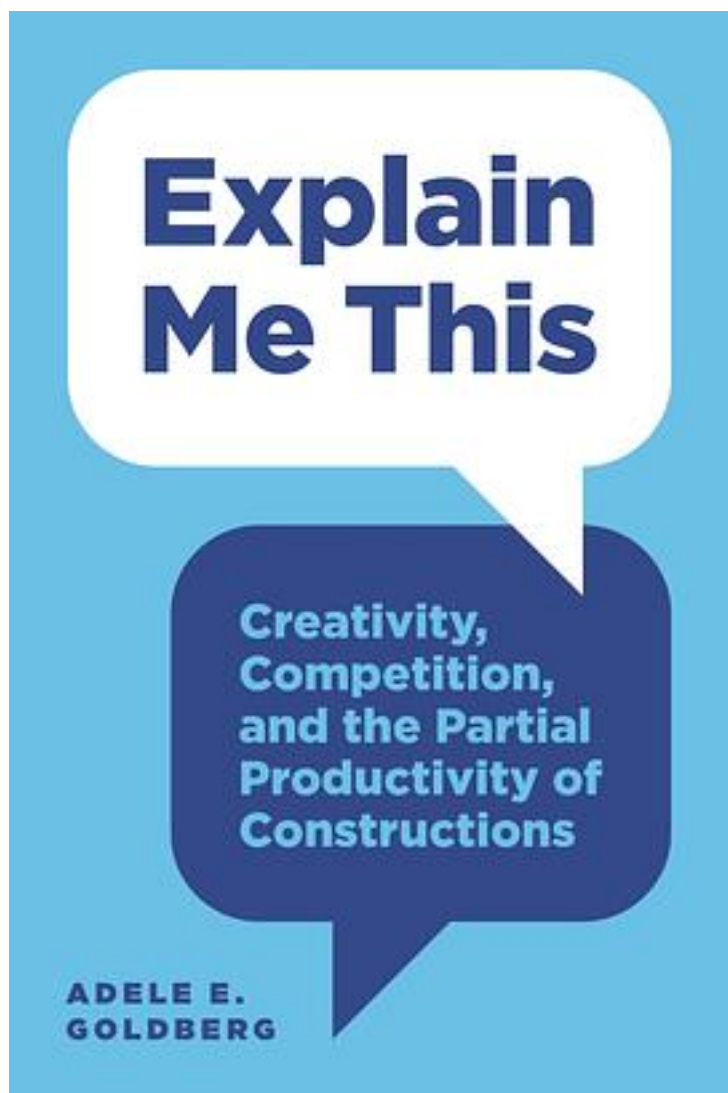


# Explain Me This



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We use words and phrases creatively to express ourselves in ever-changing contexts, readily extending language constructions in new ways. Yet native speakers also implicitly know when a creative and easily interpretable formulation—such as “Explain me this” or “She considered to go”—doesn’t sound quite right. In this incisive book, Adele Goldberg explores how these creative but constrained language skills emerge from a combination of general cognitive mechanisms and experience.

Shedding critical light on an enduring linguistic paradox, Goldberg demonstrates how words and abstract constructions are generalized and constrained in the same ways. When learning language, we record partially abstracted tokens of language within the high-dimensional conceptual space that is used when we speak or listen. Our implicit knowledge of language includes dimensions related to form, function, and social context. At the same time, abstract memory traces of linguistic usage-events cluster together on a subset of dimensions, with overlapping aspects strengthened via repetition. In this way, dynamic categories that correspond to words and abstract constructions emerge from partially overlapping memory traces, and as a result, distinct words and constructions compete with one another each time we select them to express our intended messages.

While much of the research on this puzzle has favored semantic or functional explanations over statistical ones, Goldberg’s approach stresses that both the functional and statistical aspects of constructions emerge from the same learning mechanisms.

作者介绍:

Adele E. Goldberg is professor of psychology at Princeton University. She is the author of *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language and Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*.

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标签

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## 评论

Li老师推荐的书籍

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这本书相当好，是一本比较综述/理论的书，为构式语法综述了很多实验和modeling的证据。Goldberg主要解释，Explain me this问题（为什么explain this to me可以，explain me this听着很奇怪，但tell me this又毫无问题），也就是为什么语言一方面是productive的，另一方面又有很多限制？Goldberg主要借助两个概念，一个是coverage，一个个instance怎么被generalize成construction，另一个是statistical preemption，不同的construction相互之间如何竞争。

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## 书评

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