

How AI is changing the way we learn Filipino

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For many years, students in the Philippines have learned the Filipino language by using textbooks and listening to their teachers in the classroom. These traditional ways have helped many students understand how to speak and write in Filipino. But now, technology is growing very fast. Because of this, new tools for learning are becoming popular. One of the most exciting tools is called Artificial Intelligence, or AI. AI can make lessons more fun and can change the way they are taught to match the needs of each student.

Even though AI brings many good things to learning, it also brings some problems. Some students do not have strong internet connections or good devices like computers or tablets. Because of this, they cannot use AI tools well. There are also questions about how well AI understands Filipino culture. Some people worry that students may just rely on AI too much and stop thinking on their own. This essay will talk about how AI is being used to teach Filipino and what we can do to use it in a better and fairer way.

One helpful tool that was made is called FiLLM. It is a language model made just for the Filipino language. It was created in 2025 by Maminta, Enriquez, Núñez, and Dela Fuente. This tool was trained using Filipino books and texts. It can do things like find the parts of speech in a sentence or give short summaries of longer texts. It is better than the older models, especially when it comes to Filipino grammar.

Another good tool is iTanong. It is a chatbot made by the Department of Science and Technology–Advanced Science and Technology Institute (DOST–ASTI), National University, and Bicol University. This chatbot understands Filipino, Taglish, and soon, other local languages like Cebuano and Ilocano. Users can ask questions in Filipino and the chatbot will answer using real information from the government. This tool helps students learn by using real examples and everyday language.

To check if AI can understand the Filipino way of speaking, researchers developed Kalahi. This tool tests how well AI can respond to questions using Filipino idioms, expressions, and customs. According to Kalahi (2024), even the most advanced models answered only 46 percent of the questions correctly. In comparison, native Filipino speakers got 89 percent correct. This shows that AI tools still need to improve in understanding Filipino culture.

There are also serious problems in using AI in education. Many schools, especially in rural areas, do not have fast internet or modern computers (Rest of World, 2024). This means that not all students can use AI for learning. Some AI systems are also based on English or general content, so they may not always match Filipino culture or daily life. Even with efforts like FiLLM and iTanong, there are still gaps in representing local expressions and regional dialects (Maminta et al., 2025).

Another concern is that students might stop thinking for themselves if they use AI too much. AI can give quick answers, but that does not always help students understand. Teachers worry that students might copy answers without learning the lessons. There are also questions about how AI tools collect and use student data, and if they include all Filipino dialects fairly (Kalahi, 2024).

To solve these problems, it is important to create offline versions of AI learning tools. This way, students in areas with poor internet can still use them (Rest of World, 2024). Developers should also work with Filipino teachers and language experts to make sure that AI content respects and reflects Filipino culture. Teachers must be trained to use AI in the right way, helping students use it as support, not as a shortcut (Montebon, 2015).

AI tools like FiLLM and iTanong are changing how students learn Filipino. These tools can make learning more exciting and can help students become better at using the language. But to make sure AI helps everyone, the tools must be made in a way that includes the Filipino identity, supports all regions fairly, and protects student information. With proper support and guidance, AI can be a strong partner in learning the Filipino language and not a replacement for the important role of teachers.

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