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### Sommario/riassunto

Hedging is an essential part of everyday communication. It is a discourse strategy which is used to reduce commitment to the force or truth of an utterance to achieve an appropriate pragmatic effect. In recent years hedges have therefore attracted increased attention in Pragmatics and Applied Linguistics, with studies approaching the concept of hedging from various perspectives, such as speech act - and politeness theory, genre-specific investigations, interactional pragmatics, and studies of vague language. The present volume provides an up-to-date overview of current research on the topic by bringing together studies from a variety of fields. The contributions span a range of different languages, investigate the use of hedges in different communicative settings and text types, and consider all levels of linguistic analysis from prosody to morphology, syntax and semantics. What unites the different studies in this volume is a corpus-based approach, in which various theoretical concepts and categories are applied to, and tested against, actual language data. This allows for patterns of use to be uncovered which have previously gone unnoticed and provides valuable insights for the adjustment and fine-tuning of existing categories. The usage-based approach of the investigations therefore offers new theoretical and descriptive perspectives on the context-dependent nature and multifunctionality of hedges.

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