

THE PSEUDO-VERBAL PREDICATE IN TAGALOG

GLORIA CHAN-YAP and TERESITA M. PALO
Ateneo de Manila University

1.0. PRELIMINARIES: THE PSEUDO-VERB

There are certain forms in Tagalog which exhibit some characteristics of both the adjective and the verb. Consider the sentence:

(1) *Kailangan ng bata ng pera.* 'The child needs money.'

Like an adjective, the form *kailangan* may be specified for intensification as in sentence (2) and for comparison as in sentence (3) below:

(2) *Kailangang-kailangan ng bata ng pera.* 'The child needs money very badly

(3) *Mas kailangan ng bata ng pera kaysa sa iyo.* 'The child needs money more than you do.'

Like a verb, the form *kailangan* may stand in a case relation with each of the NPs that co-occur with it in a sentence. With the NP *ng bata* in sentence (2), *kailangan* has an agentive relation, whereas with the NP *ng pera*, it has an objective relation.

Because the form *kailangan* demonstrates both adjectival and verbal manifestations in the language, it is called a *pseudo-verb*, and when it is used as a predicate, it is called *pseudo-verbal predicate*.

2.0. RELATED LITERATURE ON THE PSEUDO-VERB

2.1. In the past, the pseudo-verb has been called different names by different linguists. Lope K. Santos in his 1935 *Balarila ng Wikang Pambansa* called the pseudo-verb 'pandiwang walang-banghay', a non-conjugable verb. Regular verbs are conjugable, such as, *nagbasa, nagbabasa, magbabasa*; notice that *kailangan* is not conjugable. The term 'pandiwang walang-banghay' was handed down by Santos to a number of Pilipino grammarians, to name some: Panganiban, Villanueva, and Mariano.

2.2. Teodoro A. Llamzon, in his *Modern Tagalog: a Structural Functional Description* (1969), used the term *modal nouns* when referring to the forms *gusto, ayaw, kailangan*, and the like. He divides them into three groups, namely; first, *kailangan*; second, *gusto, ibig, ayaw*; and third, *dapat, maari, puwede*, although the basis for the division was not given in his book.

2.3 After the structuralists came a new breed of Tagalog grammarians who began to call this class of verbs *pseudo-verbs*. Some of these are Bowen, Otones, Schachter, and Pineda.

3.0. THE PSEUDO-VERBAL PREDICATE

Tagalog has a number of pseudo-verbs: *gusto, nais, ibig, ayaw, kailangan, maari, puwede, bawal*, and *dapat*. With the exception of *dapat*, all the pseudo-verbs listed above may occur in a basic sentence structure. Consider the basic sentences below:

(4) $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Gusto} \\ \text{Nais} \\ \text{Ibig} \end{array} \right\} \text{ni Ador ng santol. 'Ador likes santols.'}$

- (5) *Ayaw ko niyan.* 'I don't like that.'
- (6) *Kailangan mo ng gamot.* 'You need medicine.'
- (7) { *Maaari* } *sa iyo ang pantalon ko.* 'My pants fit you.'
- { *Puwede* }

(8) *Bawal sa akin ang bagoong.* 'Bagoong is bad for me.'

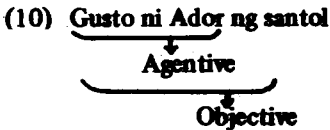
All of these verbs, including *dapat*, may also occur in embedded structures.

Consider sentence (4). *Gusto* has an agentive relation with the NP *ni Ador* and an objective relation with the NP *ng santol*. The NP *ng santol* is indefinite. To make it definite, the nominal marker *ng* is replaced by *ang* as in:

(9) *Gusto ni Ador ang santol.* 'Ador likes the santol.'

4.0. THE PSEUDO-VERBAL PREDICATE (PsV) IN BASIC SENTENCES

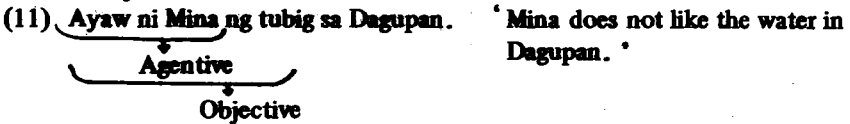
PsV predicates in Tagalog basic sentences have case relations with the NPs co-occurring with them. The case relations of *gusto* in sentence (4) above can be illustrated as follows:



Notice the lack of a subject, *ang*-marked NP, in the sentence. Of the eight pseudo-verbs, all except *maari*, *puwede* and *bawal* may occur in subjectless sentences.

4.1. CASE RELATIONS OF PsV IN SENTENCES.

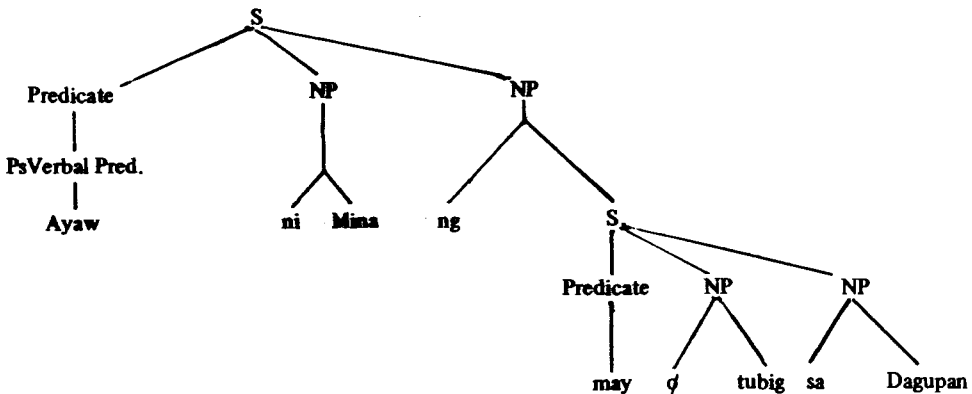
Unlike verbs which may have as many as five cases, i.e. agentive, objective, locative, benefactive, and instrumental, the PsVs may have only two cases in a basic sentence: the agentive and the objective cases.



Notice that in sentence (11), there are three NPs: *ni Mina*, *ng tubig*, and *sa Dagupan*. But the PsV *ayaw* has a case relation only with *ni Mina*, agentive, and with *ng tubig*, objective. The NP *sa Dagupan* is an expansion of the NP *tubig* in an embedded sentence.

(12) *May tubig sa Dagupan.* 'There's water in Dagupan.'

In other words, sentence (12) has an underlying structure

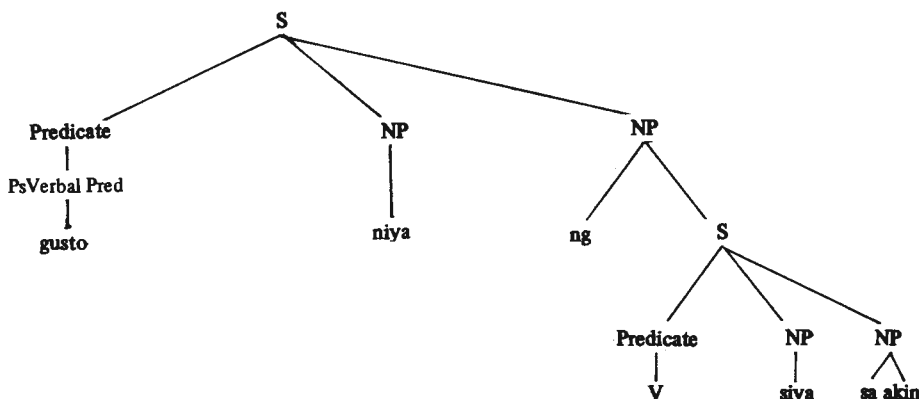


In the sentence

(13) Gusto niya sa akin. 'He likes me.'
 ↓
 Agentive

The PsVerb *gusto* has only one case relation, i.e. agentive. The NP *sa akin* belongs to an embedded sentence whose verb may only be lexically retrieved from the context of the sentence as in

(14) *Gusto niyang V(verb) siya sa akin.* 'He likes to V with/to/ . . . me.'
 where the V may either be *sumama, tumabi, sumabay, humilig, humalik, etc.*, depending upon the context of the situation in which the sentence is uttered. The NP *sa akin* in (13) is a constituent of an embedded sentence as shown in (14) whose underlying structure is:



Therefore in (13) *gusto* has only one case relation, i.e. agentive, with the NP *niya*.

In short, PvVs may have a maximum of only two case relations in a basic sentence.

4.2. ORDERING OF NP CONSTITUENTS AND CASE RELATION

In a sentence containing a verbal predicate, the case relations between the verb and the NPs are indicated in the underlying structure by nominal markers (see underscored constituents in (15)).

(15) bili ng bata ng lapis sa tindahan.
 ↓
 Agentive
 ↓
 Objective
 ↓
 Locative

In the surface structure, the case relation between the verb and the NP selected as the subject of the sentence is indicated by the verbal affix (see double-scored constituent in (16)) and the case relation between the verb and the other NPs in the sentence is indicated by nominal markers (see underscored constituents in (16)).

(16) bumili ang bata ng lapis sa tindahan 'The child bought a pencil in the store'
 ↓
 Agentive as subject
 ↓
 Objective
 ↓
 Locative

The case relations between the PsV predicate and the NPs co-occurring with it in a sentence are indicated by the ordering of the NP constituents rather than by nominal or

verbal markers. PsV predicates don't have affixes. The NPs co-occurring with PsV predicate may be marked homophonously by the marker *ng* as in (17).

- (17) *Kailangan ng guro ng estudyante.* 'The teacher needs students.'
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A native speaker of Tagalog understands that between the NPs *ng guro* and *ng estudyante*, the agentive is *ng guro* and the objective is *ng estudyante* both of which are marked by *ng*. If we rearrange the constituents of sentence (17), we get the sentence

- (18) *Kailangan ng estudyante ng guro.* 'The student needs the teacher.'
-

The agentive NP is *ng estudyante* and the objective NP is *ng guro*. This means that when there are two *ng*-marked NPs co-occurring with a pseudo-verbal predicate in a basic sentence, the first *ng*-marked NP is the agentive and the second *ng*-marked NP is the objective. But consider the fact that in each case in (17) and (18), the agentive NP is filled by a human noun. If the sentence

- (19) *Ayaw ng bata ng suman.* 'The child does not like suman.'
-

is rearranged resulting in

- (20) *Ayaw ng suman ng bata.* 'The child does not like suman.'

the first NP is understood by a native speaker as the objective and the second NP as the agentive because *suman* can not be the agentive since it is inanimate. Again, if the sentence

- (21) *Gusto ng aso ng karne.* 'The dog likes meat.'
-

were rearranged as in

- (22) *Gusto ng karne ng aso.* 'The dog likes meat.'

ng karne would still be understood as the objective and *ng aso* as the agentive since a dog is animate.

In other words, when the NPs co-occurring with the PsV predicate in a basic Tagalog sentence are both human, the ordering of the NPs is significant as it indicates case relations: the first NP is agentive and the second NP is objective. When one of the NPs is filled by an inanimate noun and the other, by an animate noun, the animate NP is the agentive and the inanimate NP, the objective. In this case, the ordering of the NPs is not significant in terms of case relations.

On the other hand, when one of the NPs is selected as subject of the sentence as in

- (23) *Gusto ni Pedro si Ana.* 'Pedro likes Ana.'
-

and the constituents are rearranged as in

- (24) Gusto si Ana ni Pedro: 'Pedro likes Ana.'
 Objective-Subject
 Agentive

the subject remains the objective NP regardless of its position in the sentence. This means that between the agentive and the objective NPs, only the objective NP may be selected as the subject of the sentence.

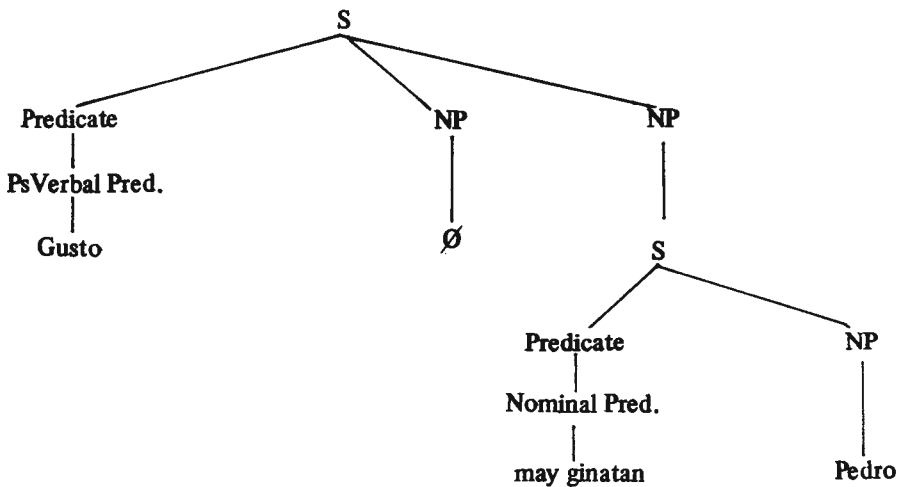
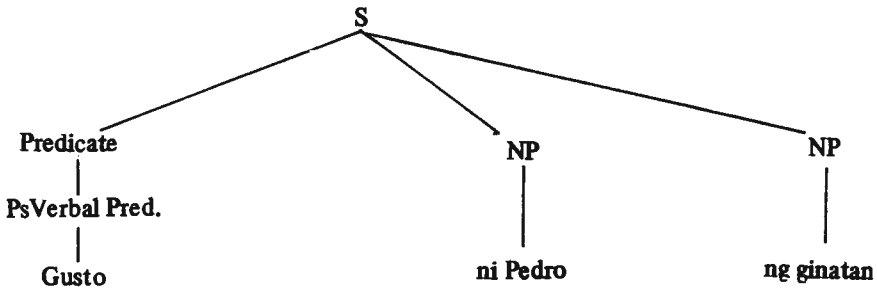
When the objective NP filled by an inanimate noun is selected as subject, the only acceptable arrangement of the constituents is PsV – Agentive NP + Objective – Subject NP as in

- (25) *Gusto ni Pedro ang ginatan.* 'Pedro likes ginatan.'

If this sentence is rearranged resulting in

- (26)* *Gusto ang ginatan ni Pedro.* 'Pedro likes ginatan.'

the agentive relation between *gusto* and *ni Pedro* is lost; the NP *ni Pedro* becomes a genitive NP. Sentence (26) is ungrammatical because it lacks an agentive. Below are the underlying structures of Sentences (25) and (26).



Note that in (26), the agentive NP is \emptyset and *ang ginatan ni Pedro* is a sentence embedded in the objective NP. If we were to add an agentive NP here as in:

(27) *Gusto ni Maria ang ginatan ni Pedro.* 'Maria likes Pedro's ginatan.'

we would get a grammatical sentence. In sentences where the NP's are pronouns as in

(28) *Kailangan niya ako.* 'He needs me.'

the objective NP (underscored constituent) must always be selected as the subject

5. PSEUDO-VERBAL PREDICATES IN DERIVED SENTENCES

5.1 BASIC AND DERIVED SENTENCES IN TAGALOG

In Tagalog a sentence may be derived from two or more sentences by one or a combination of the following processes: (1) conjoining and (2) embedding. In the sentences below, sentence (29) is derived from sentences (30) and (31) by conjoining, i.e., use of the conjunction *hanggang* (until). Sentence (32) is derived from sentences (33) and (34) by embedding.

(29) *Maglaro ka hanggang gusto mo.* 'You play as much as you like.'

(30) *Maglaro ka.* 'You play.'

(31) *Gusto mo* 'You like.'

(32) *Kailangan kong umalis bukas.* 'I have to leave tomorrow.'

(33) *Kailangan ko.* 'I need.'

(34) *Umalis ako bukas.* 'I leave tomorrow.'

5.2 EMBEDDED SENTENCES

Consider the sentences:

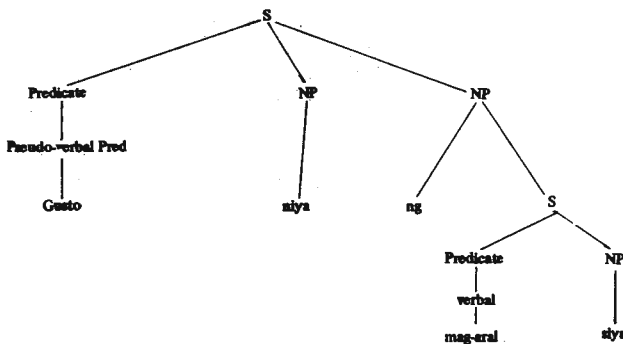
(35) *Gusto niyang mag-aral.* 'He likes to study.'

This sentence consists of the constituent sentences:

(36) *Gusto niya.* 'He likes.'

(37) *Mag-aral siya.* 'He studies.'

where sentence 37 is embedded into (36) as an objective NP, (see illustration below)



Notice that in sentence (35) there is only one agentive NP that occurs with the Pseudo-verbal Predicate *gusto* 'like'. The agentive NP of the verbal Predicate *mag-aral* 'study' does not appear. This is because the agentive NP *niya* 'he/she' of sentence (36) and the agentive NP *siya* 'he/she' of (37) are co-referential; therefore, when two agentive

NPs are co-referential, the agentive NP of the embedded sentence, and not that which occurs with the PsV predicate, is deleted. When the agentive NP of the embedded sentence is not co-referential with the agentive NP of the matrix sentence, no agentive NP deletion occurs. Thus, in the sentence

(38) *Gusto niyang mag-aral siya.* 'He wants him to study.'

where the agentive NP of the embedded sentence is not deleted, the sentence is understood to have two different agentives: the agentive *niya* refers to one person and the agentive *siya* refers to another.

Interestingly, in Tagalog sentences containing PsV predicates, there are no cases of co-referential objective NPs.

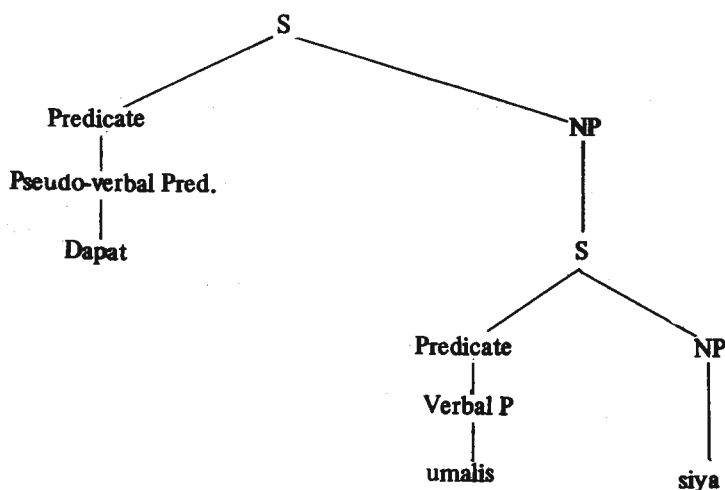
5.3 PSEUDO-VERBS *DAPAT* 'NECESSARY' AND *BAWAL* 'PROHIBITED'

5.3.1 DAPAT

Dapat occurs only in derived sentences. Consider the sentence

(39) *Dapat siyang umalis.* 'He has to leave.'

The underlying structure is the following.



Here the NP which co-occurs with the PsV predicate in an objective case relation is filled by an embedded sentence. Notice also that in the above underlying structure, the PsV *dapat* has no co-occurring agentive NP. Furthermore, whereas we can say

(40) *Gusto niyang umalis.* 'He wants to leave.'

we cannot say

(41) **Dapat niyang umalis.*

Instead we can only say the sentence given in (39).

The reason for this difference between *gusto* and *dapat* is that in the underlying structure, *gusto* has an agentive *niya* whereas *dapat* has none. The agentive that remains in (40) is

that of the PsV whereas in (39) the agentive is that of the verb *alis* 'leave', not of the PsV predicate. In this connection, *maari-puwede* 'can/may' are very similar in behavior to *dapat*. We cannot say

(42) *Maari niyang tumawag sa akin

but we can say

(43) Maari siyang tumawag sa akin. 'He can call me.'

In other words, *maari/puwede* and *dapat* do not allow an agentive NP to occur with them. The agentive NP which co-occurs with these pseudo-verbs do not belong to the Pseudo-verbs but to the verbal predicate in the embedded sentence which stands in an objective case-relation with the PsV predicate.

5.3.2. BAWAL

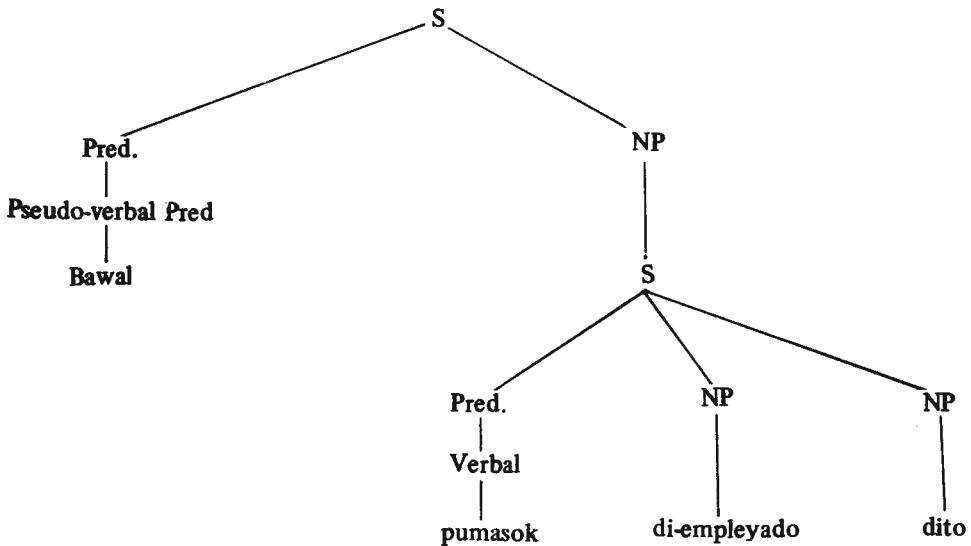
Bawal behaves differently from the other pseudo-verbs. Consider the sentence:

(44) Bawal sa iyo ang sigarilyo. 'Smoking is bad for you.'

Notice that with *bawal*, the co-occurring NPs may be in two cases: the locative *sa iyo* 'for you' and the objective *ang sigarilyo* 'the cigarette.' It does not allow an agentive NP to co-occur with it. In the sentence

(45) Bawal pumasok ang di-empleado dito. 'Nonemployees are not allowed to enter here.'

The NP *di-empleado* is the agentive of the verbal predicate *pumasok*, not of the PsV predicate *bawal*. The underlying structure for this sentence is



6.0 Summary

The pseudo-verbs in Tagalog manifest certain features of the Tagalog verb and certain features of the Tagalog adjective. The label pseudo-verbs is a misnomer but it is here used because it is widely known and accepted as such. However, it de-

serves to be treated with equal importance as the verb, the noun, and the adjective vis-a-vis its participation as a basic constituent in the Tagalog sentence, hence the concept *pseudo-verbal* predicate.

In the course of the present investigation, the following findings have appeared:

1. The pseudo-verbs in simple basic sentences may have only two cases: the genitive and the objective.
2. The case relations between the pseudo-verbal predicate and its co-occurring NPs are indicated by the ordering of the latter rather than by nominal markers or affixes (as in the case of verbs)
3. When NP's co-occurring with pseudo-verbal predicates are pronouns, the pronoun in the objective case must always be selected as the subject.
4. Pseudo-verbal predicates may occur with NP's that are embedded sentences.
5. The pseudo-verbs *dapat* occurs only in derived sentences.
6. The pseudo-verb *bawal* can take NP's in the locative and the objective cases, but not in the agentive case.

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