Sample assignment 1
Name blends

Overview

Words that commonly go together in language can be blended to form a portmanteau word, e.g., a "spork" is a combination of a spoon and fork, and "brunch" is a meal eaten between breakfast and lunch. These blended words are usually made by combining parts of each word, and we can study the ways in which words combine by referring to their phonological structure and identifying the processes that occur to create a single blended word from two input words.

For our purposes, what's most interesting is that this same phenomenon occurs with proper nouns, including personal names. Fans of celebrity couples often refer to them using name blends, and we also find the same thing for relationships between popular characters in TV and film.

- e.g. Kim Kardashian + Kanye West = Kimye
  - /kɪm/ + /ˈkɑn.jeɪ/ = /ˈkɪm.jeɪ/
- e.g. Sheldon + Amy = Shamy (from the TV show *The Big Bang Theory*)
  - /ˈʃɛl.dən/ + /ˈeɪ.mi/ = /ˈʃeɪ.mi/

Constraints

A study by DiGirolamo (2012) revealed the following constraints on name blends in English; these are only probabilistic constraints, which means that they are tendencies and not strict rules. Name blends that violate these constraints are still permitted, but the "best" blends are those that conform to as many of these constraints as possible.

Overlap
   if the names overlap in either sound or spelling, they should blend at this point
      e.g. Oliver /ˈɒ.**lɪ**.vɚ/ + Felicity /fəˈ**lɪ**.sɪ.ti/ = Olicity /ɒˈ**lɪ**.sɪ.ti/ (blending at the overlapped /lɪ/)

Onset conservation
   the name with the most complex onset usually comes first
      e.g. Snape /sneɪp/ + Harry /ˈhæ.ɹi/ = Snarry /ˈsnæ.ɹi/, not *Hape /heɪp/

Lexical neighborhood evaluation
   does the blend sound like other words that already exist in the language?
      e.g. Harry /ˈhæ.ɹi/ + Hermione /hɚˈmaɪ.ə.ni/ = Harmony /ˈhɑɹ.mə.ni/
   sometimes this is avoided, if the word has negative connotations!
      e.g. Blaine /bleɪn/ + Kurt /kɚt/ = Klaine /kleɪn/, not *Blurt /blɚt/

Orthographic transparency
   try to maintain the same sound-spelling correspondences
      e.g. Harry /ˈhæ.ɹi/ + Ginny /ˈdʒɪ.ni/ = Hinny /ˈhɪ.ni/, not *Garry /ˈdʒæ.ɹi/ because <g> before <a> usually corresponds to /g/, not /dʒ/

Generally speaking, it should be obvious which names a blend consists of. This is what Lignos & Prichard (2015) call 'understandability', and it can be achieved by preserving as many of the original sounds as possible, as well as matching one of the input names in terms of number of syllables or stress pattern.

Task

For the examples in (1), you are given name pairs and their corresponding blends, both transcribed in IPA. You should describe why the blends are **linguistically appropriate** by making reference to the constraints above, i.e. in what ways do the blends conform to, or violate, each of these constraints?

(1)	**Input name 1**		**Input name 2**		**Blend**
a.	Brad (Pitt) /bɹæd/	+	Angelina (Jolie) /æn.dʒəˈli.nə/	=	Brangelina /bɹæn.dʒəˈli.nə/
b.	Ben (Affleck) /bɛn/	+	Jennifer (Lopez) /ˈdʒɛ.nɪ.fɚ/	=	Bennifer /ˈbɛ.nɪ.fɚ/
c.	Spencer (Pratt) /ˈspɛn.sɚ/	+	Heidi (Montag) /ˈhaɪ.di/	=	Speidi /ˈspaɪ.di/
d.	Bill (Clinton) /bɪl/	+	Hillary (Clinton) /ˈhɪ.lə.ɹi/	=	Billary /ˈbɪ.lə.ɹi/
e.	Kim (Kardashian) /kɪm/	+	Kanye (West) /ˈkɑn.jeɪ/	=	Kimye /ˈkɪm.jeɪ/

For the examples in (2), you are given name pairs and **two possible blends.** You should pick whichever blend you feel is "best," again by referring to the above constraints, i.e. does one blend adhere to more constraints than the other?

(2)	**Input name 1**		**Input name 2**		**Blend 1**	**Blend 2**
a.	Fernanda /fɚˈnæn.də/	+	Henry /ˈhɛn.ɹi/	=	Fernenry /fɚˈnɛn.ɹi/	Hernanda /hɚˈnæn.də/
b.	Mulder /ˈmʌl.dɚ/	+	Scully /ˈskʌ.li/	=	Mully /ˈmʌ.li/	Sculder /ˈskʌl.dɚ/
c.	Maggie /ˈmæ.ɡi/	+	Glenn /ɡlɛn/	=	Mlen /mlɛn/	Glaggie /ˈɡlæ.ɡi/
d.	Sam /sæm/	+	Rosie /ˈɹoʊ.zi/	=	Samsie /ˈsæm.zi/	Ram /ɹæm/
e.	Carlie /ˈkɑɹ.li/	+	Nathan /ˈneɪ.θən/	=	Narlie /ˈnɑɹ.li/	Cathan /ˈkeɪ.θən/

For the examples in (3), you are only given name pairs. You should come up with your own name blend, and justify why this is an appropriate blend by referring to the above constraints.

(3)	**Input name 1**		**Input name 2**		**Blend**
a.	Clay /kleɪ/	+	Jaidyn /ˈdʒeɪ.dən/	=	
b.	Annabel /ˈæ.nə.bɛl/	+	Beth /bɛθ/	=	
c.	Kimberly /ˈkɪm.bɚ.li/	+	Lynn /lɪn/	=	
d.	Jonathan /ˈdʒɑ.nə.θən/	+	Chelsea /ˈtʃɛl.si/	=	
e.	Lawson /ˈlɔ.sən/	+	Elsie /ˈɛl.si/	=	

References

DiGirolamo, Cara M. 2012. The fandom pairing name: Blends and the phonology-orthography interface. *Names* 60(4), 231-43.

Lignos, Constantine & Hilary Prichard. 2015. Quantifying cronuts: Predicting the quality of blends. Paper presented at LSA Annual Meeting, Portland, 11th January 2015.