

VIETNAMESE TRANSLATIONAL GUIDE FOR OPTOMETRISTS

by

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## ABSTRACT

*Background:* There is a lack of resources available allowing for the English speaking optometrist to communicate with Vietnamese speaking patients. *Methods:* To work in conjunction with a native speaker of the Vietnamese language to develop a manual which optometrists may reference during an examination of a Vietnamese speaking patient. *Results:* A manual was developed outlining words and sentences, along with the translational phonetic pronunciation guide in Vietnamese, for common terms and phrases used by optometrists during a patient examination. *Conclusions:* Providing a guide for optometrists to more effectively communicate with Vietnamese speaking patients will improve patient-doctor relations, and will enhance the quality of health care that patients receive.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the time America was in its infancy, it has been a nation comprised of immigrants, and this has never been more evident than in the present day. People from countries around the world add to the diversity of our country, diversity that offers many opportunities and can present many challenges. There may be no area where these challenges are more evident than in the areas of language and communication.

Limited access to information due to linguistic obstacles affect many residents of this country. In addition, the linguistic hindrance does not just lie with large ethnic groups such as Spanish-speaking groups. Many Asian immigrants and their family members face difficulties in everyday life due to a lack of ability to speak and understand the English language. This affects all aspects of living, from simple activities such as grocery shopping and getting news updates, to more important situations such as getting medical care.

The Asian-American population is one of the fastest growing and most ethnically diverse minority groups in the United States. According to the U.S. Census 2000, the sub-group of Vietnamese population in the United States grew by 83% from 1990 to 2000. The Census 2000 count found a total of 1,223,736 Vietnamese individuals

residing in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Vietnamese immigrants who understand and speak limited or no English may encounter even more obstacles to quality health care than other such immigrants who are more proficient in the English language.<sup>2</sup>

A survey conducted by New California Media found one out of three Vietnamese immigrants who were interviewed reported difficulty obtaining medical care when necessary. Furthermore, 49% of the Vietnamese immigrants answered that they have had trouble understanding a medical condition if it is not explained to them in their native language, 42% reported having trouble understanding a medical situation, and 12% felt they weren't treated fairly by the physician and/or staff because they didn't speak English. Of the participants surveyed, 91% rated medical care as a very important issue.<sup>3</sup>

The Commonwealth Fund's 2001 Health Care Quality Survey found that Asian immigrants living in the United States were more likely to have a higher socioeconomic status as measured by income and education, but they were more likely to report poorer quality of health care compared to the overall U.S. population, because of greater difficulty communicating with physicians and accessing primary care services.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of this project is to create a basic guide to help an optometrist be able to perform the steps to a routine exam. The following guide is not meant to replace a professional translator; rather, it is meant to provide optometric physicians with a means to provide an entryway to primary ophthalmic care to non-English proficient Vietnamese patients.



## METHODS

First, a template was created by taking phrases frequently used during an optometric patient examination. The phrases were simplified as much as possible, and then were separated into sections, and grouped into phrases used for certain testing procedures.

These groups were then arranged to follow the general outline of the testing procedures to facilitate ease of use of this guide during the examination.

The guide was translated with the help of a native speaker of the Vietnamese language, who is also proficient in speaking, writing, and understanding the English language.

The guide and translation were written in such a manner as to allow for a simple and short translation, to facilitate the ease of use by the doctor, and also to improve comprehension by the patient. A simpler translation will allow for an increased understanding by the patient, in the fact that the non-Vietnamese speaking doctor will have an easier time pronouncing the words when they are grouped in shorter phrases. The translated words are written phonetically so that an English speaking doctor can easily read and pronounce the words and phrases. This will also help to facilitate more efficient examinations, by helping to reduce time that would have been spent translating simple instructions, as occurs when a second party translator is present.

## RESULTS

The translation itself is a phonetic translation, so that an English speaking doctor can easily read and pronounce the Vietnamese words during the examination.

## GREETING/CASE HISTORY

Hello (male/female).

Chao (ahnh/ehm).

Do you (male/female) speak Vietnamese?

(Anh/em) ko noi teeng viet kong?

My name is Doctor \_\_\_\_\_.

Tane toi la Bac see \_\_\_\_\_.

Please have a seat (male/female).

(Ahnh/Ehm) ngoi uh dy-ah.

Are you (male/female) having problems with...

Mm-ah-te (ahn/ehm) bee dau lam sau...

Your eyes?

Mm-ah-te qua?

One eye / Both eyes?

Mote mm-ah-te / hi mm-ah-te?

At distance / near / both?

Nighn sa/ nighn gun/ ka hi?

Double vision?

Thy hi kai?

Itchy Eyes?

Ngua mm-ah-te?

Photophobia (male/female)?

Dan ko lam mm-ah-te (ahn/ehm) nuc kong?

Eye pain/Eye ache?

Dah-oo mm-ah-te / mm-ah-te bee nuc?

Headaches?

Nuc dau?

Where is the pain?

Dao uh dow?

Are you (male/female) taking eye drops?

Ahnh/ehm kaw ung tuk zi kong?

Do you (male/female) have glasses?

(Ahnh/ehm) kaw mang mm-ah-te keeng kong?

Yes/No

Ko/kong

## EXAMINATION

### VISUAL ACUITY

Cover your (right/left) eye.

Chay mm-ah-te kap mm-ah-te (phai/chai).

Read the smallest line you can see (male/female).

(Ahnh/ehm) daw-see chu naw, nut cho toi.

Do not squint.

Dung ko neen mm-ah-te.

Look through the tiny hole (for pinhole VA's).

Ahnh/ehm nighn zoe loe nay.

### COVER TEST

Look at this (letter/number) here.

Ahnh/ehm nighn (chu/so) nay.

Keep looking at it.

Teep tuk nighn un day.

Does the (letter/number) stay still?

Ky (chu/so) ko nam yeen kong?

Yes/no.

Ko/kong.

PUPILS/EOMS

Look at the letter/number.

Ahnh/ehm nighn (chu/so) nay.

Follow this light.

Nighn thau dan.

Do not turn your head.

Dung ko quay daou.

## RETINOSCOPY

Look at the red and green colors (male/female).

(Ahnh/ehm) nighn mau daw vui mau san.

Do not look at me (male/female).

(Ahnh/ehm) dung nighn toi.

The colors may appear to be blurry.

Mau ko lah mu.

## REFRACTION

Can you see the (letters/numbers)?

Ahnh ko thay (chu/so) kong?

Yes/no.

Ko/kong.

Watch them.

Nighn day.

Tell me when you (male/female) can first start to see them.

(Ahn/ehm) cho toi be-it luc (ahn/ehm) thay.

Which choice is the most clear?

Key now raw hun?

Is this more clear for you (male/female)?

(Ahn/ehm) kaw thay zaw kong?

Tell me if they look the same.

Ahn/Ehm cho toi beit na-o ka hi zong nau.

Yes/No.

Ko/kong.

Do you (male/female) see 2 (letters/numbers)?

(Ahn/ehm) ko thay hi (chu/so) kong?

Is one more fuzzy?

Key nau muh haun?



Yes/no.

Ko/kong.

Top/bottom?

Bane chain/ bane zoi?

Are they equally blurry now?

Ka hi long thay zaw bang zau?

TONOMETRY / NCT

Open your eyes.

Muh mm-ah-te lun lan.

Look at the blue light.

Nighn dan mau sahn.

I will put drops in your (male/female) eyes.

Toi raw mm-ah-te cho (anh/em).

Please wait here for 30 minutes. (For after dilation so they don't leave the office)

Anh/em dui dy cho ba-chuk(30) phoot.

## BIOMICROSCOPY EXAM

Place your chin here.

D-ah-te kum uh day.

Place your forehead here.

D-ah-te dou uh day.

You (male/female) will see a bright light.

(Ahn/ehm) sa hay dan.

Don't look at the light.

Dung ko nighn dan.

Look at the light.

Nighn dan.

Look straight ahead.

Nighn tang.

Look at my ear.

Nighn tie toi.

Look right.

Nighn fai.

Look left.

Nighn chai.

Look up.

Nighn lane.

Look down.

Nighn soo.

Look in the direction of my fingers.

Nighn mong ty toi.

Hold your head still (male/female).

(Ahnh/ehm) ngoi een.

#### PATIENT EDUCATION

You (male/female) need glasses to see better at distance.

(Ahnh/ehm) kun mm-ah-te keg dae thay dung nighn sa.

You (male/female) need glasses to see better at near.

(Ahnh/ehm) kun mm-ah-te keg dae thay dung nighn gun.

You (male/female) have an eye infection.

(Ahnh/Ehm) coh.

You (male/female) need -

(Ahnh/ehm) kun...

- to take (1,2) drops...
- naw mm-ah-te (mot, hi) lan...

- in your right eye
- mm-ah-te ban tay phi
  
- in your left eye
- mm-ah-te bantay chai
  
- in both eyes
- ca hi kap mm-ah-te

Every....

Moy....

For....

Cho....

1 = mot

2 = hi

3 = ba

4 = bone

5 = nahm

6 = sau

7 = bay

8 = tahm

9 = trin

10 = mui

11 = mui mot

12 = mui hi

Minutes = phoot

Hours = teeng

Days = ngay

Weeks = tuan

Months = tee-ang

You (male/female) need to see Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.

(Ahnh/ehm) di g-ah-p bac see \_\_\_\_\_.

You (male/female) need eye surgery.

(Ahnh/ehm) moe mm-ah-te.

It is very important.

Zut la quan trong.

Do you (male/female) understand?

Anh/em ko hew kong?

I don't understand.

Toi kong hew.

Okay?

Duc kong?

## DISCUSSION

Assisting all patients is a goal of every physician. It is often overlooked that this means not only helping a patient with physical or mental disabilities, but also mean helping those with language difficulties as well. The Office of Minority Health defines cultural competence as the ability of health care providers to understand and respond effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs brought by patients to a health care encounter.<sup>5</sup>

This guide will help optometrists perform a routine examination with less awkwardness and more efficiency by allowing the physician to properly position the patient in a more prompt and timely manner due to increased understanding by the patient of the instructions given. This will lead to increased cooperation by the patient, meaning the physician will be able to perform certain tests in the examination more proficiently. Ideally, this will lead to more legitimate examination information, allowing the doctor to rely more fully on the test data gathered, which in turn will allow for more accurate diagnoses and treatment regimens.<sup>6</sup>

In a national survey of Asian-Americans regarding their health care experiences, participants were found to be more likely change doctors or want to change doctors if they felt they were judged or treated unfairly because of their lack of English



proficiency. The respondents were also more likely to report that their doctor did not spend adequate time with them or give them a proper amount of respect, and were less likely to trust their doctor.<sup>7</sup>

The phonetic translation will allow the doctor to not only improve patient relations, but to also improve patient compliance with basic prescribed regimens. If a patient feels the doctor is trying to accommodate them in the exam, not just as a patient, but as a person, this can increase the patient's confidence in the doctor, and promote compliance with prescribed regimens as mentioned earlier. It may also increase likelihood of return visits, be it for a routine examination, or for emergency visits should that ever be necessary.

Providing a patient with medical assistance when it is needed is a top priority for any physician, regardless of the language their patients speak. Should a non-English speaking Vietnamese patient require medical help of an ocular nature, whether it is a routine exam or an ocular emergency, this guide will be more readily accessible than a professional translator, especially in rural and suburban areas. This will help patients gain a much needed entry to the world of primary eye care.

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