



Parlez-vous français?

Kalpana Theophilus begins a series aimed at helping practitioners cope with language barriers

In an increasingly multicultural and cosmopolitan society, optometrists are often called upon to perform eye examinations on patients who do not speak English. All too often, what should be a simple enjoyable interaction between a patient and practitioner can be a source of stress and anguish for both parties, purely because we cannot communicate in a common language. While all of us, I'm sure, have managed to conduct an examination with the use of gestures, pointing and facial expressions, how much easier would it be if we could instruct our patients with a few phrases in their own language.

This series of short articles, therefore, sets out to equip the practitioner with some basic language phrases for use in an eye examination. The European languages will be written in their native form and phonetically, while languages of the Middle East and Far East will only be presented phonetically, so that you can pronounce the words as they are written.

Ironically, unless you intend to study and become fluent in the language, it would be self-defeating to speak too authentically, since you may not then be able to understand the reply you receive. Consequently, this is a very basic set of phrases and vocabulary, and should still be heavily supplemented with your usual sign language and charming smile.

I hope that these phrases will be of use to optometrists, dispensing opticians, contact lens fitters and support staff alike and will go some way to putting your patients at ease and improve the accuracy of your subjective tests. Start with a few phrases, and as your confidence grows you can pick up on the more complex sentences, and even start making up a few of your own.

French

French is the mother tongue for about 87 million people. As a first language it is spoken in Western Europe (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Monaco), Western and Central Africa, and Canada. French is also the official language in 29 countries.

The French always seem to master

the English language so well, often making the need for the optometrist to speak French redundant. However, in the last three months alone, I have examined two patients who only spoke French, even though one was an eight year-old child whom I'm sure understood every word I said, but was just too shy to reply.

French is probably the language that we are all the most familiar with from our school days, so I'm sure that this article will act as a refresher course for most of you. For the fluent French speaker do bear in mind this is a basic 'get you by' aide and not an exercise in grammar.

I have written each phrase in French, and then written it phonetically to help you with the pronunciation.

Don't be too embarrassed to try each phrase with a little French accent. Please note that in French all nouns are either masculine or feminine. This affects the pronunciation of the preceding word. In order to keep things simple, the following phrases are written predominantly in a masculine format. They should, however, still be understood by your patients.

I hope you enjoy trying some French out, and 'bonne chance'.

● The author would like to give special thanks to Elinor Block for providing the editorial for the French translation.

● **KalpanaTheophilus** is an optometrist practising in London

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INTRODUCTION

| | |
|--|---|
| Hello | Bonjour <i>bonjoor</i> |
| Sir | Monsieur <i>muhsurh</i> |
| Madam | Madame <i>madamm</i> |
| Young lady/ Miss | Mademoiselle <i>mam-woe-zell</i> |
| I don't speak French, but I can speak a little | Je ne parle pas Français, mais je peux parler un peu <i>Juh nuh parl pa fronsay, may juh puh parlay un puh</i> |

HISTORY AND SYMPTOMS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Do you have? | Avez-vous? <i>avay-voov</i> |
| Spectacles | Lunettes <i>loonet</i> |
| For distance | Pour distance <i>por distonce</i> |
| For near | Pour proche <i>por prosh</i> |
| Contact lenses | Verre de contact <i>vair duh contact</i> |
| A problem with | Un probleme avec <i>un probleme avec</i> |
| Your eyes | Vos yeux <i>vos yuh</i> |
| Your vision | Votre vision <i>votruh viz-ion</i> |
| Pain | Douleur <i>doo-lur</i> |
| Headache | Mal de tete <i>mal duh tet</i> |
| Where | Ou <i>oo</i> |
| For how long? | Depuis combien de temps? <i>depwee combyan duh ton?</i> |



Foreign phrases

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| All the time | Tout le temps <i>too luh ton</i> |
| Days | Jours <i>jhoor</i> |
| Weeks | Semaines <i>suhmen</i> |
| Months | Mois <i>mwa</i> |
| Years | Ans <i>ohn</i> |
| When | Quand <i>kohn</i> |
| Today | Aujourd'hui <i>oh-jord-wee</i> |
| Yesterday | Hier <i>eeyair</i> |
| In the morning | Le matin <i>luh matan</i> |
| In the afternoon | L'après midi <i>lapray meedee</i> |
| In the evening | Le soir <i>luh swar</i> |
| All day | Toute la journée <i>toot la jhoornay</i> |
| Have you seen a doctor? | Vous êtes alle chez le docteur? <i>voo zet allay shay luh doctur</i> |
| A pharmacist | Pharmacien <i>farmasee-ahn</i> |
| Medication | Medicament <i>medic-amon</i> |
| Show me | Montrez-moi <i>montray-mwa</i> |
| That's fine | C'est bien <i>say byan</i> |
| Big | Grand <i>gron</i> |
| Small | Petit <i>paytee</i> |
| Yes | Oui <i>wee</i> |
| No | Non <i>noh</i> |
| SUBJECTIVE TESTS | |
| Please | S'il vous plait <i>seel voo play</i> |
| Look at | Regardez <i>regard-ay</i> |
| This | Celui-ci <i>say-looey-see</i> |
| The light | La lumière <i>la loomi-air</i> |
| Open | Ouvrez <i>ooh-vray</i> |
| Close | Fermez <i>fermay</i> |
| Keep looking at that | Regardez seulement la <i>regard-ay suhluh-mon la</i> |
| Tell me | Dites moi <i>deet mwa</i> |
| The letters | Les lettres <i>lay letrah</i> |
| The numbers | Les chiffres <i>lay shiffrah</i> |
| One more time | Encore une fois <i>oncor oon fwa</i> |

| | |
|---|---|
| The picture | L'image <i>lee-marge</i> |
| Up there | En haut <i>on auh</i> |
| Down there | En bas <i>on ba</i> |
| To the left | A gauche <i>a gaush</i> |
| To the right | A droite <i>a dwat</i> |
| Is it clear? | Est-ce que c'est clair? <i>eske say clare?</i> |
| Is it more clear? | Est-ce que c'est plus clair? <i>eske say ploo clare?</i> |
| Is it less clear? | Est-ce que c'est moins clair? <i>eske say mwa clare?</i> |
| With this lens? | Avec ce verre? <i>avec suh vair?</i> |
| Or | Ou <i>oo</i> |
| Without this lens? | Sans ce verre? <i>sohn suh vair?</i> |
| Which is more clear? | Quel est le plus clair? <i>kel ay le ploo clare?</i> |
| I want to make this appear more round for you | Je veux que celui-ci semble plus rond pour vous <i>Juh vuh kuh say-looey-see sombluh ploo rohn por voo</i> |
| Is it more round with...? | Est-ce que c'est plus rond avec...? <i>eske say plus rohn avec...?</i> |
| Lens 'one' or 'two'? | Verre 'un' ou 'deux'? <i>vair 'uhn' oo 'duh'?</i> |
| VISUAL FIELDS | |
| How many lights do you see? | Combien de lumieres voyez-vous? <i>combyan duh loomi-air voyay voo?</i> |
| Press the button when see the light | Pressez le bouton quand vous voyez la lumiere <i>press-ay luh boo-ton kohn voo</i> |
| | <i>voyay la loomi-air</i> |
| Tell me how many lights do you see? | Dites moi combien de lumiere vous voyez? <i>deet mwa combyan duh loomi-air voo voyay?</i> |
| In the periphery | En peripherie <i>ohn peri-fair-ee</i> |
| Red | Rouge <i>rooj</i> |
| Green | Vert <i>vair</i> |
| White | Blanc <i>blon</i> |
| TONOMETRY | |
| Place your chin here | Mettez menton ici <i>mettay mohton eesee</i> |
| Place your forehead here | Mettez front ici <i>mettay fron eesee</i> |
| I will now measure your eye pressure | Je vais mesurer la pression de vos yeux <i>Juh vay muzuray la press-ion de voz yuh</i> |
| I will now puff some air towards your eyes | Je vais souffler de l'air vers votre yeux <i>Juh vay sooflay de lair ver votruh yuh</i> |



CONCLUSION

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| You have... | <i>Vous avez voo zavay</i> |
| Healthy eyes | <i>Les yeux sains lays yuh sohn</i> |
| Myopia | <i>Myopie mee-oppee</i> |
| Hypermetropia | <i>Hypermetropie heepermay-tropee</i> |
| You need glasses for... | <i>Vous avez besoin de lunettes pour voo zavay buzwan duh loonet por</i> |
| Distance/near | <i>Distance/proche distonce/prosh</i> |
| You need to consult a doctor... | <i>Il faut consulter un docteur eel fau consooltay un doctur</i> |
| Today | <i>Aujourd'hui oh-jord-wee</i> |
| Tomorrow | <i>Demain duman</i> |
| Urgent | <i>Urgent urjon</i> |
| When you get home | <i>Quand vous retournez chez vous con vuh retornay shay voo</i> |
| Soon | <i>Bientot byan-toh</i> |

VOCABULARY

| | |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| Lens | <i>Verre/lentille vair/lontee</i> |
|------|---------------------------------------|

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Diabetic | <i>Diabetique diyabeteek</i> |
| Blood | <i>Sang sohn</i> |
| Blood pressure | <i>Pression arterielle press-ion artayree-ell</i> |
| Haemorrhage | <i>Hemorragie emor-rajee</i> |
| Infection | <i>Infection anfeksyon</i> |
| Ulcer | <i>Ulcere oolserh</i> |
| Discharge | <i>Suppuration soopoor-assiohn</i> |
| Itch | <i>Demangeaison daymon-jay-zon</i> |
| Sting | <i>Piqure pee-kur</i> |
| Cataract | <i>Cataracte cataract</i> |
| Inflammation | <i>Inflammation an-flamassiohn</i> |
| Glaucoma | <i>Glaucome glaw-com</i> |
| Goodbye | <i>Au revoir ovwar</i> |
| Thank you | <i>merci mersee</i> |

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