

# Re: Universal grammar

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2006-10/msg01215.html>

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 17 Oct 2006 09:59:28 -0700
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Hans Aberg wrote:

In article <1161093724.915199.54370@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

A long time ago, in the early 1970s, a fellow had a book with a kind of universal grammar, describing what is common to language specific grammars. For example, it would classify the tense of verbs according to point of time and temporal direction: past, present, future, thus giving nine possibilities, noting that Turkish(?) is one of the few languages having the "future future" tense.

What book might this have been? Are there similar, more contemporary

references?

Not the four-volume set edited by Joseph Greenberg \*Universals of Human Language\* published by Stanford UP in 1978?

There have been plenty of works along these lines. You might look up Bernard Comrie.

Thank you for the references. It does not as such make any difference if it is the original book. But the story above goes back to some of the years 1972-75, so unless there is some earlier edition of the book you mention, it is not the one.

The study of linguistic universals was initiated by Greenberg at the

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conference published as \*Universals of Language\* in 1963 by MIT Press, but I can't think of anything in that volume with the sort of specificity you describe. It really didn't take off until he got the funding at Stanford more than a decade later. Maybe you saw a preprint or preliminary version of something from the Stanford Universals Project, and that's definitely where you should start your investigation.

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