

FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE: STRENGTHENING INCLUSION THROUGH COMMUNICATION

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Filipino Sign Language (FSL) is not merely a series of hand signs; it serves as a vibrant language that embodies the culture, identity, and experiences of the Deaf community in the Philippines. According to Republic Act No. 11106, FSL is acknowledged as the national sign language and acts as the main communication method for numerous Deaf Filipinos. Nonetheless, similar to any language, it keeps on developing. Enhancing FSL is crucial to guarantee that it stays pertinent, inclusive, and able to convey the intricacies of contemporary life.

A key method to enhance FSL is by promoting education and awareness. According to Jordan Madronio (2024) of Philippine Normal University, a lot of Filipinos remain unaware of FSL or erroneously depend on Signed Exact English (SEE), which fails to accurately reflect the true grammar and structure of FSL. Advocating for FSL in educational settings and public organizations can aid in closing communication divides and nurturing a more inclusive community. Programs for training teachers and accessible educational resources are essential in this initiative, enabling both Deaf and hearing people to learn and utilize FSL effectively.

An additional important element is the growth of vocabulary. With the emergence of new technologies, ideas, and cultural trends, FSL needs to evolve by creating new signs. This initiative must include collaboration among the Deaf community, linguists, and educators to develop signs that are culturally relevant and easy to understand. Community-led development guarantees that the language stays genuine and broadly embraced.

Media and technology significantly contribute to enhancing FSL. Incorporating sign language interpreters in news broadcasts, online videos, and public announcements enhances visibility and accessibility. Social media sites, mobile applications, and online dictionaries can enhance the learning and standardization of FSL, facilitating people's ability to interact with the language at any time and in any location.

Support from the government is equally important. Policies requiring the use of FSL in public services including healthcare, legal systems, and emergency response ensure that Deaf individuals have equal access to information and opportunities. Financial support for research and documentation can aid in safeguarding and promoting the language.

Ultimately, enhancing FSL goes beyond language growth, it involves respect and empowerment. Acknowledging FSL as a valid and evolving language reinforces the identity of the Deaf community. Promoting cooperation between Deaf and hearing communities enhances mutual comprehension and dismantles obstacles.

In summary, enhancing Filipino Sign Language is a collective duty. By means of education, innovation, support for policy, and community engagement, FSL can persist in evolving as a significant instrument for inclusion. Through investment in its progress, we advance toward a society where everyone can communicate, and no one remains voiceless

References:

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