

Our Voice, Our Story: Preserving the Filipino Language in a Global Era

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Language is more than a tool it is memory, identity, and heritage. For Filipinos, it is how we recall our history and express who we are. Yet as the world grows increasingly global and English dominates many aspects of life, the Filipino language slowly recedes into the background. This poses a serious question: in reaching outward, are we forgetting what grounds us?

English now surrounds us in media, education, government, and daily communication. While it offers access to global knowledge, it often pushes our native tongue aside. Many young Filipinos now view Filipino as unnecessary. Conversations in homes and schools shift easily to English, signaling more than just bilingual skill. It reflects a deeper cultural drift.

Dr. Pamela Constantino pointed out that English's dominance in schools has weakened Filipino as a language of learning and critical thought (Constantino, 2000). This loss is not just academic it also erodes cultural connection and emotional depth.

Our language is full of meaning. It carries the wisdom of our elders, the stories of struggle and triumph, and the humor and spirit of everyday life. From the pages of Rizal's novels to folk songs sung in remote barangays, Filipino reflects a unique worldview that cannot be replicated in another language. These words do more than inform they connect.

Language is how a nation breathes. As historian Zeus Salazar (1999) pointed out, it is only through the Filipino language that we can truly think and act as one people. Without it, we may lose touch with who we really are.

Unfortunately, the use of Filipino in formal settings has declined, as noted by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF, 2018). English has become the default in many schools, offices, and even public discourse. But preserving our language does not mean resisting modernity. We can be both globally competent and rooted in our identity.

Filipino must be taught with life and passion not just grammar rules, but through stories, experiences, and expression. Families can support this by speaking the language at home. Artists, influencers, and educators must bring Filipino into digital platforms where youth are most active.

Tollefson and Tsui (2004) emphasized that multilingualism strengthens cultural identity and sharpens thinking. Supporting Filipino does not limit students it empowers them to know themselves and the world.

Everyday actions matter. When we write, sing, joke, and love in Filipino, we keep the language alive. Languages adapt, but they must not disappear. When a language dies, we lose more than vocabulary we lose memory and soul.

To speak Filipino is to love: to honor our past and ensure that future generations grow up with a language that still pulses with life. UNESCO reminds us that when a language falls silent, so does the wisdom of its people (UNESCO, 2011). Our voice is our story and by speaking it, we keep it alive.

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