KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ ‘twin vowels’

Faithfully representing Kapampángan phonology in Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan)

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It has been argued many times that the Romanisation of the Kapampángan language does not accurately represent the sounds of that language.
For instance, Spanish friar Alvaro de Benavente (1699), who studied the Kapampángan language and script in the 17th century, assigned the Roman letter A as the equivalent of the character above. Many have therefore assumed that the sound of this character is similar to the sound of the Spanish A, as in the Spanish word casa ‘house.’

Likewise, the **Institute of National Language** have long maintained that the vowels in Pilipino (Tagalog) are similar to the five vowels in Spanish (**Panganiban, 1972**).

Treating Philippine languages as mere dialects of Filipino (Tagalog), Philippine educators have also assumed that Kapampángan has the same vowel sounds and number of vowels as Filipino (Tagalog).
But are there really just five vowels in the Kapampángan language? Do they really correspond to the five vowels in Spanish and Filipino (Tagalog)?
Is Kapampángan A, really similar to Spanish A and Filipino (Tagalog) A, like in the Spanish word casa ‘house’ and the Filipino (Tagalog) words basa ‘to read’ and bata ‘child?’
MANGAN
(v.) ‘to eat’

If we read the A of the Kapampángan word above in the same manner as we read A in the Spanish word casa ‘house’ and the A in the Tagalog word bata ‘child,’ will it be similar to how Kapampángans actually say it?
Kapampángan read this word as: MANGAN [mʌŋʌn] and not [mʌŋaŋ]. The Kapampángan A sounds more like the U in the English word gun rather than the A in Spanish casa ‘house’ or the A in Tagalog basa ‘to read’.
Likewise, the default vowel sounds of all the INDÛNG SÚLAT consonantal glyphs of SÚLAT KAPAMPÁNGAN (KULITAN) are closer to the U in the English word gun rather than the A in Spanish casa ‘house’ or the A in Tagalog bata ‘child’.
Clearly, the current system of Romanisation adopted into Kapampáñgan writing does not accurately represent the sounds of the Kapampáñgan language.
Fallacy of Accent

Strictly speaking, words having different accents are not the same word (Bachuber, 1952).

**MASAKIT** (adj.) ‘painful’

**MÁSAKIT** (n.) ‘sick person’

**MASÁKIT** (adj.) ‘difficult’

The Kapampángan language written in the Roman script has a lot of words that are spelled the same way but are pronounced differently.

The differences between them are indicated by the necessary diacritical marks adopted from Spanish.
Fallacy of Accent

When English, and later Filipino (Tagalog), became the language of education and the media, the Kapampángans were no longer taught how to place diacritical marks in their written language (Henson, 1965). These were not necessary in English nor Tagalog.

SÚSU (n.) ‘breast’ vs. SUSÛ (n.) ‘snail’

SÁLAT (n.) ‘blemish’ vs. SALAT (v.) ‘to fondle’

A fallacy of accent became commonplace since two or more words of the same spelling but with different reading are now often confused as one and the same word.
In Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan), no two words is spelled exactly the same way.

MÁSAKIT
‘sick person’

MASAKIT
‘painful’

MASÁKIT
‘difficult’
KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ

MÁSAKIT
‘sick person’

MASAKIT
‘painful’

MASÁKIT
‘difficult’
The **KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ** are vowel ligatures that lengthen the current sound of the glyph that precedes it.

- **MASAKIT** — 'sick person'
- **MASAKIT** — 'painful'
- **MASÁKIT** — 'difficult'
No two words are spelled the same way in Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan):
In Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan), no Fallacy of Accent occurs because of the KAMBAL SIUÁLÁ.

salátan  'a diagonal compass point'

versus

sálátan  'an orgy of sexual fondling'
INDÚNG SÚLAT CONSONANTAL GLYPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BA</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>TA</th>
<th>NGA</th>
<th>KA</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The image contains a table with the following column headers: BA, PA, MA, SA, LA, NA, DA, TA, NGA, KA, GA. Each column is filled with symbols representing consonantal glyphs. The table is likely part of a linguistic or historical document, showcasing the use of these symbols in a particular script or language.
SIUÁLÂ, the three basic vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDÛNG SÚLAT A SIUÁLÂ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ʌ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANAK SÚLAT A SIUÁLÂ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ʌ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These appear as diacritical marks placed above or below the INDÛNG SÚLAT glyphs.
The ANAK SÚLAT A PÁMISANGSIUÁLÂ appear as ligatures of the attached to INDÛNG SÚLAT consonantal glyphs. Since the default vowel sound of an INDÛNG SÚLAT consonantal glyph is [ʌ], the vowel sound [ɛ] is formed when the [ɪ] ligature is attached. While [ɔ] is formed when the [ʊ] ligature is attached.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ ‘twin vowels’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDÚNG SÚLAT A KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="Image" alt="Diagrams" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a - ; -ʌ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **ANAK SÚLAT A KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ** |
| ![Diagrams](image) |
| - a - ; -ʌ? | -i- ; -ɪ? | -u- ; -ʊ? |
From A [ʌ] to Á [a]:

sang [Sʌŋ] → sáng [S a ɲ]
From I [ɪ] to Í [i]:

sing [sɪŋ]
From U [ʊ] to Ü [ʊ]:

sung [sʊŋ] → sung [suŋ]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indûng Sûlat</th>
<th>Anak Sûlat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3w</td>
<td>3w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa</td>
<td>-sá-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si</td>
<td>-sí-</td>
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<td>su</td>
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<td>se</td>
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<td>so</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sâ</td>
<td>-sî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sû</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Altering the inherent vowel sound of the INDÛNG SÛLAT glyph **SA** by means of the GARLIT (vowel diacritic), PÁMISANGSIUÁLÂ ligatures and KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ ligatures.
Further studies into Kapampángan phonology are very much needed.

A new orthography based on a thorough study of Kapampángan phonology is very much needed to write the language in the Roman script.

At the moment, Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan) is quite adequate in representing the sounds of the Kapampángan language.
In Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan), no two words are spelled the same way, unlike in the Roman script, thus avoiding the Fallacy of Accent. This is due to the spelling convention KAMBAL SIUÁLÂ ‘twin vowels.’

The study and propagation of Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan) however is deemed impractical by many Kapampángans, especially since it can not yet be encoded and reproduced digitally. Many revere it for its ritual significance but not for its practical use.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Súlat Kapampángan (Kulitan) background images used in this presentation, courtesy of:

Allandail Lumanlan Rivera
< http://www.kulitkulitan.tk/ >

Dáno Laksínâ
< http://theurbankapampangan.tumblr.com/ >

DAKAL PÛNG SALÁMAT!!!
DAKAL PÛNG
SALÁMAT!!!

Ágúman Súlat Kapampángan,
2014 photo by Bruno Tiotuico.