

Sample assignment 2 Benedict Cumberbatch parody names

Overview

Sound symbolism typically refers to the way sounds can be iconic, or evocative of particular ideas or concepts. In this assignment, you'll be exploring a different, but related, type of sound symbolism: the way some words are evocative of other words due to the phonological features that they share. The goal is to get you focusing on phonological features of names, and thinking about whether some phonological features might be more salient to speakers of a language than others.

The actor Benedict Cumberbatch, star of BBC's *Sherlock*, has a name which has attracted a considerable amount of attention on the internet. Your assignment is to use a small corpus of Benedict Cumberbatch parody names, compiled from several different online sources, to determine what, phonologically speaking, makes a Benedict Cumberbatch parody name.

Task

At the end of this document, you'll find a total of 100 Benedict Cumberbatch parody names. 50 of them are parodies of his first name and 50 of them are parodies of his surname. Use this corpus of names to answer the following question: **Why have people picked these names as parodies of the original name *Benedict Cumberbatch*?** In other words, can we make any generalizations concerning which phonological features of the original name tend to be preserved in the parody names?

To answer this question, you are recommended to take first names and surnames separately, and examine at least the following criteria:

- Stress pattern: to what extent do the parody names replicate the stress pattern of the original names?
- Stressed vowel: to what extent do the parody names have the same stressed vowel as the original names, and/or a stressed vowel of the same height and/or backness?
- Onset of first syllable: to what extent is this maintained in the parody names?
- Coda of final syllable: to what extent is this coda, or a sound from the same natural class as it, maintained in the parody names?

If you don't know how to pronounce a name or word, ask a native speaker of English, or look it up in the Oxford English Dictionary.

A good answer to this assignment will be **quantitative** and contain **examples**. That is, you will say something like: *The original first name has feature [abc]; [x] of the 50 first names I examined also had feature [abc] (for instance, [parody first name]).* This will allow you to see whether some phonological features of the original name are more robustly maintained in the parody names than others. **You should comment on this fact as well:** which feature(s) of the original names seem to have been most salient to the people generating these parody names?

Benedict Cumberbatch parody names, compiled from various online sources:

First name	Surname
Anglerfish	Animorph
Bандаid	Banglesnatch
Bandersnatch	Battleship
Barbiturate	Cabbagepatch
Barrister	Calldispatch
Bassdrop	Camouflage
Beachbody	Candybatch
Bedbug	Cankersore
Bedlington	Capncrunch
Benchthis	Carrotstick
Bendydick	Cheddarcheese
Benefit	Chickenstrips
Benetton	Chowderpants
Benjamin	Chunkybab
Bentobox	Claritin
Billiardball	Cockletit
Billyray	Coddleswort
Blenderdick	Collywog
Blubberbutt	Combyourthatch
Blubberwhale	Commonwealth
Bodybuild	Compasstrap
Bombadil	Cottagecheese
Bonapart	Countryside
Boppinstick	Covertrack
Bouillabaisse	Crackerjack
Brandybuck	Crinklesnitch
Broccoli	Crucifix
Brokenbrick	Crumplebath
Budapest	Crumplehorn
Bulbasaur	Cuckooclock
Bumblebee	Cucumberwubwub
Bumperstump	Cumbersnatch
Bunsenburner	Cumbersome
Butawhiteboy	Cunningscratch
Buttercup	Cunningsnatch
Buttermilk	Cupboardlatch
Carrotstick	Curdlemilk
Congleton	Cuttlefish
Crumplesack	Frumblesnatch
Fragglorock	Johnnycash
Guiltyverdict	Kryptonite
Johnnycash	Luckycatch
Liverswort	Nottinghill
Pumpnickel	Oxfordshire
Rinkydink	Scratchsniff
Snorkeldink	Stinkyrash
Syphilis	Thundermunch
Timothy	Vegemite
Wellington	Wafflesmack
Wimbledon	Wonkypatch