

Imperatives Evident in the EVP's Special Message during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming of 2018

Randolf L. Asistido
Wilfredo O. Hermosura
STI West Negros University
Bacolod City, Negros Occidental
Philippines

Abstract

This paper analyzed the imperatives found on the special message of the Executive Vice President (EVP) to the Alumni and Employees of STI West Negros University during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming at the University Gymnasium on February 17, 2018. After getting the informed consent, needed linguistic data in MP3 format were obtained from the University Alumni Foundation, transcribed into its written form, forwarded for review and validation to the EVP, and thereafter analyzed using Freeman and Murcia's (2016) textbook entitled *The Grammar Book: Form, Meaning and Use for English Language Teachers*. Initial data analyses were subjected to research rigors involving three (3) language majors in reputable schools in Bacolod City. They reviewed accuracy of translation from L1 to L2, as well as the accuracy of the analyses and interpretation of data in response to those five (5) specific objectives. Final data analyses found declarative sentences, and not bare imperative sentences, as the most prevalent imperatives recording an enormous frequency of 62%. The same data provide evidence of offer/invitation and advice/suggestion as the dominant linguistic function, the prevalence of diffuse imperative illustrating requests/commands frequently addressed to everyone or anyone in attendance, the negligible occurrence of negative imperatives, and the use of "Please..." and the emphatic auxiliary *do* as a proven strategy of increasing politeness. These findings call attention on the need to review and possibly enrich the University's existing ESL curricula by giving a balanced emphasis on the use of imperatives both in pure talk or institutional talk.

Keywords: Linguistics, imperatives, requests/commands, linguistic politeness, indirect speech acts

Bio-notes:

Randolf L. Asistido holds a degree in PhD-English and currently serves as Director, Research Development and Extension Office at STI-West Negros University. His research papers include pragmatic discourse analysis, classroom interaction, language alternation, syntactic analysis, linguistic politeness, perceived teacher innovation and student engagement, corpus-assisted analysis of online hotel descriptions, and influencing variables and implications in teacher-student relationship.

Wilfredo O. Hermosura holds a degree in Doctor of Educational Management and currently holds the position as Vice President for Academic Affairs of STI West Negros University. His research interest is on teaching reading and higher educational management.

Introduction

Nature of the Problem

Alumni homecomings have always been considered to be a sentimental journey for graduates from pre-school to the graduate school levels. In the words of Natividad (2020) and Mann (2019), it is an opportune time to have fun, celebrate, gather classmates and schoolmates together, and renew once more ties made dormant after long years of separation. These special occasions necessarily involve school employees whose task is to provide a welcoming climate that usually includes a mass, motorcade, awarding of outstanding alumni, and fellowship.

Officials tasked to speak in front of these returning alumni may choose any subject matter, and the Executive Vice President of STI West Negros University took advantage of the occasion to articulate the University's vision to become a leading university in Negros Island by 2025 on that bright sunny morning of February 17, 2018 inside the university premises. Mr. Ryan Mark Molina made clear that the task at hand requires the support of every single stakeholder, the alumni and employees alike.

Viewed closely, his special message was nothing short of a policy statement replete with appeal in form of imperatives, a sentence mood described by Freeman and Murcia (2016) of having such communicative function of getting someone to do something. Whether which of those appeals happens to be the strongest in terms of exhortation still remains to be analyzed, hence this paper.

Current State of Knowledge

Mr. Ryan Mark Molina's special message was addressed to both alumni and employees of the University. Nonetheless, the operative word in the preceding paragraph is alumni engagement, which, in the words of Jones (2015), refers to any means other than simply offering a better school magazine, larger reunions, etc. Alumni needs to feel they belong and that their opinions matter. A culture of alumni engagement requires careful, deliberate planning on the part of the school administration to provide alumni with a symbolic assurance that they do definitely matter.

Fully aware of this reality, the EVP delivered his personal appeal to the alumni's intellect and emotion- that everybody has a role to play in order to realize the university's lofty vision statement. Incidentally, that was in clear adherence to Agbor's (2008) philosophy that leaders must establish an environment conducive to building organizational culture. The same author adds that organizational creativity depends on how leaders encourage and manage diversity in the organization and how they develop an effective leadership structure that sustains the innovation process. Questions, however, might be asked whether or not those personal appeal to the faculty and alumni actually hit their mark.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This paper is anchored on the speech act theory by both Austin (1962) and Searle et al. (1980), triangulated with politeness theory of Brown and Levinson

(1987). There are a number of authorities on these sub-fields of linguistics, but this section focuses on these four authorities and their theories as they help elucidate the EVP's unique situation and purpose.

Nordquist (2020) writes about how speech act theory studies how words are used not only to inform but also to carry out some actions. This is partly illustrated in the EVP's message dominated by declarative sentences telling the audience where the University is at present, and where does it intend to go in the foreseeable future. We say so because declarative sentences also have the potential to function both as indirect requests or commands. The EVP's utterances would highlight Austin's (1962) concept on locution, or what were actually uttered; and illocution pointing out the intent of those uttered words. Searle (1979) supported Austin and subsequently devised a system of speech act categorization and brought down the number of illocutionary points to five, i.e., assertive, commissive, directive, declaratory, and expressive. In any of the preceding speech acts of the EVP, Austin's perlocution, aka results of utterances could be expected in non-verbal response via intentional vocalizations and body language from the audience.

Meanwhile, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory puts premium on the notion of politeness, duly construed as efforts on redressing affronts a to hearers' self-esteem. Politeness, to the duo, refers to the way speakers convey utterances in the most polite way to minimize friction with their intended listeners. This theory helps simplify the EVP's need to engage all stakeholders in attendance to the collective tasks ahead. The audience has to be convinced they are not mere bystanders in the process, but couriers of the message or facilitators of future efforts. Simply put, they need to help. Nonetheless, in the scheme of things, they need to feel they own those big plans conveyed by the EVP.

Short of begging for their involvement, the EVP had to alternate between what Yule (1996) calls direct and indirect speech acts to get his message across. At times, he is expected to use direct speech acts courtesy of bare imperatives, illustrated by such direct relationship between the structure of the utterance and its intended function. In contrast, indirect speech acts show no such relationship between structure and function as they would at times appear in interrogatives, making them appear like questions but would actually mean commands or requests.

The preceding theories connect well with the specific concepts written by renowned authors of the 2016 Edition of the Grammar Book: Form, Meaning, and Use for English Language Teachers, Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marianne Celce-Murcia. These authors describe the imperative's linguistic form as usual subject-less sentences giving requests or commands. There are other linguistic forms of imperatives that will be tackled in the later section of this paper. Linguistic functions include offer/invitation, suggestion/advice, request, direction, or wish. When the speaker wishes to address a special appeal to anyone in attendance, he/she has an option to use diffuse imperatives, an attempt to solicit for volunteers. The speaker may also use specific imperatives starting with vocatives, or addressing someone then seek help or issue requests/command. Another special meaning comes in inclusive imperatives where the speaker does not just address the request or command to the audience but likewise includes him/herself as in Latin *Oremus*, "Let us pray." Meanwhile, the same authors likewise tackled negative imperatives like "*Do not run*," "*Don't be late*," and "*Never be late*." Finally, the magic words *please*, *kindly*,

and *offers, wishes, invitations* with auxiliary verbs *do* make linguistic expressions more polite.

Purpose Statement

This paper sought to analyze the imperatives found on the special message of the Executive Vice President to the Alumni and Employees of STI West Negros University during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming at the University Gymnasium on February 17, 2018. The university as a whole would be hard pressed to look for another opportunity where sizeable attention is given to imperatives as one of the sentence moods by examining its other notable functions as a tool of human communication.

Research Questions

1. What linguistic forms are evident on imperatives at the clausal/sentential level in the special message of the Executive Vice President to the Alumni and Employees of STI West Negros University during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming at the University Gymnasium last February 17, 2018?
2. What linguistic functions of imperatives have surfaced on the same special message on the same target audience when examined in terms of:
 - a. offer/invitation;
 - b. suggestion/advice;
 - c. request;
 - d. direction; or
 - e. wish?
3. What meanings are conveyed by the above special message to its intended audience in terms of:
 - a. diffuse imperatives;
 - b. specific imperatives starting with vocatives; and
 - c. inclusive imperatives?
4. Which of the hereunder negative imperatives are evident in the above special message to the same intended audience in terms of:
 - a. imperatives with *do*;
 - b. imperatives with *be*; and
 - c. imperatives with *never*?
5. Which linguistic evidence surfaced in the EVP's efforts of increasing politeness while appealing for everybody's cooperation to realize STI West Negros University's vision to become a leading university in the Negros Island by 2025?
 - a. Please
 - b. Kindly
 - c. Offer, wishes or invitation with the use of the emphatic auxiliary verb *do*.

Methodology

This chapter illustrates the supporting structure to this study by describing how the investigation will be conducted, the source of linguistic data, and the steps followed in the analysis of said data. In specific terms, it discussed the research design, the source of linguistic data, the initiatives done to obtain the same, translation and coding system, research design, and the procedures for data gathering and analysis.

Research Design

This study made use of the descriptive design consistent with its objective of determining the imperatives prevalent in the EVP's special message addressed to the returning alumni and the university employees on February 17, 2018 at the STI West Negros University gymnasium in Bacolod City.

Source of Linguistic Data

The data needed by this study came from the special message delivered by Mr. Ryan Mark S. Molina to the alumni and employees of STI West Negros University in the morning of February 17, 2018 at the University Gymnasium during its General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming.

Procedures

Data Collection and Transcription

At the onset, this researcher made a request to the EVP and quickly obtained approval to access the data uploaded online by STI West Negros University Foundation right after the general assembly and alumni homecoming. From its MP3 format, the linguistic data were subsequently transcribed into its written form for purposes of analysis. Census was employed as all of the EVP's utterances were analyzed in search for imperatives, be they in form of bare imperatives, declarative sentences, or interrogative sentences.

Validity of EVP's Transcribed Message

After having transcribed the data needed by this study, the said written message was forwarded to the Office of the Executive Vice President, Mr. Ryan Mark S. Molina for counterchecking and/or validation last July 27, 2018. In less than a week, the EVP's initials served as virtual seal of validation of the transcription as the linguistic material for analysis.

Coding

After obtaining the validity of the linguistic data, this researcher went right to doing some coding process of the variables on linguistic form, functions, meanings, negative imperatives, and strategies for increasing politeness. The ensuing analysis focuses at the clausal/sentential levels.

Data Analysis

The sections that follow spell out the procedure analysis of data that will find answers to research questions raised in the introductory portion of this research work.

Phase 1: Linguistic Form. All imperatives uncovered in the EVP's special message that were categorized in either imperative, declarative or interrogative sentence moods were subjected for analysis to find answers to Research Question 1.

Phase 2: Linguistic Functions. All imperatives found in the EVP's special message categorized in terms of offer, suggestion, request, advice, direction, prohibition, warning/threat, invitation, and wish were analyzed to find answers to Research Question 2.

Phase 3: Meanings. All imperatives found in the above special message to its intended audience that were categorized in terms of diffuse imperatives, specific imperatives starting with vocatives, and inclusive imperatives were analyzed to find answers to Research Question 3.

Phase 4: Negative Imperatives. All negative imperatives found in the above special message that were grouped in terms of imperatives with *do*; imperatives with *be*; and imperatives with *never* were all analyzed in response to Research Question 4.

Phase 5: Efforts to Increase Politeness. All linguistic evidence found in the EVP's efforts of increasing politeness while appealing for everybody's cooperation to realize STI West Negros University's vision to become a leading university in the Negros Island by 2025 that have been grouped in terms of "*Please*," "*Kindly*," or "*Offer, wishes or invitation with the use of the emphatic auxiliary verb do*" were likewise subjected to linguistic analysis and interpretation.

Rigors of Findings

The initial data analyses were subjected to inter-rater validity involving three (3) language majors in reputable colleges and universities in Negros Occidental. They were given the honor of looking at the accuracy of the analysis and interpretation of linguistic forms at the clausal/sentential level, their linguistic functions, meanings conveyed by imperatives, negative imperatives, and linguistic evidence of EVP's attempts to increase politeness. Those 13 recorded imperatives were subsequently compared for consistency and reliability at a minimum level of 0.80 based on Mussen's (as cited in Sevilla, Ochave, Regala & Uriarte, 1992) standards. Out of a total of 13 dimensions observed, there were a total of 12 recorded agreements; resulting in a consistency/reliability rating of 0.923.

Results and Discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the linguistic data to carry out the predetermined objectives of this paper, which was to analyze the imperatives found on the special message of the Executive Vice President to the Alumni and Employees of STI West Negros University during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming at the University Gymnasium on February 17, 2018.

Linguistic Forms of Imperatives at the Clausal/Sentential Level

There was a total of thirteen (13) imperatives observed on the special message at the clausal/sentential level of the EVP's Special Message during the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming of 2018. These sentences and clauses on the English imperative moods come out on various types according to their respective functions. Table 1 summarizes this point succinctly.

Table 1

Linguistic Forms Evident on Imperatives at the Clausal/Sentential Level

Form	Number	Percentage
Declarative Sentences/Clauses	8	62%
Bare Imperatives	4	30%
Interrogative Sentences/Clauses	1	8%
Total	13	100%

Grammar books assert that requests or commands are usually expressed in imperative sentences/clauses. Srivastava (2020) echoes this assertion. Through requests or commands, leaders can tell people what to do or what not to do. Imperative sentences usually come in an elliptical sentence/clause in what Freeman and Murcia (2016) describe as sentence type with no obvious (overt) subject noun phrase. Other authors would call this as "subject-less" sentences/clauses with their verbs in the base form. In an article published online entitled Definitions and Examples of Imperatives in English, Nordquist (2019, categorized imperatives into four groupings on requests, invitations, commands, and instructions.

In sharp contrast, Table 1 above presents a rather odd figure of imperatives in declarative sentences recording a whopping 62% of the total number of clauses/sentences analyzed. A point worth emphasizing is that those imperatives in declarative sentences have their propositional contents and the speech act they perform read from the speaker intent, aka illocutionary force. Nonetheless, there is a scarcity of research on English imperatives.

Meanwhile, bare imperatives account only for about 30% while interrogative sentences/clauses account for only 8%. In other words, requests or commands made by the Executive Vice President to his intended readers often come in declarative sentences, an indirect speech act. In the words of H. Schiffman (1997) and Ardissono, Boella, and Lesmo (1995), indirect expressions are a way of ensuring listeners do not get slighted by any command or request, which happens to be the function of imperatives.

In exact order, this section now presents three (3) clauses/sentences in imperative mood: Declarative, bare imperative and interrogative sentences.

"I would like everybody to join us in that vision and mission that we have for all of our students here in the University."

The above utterance is in declarative form but certainly has the subtle, illocutionary force of a request or command. This imperative is inviting everybody in attendance during the general assembly and alumni homecoming, the faculty, non-teaching staff, and alumni, for a common goal and purpose. In effect, the EVP exhorted everyone to be a part of the University's determined goal of taking the lead in the business of education in Negros Island. A point worth noting is that the locutionary force of this imperative is addressed to the third person- *everybody* referring to the employees and alumni, but the illocutionary force is expressed in the second person when translated to read, "*You join us.*"

Imperatives taking the declarative form appear to stick to the principle of indirect speech acts without losing their intended meaning. Terkourafi (2015) claims that empirical studies from different cultures suggest that seeming impossibility to circumscribe a closed set of expressions whose utterances guarantee a polite effect in any single culture, let alone universally. The same author, however, was candid enough to acknowledge that early perspective has since tied politeness to indirect expressions.

From its declarative form, this section now shifts attention on bare imperative. This comes in a subject-less sentence with the subject noun phrase (NP) *you* visibly missing, evident in the sample below.

"Enjoy the rest of the day."

The imperative above came in somewhere at the closing segment of the EVP's special message. It represents the usual elliptical format of a clause or sentence. It is evident that this particular imperative addresses its listener in the second person- *you* to mean "*You enjoy the rest of the day.*"

From its bare imperative form, this section now illustrates another sub-variable in an imperative in its interrogative form.

"So what about a big hand for our University?"

The above imperative appears in form of a question, but in essence it was prodding for everyone in the gymnasium to give a round of applause for STI West Negros University having earned its virtual spot as the second choice of senior high school students in Bacolod, next only to the University of St. La Salle (USLS). It was a much polite yet a potent imperative statement that quickly got its mark of compliance in form of a warm applause from the audience. In effect, it was a consequence of what the figures disclosed by the EVP showing that next to USLS Senior High School Students choose STI-WNU as a viable second-home option.

Up next is the next variable on linguistic functions of imperatives.

Linguistic Functions of Imperatives

From its linguistic form, this section now brings the spotlight on the linguistic functions of imperatives found on the EVP's special message dated February 17, 2018. Readers' attention is invited on Table 2 on the succeeding page.

Table 2
Linguistic Functions of Imperatives

Function	Frequency	Percentage
Offer/Invitation	4	31%
Advice/Suggestion	4	31%
Direction	3	22%
Wish	1	8%
Request	1	8%
Total	13	100%

Table 2 suggests the kind of social climate that characterized the General Assembly and Alumni Homecoming of 2018. For one, it shows how the EVP appreciated for those in who joined the activity as that was a gesture of their love for their Alma Mater. In fact, utterances at the onset of the message reveals his appreciation for people who worked so hard to make the 2018 homecoming a resounding success, a feat that would not have been possible without everybody's cooperation. After all, it was not just a simple occasion; it was a sentimental homecoming for alumni- both the young and the not so young. It came not as a surprise henceforth that those imperatives found in the special message in focus came mostly in form of offer/invitation and advice/suggestion, both at 31% each. An almost similar result can be gleaned from Nordquist's (2019) article published online on the functions of imperatives, i.e., requests, invitations, commands, and instructions.

Utterances like, *"I would like everybody to join us in that vision and mission that we have for all of our students here in the University," "Enjoy the rest of the day," "Please do stay until tonight,"* and *"So please do stay here"* are typical examples of an offer or invitation for all stakeholders in attendance- alumni and employees alike. Merriam-Webster defines this kind of offer or invitation as a request to be present or to participate in an activity. It is clear from the sample imperatives above that Executive Vice President was not just making an invitation; he was convincing everyone to join the general assembly and homecoming of 2018.

In like manner, an imperative like, *"I know that some of you are already leaders in your own organizations, and that is the thing that we wanted to happen"* is a subtle imperative that advises or suggests University alumni to aim higher and strive to become leaders in their respective organizations. That same linguistic function of imperatives reveals itself in the utterance, *"So what about a big hand for our University?"* The other two imperatives in declarative forms, *"This is still your gym"* and *"These are still your classrooms"* addressed to the alumni connote they must feel at home whenever they come to visit the University.

Imperatives that function as direction appeared thrice in the text in focus. The first reads, *"What we wanted to produce here in Negros are not only students and good workers."* The second, *"What we wanted to produce are graduates of the school who will become leaders in their own organizations"* while the third reads, *"We*

wanted to come up with a strong foundation for our basic education.” A point worth noting is that all these clauses or sentences are recorded in the declarative formant.

There are some interesting highlights to the imperatives above. While the third imperative of directions appears to be addressed to the top and middle level management of the University, the first and the second seems addressed to both alumni and employees alike. In general, these directions present a theme that STI West Negros University must, at the onset, build a solid foundation for basic education and then move on to nurture and produce not only dedicated students and workers but ultimately graduates who will strive to become leaders in the competitive industry outside of the walls of the University.

This section now brings the spotlight on two imperatives functioning both as a wish and request in exact order.

“So these are efforts that we are doing right now for the University, and I hope you as the alumni of the university will be one of us in all these efforts for us to be able to become one of the leading universities in the Negros Island.”

The preceding imperative, specifically on the second main clause, translates to a wish that may the alumni take part in the University’s grandiose plan of becoming one of the leading universities in Negros Island. This bidding came after reviewing the text in a paragraph that deals with the STI WNU’s ongoing initiative to become the Centers of Excellence for the Colleges of Criminal Justice Education as well as Education, and Center of Development for the Colleges of Engineering and Hospitality Management.

Found in the final paragraph of the text is a request that reads, *“So please help us in spreading the word that STI West Negros University aims to become a leading university, and that STI West Negros University is committed to be of service to everybody here in the University in Negros Occidental.”* Simply put, this was a special request for everyone in attendance, with special emphasis on the alumni, to disseminate in the widest possible terms the momentum the University now enjoys and the reforms it has instituted to take the lead in providing quality education in Negros and its neighboring provinces.

This section now brings its focus on the next variable, the linguistic meanings of imperatives found in the EVP’s special message in terms of diffuse imperatives, specific imperatives starting with vocatives, and inclusive imperatives.

Meanings Conveyed

Imperatives, to Postdam and Edmiston (2018), are directives conveying an illocutionary force of commanding, prohibiting, suggesting, permitting, or requesting by the speaker. To Freeman and Murcia (2016), imperatives generate their added meaning in the way a speaker selects his/her addressee/s. Here, the speaker may opt to either retain or delete the subject- *you*. It is still noticeable though that the retention or deletion of the subject of the clause or sentence makes clear who the speaker is talking to, and that is the person/s in front of him/her. Nonetheless, if the speaker wants to specify who he/she is really talking to, he/she can specify through the use of vocatives. Still another option possible is for the speaker to address his directives to

everybody or anybody present in an activity. These will all be tackled on the sections that follow.

Table 3 gives a glimpse of the linguistic meanings of imperatives noted in the EVP's special message.

Table 3
Meanings Conveyed by Imperatives

Meanings	Number	Percentage
Diffuse Imperatives	12	92%
Specific Imperatives with Vocatives	0	0%
Inclusive Imperatives	1	8%
Total	13	100%

The preceding table summarizes the linguistic meanings conveyed in those imperatives observed in the text analyzed. Of those three (3) sub-variables, diffuse imperatives recorded a huge frequency of 84%. An imperative translated to mean, *"Everybody please join us in that vision and mission"* is a typical example of a diffused imperative, which to Freeman and Murcia (2016), is directed at anyone and everyone in attendance during the general assembly and alumni homecoming. This imperative clause invites everyone to join the University in its grandiose plan to move ahead of the pack in the business of education in Negros.

Missing in the text are utterances in specific imperatives starting with vocatives like the name of a person or group. But inclusive vocative surfaced once in the utterance translated to mean, *"Let's all strengthen our foundation for basic education."*

When closely analyzed, the above imperative directs not only the Principal or her subalterns at the School of Basic Education. In an article entitled *Free Choice Inference in Imperatives: The Preference Allocation Hypothesis*, Staraki (2018) call this phenomenon preference-to-addressee. In verity, the EVP is likewise directing other university stakeholders to synergize efforts to elevate the standards of its instructional and allied services to elementary pupils. Not only that. He was likewise directing himself to take the lead and share efforts to realize his very own directives.

From the linguistic meaning of imperatives, this section now brings the spotlight on negative imperatives.

Negative Imperatives

Thus far, only one clause recorded a negative imperative in, *"What we wanted to produce here in Negros are not only students and good workers."* This can be translated to an imperative with *do* as in, *"Do not just become good students and good workers."* Taking cue from Han (2001), the linguistic force of this imperative can further be translated into its declarative form to read, *"I request that you do not just become good students and workers."* This imperative, as observed, was a prelude to the EVP's prodding that graduates of STI West Negros University must aim higher and become leaders in their respective fields in the foreseeable future.

From here, the section proceeds to tackle the final variable on linguistic evidence that shows strategies used to increase politeness while making appeal to listeners.

Linguistic Evidence of Increasing Politeness

The final question every reader of this research might get interested to ask is the strategy used by the EVP while he appeals for everybody's cooperation to realize STI West Negros University's vision repeatedly appearing in the text of this paper. Table 4 summarizes these findings.

Table 4

Strategy Used to Increase the Level of Politeness

Strategy to Increase Politeness	Frequency	Percentage
Please	3	60%
Kindly	0	
Offer, wish, or invitation with emphatic <i>do</i>	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Carrel and Konnecker (as cited by Freeman & Murcia, 2016) fell short of explicitly examining the politeness contribution of *please*. But the power of magic words like "Please" and "Thank you" can never be overemphasized. Using these magic words creates a favorable impression on interlocutors, much more on leaders addressing a crowd of followers or subordinates. Contrast between the directive given by the same authors above, "Give me a glass of water" and "Please give me a glass of water," and the more polite choice becomes obviously clear.

Back on Table 4, there were five instances where the EVP made an attempt to increase the level of politeness. He used "please" thrice and making an offer with an empathic auxiliary verb *do*.

"So please help us in spreading the word that STI West Negros University aims to become a leading university, and that STI West Negros University is committed to be of service to everybody here in the University in Negros Occidental."

The above utterance is a replication of a request in p. 9 to spread the news about the momentum the University now enjoys and the reforms it has made to take the lead in providing quality education in Negros and its neighboring provinces. Similar other two examples prefixed by this magic word appeared two more times in the text.

In the words of Freeman and Murcia (2016) "kindly," can also be used to make an imperative more polite. Perez (2018) echoed this claim in an article published online. It was, however, nonexistent in the text.

Meanwhile attention is directed to twin utterances prefixed with the magic word "please" and made more emphatic with the auxiliary verb *do* plus the fact that they were categorized as offers.

The first of this kind reads, “Please do stay until tonight.” The other one reads, “So please do stay here.” The first is translated to mean as an offer for the University Alumni to stay way until the night as various activities have been lined up for students, alumni, employees and other visitors. The other one is a clear offer or invitation for the same addressee to stay in the school campus.

Conclusion

It is rather surprising that declarative sentences were found to be the most prevalent linguistic form of imperatives in the EVP’s special message. On its linguistic functions, offers/invitation and advice/suggestions both dominate in the said talk with directions coming in a unanimous second. This brings to fore the idea that indirect speech acts are more polite expressions that generate a considerable amount of goodwill. Meanwhile, diffuse imperatives that obtained a monstrous frequency of 92% provide evidence of the EVP’s frantic effort to involve all stakeholders in the University’s grandiose plan of moving ahead in the business of education in Negros Island. Moving on, the lone negative imperative syntactically translated in form of auxiliary *do* with adverb of negation *not* did not semantically mean prohibition to do something; it was instead a challenge to all stakeholders present not to get content with producing mediocre but quality graduates instead. On the aspect of linguistic politeness, the magic word *please* is still considered magical as it turns an order by the EVP into a request for all in attendance to help the University realize its vision. These findings validate earlier assumption made in the introduction that the EVP’s special message would be replete with imperatives welcoming back the alumni and urging them to get involved, together with University employees, with STI West Negros University’s vision of becoming a leading university in Negros Island in 2025. Future research might attempt in earnest to enhance the climate of politeness at STI West Negros University by looking at the feasibility of reviewing and possibly enriching the University’s existing ESL curricula through a balanced emphasis on the use of imperatives in and out of the classroom settings.

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