Agreement**.

Sastri College was ready in ten months' time and was opened by His Excellency, the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, on the afternoon of Monday, October 14th, 1929. – *Souvenir Programme* 7 December 1963

sathima *exclam.*

An oath equivalent to 'upon my word', 'in truth', etc. See **kassam**, **oath**, **true's God**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. Also spelt **Sathiema**. [Ta, Te *satyam/catyam* 'truth' plus *mā* 'mother' or possibly based on the goddess *Shakti* plus *mā*]

'Why did he arrest you? You weren't doing anything ... in the car were you?'

'No Sathiema, Uncle ... I never did nothing.' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 146

'I was there only for a couple minutes, sathima!' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.)

'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

sathsang *n.*

Group recitals of Hindu prayers and devotional songs; a congregation gathered to worship and sing **bhajans** (q.v.). Also spelt **satsang**. [Gu, Hn *satsaṅg*, from *sat* 'honour, virtue, faith', *saṅgh* 'meeting, association']

Satyagraha *n. Historical*

Non-violent struggle, soul-force, passive resistance as advocated by Gandhi. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. [Coined by Gandhi in 1906 in Durban from Skt *satya* 'true, honest', *āgraha* 'firmness, obstinacy']

As the struggle advanced, the phrase 'passive resistance' gave rise to confusion and it appeared shameful to permit this great struggle to be known only by an English name ... A small prize was therefore announced in Indian Opinion to be awarded to the reader who invented the best designation for our struggle. Shri Maganlal Gandhi was one of the competitors and he suggested the word 'Sadagraha', meaning 'firmness in a good cause'. I liked the word, but it did not fully represent the whole idea I wished it to connote. I therefore corrected it to 'Satyagraha'. Truth (*satya*) implies love, and firmness (*agraha*) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. – MK Gandhi *Satyagraha in SA*, 109

Satyagrahi *n. Historical*

An agent of **Satyagraha**, one who embarks upon non-violent political struggle. Not exclusively SAIE. [Coined by Gandhi in Durban from Skt *satyagraha*, plus agentive suffix *-i*]

The women Satyagrahis entered Natal without permits at several points but were not arrested. Finally, under Gandhiji's instructions they approached coal-miners and tried to persuade them to go on strike until the £3 levy was withdrawn. – P Gandhi *Childhood with Gandhiji*, 141

sauf *n.* ['soʊf]/['so:mph]

Fennel seeds (*Foeniculum vulgare*), or aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*). An ingredient in various preparations including **biryāni**, **variāli** and **chevda** (q.v.)

Spellings: **saumph**, **saunf**, **saumf**, **somph**, **soomph**, where 'm' denotes a nasalisation of the vowel. See also **barishap**. [Hn, Ur *sāūph/sāūf*]

In India both fennel and aniseed are called *saunf* because of their similarity of appearance and flavour. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 68

It is customary in an Indian home to hand a small plate of the roasted seeds of soomph round after meals. They are used as a digestive and as a breath sweetener. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 14

sauf sweet *n.*

Health sweet containing **sauf**.

scheme *v. Slang**

To say, reckon, think, consider.

I scheme Mimla Mowsie cooks better than this. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

schemes *n.*

A housing scheme, aimed at lower income groups.

■ These usually comprise small detached or semi-detached houses, with one or two storeys. See **ownership house**, **scheming-house**.

• *He lives in the schemes.*

scheming-house *n. Basilectal*

A home in a housing scheme (pertaining to lower income groups). See **schemes**.

There was this politician in the 1980s House of Delegates who always used to talk about scheming-houses, instead of housing schemes. – Durban resident, 1986

school-name *n.*

The name a youngster is known by at school and in public, based on the official name on his birth certificate. Also SABE. See **calling-name**, **house-name**, **rās-name**.

seen *v. Basilectal*

Equivalent to *saw*. Similarly *been*, *done*.

- *I never seen such a thing before.*

sēko *v.*

To bake dough on a **thava** (q.v.) in the making of **rōti** (q.v.). Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *sēknā*, Gu *sekna*]

- *If you roll the dough, I'll sēko the rōti and we can finish quickly.*

sēm *n.*

A type of flat kidney-shaped bean (*Dolichos lablab*) cooked when mature, or cooked with its pod while still immature. Same as **vālor**. Similar to **mochka**, **papadi**. Mainly Hindi, Urdu homes. [Hn, Ur *sem*]

sendhūr/sindhūr *n.*

Vermilion used to make a dot on a woman's forehead, or a line down the parting of a woman's hair, closer to the forehead. The vermilion signifies wedded status, as opposed to widowhood. Also spelt **sindoore**. See also **kunkum**, **kongu**. [Hn *sindūr*, literally 'the colour vermillion']

The red line of powder on the first few inches of the parting of a Hindu woman's hair [is] almost universal in eastern India but rarely seen in the south, proclaiming her married status: the first application, the *sindoordan*, by the bridegroom, sometimes immediately follows the wedding ceremony. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 199

He can tell Daisy to put *senthur* too, but if no *thali* then my father and mother in Kanchipuram discrease for them too. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 151

serious *adj. Slang**

Outstanding, wonderful, attractive. Also SAE slang. Now rare.

- *She's a serious cherry, hey.*

sēv *n.*

Thin, twisted crisps, or savoury crispy noodles, made of spiced gram flour fried in oil. See also **gāṭhia**.

Spellings: **serv**, **serve**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *sev*, Bhoj *seo*]

These savoury noodles are ideal for children's parties or as cocktail snacks. You will need a sev machine to make them. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 30

Place dough in machine and turn handle anti-clockwise directly over hot oil. Turn sev over and fry until pale mustard in colour and crisp. Drain on absorbent paper. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 22

seva/sevei *n.*

Service, worship, attendance – used in the context of public service or domestically of one spouse's duties to the other. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Ur *sevā*, Te *sevei*]

- *Hindu Seva Samāj* 'Hindu Service Association'

seven-eight-six *Numeral*

A sacred number in Islam, seven hundred and eighty-six being the sum of the values assigned in Islamic numerology to the letters that constitute the **Bismillah** (q.v.) or opening words of the **Qu'rān** (q.v.): 'in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful'. The number is used as an abbreviation for the invocation itself.

■ 786 is very popular as part of a sequence in personalised car number plates, e.g. *WP 1786* or *CA 197860*, and in names like *786 Store* for a corner store. The term 786 is sometimes used jocularly or derogatorily by outsiders for 'Muslim'. See **Slam-ou**.

Shakti *n.*

Generic name for the Hindu goddess, implying her power and energy. See also **Kāli**, **Mariammen**, **Porridge Prayers**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te from Skt *śaktī*]

Shakti [is] the mother Goddess, sometimes benevolent, sometimes terrible: under such names as Ambika, Bhairavi, Bhowani, Devi, Durga, Gouri/Gauri, Mahadevi, Parvati, Sati, Shaktidevi and Uma. – N Hankin, *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 193

The word Shakti means the power or energy of women. Shakti is often believed to be personified and expressed by divine females, those alter egos of every woman, who are amply portrayed in these accounts of local Indian women. – A Diesel *Shakti*, viii

shalāt *n.* [ʃʌˈlɑ:t]

Shallot, a plant of the onion family that is widely used as a seasoning in cooking, similar to spring onion and scallion. [Eng *shallot* from French *échalotte*]

shalembu/selembu/chelembu *n.*

Musical bells, anklets which produce music as one dances. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *silampu*, Te *selembu*, *celembu*]

share *n.*

Inheritance, usually of money, sometimes property. Although this meaning is implicit in other varieties of English, in SAIE it is the usual colloquial term for an inheritance.

- *The share is still tied up with the lawyers.*

sharp/sharpshoot *Slang/informal**

1. *adj.* Fast, prompt.
 - *He did it sharp/sharpshoot.*
2. *exclam.* Fine, wonderful, 'cool'. Always used as a response indicating assent or approval. Used from the 1960s and a possible source of current Tsotsitaal *sharp*. The British English slang sense of 'good at something, expert' is also used in SAIE. [Based on Eng *sharp* 'alert, expert at']
 - *A: I'll drop you at the corner. B: Sharp/sharpshoot.*

sheep-head *n.*

Head of a lamb or sheep, cut into small pieces and cooked as a curry.

■ Formerly favoured as a cheap source of meat. See also **bōthi**. [Eng *head of sheep*]

shell *adj. Informal*

Deranged, out of one's mind, mad, idiotic.

■ The standard meanings of *shell-shocked* relate to battle fatigue and exhaustion after a stressful experience. [Abbrev. of *shell-shocked*]

- *Poor thing, she's gone a bit shell after her child died.*

shell-shock *n.*

1. One who is deranged, out of one's mind, mad, silly. *Basilectal*.

- *Ignore her, she's a shell-shock.*

2. The condition of being deranged.

■ Similar to the standard meanings of the term, concerning a psychiatric disorder caused by exposure to warfare, extended metaphorically to a condition of being stressed or disturbed. The war meaning is rare in SAIE.

- *A: What's wrong with him? B: Shell-shock!*

shenai/shanai *n.*

Wind instrument of the oboe family; an Indian clarinet.

■ Recorded *shenai* music is played at weddings before the nuptial ceremonies and at open-air ceremonial processions. [Hn, Ur *shahnāī* from Persian]

sherwāni *n.*

Indian-styled men's suit made of pants and a long, tight-fitting coat with high, stand-up collar. More elaborate and fashionable than the **Nehru suit** (q.v.) [Hn, Ur *śerwānī*]

Karishma wore a red and gold beaded bridal gown for the Hindu ceremony, while the groom was decked in a beige and red sherwani. – *Post* 7 April 2010

shift *v.*

To move house. Does not imply informality or impermanence, unlike British English. Also IE.

- *They're shifting to their lovely new house next week.*

shifted navel *n. phr.*

A stomach disorder caused by straining of the abdominal area, usually by lifting heavy objects. Often accompanied by diarrhoea. See also **pulling veins**.

■ In the Hindu system the triangle formed between the shoulders and the navel is seen as a form and cause of equilibrium. [Folk belief, based on Hn *nārā* 'navel']

Shi'ite *n.*

A member of the *Shi'a* branch of Islam, mostly concentrated in Iran and southern Iraq, which regards Ali, the fourth caliph, as Muhammad's true successor. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*.

■ A Shi'ite presence in SA was miniscule and remains so, despite slight increases in numbers since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and post-apartheid immigration since 1994. [Ar *shi'a*]

... adherents of the Shi'a differ from the Sunnīs on a variety of matters, principal of which are the questions of succession, authority and law. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Shiva *n.*

Hindu god, one of the basic trinity with Brahma and Vishnu. He is the destroyer and recreator, appearing in many forms, including **Nataraja** (q.v.) and **Shankar**.

■ The colloquial form of the name is **Siva** (Tamil) or **Sew** (Bhojpuri), both occurring in SAIE personal names. See also **Kāli**, **Lingam**, **Saivite**. [Skt, Hn *śivā* literally 'the auspicious one']

Shiva is usually represented with three eyes, perhaps indicating the present, the past and the future, and with a crescent moon on his forehead which may indicate the measurement of time. His neck is blue from the stain of the poison he drank at the 'churning of the ocean' ... The holiest of Hindu waters, the Ganges (*ganga*) flows from his hair ... his *vahan* or vehicle is the bull, Nandi. He dwells on Mt Kailasa in the Himalayas, with Parvati, his wife, and his two sons Ganesa, the elephant-headed deity, and Karttikeya with six heads. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 217

Shivarātri *n.*

Hindu festival in honour of **Shiva** (q.v.), observed on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar month of Māgh. [Skt, Hn *śivā* plus *rātri* 'night']

shoot *v. Slang**

To tell a lie, to exaggerate. Hence **shooter** 'a liar, teller of tall tales'. See also **brom**, **thrill**. [Probably abbrev. of *to shoot one's mouth off*]

• A: *I've got a ticket to go on a sea cruise.* B: *Don't shoot!*

shop-aunty *n.* – see **aunty****shop-bread** *n.*

Bread made in a bakery, purchased at a store, as opposed to **hand-made bread**, or **rōti** (q.v.). Same as IE *double-rōti*. See **naan**.

short breath *n.*

Chronic shortness of breath, often accompanied by wheezing. May include asthma. Also Cape Coloured English. [Abbrev. from Eng *shortness of breath, to be short of breath*]

- *He suffers from short breath.*

should *aux. v.*

Sometimes denotes habitual past, equivalent to 'used to'. Possibly reinforced by analogy with *would*, as in *We would sing in the winter evenings*. [Probably from 'stu, truncated form of *used to*.]

I remember when ... my ballie should take me and Viks town for Diwali-shopping – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

shunt *v.*

To post or transfer an employee, especially a state employee, to an area far from his home. Usually used by teachers, among whom it is believed to apply to recently qualified graduates or those out of favour with their employers. [A slightly different nuance from the usual metaphor *shunt*, 'to leave a person inactive', from *shunt* 'to divert a train on to a side track']

- *They shunted him to a farm-school at Nil Desperandum estate.*

shur-ban *n.* ['ʃurbʌn] *Children's speech*

A little firecracker with damaged wick, bent and re-used to produce a hissing sound with fiery sparkle.

■ The cracker is broken into two equal halves into a V shape, and the wick removed. It is placed on the ground and relit at the wedge, causing a shower of sparks to emanate with a low hiss (onomatopoeised as *shur*). [Hn *śur* (onomatopoeic) plus *bān* 'arrow']

shut *adj. Slang**

Drunk, excessively drunk. Now rare. See **on**, **spark**, **tanned**.

- *After three drinks he was completely shut.*

side *Basilectal*

Used in compounds having as first element a noun denoting a place, often a proper name. Equivalent to a directional postposition. Similar to Hawaiian English and Creoles of Indo-Trinidadian and Indo-Guyanese speakers.

- *She stays Tongaat-side* = 'She lives near Tongaat'. *My family stays farm-side* = 'My family lives on/near a farm'.

side-part *n.*

A slice of bread made up mainly of crust. See **side-path**.

sideways *adv. to come out sideways*

To be devious, to offer devious excuses, to attempt to wriggle out of a difficult situation by smooth talk.

- *A: I can't pay you back this month because my daughter got sick and I had to pay my tax. B: Don't come out sideways!*

sight *v. Slang**

To see, to look at. Also SAE slang. [From Eng *sight* 'to get sight of, take observation of with instrument']

sight you *exclam. Slang**

A way of leave-taking, equivalent to 'good-bye', 'cheerio'. Same as **check you**. (q.v.). Also **lakker**.

Don't worry, don't worry, I'll site you by the posie! – K Govender *Women in Brown*, 291

sikhand *n.*

A rich yoghurt dessert. Also spelt **seekund**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *śrikhaṇḍ*]

A cooling dessert resembling thick cream, delicately flavoured with almonds, nutmeg and cardamom. The smooth texture is complemented by the pastry-like fried puri that are served with seekund. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 129

sincing/since seeing *conj. Basilectal*

Since; seeing that.

- *Sincing he came all the way from Puntan's Hill without food, they took pity on him.*

Singh *n.*

Surname in SA of some families of North Indian Hindi-speaking background. Originally belonging to *kshatriya* (or warrior caste, the second highest in the traditional Hindu hierarchy).

■ Although the majority of people with the surname Singh in India are of the Sikh religion, very few Sikhs were among the original indentured immigrants to Natal, making SA different from other territories, like the UK. The Indian regional surnames Sinha and Narsimha are rare in SA. It is said that not all Singhs of SA are of *kshatriya* descent, with many people adopting this surname and its status locally. The root *singh* meaning 'lion' occurs in *Singapore*, *Singhalese* and even *simba*, the African lion. [Hn, Panjabi *singh* literally 'lion']

Hindi female teacher (25) seeks Singh/Maharaj doctor in marriage (24–28 years) – matrimonial advert, *Hindu Guardian*, Durban July–August 1988

sir *n.* – see **ma'am****sirdar/sardār** *n. Historical*

An overseer, usually on a plantation. Now replaced by the Zulu/SAE term *induna*. In *COD*.

■ The Indian use of the term to refer to a Sikh male is unknown in SAIE. [Hn, Ur *sardar* 'head, leader, Sikh']

Of the few Indians who spoke English, a small number were appointed as 'sirdars' (or overseers) who acted as interpreters. – C Henning *Indentured Indian in Natal*, 39

The value of the Sirdar was that he was one of the 'indentured's own', speaking their language and networked into their lives. Sirdars were often men of higher caste, as planters attempted to use what they regarded as traditional forms of Indian hierarchy to keep workers 'in their place'. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 110

I think that the ship sirdars should, during the voyage, look better after the coolies in their charge ... – Testimony of A Wilkinson, 11 August 1885, cited in YS Meer *Documents of Indentured Labour*, 453

sīro/seero *n.*

A type of dessert, made from semolina, milk, ghee and often with almonds and raisins, eaten hot. Mainly Gujarati homes. Also spelt **sheero**. Same as **sōji**, **sujji**. [Gu *sīro*]

sissy *n.* *Slang**

1. Sister. Also SAE (slang) and BSAE (respectful term for a young woman, from Afrikaans via Xhosa). Not used as vocative in SAIE. Also spelt **sisi**. [Afrik *sussie* 'little sister']
 - *My sisi wants to go to college.*
2. An effeminate boy or man; a weakling. Also SAE slang. Also spelt *cissy* in British English. [Br Eng slang dating back to c19 *sissy*, based on *sister* – E Partridge *Dict of Slang and Unconventional Eng*]
 - *Don't be a sissy.*

sistern-law *n.* – see **mothern-law**

sister *n.:* **your sister**

An insult or taunt by one male to another, usually in response to an insult or unbecoming request or remark. Implies dishonour in the family of the insulted, especially illicit sexual relations between speaker and sister of the insulted. Now rare. See also **sāla**.

- *A: Go get me some cigarettes. B: Your sister! You think I'm going to go all the way to the shop?*

Sita/Sitha *n.*

Wife of **Ram** (q.v.). Heroine of the **Ramayana** (q.v.), in which she is portrayed as the ideal devoted wife who accompanies her husband into the forest in a fourteen-year exile, and is abducted by King Ravan of Lanka. Hence **Ram** and **Sita**, **Sita-Ram**. The deeds of Ram and Sita are commemorated at **Diwali** (q.v.), especially by North Indians. [Skt *sītā*, literally 'furrow']

Sita was an incarnation of **Lakshmi** (q.v.) and received her name because she was born in a furrow in a ploughed field of her own desire and free will. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 221

sithappan/chittapa *n.*

Father's younger brother. Older speakers. Mainly Tamil homes. See **māsa**, **mousa**, **periappa**. [Ta *citappan*, Te *citappa*]

six-foot dance *n.*

A long, dramatic recital of tales from Tamil scriptures, mingled with local comedy, song and dance, culminating in a divine dance. See also **nachaniya dance**, **Riverside**, **tiger dancing**.

■ The term is said to refer to the leaps into the air occasionally made by the dancers. In some areas it is attributed to the raised platform on which the final dance is performed. [Local term for Ta *terukutu* from *teru* 'street', *kutu* 'dance']

I must still do my practice. Big six-foot jol coming up at Motala's farm. – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 2

In South Africa, the Therukuthu [or six-foot dance] dance drama is performed in the suburbs of Durban and on the north and south coasts of Natal during religious festivals. The 'clown compere' acts as the crucial link in the play. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 217

The Therukooththu were performed on the eve or night of festivals and prayers. During prayers the main character got into a trance, at the end of the performance usually at daybreak. With trance the performer climbed the 'Kathie Maram' knife tree – a pole with knives stuck on it with sharp side up. This was done at sunrise. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 94

skai *v. Slang**

To scold, rebuke, reprimand. Also spelt **sky**. [Probably Afrik *skaai* *v.* 'to steal' – informal]

- *My ma skaid me one way for coming back so late.*

skâpie *n.* ['ska:pi:] *Slang**

A fool, a timid person, one who is not streetwise or part of a gang. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. Also spelt **scapie**, **skaapi**. [Afrik *skaap* 'a sheep' plus dimin. suffix – i.e. *skapie* 'lamb, little dear']

Sam nodded, not sure what was expected of him.

'Gimme a sassy, scarpie, shine up!' he snarled. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 174

skatûl *n.* *Slang**

A shoe. Also SAE slang. Same as **skoenes**. [Zu *isicathulo*]

- *Where's my skatûls?*

skayf/skafe *n.* ['skeif] *Slang**

A cigarette, a smoke. Also SAE slang. Denotes a request for a cigarette in Tsotsitaal. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 96. [Afrik *skuif* 'puff of smoke']

He inhaled the smoke and fumes deep into his lungs until, man, he felt like a man! His *skafing* spot was behind the overgrown hedge of Thumba's yard fronting Discovery Road. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 131

skelēm *n.* *Slang**

A rascal, scamp, villain, knave. From SAE slang and Tsotsitaal *skelm*, from Cape Town Afrikaans *skelem* (with stress on first syllable). Cf. Br and Scots archaic *skellum*, *skillum*. [Afrik *skelm* 'rogue, rascal', related to *skel* *v.* 'to scold, abuse, be abusive']

skīt/skit *v. Slang**

To steal, to ‘pinch’. Also SAE slang *skit*. Past tense: **skat** [skat]. See also **bowl**. Cf. Tsotsitaal *skut* ‘to search, pick someone’s pocket’ – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 96. [Afrik *skut* ‘to impound’]

- *That rogue skut all my marbles.*

skoenes *n. Slang**

Shoes (sg. or pl.). Also SAE slang. Same as **skatūl** (q.v.). [Afrik *skoer*, plus double pl. -e via Afrik -s from Eng]

skop *v. Slang**

To hit, beat up, kick a football. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *skop* ‘to kick’]

- *They skopped him and left him.*

skotēn *n. Slang**

1. A rogue, scoundrel, a youngster who is extremely naughty. Also SAE slang. Also spelt **scoten**.
2. A conductor of a bus or mini bus operating as a taxi (KZN only). [Zu *isikhoteni* ‘rogue, scoundrel’]

You want to be a survivor, not end up as an old *scoten* or a barfly, jumping every time some *kachela* [bossy person] shouts at you. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 194

skraal/skrāl *adj. Slang**

Hungry, famished. Also SAE slang. Related to Tsotsitaal *skraal* ‘thin, emaciated’. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*. [Afrik *skraal* ‘skinny’]

As soon as we landed we were skraal for a chow. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) ‘Bhajia & Bhoondi’, *Post* 7 April 2010

skrik *adj. Slang**

Afraid. Also SAE slang. Hence **skrikkie** ‘a timid person, one who is afraid’. [Afrik *skrik*]

‘I’m not skrik of these guys, Vusi,’ Magua said. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 180

skryf/skrayf *v. [skreif] Slang**

To write, to write a letter. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *skryf*, cognate with Eng *scribe*]

- *He wanted some dough, but he was too skrik to skryf to his ma again.*

slaatslāt *v. Slang**

To sell. Cf. Tsotsitaal *slaan*, *slaatslāt* ‘to beat up, burgle’. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 96. [Std Afrik *slaan*, Cape Afrik *slaatslāt* ‘to strike, hit, make a bargain’]

- *I was so broke I had to slaatslāt my guitar.*

slāba/shlāba *n. Rural*

Large species of aloe, including *Aloe sessiliflora*. Also **slāba tree**.

■ Ashes of their dried leaves are mixed with snuff to add sharpness. [Zu *umhlaba*]

slam-ou/slum-ou *n. ['slʌm oʊ] Slang**

A Muslim male. Not related to English *slum*. Sometimes derogatory. See also **banya**, **bread-ou**, **porridge-ou**, **rōti-ou**, **sulla**. [From Afrik *Slamaaier*; *Slams* ‘Cape Muslim’ based on *Islam* and Afrik *ou* ‘fellow’]

‘You need help,’ I spluttered finally. ‘How can you be a bisexual Slumou?’ – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 168

sleep away *v. phr.*

To fall asleep, to be asleep.

- *The baby slept away in the car.*

slim *adj. Slang**

Sly, crafty, wily. Usually combines with **ou** (q.v.). Not used with proper names in SAIE. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *slim* ‘cunning, clever, sly’]

- *You gotta watch him – he’s a slim ou.*

slingeberry *n. ['slɪŋəberi:]*

Syringa berry, inedible ochre-coloured berry of the shady tree (*Melia azedarach*), bearing lilac flowers. Hence **slingeberry tree** ‘the syringa tree’. Known in Hindi as *bākayan*, whence Anglo-Indian English *buckyne*

■ The closest relative in SA to the ubiquitous *neem* tree of North India, sacred to Hindus. Like those of the neem, syringa leaves have medicinal properties in countering cholesterol and in treating pox and blotches on the skin. The term *neem* is not generally known in SA, except for *neem oil*, applied to a mother’s breast to discourage children who will not be weaned. [From Eng *syringa*, based on Greek *surigx* ‘panpipe’, whence Eng *syringe*]

Introduced from India, the syringa was first recorded at the Cape in 1800. – P Silva *Dict SAE on Hist Principles*

slippery jack *n.*

An alternative term for **bhindi** used in Indian markets in Natal.

■ The international term *okra* is not common in SAIE.

slow *adj. Basilectal*

Soft, low in volume of sound. Hence **put it slow** ‘soften, lower the volume’.

I gratefully accepted this and moved in with his Indian family. For the first three months I didn’t know what these people were talking about. ‘Ey, you, make the TV slow.’ Huh? I didn’t realise the damn thing was going fast! – N Ngcobo *Some of My Best Friends are White*, 133

smaak/smāk *v. Slang**

To enjoy, to like, to love, to want, to wish. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. Also spelt **smark**. [Afrik *smaak* *n.* ‘taste, flavour, fancy’, *v.* ‘to taste’]

'You're shocked and horrified, but there you go – Shahzad Moosa smaaks you!' His eyes twinkled merrily. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 53

'You *smark* this ou?' Vusi asked. 'I mean really love him?' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 401

'Check here ekse, we don't smaak to make a speech.' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

small *adj. Basilectal*

Young, youngest. See **big-brother**.

- *My small son is getting married.*

from small *adv. Basilectal*

From the time when one was young.

- *From small he's had sinus.*

Small Four *n.*

Combination of the following BSc subjects to be studied in one's first year at university: Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. Contrasts with **Big Four** (q.v.), which was a prerequisite for those intending to go on to study medicine. Now rare.

snaff *n.* ['snæf] *Basilectal*

Snuff, powdered tobacco inhaled through the nose. Now rare. Also known by the SAE term **gwaai**, based on Zulu. [Eng *snuff* from Dutch]

snai *n.* ['snaɪ] *Slang**

A fool, a **sissy**, one who is not 'one of the boys', one who 'lacks personality'. [Etymology uncertain, possibly Afrik *snaaks* 'odd, strange, funny']

- *He's such a snai – always with his books!*

sny/snay *v.* ['snei] *Slang**

To cut, to make an incision. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *sny*]

- *I snayed my thumb by mistake.*

soccerite *n.*

A soccer player.

■ Although the term *soccer* is common to the US, Australasia and SA, *soccerite* seems to be a neologism in the SAIE community. The term does not apply to a soccer lover or fan in SAIE. *Soccer* itself is an abbrev. from *association football* that never took on in Britain. [Neologism, based on *soccer* plus agent suffix *-ite*]

We don't use *soccerite* in the US. I've actually never heard it (though, I like it. Reminds me of anchorite). We use *soccer player*. – Greg Lalas, US journalist, *July* 2009

Sunny: he was a good soccerite – he played for Mayville – he was a fantastic player. – R Govender *Lahnee's Pleasure*, 17

soft liver *n.*

Lungs and other portions of sheep's offal which when cooked are comparatively soft. Rare. See **hard liver**.

sōji/sujji *n.*

A hot dessert made from semolina or cream of wheat with almonds, raisins and cinnamon sticks. Often made on religious occasions as **prasādh** (q.v.). Same as **siro** (q.v.) Spellings: **sojee**, **soojee**, **sugee**. [Hn, Ur *sūjī*, Bhoj *sujjī*]

Suji is a traditional Indian wedding dessert served after a main course consisting of vegetable biryani, dal and kachumber salad. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 233

Soji is food for the gods – one of the chief offerings of prasadam (holy food) in Hindu temples. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 137

sometimes *adv. Basilectal*

Presumably, perhaps, maybe. Often used with presumptive *must*. Now rare.

- *They must be coming now, sometimes.*

sōna *n.*

A term of endearment for a child. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. [Gu *sonū* 'gold', Hn, Ur *sonā*]

- *Hello, my sōna.*

sour herbs *n.* – see **herbs****sour porridge** *n.*

Mealiemeal porridge, soured by natural fermentation, favoured by some people of South Indian extraction. Also SABE. – J Branford *Dict of SAE*. See **kalli**, **porridge-ou**, **porridge-prayers**.

sovereign *n.*

Former British gold coin worth one pound sterling. Now rare in British English. Still known among older SAIE speakers in connection with special payments to indentured workers. Hence **sovereign chain** for a necklace made of sovereigns which were highly prized and are still retained as family heirlooms.

span *adj.* ['spæn] *Slang**

A lot, many, much. [Eng *span* 'full extent from end to end', possibly reinforced by Afrik *span* 'a team']

- *There was a span of people at the funeral.*

spark *n.* *Slang**

An intoxicating drink, liquor, a drop of liquor. See **dop**. [Possibly related to British English slang *to have a spark in one's throat* 'to be perpetually thirsty' (no longer in vogue); *to spark out* 'to become unconscious through liquor'.]

- *Let's have a spark.*

speculating *part.* – see **battler**

speeches *n. Slang***

Pompous talk, irrelevant talk, unreasonable request. See **heavy speeches**. May also refer to the use of fisticuffs.

- *Don't give me your speeches.*

spirit *n.*

Divine or supernatural influence that takes over a person's body during a trance. Not restricted to SAIE but very common in colloquial speech.

■ During a trance session a fortune teller-cum-priest reveals some important future events in a person's life. See **firewalking ceremony**.

- *Spirit came for/on him.*

spitting bug *n. Rural*

An insect which secretes a saliva-like liquid in large quantities, usually found on twigs of tall trees. The saliva is believed by children to make those whom it drips upon bald. Possibly other varieties.

spoilt *adj.*

Used to describe an unmarried pregnant woman, or a woman who marries at a late age and cannot bear children. Rare.

spoon *v. Slang**

To drive at high speed. Also **to spoon it**. Cf. British English slang *spoon* 'to flirt, run after women'. See **wind**.

- *We were spooning it on the highway.*

sports *n. ['spots] Basilectal*

May be used in the sg. to denote a code of sport. Now rare.

- *Soccer is my favourite sports.*

spray *v. Slang**

To vomit, especially on account of drunkenness. Now rare. [Eng *spray*, with semantic shift]

- *He was so sparked he sprayed the cinema.*

squeal *v. Children's speech*

To cheat at sport, to employ unnecessarily unsporting tactics, including showing dissent and use of force. Hence **squealing, squealers**. [Slightly different nuance from Eng *squeal* 'to whine, complain, grumble']

- *These guys always squeal, that's the only way they can beat us.*

staffs *n. Basilectal*

Staff, staff members, members of staff. Also IE and other varieties of English in Africa.

- *They're firing workers now, 'cos they say they've got too much of staffs.*

stars *n.*: to count stars

Practice believed to bring bad luck and to cause warts.

- (*Teacher to pupil with warts*): *Have you been counting stars again?*

start *v. trans.* Basilectal

To annoy, to cause trouble, to start trouble. A slightly different nuance from English *Don't start with me*.

- *Don't start her.*

start *n.* Slang*

Money, funds, resources. [Probably based on *start-up funds*]

- *I've got no start, man.*

stay *v.*: and **stay** Basilectal

A stative and habitual marker. Hence **suffering and staying** 'being in continual bad health'. Cf. *stay* as auxiliary in Guyanese Creole. See also **leave**.

... she shrieked from behind the counter: 'You fellas only know to complain and stay.' – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 April 2010

stekkie *n.* Slang*

A young woman, girl. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *stukkie* 'a little piece' from *stuk* 'piece, bit' plus diminutive *-ie*]

The others ... tended to lose their cool when there was a *stukkie* around. Billy hated the word. It made women look cheap but that sentiment would be weird in such a macho gathering. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 135

'Hey, Shaz, my bra ... leave your stekkie and come check what Rozi's brought ...' a familiar voice chimed in the background. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 217

stering *part.* ['ste:ɾɪŋ]

Steering, steering wheel. See also **review mirror**.

- *There's something wrong with this stering.*

stompie *n.* Slang*

A cigarette-butt, a cigarette with only a little section left unsmoked. See **inchie**. From SAE slang, informal usage. [Afrik *stompie* 'little stump, cigarette-butt']

striker *n.*

The large disc used to strike smaller discs (called *beads*) into a pocket in the game **carom** (q.v.). See also **queen**.

Subrahmanya *n.* – see **Muruga****sucha** *adv.* Basilectal

Such, such a, very, really, truly. Treated as one word in basilect. [Eng *such*, *such a*]

We got *sucha* small brains, right. – Durban resident, 1988

Sūfi *n.*

A Muslim saint, a mystic. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. See **wali-allah**. [Ur *sūfi* from Ar *ṣūfī*]

The name is said to derive from *suf*, wool in Arabic, a reference to the single, often woollen, garment worn by dervishes [mystics] and fakirs. To Sufi thought, all actions, good and bad, are inspired by God and all religions, excepting that Islam is pre-eminent, likewise. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 204

Like the Sufis, we hear the tread of the messenger of death long before we can hear the knock. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 115

sugar *n. Basilectal*

Diabetes mellitus. Similar to Afrikaans *suiker*. See also **heart**. [Abbrev. from SAE *sugar-diabetes*]

- *He's suffering with sugar.*

sugar-beans *n.*

Dried beans of pinkish, mottled colouring (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), cooked as a curry and usually eaten with **pūri**, **rōti** (q.v.) or rice. Also SAE. Although not of Indian origin, this has become the most popular bean for curries, though **rajma** or **red-beans** remain popular in Gujarati homes.

Sugar beans, a delicacy now, especially in the bunny chow was not a favourite then. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 20

For Sale. Seed Beans, large White Butter, Round, Sugar and Yellow; also Soya Beans. – *Farmer's Weekly* 20 December 1916, cited in P Silva *Dict SAE on Hist Principles*

sugar-cane herbs *n.* – see **herbs****sugar-mango** *n.*

A long, stringless kidney-shaped mango, less common than the round fibre mangoes of Natal. Same as **kidney mango**, **long mango**. See also **Bombay mango**, **paraffin mango**.

sugars *n. Slang*****

Name for methamphetamine in KZN, a psycho-stimulant drug known internationally as *meth* or *crystal* and as *tik* in Cape Town. Popular among younger people, despite being listed as an undesirable Schedule 7 drug.

Two Chatsworth grandmothers, aged 65 and 73, have been arrested for the possession of large quantities of sugars, the highly addictive form of heroin. They were allegedly storing it for drug dealers. – T Markandan, Letter to *Post* 28 April 2010

sugar-water *n.*

Sugared water, given as a palliative for fainting or dizziness. [Dvandva compound]

Just when I drank that sugar-water I became better. – Pietermaritzburg resident, December 1986

suitcase-aunty *n.* – see **aunty**

sujji *n.* – see **sōji**

sullah *n.* [sulla:] *Slang/derogatory**

A Muslim person. Term used by non-Muslim males as a teasing reference to a Muslim. Now rare. See also **banya**, **bread-ou**, **porridge-ou**, **rōti-ou**, **slum-ou**. Cf. Zulu *sulaman* ‘Muslim’.

■ Suleiman is a common name among Muslim males, referring to a prophet in the **Qur’an**, **Sulaymān** (or Solomon in Judaism) (q.v.). [Probably from proper name *Suleiman*, possibly derived from the Zu form *sulaman* ‘Muslim’]

sunnah *adj.*

That which is proper to Islam. Also spelt **sunna**, **sunnat**. See **wājib**. [Ur *sunnah*, *sunnat* from Ar *sunna*]

Literally, this word [sunnah] means ‘trodden path’. It developed from meaning ‘customary practice’ to indicating the specific actions and sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

The fast is opened with the eating of dates and the sipping of milk for this is *sunnat*, that is, the Prophet himself ended his fast in this manner. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 191

Sunni *n.*

An orthodox Muslim, one who accepts the traditional canon of Muslim law and religious writings, i.e. the **sunnah** or customary practice of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. [Ur *sunnī*]

The word *sunnī* is sometimes loosely translated as ‘orthodox’ but this should not be taken to disparage the Shi’ite branch of Islam. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Sunday longer than Monday

Expression used when the petticoat, slip or other undergarment shows below a dress. Teasing equivalent of Standard English *Your slip is showing*.

The expression when I was growing up was *Your Sunday’s longer than your Monday*. – Jean Branford, 1986

sūp/supru *n.*

A winnowing tray or basket made of bamboo strips. Same as **mōro**. [Gu *sūpdū*, Hn, Ur *sūp*]

supāri *n.*

Betel-nut (q.v.), areca nut. Same as **pāke**. See **pān**, **pan-supāri**. [Hn, Ur *supārī*, Gu *sopārī*]

Betel-nuts are offered to priests who carry out poojas or worship on behalf of the *supari*-giver. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 142

Surti *n.*

One whose family originated from Surat, a district in Gujarat. See **Kathiawādi**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *surtī*]

Hindu Gujaratis are divided into Kathiawadis (from Kathiawad) and Surtis (from Surat) and though there is considerable social contact between the two, they do not as a rule intermarry. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 62

‘Hawubo, Maha. You don’t know to have Surti, Guji friends only?’ she slapped my back playfully. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 103

sutherfēni *n.*

A large, flat white sweetmeat made of flaky strips of dough. [Gu, Hn, Ur *sūtarphenī*, from *sutar* ‘thread, yarn’, *phenī* ‘swirl’]

... much proficiency must be gained before one can shred the dough to the flaky hair-thin strings, which is the criteria by which sutherfeni is judged. Most appropriately the children have named this sweet, ‘granny’s hair’, because it is as white and fragile as granny’s hair. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 359

swār *n. Slang**

Brother-in-law. Also SAE slang. [Afrik *swaer*]

swār-lightie *n. Slang**

A brother-in-law younger than one’s wife and oneself. See **lightie**. [Afrik *swaer* plus *lightie* (q.v.)]

swarāj *n.*

Indian Home Rule, self-rule for India, the political programme of Gandhi and others in the first half of the c20 for independence.

■ *Hind Swaraj* was originally written in the form of a dialogue between Reader and Editor for the **Indian Opinion** on the subject of independence for India by Gandhi on the *Kildonan Castle* between London and Cape Town in 1909. The term became widely known in SA, and used as the name of a football club, ‘houses’ at school, etc. [Hn *swarājy* based on Skt *swā* ‘own’ plus *rāj/rājyā* ‘rule’]

Indian Home Rule by MK Gandhi, being a translation of ‘Hind Swaraj’ published in the Gujarati columns of *Indian Opinion*, 11th and 18th Dec., 1909 – title page of booklet published in Durban, 1910.

Swaraj was my team. There was not the slightest wish to identify with the six other teams that made up the Pretoria District Football Association. – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 25

swaz *n.* [ˈswæz]: **to catch a swaz** *Slang**

To urinate, pass water. Possibly other varieties. [Etymology unknown, possibly onomatopoeic]

swear *v. trans.*: **to swear someone**

To swear at someone, to use foul language directed at someone, to use obscenities. See also **to use F's and B's**, **to use languages**. [Std Eng *to swear at X*]

The more I swore him, the more tickets he wrote. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

sweet rice *n.*

White rice boiled with sugar, milk, butter and **ilachi** (q.v.). Usually served after Hindu prayers, especially at **Pongal** (q.v.) as **prasādh** (q.v.).

sweetmeat *n.*

An item of confectionery or sweet snack, e.g. **barfi**, **gulab jamun**, **jalebi**, **sutherfēni** (q.v.). The *COD* records the term as archaic.

■ The use of the term *meat* to mean any food goes back to Old and Middle English and can be found in expressions like *One man's meat is another man's poison*. The term survives in SAIE, where sweetmeats are prepared and distributed in abundance at religious festivals like **Diwali** and **Eid** (q.v.). [Eng *sweet* plus early modern Eng *meat* 'food']

The opportunity came a few days later. Father arrived, all smiles, with an armful of sweetmeats and chocolates. He seemed to have had a good day at the office. – K Goonam *Coolie Doctor*, 23

swot *v.*

To study hard for subjects that require committing content to memory, to learn off by heart, to 'cram' for an examination in subjects requiring extensive information. Hence **swotting subject** 'a subject for which one swots'.

■ In British English and SAE **swot** refers to intense study for any subject, in British English especially mathematics. In contrast in SAIE the swotting subjects are history, geography, biology, etc. but not mathematics, accounting, English, etc. See also **by-heart**. [Br Eng informal, *swot*, *swat*, a dialectal variant of *sweat* v.]

I enjoy physics, I really do ... And bio is a swotting subject, so I'm fine with that. – Amanzimtoti student, July 2007



take *v.*

To 'close someone down' at sport, to tackle especially at soccer, not necessarily legally. [Probably from Br Eng *to take someone out*]

- *The captain said "Take him!", so I took him from the back.*

tameric *n.* ['tæmərik]

Turmeric, turmeric powder. See **aradh**, **hardhi**, **manja**. [Eng *turmeric*, perhaps from French *terre mérite* 'deserving earth' – COD]

Saffron was traditionally the colour of royalty and turmeric is a cheaper substitute; it is regarded as purifying, cooling and healing, and is much used in religious contexts, for example to bless devotees, to cool/heal a person with fever, and to bathe images of deities as well as brides. – A Diesel *Shakti*, 218

Tamil *n.*

A major language of India, having about 66 million speakers in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. Also more formally **Thamizh**. An official language in Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry as well as Sri Lanka and Singapore.

■ Tamil is the major Indian language of SA, having the most speakers or people of Tamil descent. Tamil culture remains strong in SA, despite the decline of the language as a medium of ordinary communication. Attitudes to the language remain positive, and it is used on religious occasions. In SA (but not in India) the term may be used for a person of Tamil descent (e.g. *He's a Tamil*) – see **Tamilian**. Tamil speakers sometimes describe their religion as 'Tamil', contrasting it with 'Hindu', which is mistakenly associated with the language Hindi. Most of the original Tamil migrants to SA were Hindus (with a few Muslims and Christians), and though conversion to Christianity has been significant in this group since the 1980s, a majority are still Hindus. See also **Dravidian**, **Malayalam**, **Madras**, **Madrāsi**.

After all, Thaver told himself, even then, way back in the forties when most Tamils were ignorant of their 'glorious past', that Tamil was the world's oldest living language. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 85

Tamilian *n.*

Person of Tamil descent in SA, one of South Indian origin. Also IE. Same as a **Tamil**. [From *Tamil* plus Eng agentive suffix *-ian*]

Among the settlers on the farm were Gujaratis, North Indians and Tamilians as well as Englishmen. – MK Gandhi *Satyagraha in SA*, 141

tandūri/tandoori *n.*

Pertaining to food baked in a *tandūr*, a clay brick or earthen oven, e.g. **rōti**, **nān** or meat, especially chicken. In SA the concept is a recent one going back only to the 1980s. [Hn, Ur *tandūrī*, from Ar *ta-noor* ‘an oven’]

The usual form in an eating house ... is of earthenware, rather like a large flower pot with a fairly wide opening at its base, inverted over a smokeless fire. The food to be cooked (tandoori) is either slapped on the hot inside wall (rōti) ... or hung inside on rods (meats and chicken, usually first marinated). A dry form of roasting since all moisture escapes from the top. The tandoor came to India from Persia in Moghul times as an oven for breads, but the now ubiquitous tandoori chicken only arrived after 1947, brought by refugees from the north-west frontier, by then part of Pakistan. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 208

tandoori masala *n. phr.*

Masala (q.v.) appropriate for **tandoori** cooking.

tanned *adj. Slang***

Drunk, excessively drunk. Now rare. See **shut**. [Probably a variant of British English *canned* or *pickled*]

tea-bread *n.*

Tea and bread; tea and snacks. Now rare.

■ In most homes a generation ago buttered bread was served with afternoon tea to schoolchildren returning home. See **butter-bread**. [Dvandva compound]

- *Have some tea-bread.*

tea-water *n.*

Water for tea.

- *Boil the tea-water now.*

tēbé *n. Rural*

Arum lily (*Richardia Africana*), whose leaves are cooked as a type of **bhāji** (q.v.) when tender. Hence **tēbé herbs**. See also **herbs**. [Zu *umthebe*]

tegwān *n. Rural*

A large hammer-head bird with silver and black feathers (*Scopus umbretta*). Known as *hamerkop* in Afrikaans and SAE. [Zu *uthekwane*]

The friendly *tegwane* knows perfectly well that the Zulus think him *mtagati*; it brings bad luck on a hunter to kill one. – C Birkby *Zulu Journey*, 134, cited in P Silva *Dict of SAE on Hist Principles*

Tegwīn *n. Slang**

Durban. Also SAE slang. [Zu *eThekwini*, ‘Durban’, literally ‘at the bay’, from *itheku* ‘bay’. Now the name of the greater Durban municipality.]

Telugu *n.*

A **Dravidian** (q.v.) language spoken mainly in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India, brought to SA by large numbers of indentured workers in the c19 and early c20.

■ Telugu is the most spoken Dravidian language in India, with about 70 million speakers, and an official language of the state of Andhra Pradesh. While it has absorbed a large number of words from Sanskrit historically, the grammatical structure of Telugu remains that of a Dravidian language. In SA it has fewer speakers than Tamil and has been considerably influenced by Tamil–Telugu bilingualism of former times in the plantation **barracks** (q.v.). Speakers of the language are called **Telugus** or **Andhras** (q.v.). See **Gentoo**, **Malayalam**, **Ugādhī**.

The first Telugu indentured labourers came in the *Truro*. The ship's list referred to them as *Gentoo*s, a term first used by the Portuguese. They were assigned to farms along the coast from Kearsney in the north to Port Shepstone in the south ... At present Telugu in South Africa is not in a healthy position. Most of the people of Telugu stock are unable to speak their ancestral tongue. – V Latchanna *Telugu Companion*, 2–3

temple goods *n.* – see **pūja goods**

tenga *n.*

Coconut. Older speakers.

■ In religious ritual a coconut often symbolises the goddess **Lakshmi** (q.v.). At the beginning of most important prayers a coconut is neatly broken into two halves. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *tenkam*, Te *tenkāya*]

Thenga chutney (coconut relish): Coconut is used a great deal in south Indian cookery, as coconut trees grow luxuriously along the entire coast; it is said a tree can live up to two hundred years. – R Fernandez *Cooking of Southern India*, 82

tension *v.:* **to tension someone up**

To discipline, scold severely, arraign, set right. [Change of part of speech, probably based on military idiom *tension up*.]

• *My ma really tensioned me up this morning for not cleaning my room.*

thabij *n.*

An amulet worn by children to ward off evil, made up of writing on a small piece of paper, together with clove, camphor and other small items. Knotted in cloth and tied around the wrist or waist or worn around the neck. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu homes. Also spelt **ta'weez**, **tabeej**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *tāvīj*, *tāvīz* from Ar]

'What's a ta'weez?' I interjected.

'Hmmm ... well ... the most common type is a small square of paper on which some prayers for protection and blessings are written, wrapped in a cloth and worn around the neck ... technically, it's a written request, compared to a verbal one ...' – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 95

thabla *n.*

Small drum or pair of drums played at one end by hand. Hence **thabla player**. Not exclusively SAIE. In *COD*. See **dholak**, **molo**. [Hn, Ur *tablā* from Ar *ṭabla*]

A tabla [is] a pair of small kettle-drums played with the fingers, the large, the left-hand one, bass; the right-hand one tenor. – I Lewis *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs*, 229

The tabla, developed from the mridangam, like the sitar was the creation of a c13 genius of many parts, Amir Khusro. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 207

Thablighi *n.*

A person belonging to the *Tablighi Jamaat*, a puritanical reformist Muslim group started in India, concerned with the preservation of Islam and with religious conversion. Also spelt **Tabliqi**, **Tabliq**. [Ur *tablighi* from Ar]

The work of conversion is complemented by the Tableegh groups, which conduct revival meetings in Muslim communities both in South Africa and other African countries. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 194

He's into religion now in a big way, has been flirting a little with those Tabliq characters, on and off. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 409

thaj *n.*

Cinnamon sticks (*Cinnamomum cassia*), dried pieces of the inner bark of the cassia tree or tree of the laurel family. Used to flavour rice, curries and desserts. Also used in making **chai** (q.v.). Usually spelt **tuj**. Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu, Hn, Ur *taj*]

The more pungent and rougher looking cinnamon sticks [tuj] used in Indian cookery are in fact cassia bark, which when ground produces a slightly redder powder than true cinnamon, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*. Both the cassia and the cinnamon tree belong to the evergreen laurel family, and cassia is also known as Chinese cinnamon. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 15

thajia/thazia *n. Historical*

Large floats or chariots designed as replicas of the martyrs Hassan and Hussein, used at Muslim **Moharrum** festivals (q.v.) during the days of **indenture** (q.v.) in Natal. Now less common. Also spelt **thaziyah**, **thajiyah**. [Ur *tāziyā*]

Thaziyah, which translates into 'mourning' or 'condolence' was a replica of the martyred Imam Husain's mausoleum at Karbala. Individual thaziyahs were ornately decorated, gaudy simulacrums of the tomb. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture* 216

It later transpired that the police had destroyed the thaziyah of an innocent party. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 224

Thaziyas are common in India and Pakistan. They were introduced to South Africa in the very early period of Indian indenture by Muslims from South India and were then known as *Allahsamy's Goonda*, following South Indian terminology. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 207

thalaq *n.*

Divorce according to Muslim custom, by use of the word *thalaq* uttered by the husband. Hence **to give thalaq**.

■ Divorce is permitted in Islam, but not encouraged. [Ur *talāq* from Ar *talāq*]

Sunni (q.v.) jurists ... classified divorce as ‘approved’ or ‘reprehensible’, according to the way in which it was pronounced. An example of the latter ‘reprehensible’ type was three repudiations said all at one time. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

And in case you’re wondering whether it is allowed to send talaq by SMS, Molwi Ameen said it is perfectly valid. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 131

thāli *n.*

Marriage necklace, central piece of a neck ornament tied by a bridegroom round a bride’s neck, worn as a sacred wedding locket for life according to South Indian custom. Not the same as **thāli/thāri**. See also **mangal-sutra**. [Ta, Te *tāli*]

I was wearing Murugan’s thali and was married to him ... – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 70

thāli/thāri/thariya *n.*

Large brass or silver or other metal plate, resembling a round tray, traditionally for eating off. The plate has a large section for dry items like **rōti** (q.v.) and rice, and smaller sections for curries and **dhāl** (q.v.). Now used mainly in Hindu religious ritual for carrying gifts of sweetmeats or fruit or for offerings to a temple deity. Not the same as **thāli** ‘locket’. Mainly Gujarati, Hindi homes. [Gu *thāḷi*, Hn, Ur *thālī*, Bhoj *thārī*, *thariyā*]

The state of Gujarat has made an important contribution to Indian cookery – the *thali*. *Thali* actually means a plate of metal and in culinary terms it has come to mean an extensive meal served on such a plate. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 154

Try our new vegetarian thali menu – advert for Cape Town restaurant, January 2010

... Gone are the days of joint families painstakingly preparing daily spice mixtures and serving a variety of food in several small metal bowls on a larger one called a thali. – F Hassen, *Post* 7 April 2010

thalki *n.*

A show-off. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *talki*]

- *Why are you wearing such gaudy clothes and jewellery – you look like a thalki.*

thāluk/tāluk *n. Historical*

A tract of country, agglomeration of Indian villages, administrative sub-district, subdivision of a **zillah** (q.v.).

■ Used in connection with places of origin of indentured workers in India. See also **thanna**. [Ur *tālluqā*, Ko *taluka* from Ar *ta’lluq* ‘estate’]

The north-eastern coastal Telugu-speaking district of Godavari consisted of 12 *taluks*. – S Bhana *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal*, 44

Letters to my family in India go as follows: Name of family member; at Post Office Mhapral; Taluka Mandargarh; District Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India. – Cape Town resident April 2010

thālum/thālo *n.*

1. Rhythmic system of a piece of music.
2. Small musical bells, cymbals for keeping time in musical performance or song. Also spelt **thalam**, **thalam**. [Ta, Te *tālum*]

Sometimes the thalam beats were so fast that the dancer had to be on his toes to perform the perfect foot work with perfect timing. – P Murugan *Lotus Blooms on Eastern Vlei*, 94

thamāsha *n.*

1. Fun. See **masthi**.
2. A spectacle for public amusement; light-hearted, small-scale celebration. Not exclusively SAIE. [Hn, Ur *tamāshā*, Te *tamāṣā*, originally Mar for ‘slapstick stage comedy’]

Thamāsha [denotes] a simple entertainment, with a touch of buffoonery perhaps, particularly for the less sophisticated. In Maharashtra, tamasha is the professional folk theatre, originating with religious themes performed in temples. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 208

The banquet was ‘an expensive tamasha [event] at the expense of the Prince to regain the waning influence of the Congress by showing the outside world that the Congress is so influential as to have the honour of dining with the Prince’. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi’s Prisoner*, 126

thambi *n.*

1. Younger brother, male first-cousin. Also spelt **thumbi**, **thumbee**, **thumbie**.
2. A young man, boy, especially one whose name one does not know or cannot remember. Also used as a nickname. See **anne**, **bhai**, **thammudu**. Mainly Tamil homes.
3. *Slang*****. Young, working-class urban male or (less commonly) female. Used jocularly or slightly derogatorily by middle-class speakers in Durban with reference to a mainly Tamil working-class style of dress, behaviour and speech. [Ta *tampi*]

‘What’s the matter *thumbie*, little brother,’ he said. ‘I hear you are looking for a job.’ – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 137

Thunga was beginning to feel sorry for the youngster, but business was business. ‘Okay Thumbi, I’m putting my head on the block here for you, but I’ll do my best for you ...’ – R Govender *At the Edge*, 146

thammudu *n.*

1. Younger brother, male first-cousin.
2. A young man, boy, especially one whose name one does not know or cannot remember. See **anne**, **bhai**, **thambi**. Mainly Telugu homes. [Te *tammūdu*]

thangechi *n.* [ˈtʌŋətʃi]

Younger sister; by extension a female first-cousin. Older speakers. See **akka**, **bahini**, **bēn**, **chelli**. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *tankacci*]

thanna *n. Historical*

A police sub-district, an area served by a police station in India, the chief police station of a sub-district.

■ Used in reference to places of origin of indentured Indian labourers, as recorded in ships' lists. See **tāluk**, **zillah**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Ur *thana* ultimately from Skt *stan/sthan* 'place, post of duty']

The places of origin [of indentured Indians] incorporate names of *zillahs* (districts), *taluks/tahsil*, towns and *thannas*. – S Bhana *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal*, 41

thanni *n.*

1. *n.* A popular card game played in groups of four or (less commonly) six, using twenty-four cards comprising, in descending order of value, the Jack, Nine, Ace, Ten, King and Queen. Similar to Dutch/Afrikaans and Cape card game *klawerjas/klaberjas*. The terms used in the two games are, however, different.
2. *exclam.* A call in the card game **thanni**, signalling the intention of playing in a set manner for maximum points. See **ball**, **jōdi**, **kanak**. Also spelt **thunnee**, **thunee**, **thunni**, **thunnie**, etc. [Probably Ta *tannir* 'water']

Ironically, most of the family males belonged to the moronic variety of the species, which led them to Master in thunee-playing, smoking and generally fooling around. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 138

tharoi *n.*

Loofah acutangula – a long gourd with a rough-ridged outer shell. Sometimes called *sponge gourd*. Also known in Natal Indian markets as **lufus** (q.v.). Same as **pikenka** (q.v.), **thuriya**. [Hn, Ur *torai*, Bhoj *tharoi*]

thār-work *n.*

Decorative gold or silver thread-work on saris or on other items of women's wear, usually in paisley, floral or other patterns. See **chikkan-work**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *tār* 'wire, thread, fibre']

thātha *n.*

Grandfather. An old man (usually respectful). May also be used jocularly to refer to a youngster behaving like an old man in not having fun with others. See **āja**, **dhādha**, **nāna**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *tāta*, Te *tāta*]

Paarti ... Paarti how did you come here from India? Did *thaatha* (grandfather) come with you too? – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 60

thaurenka *n.*

Small green lentils (*Cytisus indicus* or *Cajanus indicus*). Known as lentils in Natal Indian markets. Same as **rahari**, **thubar**. See **oil-dōl**. Mostly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta *tuvarankay*]

thava/thāwa *n.*

A flat iron-plate or griddle on which **rōti** (q.v.) and similar preparations are made. [Gu, Hn, Ur *tavā*, Bhoj *tāwā*]

A tava is the iron griddle over which rotis are made. Beautiful cast iron or Teflon covered ones can be bought in any hardware store. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 13

theili/thayli *n.*

A carrier bag usually made of cloth. Now rare. [Hn, Ur *thailī*, Gu *thelī*]

the way *n. phr.*

A sentence-initial phrase which emphasises the intensity of an act or feeling. See also **how**.

- *The way they hit him!* = ‘They beat him up badly’. *The way I like ice-cream!* = ‘I like ice-cream very much’.

them/and-them *suffix*

A marker of the ‘associative plural’, with proper names and human or human-like beings. Carries the meaning ‘and associates, and others, and friends, and family’. The SAE form *and them* occurs as a more educated variant. Also Caribbean Creoles.

- *That’s my uncle-them* = ‘Those are my uncle and his friends’.
- *Pushpa-and-them don’t stay here anymore*.

them-days *n. Slang**

Days of old, days referred to by ‘old-timers’. Said with stress on first word.

- *Them-days you could buy a week’s groceries for five bob*.

Loha reminds me so much, with his no-nonsense demeanour and barking instructions, of the nanas, ajhas and thathas of them-days. – The Scorpion (pseudo.), *Post* 28 April 2010

thepla *n.*

A spicy variant of **rōti**, made with flour and **herbs**, usually **methi** (q.v.). Mainly Gujarati homes. [Gu *thepalū*, pl. *thepālā*]

Theplas are a Gujarati speciality. Spices and finely chopped herbs are added to the dough, which is rolled out and cooked like *rotis*. – R Makan *SA Indian Cookbook*, 75

therukuthu *n.* – see **six-foot dance**

these are the things – see **thing**

theses *n.* [ˈt̪iːsiːz]

Thesis, dissertation. Also other varieties of English in Africa.

- *He’s doing his theses*.

thēthar *n.* [t̪ʰeːt̪ʰΔr]

A ne’er do well, an obstinate, lazy or uncooperative person. Older speakers. [Bhoj *thetar*]

thikka/thikku *adj.*

Spicy, curry-hot, chilli-hot. Same as **kāro**, **kārum**, **thitha**. Also spelt **thiku**, **theeku**. [Gu *tīkhu*, Hn, Ur *tīkhā*]

Samīha grunted. ‘Which Pakistani is going to cater?’ she asked. ‘You sure they won’t make it too thiku, then no one can eat also ...’ – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 259

thikka *n.*

Small pieces of meat. A dish of small pieces of meat and/or vegetables marinated in spice. Popular in SA since the 1980s under British Asian influence. Hence **chicken thikka** (q.v.). [Ur, Panjabi *tikka* from Persian]

thil/thal *n.*

Sesame seeds (*Sesamum indicum*). Used in making sweetmeats like **pōli** (q.v.) and in prayer offerings. [Gu *tal*, Hn, Ta, Ur *til*]

Based on the Hindu belief that foods can produce either heat or cold in the body, certain traditional festive dishes are made to mark the onset of winter or summer in India. Thus as the winter mists swirl in, sweets made of sesame seed (til), known for their warming energy, are eaten in every part of the country. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 76

Tal (sesame seeds) ... [are] small beige unhulled seeds, highly nutritious and with a nutty flavour, especially when roasted. Used extensively as a health food product in the West. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 17

thilak *n.*

1. An ornamental or religious mark over the forehead.
2. Pre-wedding ceremony during which a *tilak* (ceremonial vermilion or sandalwood paste dot) is applied by the groom’s representatives to forehead of the bride, as a sign of engagement or acceptance of the marriage by her. A dowry (or token) is also exchanged.
3. The dowry or token itself. Mainly Hindi homes. [Hn *tilak*]

thimeri *n.*

Part of a religious ceremony dedicated to the Mother-Goddess in her manifestation of Dhropadhi (or Draupadi) during which Hindu devotees walk barefoot on burning hot coals to test and reaffirm their faith and expiate their sins. Also formerly known as **fire tramp**. Mainly Tamil homes. Also spelt **Themeri**. [Ta *tīmeri*]

Originally, firewalking in South Africa appears to have been predominantly a Tamil celebration. However, over the years, its popularity has grown, and today it has come to transcend its Tamil origins to some extent, although it still retains a South Indian orientation. The firewalking festival is sometimes called Poo-kulithal (walking on a bed of flowers) or Themeri (walking on fire). – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 53

thing *n.* *Derogatory/informal*

Person. See **good-thing**.

- *He’s a useless thing. She’s a fast thing.*

that's the thing/that's the thing, now

Said of a minor problem or difficulty that one is unable to cope with, or something about which one is uncertain. Occasionally used to signify assent, equivalent to: 'Yes, *that's the problem/issue*'. Cf. IE 'That's the chiz/cheese; the real cheese'. [Hn, Ur *chīz*, *chīj* 'thing, matter'] Not the same as British English *the thing* 'fashionable, in fashion'. See also **these are the things**.

these are the things

Shortened expression of 'These are the things that annoy us/are vexatious, irritate us, concern us'.

thinnar/thinure *n.*

Lines of ash smeared on one's forehead during Hindu religious ceremonies. See **vibhudi**. Mainly Tamil, Telugu homes. [Ta, Te *tirunīru*]

thirdé *n.*

A rogue, a despicable person. Mainly Tamil homes. [Ta *tirutan*]

- *Don't think of giving him any donation for his club, he's a thirdé.*

this thing *exclam.*

1. A pause-filler during conversation, equivalent to *thingammybob*, *thingammyjig*, Cape English and Afrikaans *dingus*, etc.
 - *I love that – this thing – photograph over there.*
2. A means of tentatively introducing a question which seeks to gain information on a new topic.
 - *This thing – what did he say about the money?*

thittha *adj.*

Spicy, curry-hot, chilli-hot. Same as **kāro**, **kārum**, **thikka**, **thikku**. Mainly Hindi homes. [Bhoj *tīt*, SA Bhoj *tittā* in contrast to Hn *tīkhā*]

- *This curry is too thittha – she's got a very loose hand with the masāla.*

thongue *n.* [ˈtʌŋ]

Tongue. [Change of pronunciation of initial consonant]

thonsil *n.* [ˈtɔːnsəl]

Tonsil. [Change of pronunciation of initial consonant]

thooth *n.* [ˈtuːt]

Tooth. Hence **theeth**, **thooth-ache**, etc. [Change of pronunciation of initial consonant]

thovel *n.*

A nut and mint **chutney** (q.v.), made from finely ground monkey-nuts mixed with either crushed mint or red chillies and a small quantity of water. Now usually called **nuts-chutney**. [Ta *tuwaiyal*]

thrill *v. Slang**

To exaggerate, to deceive. Hence **thriller** *n.* ‘a teller of tall stories, one who deceives by exaggeration’. See also **brom**, **shoot**.

Sunny: But the wit ous get thrilled when you call them sir. – R Govender *Lahnee’s Pleasure*, 18

thuār/thuvar *n.*

Small green Indian lentils (*Cytisus indicus* or *cajanus*). Also spelt **toover**, **toovar**. Known as **thuvar dāl** when cooked. Same as **rahari**, **thaurenka**. See **oil-dōl**. [Gu *tuvar*]

Toover (tur) dhal [or] oil lentils [are] the dried split form of the toover bean, which grows in a pod. This round, flat, dark yellow lentil has a natural oil content – hence the name oil lentil. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 89

Toovar dhal is also known as split pigeon pea oil, or thick oil lentil dhal. The most popular dhal in the north of India, it is served over rice. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 109

thulsi/tholsi *n.*

Basil plant (*Ocimum sanctum*), considered holy among Hindus, planted in the vicinity of Hindu temples or dwellings. Also used for medicinal purposes as palliatives for earache and other aches. [Gu, Hn, Ur *tulsī*, Ta *tulāci*, Te *tulasi*]

Holy basil (tulsi) is considered one of the sacred plants of India and is native to the Indian subcontinent. It is an integral part of Hindu ceremonies and sacraments. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 106

Tulsi [or] basil, [is] the royal plant of the mint family containing an aromatic oil. Held in great veneration by Hindus as representing the Goddess Tulsi-rinda, or Tulsi Mata (Mother Tulsi) and very frequently grown in temples and homes: hence the botanical name, *Ocimum sanctum*. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 215

... and after they had their prasād which consisted of sweetened milk in which was soaked *tholsi* leaves and diced bananas she said, ‘Poobathie, it’s time you got married.’ – R Govender *At the Edge*, 32

thunsil *adj.*

Naughty. [Ta *tuni*, *tunsil*, ‘trouble, sorrow’]

- *He’s a thunsil youngster, this.*

thuriya *n.*

Luffa acutangula, a long gourd with a rough-ridged shell. Same as **lufus**, **pikenka**, **tharoi**. [Gu *tūriyū*, pl. *turiyā*]

three tins *n. phr*

A children’s game played with a small ball and three empty cans, once popular in schools.

■ One team attempts to knock down the set of tin cans stacked one on top of another with a small ball (usually a tennis ball), and to reset them eventually without being caught out by the opposing team. Also SAE. Known as

drie-blikkies or *blikkies* in Afrikaans. See also **guli danda**. [Calqued on Afrik *drie-blikkies*]

tickey-line *adj. phr.*

1. (Of things) Cheap, of poor quality.
 2. (Of people) Indulging in socially unapproved behaviour. Same as **cheap-line** (q.v.). Cf. SABE *tickey-line* 'a syndicate'; 'a woman no longer in the big time or social swing'. – J Branford *Dict of SAE*; Tsotsitaal *cheap line* 'a woman of easy virtue'. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 104. [From SAE *tickey* 'coin worth three pennies' (now obsolete), plus *line* 'class of goods']
- *Where did you buy this tickey-line trousers? Leave those tickey-line people alone.*

tie *v.*

To wrap a sandwich in lunch-wrap.

■ Poorer families use newspaper for this purpose. See also **parcel**.

- *Have you tied your lunch yet?*

tiffin *n.*

A small metal container for carrying food, one of a tier of circular metal containers in which the courses of a meal can be carried to work or on a journey. Rare.

■ The Anglo-Indian and archaic British English meaning of a light midday meal does not occur in SAIE. [From IE *tiffin-carrier*, based on Eng dialect *tiffin*]

Workers had to report for roll-call at five, then set off for the fields with their tools, taking with them rations for the day: 'a double-decker tin with mealie porridge underneath and rice above, with a cup of curry resting on top of the rice'. – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 127

tiger-dance *n.*

Dance formerly performed by men dressed up as tigers at festive occasions celebrated by South Indians. See **six-foot dance**. [Transl. from Ta *puli passu*]

Thaziyahs were led by dancers known as 'tigers', who wore masks and painted their faces and bodies to resemble tigers. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 218

It is an old custom which we can do very well without. The same as they have the Coolie Tiger performance. I consider these quite unnecessary. – Alexander, cited in A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 225

tikka *n.*

Dot worn on the forehead by women, made from vermilion, sandal-paste, or sometimes paper. Has religious significance as a sign of blessing by a priest, or signifies the blessing of the bride and groom by a priest at the close of a wedding ceremony. Same as **botu**, **chāndlo**. See **kongu**, **sendhūr**, **thilak**. [Hn *ṭikā*]

time *n.* *Basilectal*

Used in compounds having as a first element a noun denoting a period of time. Similar to international English, but more productive in SAIE. Similar to Hawaiian English.

- *Diwali-time you'll get a new dress* = 'You'll get a new dress at Diwali'. *Night-time I get frightened* = 'I become afraid at night'. *Dark-time the spooks come out* = 'The spooks come out in darkness'.

time *v.* *Slang**

To watch over, to watch carefully. Also Tsotsitaal *timing* 'to be aware, alert, watchful'. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*, 105.

- *This guy was trying to hide behind a bush, but he didn't know I was timing him.*

tin-fish *n.*

Tinned fish. Cooked as a light curry or as a **chutney** (q.v., sense 1). See also **fish-tin**.

■ Tinned fish remains a popular dish in many homes even though fresh fish might be available and now affordable.

Tin-town *n.*

Popular name for small residential area of the 1950s and 1960s on the banks of the Umgeni River in Durban comprising shanty dwellings made chiefly from tin. Now defunct.

The buildings vary from crude to near respectable, and in some there is evidence of true domestic pride. Tintown has been in existence for nine years and will continue to exist for nine more years. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 108

They came to give this aunty some advice because they were all Tin Town sharks. – Salam Bombay (pseudo.) 'Bhajia & Bhoondi', *Post* 7 May 2008

tiny-beans *n.*

Small, slender, flat green beans (*Cyamopsis psoralioides*), usually fried in oil till crisp. Same as **gūar**, **gwālin**, **kothrenka**.

Tolstoy Farm *n.*

Large farm 35 km from central Johannesburg used by Gandhi from 1910 onwards for his **Satyagraha** (q.v.) ideals in the early c20, named after the Russian author Leo Tolstoy.

■ The property, eleven times the size of the **Phoenix Settlement** (q.v.), was purchased by Hermann Kallenbach, a close friend and supporter of Gandhi, and used as a training ground for youngsters and for experiments in communal living.

Gandhi conceived of a communal farm that could meet their needs and also serve to train a new generation of youth as satyagrahis ... Kallenbach purchased a 1 100-acre farm for £2 000 ... Not surprisingly, the two friends named it Tolstoy Farm, after the man they had admired for almost a decade for his advocacy of the simple rustic life. – U Dhupelia-Mesthrie *Gandhi's Prisoner*, 96

Gandhi left Tolstoy Farm in January 1913 and took some of the youngsters with him to Phoenix which thereafter became his main base. Tolstoy Farm residents nonetheless proved crucial in the Satyagraha campaigns that resumed in 1913. – K Menon *Story of Tolstoy Farm*, 2

too *adv.*

Equivalent to ‘very’, without implying any negative qualities or unnecessary excess. Also SABE and some varieties of British English. Possibly based on *too beautiful for words*, etc. See also **too good**, **too much**.

- *Her youngest child is too beautiful. This sari is too lovely.*

too good *adj. Basilectal*

1. Very clever, skilful, wonderful. Also SABE.

- *He’s too good in his studies.*

2. Over-indulgent.

- *He’s too good in smoking and going to the bioscope.*

too much *adj. Basilectal*

Outrageous, unorthodox, too much to handle. Used in admiration or exasperation. Also SAE and other varieties, including Sri Lankan English.

- *He’s too much.*

topaz *n. Historical*

An Indian interpreter, used in the early days of indenture to translate from an Indian language into English or vice versa. [The term originally referred to a person of Portuguese and Indian descent in the c17 and c18, often a soldier – based on *top-chi* ‘a gunner’ – Persian from Turkish. – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 933. Later it referred mainly to an attendant and an interpreter, influenced by Ta *topāshi* ‘man of two languages’, based on Hn *dobāshī* from *do* ‘two’, *bhāsā* ‘language’ plus agentive suffix *-ī*.]

Breakfast of dry food was issued and cooked rice and dholl will be given for supper. Tin vessels were issued yesterday. Today the badges of the Sirdars, cooks and topazes will be issued. Tomorrow I shall issue the clothing. – Diary of Dr J McIntyre on the *Umvoti*, 26 August 1888, cited in A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 37

The Topaz on board ship is the sweeper who is at sea frequently of this class. – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 933

The Dubash was at Madras formerly a usual servant in every household; and there is still one attached to every mercantile house, as the broker transacting business with natives, and corresponding to the Calcutta banyan. – H Yule & AC Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*, 328

tōpi *n.*

1. A western-styled hat usually worn by older non-Muslim men. See **toppie**. Known in British English as *topee*, based on solar helmet or sun-hat worn by the British in India, hence *topi-wala* or *topeewallah* ‘a European’.

2. A white skull cap made of cloth worn by Muslim males, especially on visits to the mosque for prayer. Known as *kufiya*, *keffiyah* in the Cape. See also **toppie**. [Gu, Hn, Ur *ʔopī*, Te *t̄opī*]
3. (In India) An Indian-style white forage cap worn for a time by Gandhi and for a longer period by other leaders like Nehru, hence **Gandhi-cap**, **Nehru-cap**.

In northern India, correctly, a hat without a brim (a type mandatory for Muslims at prayer, since a brim would prevent the forehead from coming in contact with the ground and it would be disrespectful to worship God with the head uncovered). – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 214

toppie *n.* Slang**

Father. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. Cf. British English and SAE slang *old top*, and SABE *amatopi* ‘older person’ (JB), [Gu, Hn, Ur *ʔopī*, Te *t̄opī* ‘hat’, Gu *ʔopī vālā* ‘one who wears a hat, a European’]

- *My toppie doesn’t know I skafe so much.*

town *n.*

Durban, the city centre of Durban. See also **Tegwīn**.

■ Although ‘going to town’ has this general meaning of ‘city centre’ in many varieties of English, for many SAIE speakers of KZN it refers specifically to Durban, even if they move to another city.

- *A: (on cellphone to friend, resident in Cape Town for 20 years): Are you in town? B: (hesitates): You mean Cape Town or Durban?*

Township *n.* Regional

Usual form for *Umhlatuzana Township*, a middle-class Indian residential area in south-west Durban.

■ *Township* is SAE for an area set aside for ‘non-White’ occupation.

- *She’s from Township.*

trick *v.* Basilectal

To use black magic on someone. See also **najar**, **ohja**, **takāti**.

- *Someone is tricking me – that’s why I’m so sick.*

tronk *n.* Slang*

Prison. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Afrik *tronk*]

- *He was in the tronk for two years.*

true’s God *exclam.*

Upon my word, in truth, honestly! Also SABE. Same as SAE *as true as God*. See also **kassam**, **oath**, **sathima**. [Abbrev. of *as true as God*]

- *A: Are you sure you saw her in town? B: True’s God!*

Truro *n.*

Name of the first ship carrying indentured Indians to arrive in Natal in 1860. Called **Truro ship** by older speakers. Today used as names for magazines, schools, school-clubs, radio stations, etc. See **Belvedere**. The next four ships

were the *Belvedere* and *Lord George Bentnick*, which also arrived in 1860, and the *Spirit of Trade* and *Tyburnia* of 1861. [Probably named after *Truro*, a port city in Cornwall]

The *Truro* arrived in Port Natal on 16 November. By the time the indentured migrants saw the outlines of Port Natal it would have been over a hundred days since they had last seen home. – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 68

Radio Truro *n.*

A radio station based in Durban, aimed at an Indian listenership in the 1970s. See **Radio Lotus**, **Radio Chaar Ou**.

Radio Truro was taken over first by Safee Siddiqi and when he could not make a go of it, Ketan Lakhani took over, but he too has had to dispose of it. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 175

tuition *n.*

Extra lessons as reinforcement of school subjects after school hours provided by a private tutor. Sometimes **tuitions**. Also IE.

- *He goes for tuition in Maths every Saturday.*

tune *v.* – see **chūn**

twang *v. Informal*

To speak in an affected way, especially with an accent associated with another social group.

■ This disapproving term usually refers to the quality of vowels and not to a general nasal quality as in the US. Used in SAIE since the 1970s; now becoming more widely known in non-racial SA, where speakers with many accents mix, try out new styles and adopt some of them. [Eng *twang* *n.* ‘sound of a tight string resonating’, hence *to speak with a twang* ‘to speak with a nasal quality of voice’]

- *Ever since she moved to Maritzburg, she’s started twanging.*



Ugādhi *n.*

The Telugu New Year, celebrated on the first day of the New Moon after the Indian spring equinox. The celebration and prayers are common to the Andhra Pradesh and Mysore areas. **Pachadi** (q.v.) is prepared as a special item to be eaten. [Te *ugādi*]

A typical Ugaadhi day begins with all the members of the family having their heads and bodies anointed with sesame or groundnut oil followed by a hot bath and the wearing of new clothes. – V Latchanna *Telugu Companions*, 62

ulema *n.*

Religious scholars, jurists, learned men, **imams** (q.v.) and judges in Islam – e.g. *Sunni Ulema Council* (Cape Town). [Ur *ūlema*, from Arabic '*ulama*', pl. of '*alim*']

The '*ulamā*' ... are ... often referred to as if they formed a coherent professional monolithic group of intellectuals and academics. While they ... are ... the 'group ethic' should not be overstressed. The '*ulama*' were often regarded as custodians of orthodoxy. The Arabic word should never be translated as 'clergy' of which there are none in Islam. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*, 252

South African Indian Muslims turn mainly to the theological centre in Deobad in India for such rulings, this being the centre from which most of the local *ulema* are drawn. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 182

At the time you became a state guest at Robben Island, the youth were completely disenamoured with the ulema class. These days ... the younger generation hang onto their every word. – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 166

umra/umrah *n.*

Minor Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, in contrast to **haj** (q.v.). [Ur *umrā* from Ar '*umra*']

A minor pilgrimage to Mecca, which does not count towards fulfilment of the religious duty and is called in Arabic an '*umra*', may be made at any time and requires less ceremonial – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

... I'll write a letter explaining that we are taking you for Umrah – anyone can understand that this is a blessed opportunity for a girl your age! You'll miss some work ... you can catch up when you get back. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 116

uncle *n.*

1. (Voc.) A respectful term for an older man, usually not a close relative (for whom a term from an Indian language is often used. Also IE and other varieties of SAE.

2. (Ref.) A respectful term for either an older man or one's relative. Also SAE, IE and other English varieties. See **aunty**.

'Why did he arrest you? You weren't doing anything ... in the car were you?'

'No Sathiemā, Uncle ... I never did nothing.' – R Govender *At the Edge*, 146

I'll never forget the nuts-uncle who sold salted roasted peanuts to us in the schoolbreaks. – Durban resident, January 2009

unders *n.*: to have someone unders *Slang***

To have someone under one's control, to have significant influence over someone, to have someone under one's thumb (usually said of henpecked husband). [Neologism from Eng *under* prep]

Eh uncle, your wife got you unders, eh? Petticoat government big time! – K Govender *Women in Brown*, 297

unity *adj.* *Basilectal*

United. Close-knit. Hence **unity people** 'close-knit people, people united by a spirit of community'.

- *We are all unity people in this street.* – Durban resident, December 1986

uplag/uplang *n.*

Hidden assets, profits not disclosed on the balance sheet, undeclared money or assets. Hence **uplag money**. Also spelt **uplung**, **uplang**. [Gu *uplak* 'increase accrual']

... So long as I live I will honour this agreement. I understand the concept of uplung and why you do not wish to reduce it to writing. – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 9

urad/urad dhāl *n.*

Black split lentils (*Lens culinaris*, *Dolichos pilosus*). Used to make **papad**, **idli** and **dosa** (q.v.) or cooked as a dry curry. See **dhāl**. [Hn, Ur *urad*]

Also known as black gram, black lentils (urad dal) are used whole in north Indian cookery and split in the south. Batters made of ground black lentils are prepared every day in many south Indian homes. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 156

Urdu *n.*

An Indo-Aryan language of India spoken by Muslims, deriving from medieval developments of Sanskrit in contact with languages like Persian, Arabic and Turkish.

■ Urdu is an official language in Pakistan and one of the state languages of India. Though written in a modification of the Arabic script, it is closely similar in structure to **Hindi** (q.v.), with which it shares 400 million speakers today. The two languages are differentiated in their religious and cultural lexis. Urdu was brought to SA by indentured workers from the south of India (see **Hyderabadhi**), the north (where it is closely related to **Bhojpuri** (q.v.) and Awadhi) and parts of Gujarat. Urdu is a language of Islamic culture in SA, second only to Arabic. See **Bazme Adab**, **mushaira**, **qawālī**.

It is said that Urdu was born in the bazaars of Delhi and raised in the camps of the Moghul army. Amir Khusro sometimes calls it 'Dehalvi', as does Abul Fazl. The word 'Urdu' was first used in Shah Jehan's time to refer to a mixture of Hindi and Persian, but its skeleton had been in use for centuries as a popular link between Deccan and Delhi as well as between Peshawar and Chittagong. – S Chaudhary *Foreign Languages in India*, 187

Chengal Reddy was born Hindu and given a Telugu name. He became Muslim as a young man, changed his name to Chiniah Siethiah, married a Muslim woman Jamal Bee Raj Mohamed, and changed his home language from Telugu (and Sanskrit in the Temples) to Urdu (and Arabic in Mosques). – A Desai & G Vahed *Inside Indenture*, 270

used *adj. Basilectal*

To be or get accustomed to someone, to become familiar with something through experience

■ Close to the Standard English meaning, but frequently used without the preposition 'to'. Hence **too used** 'very accustomed'. See **too**. [Eng *used to X*]

- *Poor thing – she's not used.*
- *Don't worry, you'll get used.*
- *She's too used to her granny.*



vadavum *n.* [ˈvʌdʌvʊm]

Sauce or spice containing dried shallot, onion and mustard seeds. Used as a base in medicinal preparations or as flavouring in curries such as **branjol** (q.v.), fish and chicken. Same as **phorān**, **vagār**. [Ta, Te *vaṭavu*]

vadhina/wadhina *n.*

One's brother's wife. Same as **anni**, **bhābi**. [Te *vadine*]

vagār *n.*

Seasoning of brown onions and spices, especially mustard seed and **jīra** (q.v.) in heated oil or **ghee** (q.v.), as preparation used in curries. Sometimes called a *tempering spice*. Also spelt **vagaar**. Same as **phorān**, **vadavum**. [Gu *vagār*, Hn *baghār*]

Vagaar means the captured aroma of selected seeds, through a tempering that is an integral process of Indian cooking. A good vagaar is highly important in Indian cooking ... [which] should have not only the right flavour of spices, masalas and herbs, but the warmth and aroma of spices such as cinnamon, cloves, cardamom and cumin ... If you burn your vagaar spices, be sure to start again. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 20

For the really luxurious dish slivered almonds alone are fried in ghee for a vagaar over rice dishes – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 13

vagarilu bhāth *n.*

Refried rice cooked in a spicy vagār. [Gu *vagār* plus *bhāt* 'cooked rice']

vāi *v. Slang**

To go, to depart. Also SAE slang.

Spellings: **vie**, **vai**, **vaay**. Not the same as the English *vie*, 'to compete, strive for superiority over a rival' or the Tamil *vai* 'to come'. [Afrik. *waai* 'to blow, to dash off, go off', possibly reinforced by Ptg *vai* 'to go']

'Salaams, Maha! Howzit vaaing?' he answered. – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 163

Yah, so, like I didn't want to vaai to varsity and all. – S Lee *Story of Maha*, 210

to vāi pōzi

To go home, to return home. See **pōzi**.

Vaishnavite [ˈvaɪʃnavait]

1. *n.* A follower or devotee of **Vishnu** (q.v.).
2. *adj.* Pertaining to Vishnu. See **Saivite**.

Vaishnavites consider Lord Ram, Krishna, and some the Buddha, to be incarnations of Vishnu (in fact a Vaishnavite is far more likely to worship Ram or Krishna than Vishnu as himself). – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 222

My people are *Vaisnava gotram*, Vishnu worshippers. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 59

North Indians are almost always Vaishnavite in orientation and have traditionally catered for Hindi-speaking and Gujarati communities ... – A Diesel & P Maxwell *Hinduism in Natal*, 21

vakka *n.*

Betel-nut (q.v.), areca nut. Same as **supāri**, **pāke**. [Te *vakka*]

vālor *n.*

A type of flat kidney-shaped bean that is cooked when mature or cooked with the pod while still immature: *Dolichos lablab*, *Lablab purpureus* or close varieties. Same as **sēm**, similar to **mochka**, **papadi**. Also known as **vāl**. [Gu *vālo!*]

On the whole Gujaratis are vegetarians, and as such, they have perfected the cooking of vegetables, lentils and pulses. One pulse included in a thali is val (valor) a variety of bean ... Val beans grow on flat pods on small bushes. When the pods mature, they are plucked and sun-dried. – M Bharadwaj *Indian Pantry*, 154

vanekum *exclam.*

Greetings traditionally exchanged by South Indian Hindus upon meeting or leave-taking at any time of day. Usually accompanied by placing palms together at mid-chest level in the traditional Hindu way. Older speakers. Also spelt **vanakum**, **vanakam**. See **namasté**, **namaskār**, **salām**. [Ta *vanakam*]

Ruthnam Pillay would be introducing the Indian programme on SABC and every home in the district would have the radio on full blast ... ‘Good morning listeners, vanakum, namaaste and salaams to all you very good people’. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 66

vānia *n.*

A Hindu of the merchant class, caste of traders, merchants and shop-keepers. Same as **banya** (q.v.), but not used derogatorily. See **bunny-chow**. [Gu *vāṇiyo*, pl. *vaṇiyā*]

varyāli *n.*

A mixture of roasted aniseed (**sauf** – q.v.), sesame seed (**tal** – q.v.) cumin (**jīra** – q.v.) and uncooked **dol** (q.v.), eaten as after-dinner digestive. Also spelt and pronounced **varyāri**. [Gu *variyaḷi*]

It is customary in an Indian home to hand a small plate of the roasted seeds [of **soomph** or varyari] round after meals. They are used as a digestive and as a breath sweetener. – R Parbhoo *Indian Cookery in SA*, 14

vedde/vadde *n.*

A crisp, flat circular snack made of spiced, ground lentils and flour fried in oil, frequently with a hole in the centre. [Hn *vaḍa*, Ta *vaḍai*]

Vadde [is] a South Indian chilli-bite. – Z Mayat *Indian Delights*, 231

Born-again Christians put a fish on the back of their cars, right? What do born-again Hindus put? You don't know? Born-again Hindus put vaddes, you know, the one with the hole in the middle. – K Pillay *Looking for Muruga*, 17

Vedic *adj.* ['ve:ɖɪk]

1. Pertaining to the tenets of the **Arya Samaj**, a reform Hindu movement, which stresses the principles set out in the Vedas or early Hindu scriptures. Thus **Vedic prayers**, **Vedic wedding**, etc. See **Sanāthan**.

2. Pertaining to the Vedas, the most ancient Hindu scriptures. In *COD*. [Gu, Hn *vaidik*]

The Natal Tamil Vedic Society building has three halls ... for social and cultural purposes. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 106

veis/vys *v.* ['veis] *Slang**

To show off, to brag, to put on airs. Cf. Tsotsitaal *wys* 'to dribble at soccer, show off dribbling skills'. – L Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*. [Afrik *wys* 'to show, demonstrate']

- *Stop veising here.*

veleku *n.*

A small, open, oil-burning brass lamp lit during prayer or at festivals. Rare – now referred to as *the lamp*, **God lamp** or **Kamachi (lamp)** (q.v.). Same as **dhīvo**, **dhīya**.

Spellings: **velku**, **valku**, **vulca**, **vilaku**. [Ta *viḷakku*, Te *velupu*]

'Then you must pray to her. Take some of those lovely asters and put them around the valku and pray to her.' That evening I went to the valku and prayed to Saraswathie, the goddess of knowledge. I remembered Thatha and asked him to forgive me for neglecting him. – A Govender *Acacia Thorn in my Heart*, 98

I noticed quite early in life that Fridays were exceptional: ... the *vulca* was cleaned and lit and, most notable of all, the food prepared that day was severely uniform – J Naidoo *Coolie Location*, 13

kuthu veleku *n.*

Household holy lamp. [Ta *kutum* 'household, family', plus *viḷakku*]

... Poobathie took off her shoes, washed her feet and joined them. She stared at the small, steady flame in the brass *kuthu-velkoo* and she prayed with ... intensity. – R Govender *At the Edge*, 30

vengan/vegan *n.* ['vɛ:ŋən]/['ve:ɡən]

Brinjal, egg-plant, aubergine. Rare. Not related to modern English term *vegan* for a strict vegetarian. Same as **kathrika**, **baingan**. See **branjol**, **garden chops**. [Gu *vengan*]

verse *v. Children's speech*

To play against another team at sport. [Abbrev. from *versus* 'against']

- *We versed them last week, so what's the point of playing them so soon again?*

vethelu *n.*

Betel-leaf (q.v.), leaf of *Piper betel*, an evergreen climbing plant with soft wide leaves chewed as a mild stimulant. Same as **pān**. See **pāké**. [Mal, Ta *vettilai*, the source of the Eng word *betel*]

vethelu-paké *n.*

Betel-leaf and betel-nut combination. Same as **pān-supāri**. See **pāké**. [Dvandva compound based on *vethelu* plus *paké* 'betel-nut']

vet-ou *n. Slang**

A White man, White person. Also spelt **wit ou**, **vit ou**. See **bruin-ou**, **boer-ou**, **char-ou**, **pekkie-ou**. [Afrik *wit* 'white' plus *ou* 'fellow']

Ja, but man, he getting lot privileges with letters ... because they thinking him one wit ou, not a bloody coolie. – D Govender *Finishing Touch*, 100
'Jake?' Sam asked, 'How can these vit ous operate around here?' – A Hassim *Lotus People*, 204

vibrate *v. Slang**

To be afraid, to tremble with fear. See **vip**, **gabrāts**.

vibūdhi *n.*

Ashes, holy ashes, usually smeared in horizontal lines on forehead or used to make a sacred dot. See also **thinnar**. [Hn *vibhūti*]

But that did not deter him from dipping his right forefinger into the bowl of *vibhudi*, sacred ash, and placing a large white dot on his forehead. – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 133

vip *v. Slang**

To be afraid. See **vibrate**. [Abbrev. of *vibrate*]

Vishnu *n.*

One of the chief deities of Hinduism, together with Brahma and **Shiva**. Vishnu is the Preserver, also known as *Maha-Vishnu* 'Great Vishnu'. Amongst his incarnations are **Krishna** and **Rama** (q.v.). See **Vaishnavite**.

Unlike Shiva, Vishnu is wholly benign, the fighter for good against evil, the protector of the world. He is portrayed as blue in colour and, usually, as having four arms. – N Hankin, *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 222

'This is the temple city of India,' she would say, 'no matter which part of the town you go to, you will find a temple and all the temples are for *Sivam* and for *Vishnu* people.' – P Poovalingam *Anand*, 59

vūs/voose *adj. Slang****

Used to describe someone who suddenly adopts modern or 'with-it' ways of dress and behaviour. Same as **waked up**. [Zu *ukuvusa* 'awaken', *-vuswa* 'awakened']

- *Ey, she's so voose now, you won't recognise her.*



wada/vada *n.*

A round snack of fried pulse with a potato or similar filling. See **dhahi vada**. Cf. British WW II serviceman's expression **char and a wad** 'tea and a cake or bun.' – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 35. [Gu, Hn, Ur *vaḍā*]

wājib *adj.*

That which is compulsory within Islam, but which may be contested. See **fard**. [Ur *wājib*]

waked up *adj.* *Slang*** – see **vūs/voose**

Wali-Allah *n.*

A saint, holy man, friend of Allah. See **Sūfi**. [Ur *wali-allah* from Ar *walī* 'saint holy man' plus *Allah*]

ward-draw *n.* ['wɑ:drɔ]

Wardrobe. On analogy of **chest-draw** 'chest of drawers' (q.v.).

wāri *n.*

A plot of land, orchard, smallholding, enclosure, house. Usually used in relation to property in India. [Ko *wādi*]

- *I've decided to sell my wāri.* – Cape Town resident 2010

waste *n.* *Informal*

A good-for-nothing person, wastrel.

- *He's a waste, that ou – he drinks juba an'all all the time.* – Durban resident 1986

water *n.:* **where there's water, you must go to drink** *Basilectal*

To take advantage of someone's weakness, generosity or promiscuity; to take advantage of a situation. Rare.

- *A: I see he's visiting that house again. B: Where there's water, you must go to drink.*

what *pron.:* **what's there if?** *Basilectal*

A rhetorical, interrogative phrase, equivalent to 'What does it matter?', 'What's it to you?'

- *What's there if they spend all their money?*
- *What's there if I wear tight jeans?*

what-what *pron.*

Everything (rhetorical), what of several things. Similarly **who-who** for 'who' (pl.).

- *What-what we tried* = 'We tried everything'.

where

1. *interrog.* A rhetorical interrogative, for a question to which the answer is a definite negative.
 - Slightly different nuance from English rhetorical *where*, as in *Where will I find the girl of my dreams?* [Eng rhetorical *where*]
- *Where he'll help with the shopping* = 'He won't help with the shopping – don't even ask'.
2. *exclam.* Denoting surprise, disbelief or sarcasm. May also be said in full as **where babé** (Zu *we bábe*). See **āi**, **how**. [Probably from Zu *wee, wee bábe* denoting fear, surprise, sarcasm, reinforced by Eng rhetorical *where*]
 - *A: I'm going to get a job and buy a new car. B: Where!*

wind *v.* ['waɪnd] *Slang**

1. To drive at high speed.
 2. To have sexual intercourse. See **spoon**.
- *We were winding it on the freeway.*

wish *v.* *Basilectal*

To greet, send wishes to. Also SAE and IE.

- *Did you wish my dogs when you came?* – Umkomaas resident, April 2010

with all that *adv.*

Despite that, for all that.

- *He's never paid me rent for six months, with all that I never kicked him out.*

wompodì *n.*

Thin, twisted crisps made from gram flour fried in oil. Now rare. Same as *sēv*. [Ta *ompaṭi*]

word *n.:* **word came for her** *Basilectal*

A proposal of marriage made by the representative of a male to the family of a female. See also **book**, **future**, **interested**, **proposed**. [Calqued on similar phrase in Gu, Hn, Ta, Ur]

wudu/wazu/wuzu *n.*

Ritual washing-up before Islamic prayers. [Ur *wudū* from Ar *wuḍu*]

Wudu' [refers to a] minor washing of parts of the body before prayer. It assumes that **ghusl** [major ritual washing to reach a state of purity after childbirth, menstruation or contact with a dead body] has already taken place. Sand may be used if water is scarce or unavailable. – I Netton *Popular Dict of Islam*

Before praying, Muslims make ablutions, *wudu*, in a prescribed form. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 185

wudumbu *n. Rural*

An iguana, leguan, large monitor lizard, *Varanus*.

■ In rural areas some men cook and eat a wudumbu in the belief that it gives them strength. [Ta *uṭumpu*, Te *uḍumu*]

Indians ... had another delicacy, says Glen Hayes. 'They caught leguans in the cane and made a delicious curry from them. At first the Pundos took no interest in leguans but gradually they acquired the taste.' – A Hocking *Renishaw*, 214

wurendé/wurunda *n.*

A round snack stuffed with sweetened **gram dōl** (q.v.), a **gulgulla** (q.v.) made with lentils or sugar and raisins, etc. [Ta *uruṇḍai*]

Woorende: this South Indian delicacy is also my favourite. – S Somers *Indian Cuisine the SA Way*, 232

wurké/wudukai *n.*

A small hand-held drum tapering in the middle, played on both sides, accompanied by bell-like cymbals (see **shalembu**). See **dholak**, **molo**, **thabla**. [Ta *uṭukkai*]

wuruka/urugai *n.*

Pickles. See **achār**. [Ta *ūrukāy*, based on *uru* 'soaked' plus *kāi* 'vegetables']



y'all *pron.* ['jɔ:l]

The usual second person plural pronoun, even in formal speech. Also Southern US English and Caribbean Creole, though unrelated. The full form *you all* is rare in spoken SAIE, but may occur in writing. Usually spelt **you'll**, **yorl**, **your'll** in informal writing. [Contraction of *you all*]

'Oh, yorl heard?' she announced flinging open the door to the study. 'That Umlazi Dr Osman got shot dead ...' – S Lee *Maha, Ever After*, 36

'Do all of y'all understand?' – SA Indian speaker at conference, Durban March 2010

yall's *pron.* ['jɔ:lz]

Your (pl.). This is the normal genitive form in informal speech.

- *Is that yall's cat?*

yajna *n.*

Hindu prayers involving a pledge or sacrifice. Now more commonly used as a synonym for **havan/hāwan** (q.v.). [Hn *yajña*]

South African Hindu temples range from the simple domestic altar ... where the housewife lights her camphor following the tradition of the Vedic *yajna*, to the highly ornate architectural forms built by special committees. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 162

yammadiyoh *exclam.* – see **ammadio**

yard lady *n.*

Female resident who collects the rent for a landlord. Now rare. See **bag-lady**, **suitcase aunty**. [From Eng *yard*, referring to area shared in common by tenants in a block of flats]

you-people *pron. Basilectal*

You (pl.). Less common than **y'all**. Said with main stress on first word. Sometimes faintly derogatory. Also SAE.

- *You-people got no manners!*

your-peoples' *pron. Basilectal*

You (pl.). Less common than **yall's**. Said with main stress on first word.

- *Is that your-peoples' dog?*



zakāt *n.*

Obligatory annual charity payment in Islam, compulsory alms tax constituting one of the five pillars of Islam.

■ A Muslim is required to pay the **zakāt** (two-and-a-half per cent of his annual income) either to a central fund as in an Islamic state or to a voluntary personal organisation for the benefit of the poor. In SA the largest well-organised South African Zakaah Fund (SANZAF) collects and distributes **zakāt**. Also spelt **zakah**. [Ur *zakāt*, from Arabic *zakāh*, pl. *zakawāt*]

... the classic prayer of our prophet and his companions to recite every now and again ‘And forget not the ones detained – but remember them in your prayers and with zakaat!’ – Z Mayat & A Kathrada *Letters*, 23

zamindār *n. Historical*

An Indian landowner. Also IE. In *COD*. [Hn *jamīndārī*, Ur *zamīndārī*, based on *zamin* ‘earth, land, ground’ from Persian plus *dār* ‘possessor, holder’]

[Zamindari:] The system adopted in Bengal in early British days, whereby the individual responsible for collecting and paying to the government the revenue from a tract of land (normally, a locally influential person) became recognised as the freehold owner. – N Hankin *Hanklyn-Janklin*, 229

In the *zamindari* system, the tax was imposed on an individual or the community who owned an estate and occupied a position like that of a landlord ... A *zamindar* paid the share of the taxation and retained the balance for himself. – S Bhana *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal*, 37

Zanzibāri *n.*

A member of a small community of Black Muslims residing in Chatsworth, Durban, descended from East African slaves (mainly from Mozambique and Malawi) liberated from Arab ships and brought to Natal by the British in the 1870s.

■ The slaves were also placed in the charge of the Protector of Indian immigrants, and subsequently moved to live among the Indian community since the 1960s in terms of South Africa’s apartheid laws. Also spelt **Zanzibaree**. [Place name *Zanzibar*, the port/island from which East African slaves were shipped.]

On Sunday, July 28th, 1929, His Highness Syed Khaifa bin Harub, Sultan of Zanzibar, visited Durban where he was accorded an official welcome in the Town Hall ... Zanzibaree members of the little colony were summoned to give their help. – B Fuller *Springbok Round the Corner*, 14

The first **muezzin** (q.v.) of Islam was Hazrat Bohra, a negro slave, who the Prophet freed and who became one of his closest friends. Durban, presumably in commemoration of that tradition, has continued to employ

negro muezzins drawn from the local community of Zanzibari Muslims. – F Meer *Portrait of Indian S Africans*, 188

zillah/jillah *n. Historical*

A magisterial district in India. In *COD*. Used in reference to places of origin of Indian indentured labourers. See **tāluk**, **thanna**. [Gu, Hn, Ta, Te *jilā*, Ur *zilā*]

Often the name of the town was the same as that of the *zillah* and the *thanna*. – S Bhana *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal*, 41

zink *n. ['ziŋk] Basilectal*

Kitchen sink. Also SAE. [Change of pronunciation of initial consonant, rather than direct link to SAE *zinc* 'galvanised iron, iron coated with zinc', from Afrik]

- *Put the plates in the zink.*

zol *n. Slang**

Dagga (*Cannabis sativa*), a measure of dagga, a cigarette containing dagga. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal 'a cigarette made by rolling loose tobacco or marijuana'. – Molamu *Tsotsi-taal*. Cf. **ganja**, **bhang**. [Afrik. *zol* 'a hand-rolled cigarette', probably related to Mexican border argot of the 1950s *zol* 'a marijuana cigarette'. – J Branford *Dict of SAE*]

zonda *v. Slang**

To dislike; to hate. Also SAE slang and Tsotsitaal. [Zu *ukuzonda*]

- *I donno why, but I really zonda that guy.*

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