SUMMARY

Our pilot study shows that children’s acceptance of English onset cluster errors is quite variable, even when their cluster production has stabilized. Nevertheless their acceptance ‘errors’ are in large part phonologically-systematic – so how should they be explained?

**Early perception: rapidly acquired**
- language-specific discrimination by 1-0 (Weker and Tees, 1984; Jesuycyk et al, 1993)
- toddlers perceive one-feature changes in familiar words (Swingley, 2009; Berko and Brown, 1960)

**Early production: slower progress**
- Typical L3 English cluster production at 2-0-3-6:
  - Julia (Pater & Barlow, 2003): 6M; 5F; 5M
  - Trevor (Pater, 1996): 5M; 6F; 2M
  - Steve (tiv): 6M; 6F; 5M
  - sleep (sip): 6F; 5M; 6F
  - clean (kin): 6F
  - froggy (fog): 6F

**Upshot: Multiple grammars?**
Separate production, perception systems e.g. Smolensky (1996), Menin & Matthei (1992)

**RESULTS**

**Judgments: variable acceptance of epenthesis**
Mean overall 74% accuracy, 44 trials per child

**Evidence of positional phonology in judgment task**

**Production Task**
- All kids: Initial epenthesis more likely only for sC clusters

**INTERPRETATION**

**Evidence of positional phonology in judgment task**
- All kids: Initial epenthesis more likely only for sC clusters

**References**