**Homework #1**

**Introduction to Linguistics / Spring ’21**

**Due on Wednesday, Febrary 10**

On the Blackboard Assignments tab, **submit** **PAGE 2** **only**.

Parts I and II (**page 1**) should be done before class on Thursday so that we can have a good discussion, but the only part that is to be **submitted** (for the “Weekly Assignment” credit) is Part III.

**Part I:** Complete the autobiographical survey [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1qhaEJA802eFVHAhCi56Wc-ocNcC5lf-Koas-KHcRSZo/edit):

<https://forms.gle/eSuMjKHwgX9yWTz8A>

**Part II:** WATCH the [TedTalk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjFtIg-nLAA&t=7s) by John Baugh and respond to the discussion questions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjFtIg-nLAA&t=7s>

(Note: This part is for class discussion, and for participation in the Blackboard Discussion forum. It does **NOT** need to be submitted in the “Weekly Assignment” portal in Blackboard!)

* At the beginning of his talk, Prof. Baugh says that *“language is so ubiquitous… that it is often taken for granted”*

Is there anything about human language that strikes you as surprising now that we have talked about what it actually *is*? Come up with a couple of insights about language you previously took for granted or had assumptions about.

* How does Prof. Baugh differentiate a dialect from an accent?
* Prof. Baugh asks us to think about our own unique linguistic experiences. Can you identify anything about your language background that has shaped how you use language or the attitudes you have towards the ways in which others around you speak?
* What is *linguistic profiling*? Try to think of both example when you profiled someone else based on how they sounded, and of a time when you personally were linguistically profiled.
* Prof. Baugh is *multidialectal*. How does he use his multidialectalism in his experiments to uncover how linguistic profiling unfolds? Describe the experiment methods and general findings.
* What criticism does Prof. Baugh often encounter regarding his work? Why is that criticism misguided?
* What can we reliably *assume* about a person based exclusively on their *voice*? How are our assumptions about a person’s social background different from linguistic profiling as Prof. Baugh has defined it?
* What does Prof. Baugh suggest we do to push back against linguistic profiling?

**Pt III:** Study Guide Questions

(This is the part to be submitted in the “Weekly Assignment” portal in Blackboard!)

* What are the human language **design features**? Define each one and give an example that illustrates that feature. (pp. 4-5)
	+ What design features do primate communication systems like those of Washoe and Nim possess? Which ones do they lack?
	+ What design features does the honeybee communication system possess?
	+ How have studies of animal language been criticized?
* Our first language is **acquired through natural exposure** during infancy and childhood, rather than through instruction. What evidence do we have to support this view? (p. 4)
* The sentence ‘*She don’t know nothing’* is grammatical in some varieties of American English, even though some people label this sentence as ‘incorrect’. Explain why, using the terms ***descriptive grammar***and ***prescriptive grammar***. (p. 9)
* It’s often hard to tell the difference between a *dialect* and a *language*. While many people refer to Mandarin and Cantonese, two varieties spoken in China, as dialects of Chinese, linguists refer to them as separate languages. Explain the difference between dialects and languages **mutual intelligibility** and **language-dialect continuum**. (p. 13)
* Define **linguistic competence** vs **linguistic performance**, and provide an example that illustrates each concept.