I just called one of our service providers' Customer Service hotline to inquire about making a payment for our mobile account when the agent asked me: "So, Ma’am how would you like to make your payment, is it over the phone, over the online or over the branch?" And in one instance while talking to an English major student from a state university, I asked her about any suggestions that she can give for our students to improve their English grammar, she said, "I think the only suggestion that I can suggest is for them to really focus their...there...them...selves in studying."

The two instances may have sounded a little funny and awkward at the same time. But they made me think about our English Communications courses and subjects. How the English proficiency of our students is doing right now? What happened to our reputation as one of the best English speakers in Asia?

One international research organization, the Hopkins International Partners conducted a study on this matter in the ASEAN countries. It shows that the English proficiency level of tertiary graduates from the Philippines is lower than the English proficiency of secondary school students in Thailand. Rex Wallen. The Hopkins International Partners' General Manager, said the country’s gaps behind most of its neighboring countries in English proficiency. He said that this might affect the chances of Filipinos getting jobs outside the country. He even cited that the previous year, almost ninety percent of nursing program to the United Kingdom were cancelled because of that. (GMA, 2018)
In a research written by Melissa N. Mizon, she said that this decline in English proficiency is because of poor quality of English instruction as well as the resources or textbooks on English teaching. In addition, she also presented that future teachers displayed a very poor English language skills, even scoring lowest in this subject area in their board examinations. (Mizon, 2018)

As a challenge for all of the educators, revisiting our curriculum and our educational system is very essential this time. We cannot deny the fact that English is one of the strongest weapons of our students when the time that they face the challenges of getting a decent job after their graduation from the academic world. This is also a great challenge for the Philippine government and all our leaders on reviewing the national budget for education. It is undeniable that a lot of the needs in our educational system is not being addressed due to lack of support and funding. May this be a continuing challenge for all of us – English is very important in this competitive world.

References:
