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Sommario/riassunto

This book proposes an innovative approach to general nouns. General nouns are defined as high-frequency nouns that are characterised by their textual functions. Although the concept is motivated by Halliday & Hasan (1976), the corpus theoretical approach adopted in the present study is fundamentally different and set in a linguistic framework that prioritises lexis. The study investigates 20 nouns that are very frequent in mainstream English, as represented by the Bank of English Corpus.

The corpus-driven approach to the data involves a critical discussion of descriptive tools, such as patterns, semantic prosodies, and primings of lexical items, and the concept of 'local textual functions' is put forward to characterise the functions of the nouns in texts. The study not only suggests a characterisation of general nouns, but also stresses that functions of lexical items and properties of texts are closely linked. This link requires new ways of describing language.
