

TAGALOG/PILIPINO

COUNTRY: Philippines

POST: Manila

Historically the structure of the Philippines (series of islands) and immigration of Indonesians, Chinese, Malays etc. have brought about 87 spoken dialects which are significantly different from each other. During the Spanish occupation, Spanish was taught in the high schools and became the language of business and remained so until the Americans occupied the country and brought with them the English language. Newspapers, television, radio and even Government statistics are carried out in English today. In 1937 Tagalog, the most common language of the Filipinos was selected as the basic tongue and was declared the official language of the Philippines in 1946 under the name Pilipino.

In Pilipino, P and F are often interchanged. Written "P"s can be pronounced as "F"s. "W"s are often pronounced as "U"s and double vowels are pronounced separately (paalm-pa-alam.)

Gestures and signs are widely used. Hand movements which mean "go away" to us mean "come here" in the Philippines. Raising the eyebrows is a positive gesture and can be interpreted as a discreet wink, greeting or indication of agreement. To gain attention one hisses. To indicate numbers use only the fingers, never the thumb, e.g. when asking for two (2) raise the ring and little finger.