

BY Christine Y. Guinacaran

I can stand bad grammar, be it merely a lapse or a real error, but the deliberate deformation of the language annoys me. I have an aversion to the intentional distortion of speech.

I can still be pleased with my students who try to speak English even if their grammar is very askew, for as long as there is effort to speak properly. After all, everybody has to start somewhere, and when they always try to say everything as correctly as possible, they will hold more promise to be a proficient speaker than those who know the rules of the language, yet distort it.

I would rather listen to the parents of my students faltering as they speak, in their attempt to use good English, than some supposed to be smart teachers who think it cool to “bastardize” the language when talking with their peers, and believe it or not, even with their students!

I have good reasons why I insist on speaking well, here they are:

I do not like to waste the learning that I have gained from my years of study. I would like to apply the conventions of proper speaking in my everyday life. In gratefulness to my parents who spent a lot for our education (not everyone has this privilege), I would not for all the world take knowledge for granted by choosing what is erroneous instead.

For reasons of vanity I choose to speak well. Whatever glamour I lack physically, I will compensate through fine speech. I would like to be attractive yet in my 40's (not to attract men, mind you, for I am very much married), and I have noticed that people who act with finesse and has a refined way of talking excel in this area. No matter how old a lady is, when she talks fittingly she draws respect. Good speech is much more effective in making a lady stunning than make up, clothes or pieces of jewelry.

I would like my hearers to have a clear picture of what I am saying and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. I would not like to irritate others and make them think that I am wasting their time because I talk to them foolishly. There is no rule against correct speaking and I am therefore on the safe side when I talk appropriately.

King Solomon was right when he said, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver”.