

The Importance of Diacritical Marks in Romanized Kapampáŋgan

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Logic recognizes a defect in reasoning known as the *Fallacy of Accent*. This occurs when one confuses two words of the same spelling but with different reading as one and the same word. The Kapampáŋgan language written in the Roman script contains many words that have the same spelling but have different meanings depending upon the position of the stress on a particular syllable. The classic examples are: *masakít* (adj., painful), *masákit* (adj., difficult) and *másakit* (n., a sick person). If these were written simply as *masakit*, *masakit*, and *masakit* without the necessary diacritical marks, how would one determine which word is which? Since the Kapampáŋgan language is not a part of the curriculum in schools throughout the region, and since the Tagalog-based Filipino language taught in schools hardly requires the use of the diacritical marks, contemporary writers in the Kapampáŋgan language are doing away with the diacritical marks in Romanized Kapampáŋgan. Yet, despite doing so for the past 30 years, Kapampáŋgan readers are still not used to reading their language in the Romanized form without the use of the diacritical marks. This paper aims to show the necessity of the diacritical marks in the Kapampáŋgan language especially in cases where they distinguish singular from plural: *anáċ* (child) versus *ának* (children), noun from verbs: *lugúċ* (n., love) versus *lúċud* (v., to love), and the tenses among a number of verbs: *manós* (to wash, future tense) versus *mános* (washing, present progressive tense)