Volume 4, Issue 4, April – 2026 **ISSN (E):** 2938-379X

PRAGMATIC ATTITUDE OF A NON-CATEGORIC STATEMENTS

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Abstract
This article explores the pragmatic nature of non-categoric statements in discourse. Non-categoric statements are linguistic units that express uncertainty, probability, or subjectivity rather than absolute certainty. The study examines their role in communication, their linguistic markers, and their pragmatic functions in various contexts. Special attention is given to how such statements contribute to politeness strategies, mitigation, and the speaker's epistemic stance.

Keywords: Pragmatic Attitude, non-categoric statements, probability, subjectivity, communication, politeness strategies.

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Introduction

Language is not only a system of grammatical rules but also a tool for expressing attitudes, beliefs, and intentions. In real communication, speakers rarely make absolute or categorical statements. Instead, they often rely on non-categorical expressions to reflect uncertainty, politeness, or caution.

Non-categoric statements play a crucial role in pragmatics, as they help speakers manage interpersonal relations and present information in a less direct or less imposing way. These statements are especially common in academic discourse, everyday conversation, and diplomatic communication.

Pragmatics studies how meaning is constructed in context. According to pragmatic theory, the interpretation of an utterance depends not only on its semantic content but also on the speaker's intention and the communicative situation.

Non-categoric statements are closely related to:

- Epistemic modality (expressing degrees of certainty)
- Hedging (softening statements)
- Politeness theory (Brown and Levinson)

These concepts highlight that speakers often avoid categorical assertions to maintain flexibility and avoid conflict.

A non-categoric statement is an utterance that does not express absolute certainty or a fixed claim. Instead, it reflects:

- probability
- assumption
- doubt

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• approximation

Examples:

• *It seems that the results are inconclusive.*

• *This might be the correct interpretation.*

• *It is likely that the author intended…*

Such statements contrast with categorical ones like:

• *This is the correct answer.*

• *The results are conclusive.*

Non-categorical meaning is expressed through various linguistic devices:

1. Modal Verbs

• *may, might, could*

Example: *This could indicate a shift in meaning.*

2. Adverbs of Probability

• *probably, possibly, perhaps*

Example: *Perhaps the speaker intended irony.*

3. Introductory Phrases

• *It seems, It appears, I think, I suppose*

Example: *It seems that the data is incomplete.*

4. Conditional Structures

Example: *If this assumption is correct, then…*

5. Hedges

• *kind of, somewhat, relatively*

Example: *The result is somewhat unexpected.*

1. Expression of Uncertainty

Non-categorical statements allow speakers to reflect incomplete knowledge or doubt.

2. Politeness and Face-Saving

According to politeness theory, avoiding categorical statements helps reduce the risk of threatening the interlocutor's "face".

Example:

• Direct: *You are wrong.*

• Non-categorical: *I might be mistaken, but this seems different.*

3. Mitigation of Claims

In academic discourse, researchers often soften their claims to avoid overgeneralization.

Example:

• *The findings suggest…* instead of *The findings prove…*

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4. Strategic Ambiguity
Speakers may intentionally remain vague to allow multiple interpretations or avoid commitment.

1. Academic Discourse
Widely used to present hypotheses and avoid absolute claims.
Example: *The results may indicate a correlation.*

2. Everyday Communication
Used to maintain politeness and avoid conflict.
Example: *Maybe we should try another option.*

3. Political and Diplomatic Discourse
Used to avoid direct statements and maintain neutrality.
Example: *We are considering possible solutions.*

Cross-Cultural Perspective
The use of non-categoric statements varies across cultures. In some cultures (e.g., English-speaking), indirectness and hedging are common and expected. In others, more direct communication may be preferred.
This difference can lead to misunderstandings in intercultural communication, where indirect statements may be interpreted as uncertainty or lack of confidence.
Non-categoric statements are an essential component of pragmatic competence. They allow speakers to express uncertainty, maintain politeness, and adapt their speech to different communicative contexts. Understanding their function is particularly important in language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication.
Future research may focus on comparative studies of non-categoric expressions across languages and their role in discourse strategies.

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