

# Co-occurrence and Non-Tense Carrier and Verb

By Yao Shen

The formation of simple predicate expansion by means of continuous strings and discontinuous strings has been described in a previous article, "Supplementation of Opposites in Simple Predicate Expansion," *TESL Reporter*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1-4 (Fall, 1970-Summer, 1971). In an expanded predicate, the string begins with an auxiliary or a modal and ends with the verb. In an unexpanded predicate, there is no string, since the verb is not preceded by either an auxiliary or a modal. The present article attempts to show the co-occurrence and non-co-occurrence of the tense carrier and the verb in simple predicates. The purpose is to simplify for both teachers and students of ESL an area where words such as have, be, do; can, will are sometimes called auxiliaries and modals, and at other times verbs. Illustrations are affirmative statements.

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Tense in English is either present or past. The past tense is marked by vowel change or the addition of the "dental suffix" in the pronunciation of -t, -d, or -id to the verb base. For example.

**Vowel change**

Verb base	eat, come, sing
Past	ate, came, sang

**Dental suffix**

Verb base	walk, enjoy, attend
Past	walk-t, enjoy-d, attend-id

In the present tense, the third person

singular is marked by the addition of the -s, -z, or -iz suffix in pronunciation to the verb base.

Verb base	eat, come, watch
Third person singular	eat-s, come-z, watch-iz

The word in a simple predicate which carries tense or the tense carrier begins the predicate. Three illustrative groups of simple affirmative statements are taken up.

Group 1. In an unexpanded predicate, the word which carries them is also the verb. In other words, the tense carrier and the verb co-occur. Such tense carriers can be lexical verbs.

**Tense carrier = verb (lexical)**

Joe	eats	
Joe	ate	
Joe	watches	color T-V
Joe	watched	color T-V

Group 2. An expanded predicate contains a string which begins with an auxiliary or a modal. The verb terminates the string. The auxiliary or the modal carries tense; the verb does not. In an expanded predicate, the tense carrier and the verb do not co-occur.

**Tense carrier = auxiliary or modal**

Joe's book	has
His poems	have
Joe	is
His fables	were
His students	do
His friends	can
His ideas	would

# co-occurrence of in Simple Predicates

Verb	
	arrived
been	published
	writing
being	enjoyed
	study
be	singing
have been	accepted

Group 3. Auxiliaries and modals which carry tense in expanded predicates as those above may occur withOUT being in a string. In such cases, they are also the verb. There is co-occurrence of the tense carrier and verb.

Tense carrier = verb  
(auxiliary or modal)

Joe's book	has
His poems	have
Joe	is
His fables	were
His students	do
His friends	can
His ideas	would

Frequently teachers and students of ESL dwell on the concept that the verb, usually a lexical verb, carries tense. This is quite true with sentences as those in Group 1 in which the tense carrier and the lexical verb co-occur. When the concept is applied to sentences such as those in Group 2 in which the tense carrier and the verb do not co-occur (tense here is carried by auxiliaries or modals, and not by the verb), it causes difficulty. In fact, the difficulty is further complicated by sentences such as those in Group 3 in which tense is carried by the same words which are auxiliaries and modals in Group 2 sentences. But here they are the verbs.

It seems that the importance of identifying the tense carrier in the predicate should be brought to the fore. If there is a string in the predicate, the word in the string which carries tense begins the string and the word in which ends the string is the verb. If there is no string, the tense carrier itself is the verb, be it a word with lexical meaning or one that is an auxiliary or a modal elsewhere.

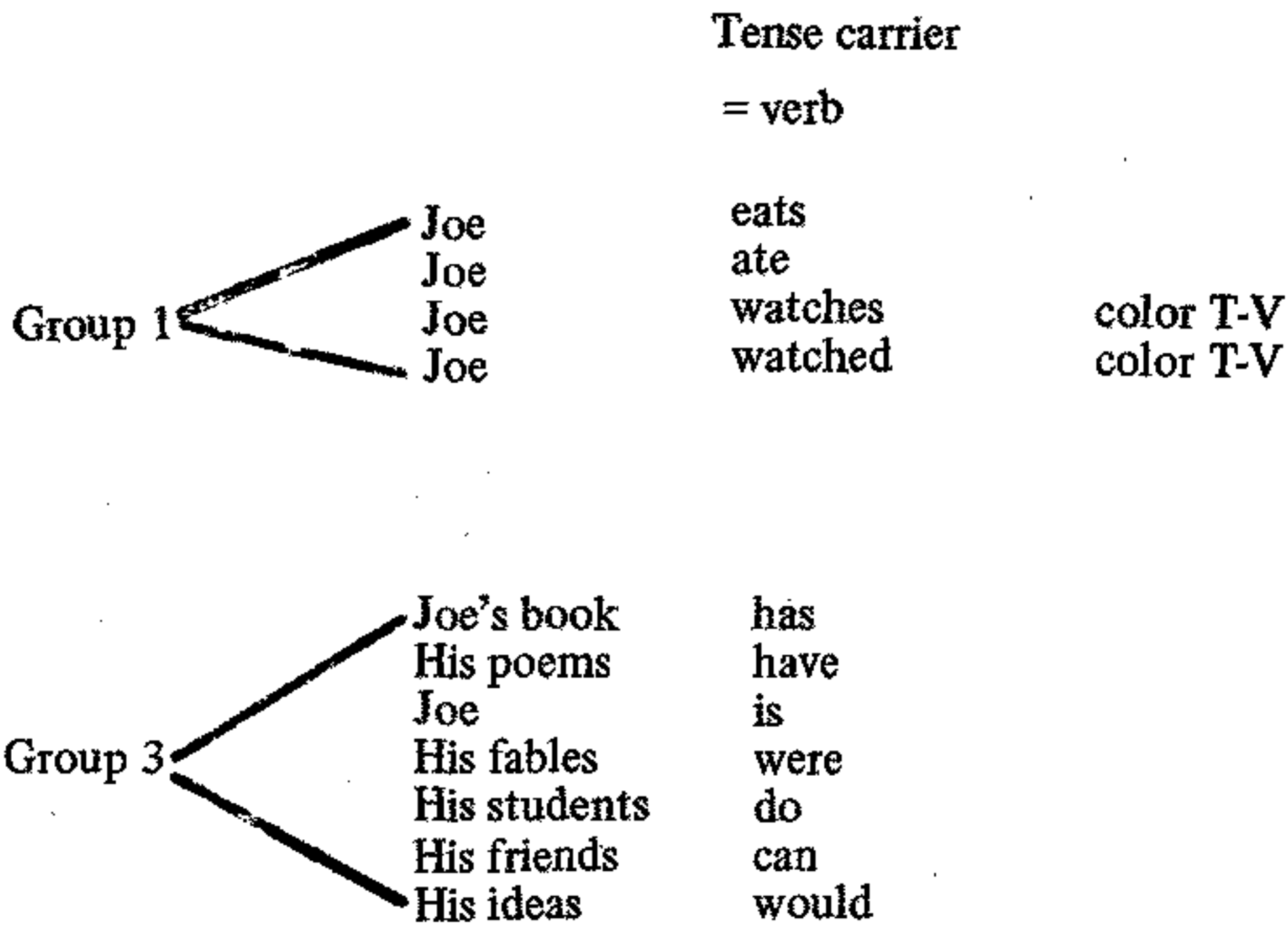
There are now two types of sentences, X and Y, rather than three groups. In type X are sentences from Group 1 and Group 3. The predicates of these sentences are unexpanded; tense carrier and verb co-occur. In Type Y are sentences of Group 2, the predicate of which is expanded. Here the tense carrier and the verb do not co-occur. The co-occurrence and non-co-occurrence of the tense carrier and verb in the two types of simple affirmative statements are given below.

(Cont. on p. 10)

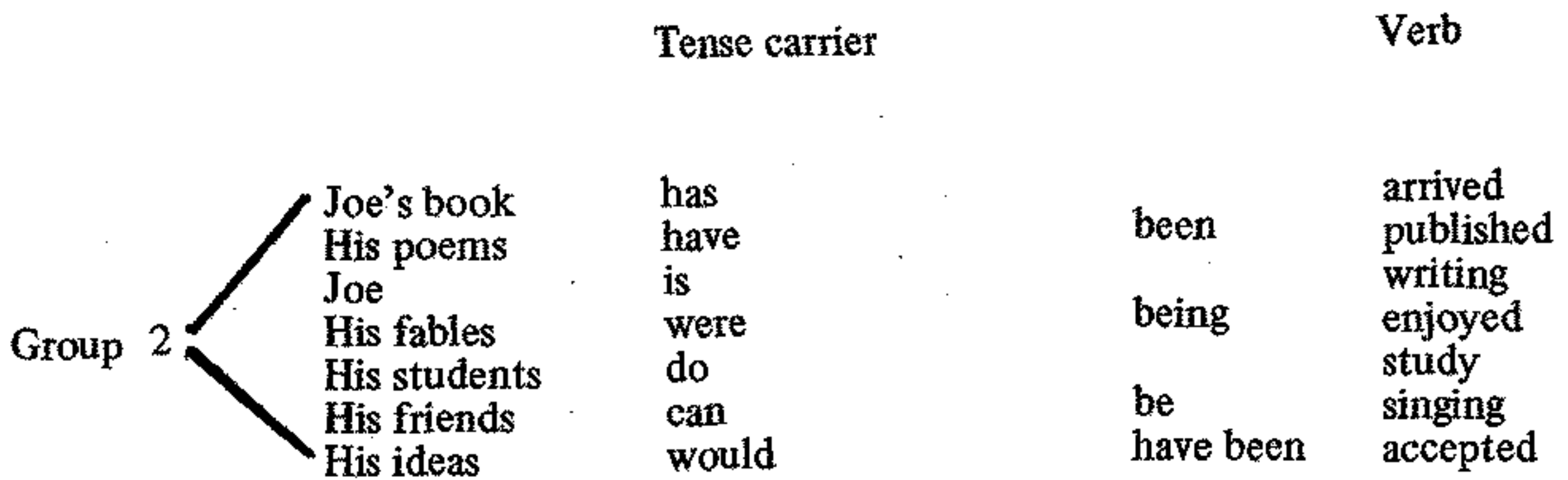
# Co-occurrence and Non-co-occurrence....

(Cont. from p. 7)

## Type X: Co-occurrence



## Type Y: Non-co-occurrence



It is hoped that the idea of convergence (co-occurrence) of tense carrier and verb, and the divergence (non-co-occurrence) of

tense carrier and verb will help teachers and students in ESL in the formation of simple affirmative statements with expanded and unexpanded predicates.