

# DISTINGUISHING TWO TYPES OF SENTENCES BY RE

by Yao Shen

This short article demonstrates four grammatical features in a simple predicate in English. Two of them are obligatory; the other two are not. All four features are illustrated with examples in a statement.

The two obligatory features in the predicate of an English statement are 1. tense (present or past and NO other, because English has no other tense), and 2. the verb (usually a word with a lexical meaning). In a simple predicate, tense occurs only once, and the verb also occurs only once.

When there is only one word in the predicate, both tense and verb occur in the same word.

Peter studie-s. (Present tense of verb *study*)  
Kathy write-s. (Present tense of verb *write*)

Peter studie-d. (Past tense of verb *study*)  
Kathy wrote. (Past tense of verb *write*)

A modal or an auxiliary or both (modal and/or auxiliary) may precede the verb, in which case, a verb string is formed. A verb string consists of a specifically related string of words (modal and/or auxiliary + verb) in which the modal or the auxiliary carrying tense begins the string, and the verb ends (terminates) it.

	Present		Verb
Peter	will		study.
Peter	had		studied.
Peter	is		studying.
Peter	does		study.
Peter	will	be	studying.
Peter	has	been	studying.
Peter	will	have	been
	Past		Verb
Kathy	would		write.
Kathy	has		written.
Kathy	was		writing.
Kathy	did		write.
Kathy	would	have	written.
Kathy	would	be	writing.
Kathy	had	been	writing.
Kathy	would	have	been

While the verb and the verb string are always co-terminous, the verb and the predicate are not. When the verb is followed by a complement, the complement and the predicate are co-terminous.

	Verb	Complement
Peter	studies	English.
Peter	studies	in class.
Peter	studies	everyday.
Peter	studies	carefully.
Peter	studies	because of interest.
Peter	studies	English in class everyday carefully because of interest.

	Verb	Complement
Kathy	wrote	letters.
Kathy	wrote	at home.
Kathy	wrote	on Sunday.
Kathy	wrote	regularly.
Kathy	wrote	for the family.
Kathy	wrote	letters at home on Sunday regularly for the family.

Let us now examine the four grammatical features in a simple predicate: tense, the verb, modal and/or auxiliary, and the complement in each of the following four different kinds of examples.

- Predicate = tense + verb:  
Peter studies.  
Kathy wrote.
- Predicate = tense + modal and/or auxiliary + verb:  
Peter will have been studying.  
Kathy would have been writing.
- Predicate = tense + verb + complement:  
Peter studies English in class everyday carefully because of interest.  
Kathy wrote letters at home on Sunday regularly for the family.
- Predicate = tense + modal and/or auxiliary + verb + complement:  
Peter will have been studying English in class everyday carefully because of interest.  
Kathy would have been writing letters at home on Sunday regularly for the family.

When the verb is not followed by a complement, the verb and the predicate are co-terminous.

	Verb
Peter	studies.
Peter	will have been studying.
	Verb
Kathy	wrote.
Kathy	would have been writing.

# RETRIEVAL

In each of the four kinds of predicates, tense and the verb both occur (1, 2, 3, 4); they are obligatory features. The occurrence of modal and/or auxiliary nevertheless, is optional. If modal and/or auxiliary are added (+ modal and/or auxiliary) preceding the verb, a verb string is formed with tense carried by the modal or the auxiliary (2, 4). If none ( $\emptyset$ ) is added (+  $\emptyset$ ), there is no verb string; tense is carried by the verb (1,3). The occurrence of a complement

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is also optional. If a complement is added (+ complement) following the verb, the complement and the predicate are co-terminous (3, 4). If no complement ( $\emptyset$ ) is added (+  $\emptyset$ ), the verb and the predicate are co-terminous (1,2).

The predicate of an English statement begins with tense (1, 2, 3, 4), and in the predicate there is a verb (1, 2, 3, 4). In a simple predicate, tense occurs only once (1, 2, 3, 4), and the verb also occurs only once (1, 2, 3, 4).

In conclusion, then, the following formula should be clear.

A simple predicate in English=

$$\text{tense } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} + \text{ modal and/or auxiliary} \\ + \emptyset \end{array} \right\} + \text{verb } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} + \text{ complement} \\ + \emptyset \end{array} \right\}$$

The syntactic arrangement of the two obligatory features and the two optional features in a simple predicate in English is represented with the obligatory features given outside the braces and the optional ones inside the braces.

Note: This is the first of a series of three articles.

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