



Chinese whispers

Kalpana Theophilus continues her series to help practitioners cope with language barriers

China has the largest population in the world, and Chinese is therefore the world's most common language.

About one-fifth of the world's population speak some form of Chinese as their native tongue. The language has a very high level of internal diversity – many dialects

of Chinese are different enough to be mutually incomprehensible. Standard Mandarin is the official language of the Peoples Republic of China and Taiwan, as well as one of the four official languages of Singapore.

Standard Cantonese is the official language of Hong Kong and Macau (along with English). It is also spoken in south east China, and Malaysia,

Europe, Australia, Fiji, and north America. Cantonese is, therefore, the chosen language for the following phrases.

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● **Kalpana Theophilus** is an optometrist practising in London

Hello	<i>lay Ho</i>
I don't speak Chinese, but I can say a few words	<i>or mm sic gong jong mun, sic gong gay gor jee</i>
Do you have?	<i>yuw moe</i>
Spectacles	<i>arn geng</i>
contact lenses	<i>yun ying arn geng</i>
Do you have a problem with?	<i>yuw moe mun tai</i>
Your eyes	<i>arn</i>
Your vision	<i>tai yer</i>
Pain	<i>tong</i>
Headache	<i>tuw tong</i>
Diplopia / double vision	<i>seung chong ying jeung</i>
Where?	<i>been dough</i>
How long?	<i>gay loi</i>
All the time?	<i>sing yut</i>
Days	<i>yut</i>
Weeks	<i>sing kay</i>
Months	<i>yoot</i>
Years	<i>leen</i>
When?	<i>gay see</i>
Morning	<i>joe seung</i>
Afternoon	<i>har mm</i>
Evening	<i>yeah marn</i>
All day	<i>sing yut</i>
Have you seen a doctor?	<i>yuw mo tai yee sung</i>
Medication	<i>yerk mut</i>
Show me	<i>bay or tai</i>
That's fine / good	<i>hoe</i>
Yes	<i>hai</i>
No	<i>mn hai</i>
Big	<i>die</i>
Small	<i>sai</i>
One	<i>yut</i>
Two	<i>yee</i>
Three	<i>sarm</i>
Four	<i>say</i>
Look at	<i>tai</i>
This	<i>lee dow</i>
That	<i>gor dow</i>
The light	<i>dung</i>
The picture	<i>gong jai</i>
Open your eyes	<i>dar hoi arn</i>
Close your eyes	<i>hup my arn</i>
Tell me the letters	<i>dook dee jee</i>

The numbers	<i>sow mok jee</i>
Look	<i>mong</i>
To the left	<i>gor</i>
To the right	<i>yuw</i>
Up	<i>seung</i>
Down	<i>har</i>
Is it clear?	<i>ching mm ching</i>
Is it clearer?	<i>ching d</i>
Is it better with?	<i>yiw ching d</i>
Is it better without?	<i>mm yiw ching d</i>
More clear	<i>ching d</i>
Less clear	<i>mo gum ching</i>
Tell me how many lights you see?	<i>gay dor arn dung</i>
In the periphery	<i>pong bin</i>
Red	<i>houng sic</i>
Green	<i>look sic</i>
White	<i>bac sic</i>
I want to make this more circular for you. Which lens makes it look more circular for you, one and two?	<i>bin gor geng tai d yoon hoon yoon d, dai yut jing dai yee.</i>
For the answer:	<i>yut is one, yee is two</i>
You have healthy eyes	<i>arn jing hoe gin hong</i>
You need glasses for	<i>lay soi yiw arn geng</i>
You need to visit a doctor	<i>lay yiw tai yee sung</i>
Today	<i>gum yut</i>
As soon as you get home	<i>farn oik kay</i>
Soon	<i>jun fai</i>
Tonometry	
Chin/Forehead here	<i>buy gor tow lee dough</i>
I will now puff some air towards your eye	<i>choi d hai heung arn gor dough</i>
I will now measure eye pressure	<i>bong lay leung arn art</i>
Lens	<i>geng peen</i>
Diabetic	<i>tong liw beng</i>
Blood pressure	<i>hoot art</i>
Infection	<i>fart yeem</i>
Discharge	<i>long</i>
Sting	<i>geep</i>
Cataract	<i>bak loi jeung</i>
Pressure (eye pressure)	<i>arn art</i>
Inflammation	<i>joong</i>
Glaucoma	<i>cheng gong arn</i>
Thank you	<i>dor jer</i>
Goodbye	<i>joy geen</i>