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Rational Productivity:
using a system of learned constructions to express new messages

In order to communicate, we each learn a complex, dynamic system of constructions, a ConstructionNet. Mismatches between what is expected and what is witnessed fine-tune our network of learned constructions via **competition-driven** learning (statistical preemption). To express novel messages, we must combine familiar constructions in new ways; such productive combinations have given us *wugs; tweeted*; *humble brag*; *Ok, Boomer*, and *is (not) a thing*. Productive combinations of constructions also allow us to talk about a period *three hairstyles ago* or explain that *we napped our way across the Atlantic.* Granted certain caveats, evidence is reviewed that novel combinations are generally judged less acceptable to the extent that there exists a "better" (conventional) way of expressing the same intended message-in-context (e.g., *say to me > ?say me; succeeded in doing > ?succeeded to do*).