

Pseudo-Verbs

Introduction

Pseudo-verbs indicate some of the modalities (e.g., wants and obligations) expressed by modal verbs in English (e.g, can, may, should). This page presents some of the most common ones grouped according to their focuses.

The word pseudo means false, so pseudo-verbs are "false verbs." They are similar to regular verbs, but they behave a little differently. For example, unlike other Tagalog verbs, pseudo-verbs do not use markers or affixes to indicate aspect. Nor do pseudo-verbs use affixes to state which part of the sentence is in focus.

Because of this, they are in some ways easy to use. With pseudo-verbs, you just simply use the root word (like *ayaw*) without changing it or modifying it. Because the pseudo-verb is not really a "complete" verb, it often is accompanied by a main or regular Tagalog verb. Take the following English sentence as an example:

I must run to the store.

The word *must* would be the equivalent of the pseudo-verb while *run* is the main verb.

At this point we have talked about how pseudo-verbs are both similar and not similar to verbs. Now let's talk more about what pseudo-verbs do, or why they are even included in the sentence at all. Pseudo-verbs are also called modals. Using a modal puts the sentence into a different mood. This might be confusing, but hold on for a bit. Using a modal is like shifting your car into a different gear. For example, in what we might think of as a "regular" sentence, a speaker will make a statement in a plain, matter of fact sort of way. Look at the following sentence:

I have a house.

Here the speaker merely states the facts as they are. This type of statement is said to be in the indicative mood, and you can think of this as sort of like having your car in neutral. You do not need any modals (pseudo verbs) to state something in a factual way.

On the other hand, if you want to state something that is contrary to fact, then you use a modal (pseudo verb). A modal is a way of saying that something should have happened, or that something should happen. It is contrary to fact. Modals are

words like *puwede* (can), *dapat* (must), *gusto* (like), *ayaw* (dislike), *maaari* (might), and *kailangan* (need). Let's use the modal need (*kailangan*) as an example:

I need Mary to go to the store.

Note that in this sentence Mary is not actually in the store. Nor is it a fact that she is going to the store. You have merely expressed that you would like to have Mary go to the store. You are wishing for or demanding something that is not actually happening according to the facts of the moment (Mary is not at the store). You really would like for her to go, or need her to go, but she might not go.

As you can probably guess, you will need to use modals frequently. In this section we will learn more about the different modals. Note also that enclitic particles also help express moods or states that are contrary to fact. We will talk about those later.

Remember that sentences with Pseudo-verbs may not follow the regular rules. They may throw you some surprises.

Some More Pseudo-Verbs

There is another set of pseudo-verbs in Tagalog. These are the ones that can come before an agent (doer of the action) that is either a NG-phrase/pronoun or an ANG-phrase/pronoun. In other words, these pseudo-verbs can have the doer of the action as being either in focus or not in focus.

The following are a few examples. Notice that there is a linker (-ng) attached to the word that comes before the main verb. And the actor pronoun always comes after the pseudo-verb.

PUWEDE = can; could; may (permission)

Puwede + Object-Focus Agent

Puwedeng dalhin ng kaibigan ko ang radyo. My friend can bring the radio.

Puwede kong tulungan si Mario. I can help Mario.

Puwede + Actor-Focus Agent

Puwede magdala ng radyo ang kaibigan ko. My friend can bring a radio.

Puwede akong tumulong kay Mario. I can help Mario.

MAAARI = might; may (possibility)

Maaari + Object-Focus Agent

Maaring ibigay ng guro ang libro sa akin. The teacher might give the book to me.
Maaaring tawagan niya si Tess. He might call Tess.

Maaari + Actor-Focus Agent

Maaaring magbigay ng libro ang guro sa akin. The teacher might give me a book.
Maaaring tumawag siya kay Tess. He might call Tess.

DAPAT = must; should; have to

Dapat + Object-Focus Agent

Dapat isulat ng estudyante ang papel niya. The student must write his paper.

Dapat kong bilhan ng regalo si Maria. I have to buy Maria a present.

Dapat + Actor-Focus Agent

Dapat sumulat ng papel niya ang estudyante. The student must write his paper.

Dapat akong bumili ng regalo para kay Maria. I have to buy a present for Maria.

Sentence Expansion

Coordinating Conjunctions

There are two kinds of conjunctions in Tagalog. The first kind is called a coordinating conjunction. This type of conjunction is used to add to a sentence an extra thought that is considered to be of equal importance as the first part of the sentence. For example, in the sentence "I got on the bus and waved to her" both parts of the sentence are of equal importance. It is as important for me to tell you that I got on the bus as it is for me to tell you that I waved to her.

AT (AND)

aso't pusa (dog and cat), kape't gatas (coffee and milk),

araw at gabi (day and night)

Sumakay ako sa bus at kinawayan ko siya. I got on the bus and waved to her.

Tumahol ang aso at natakot ang pusa. The dog barked, and the cat got scared.

Pumunta ako sa tindahan at bumili ng tsokolate.

I went to the store and bought some chocolate.

Note that sometimes AT can be abbreviated to 't.

O (OR)

si Aida o si Fe (Aida or Fe), kape o tsaa (coffee or tea),

sapatos o tsinelas (shoes or slippers)

Mag-aaral ka ba o matutulog? Are you going to study or sleep?

Umulan man o umaraw, darating ako. Rain or shine, I will be there.
Puwede tayong kumain sa labas o magpadeliver na lang.
We can eat out or have food delivered.

PERO, NGUNIT, SUBALIT, KAYA LANG (BUT)

Tumawag ako kaninang umaga pero wala ka.
I called this morning, but you were not there.
Masarap ang litson kaya lang nakakataba.
Roasted pig is delicious, but it's fattening.
Inimbata ko siya sa aking kasal ngunit hindi siya dumalo.
I invited him to my wedding, but he didn't show up.

KASI, DAHIL (BECAUSE (OF))

Umutang siya dahil wala siyang pera.
She borrowed some money because she didn't have any.
Umalis na siya kasi ang tagal mo. She left because you took so long to get here.
Sumaya ang mundo ni kuya dahil sa iyo.
My brother's world brightened up because of you.

Subordinating Conjunctions

The second type of conjunction in Tagalog is the subordinating conjunction. This type of conjunction is used to add on extra thoughts that in some way seem to be of less importance or prominence than the main part of the sentence. Sometimes they can be sort of like an afterthought to the first thought.

KUNG (IF)

Papasa ka kung mag-aaral ka ng leksiyon mo.
You'll pass if you study your lessons.
Hindi ko alam kung nagbibiro siya. I don't know if she's joking.

KAHIT (EVEN THOUGH; ALTHOUGH)

Mahal niya si Steve kahit na sumpungin ito.
She loves Steve even though he's moody.
Pumunta siya sa pagtitipon kahit hindi siya imbitado.
He went to the meeting although he wasn't invited.

UPANG, PARA (SO THAT)

Kumain ka ng gulay upang maging malusog ka.

Eat vegetables so that you'll be healthy.

Awitan mo ang bata para makatulog siya.

Sing to the baby so that she can sleep.