

## *Language beyond Earth. The value of this speculative topic*

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Raymond Hickey (University of Limerick)

My talk will address a number of basic questions about life and language beyond Earth within the context of the overall topic of the conference, Is Human Language Unique?

The reason why it is of value to consider possible language beyond Earth is that it allows us to reflect on the nature of human language and assess the likelihood of comparable language arising elsewhere (outside our Solar System) under the appropriate circumstances.

In order to assess the likelihood of language beyond Earth we must first consider what aspects of human language are quintessential to it. So the task will be to try and formulate the core features of our language(s) and then see how these might manifest themselves on an exoplanet with intelligent life comparable to our own. This task will involve looking at how *Homo sapiens* developed language, how it is structurally organised and how it relates to our cognitive faculties as human beings. It can be shown that the continuity hypothesis of language development, paired with both cognitive linguistics and formal syntax can yield insights worth reflecting on given the topic of the conference.

Hickey, Raymond 2023. *Life and Language Beyond Earth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Raymond Hickey  
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