

*The expression of politeness forms in Malayic*  
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Politeness is a general term that has been applied to many things, from social etiquette to the representation of face (cf. Pizziconi 2007). Here we focus on its genesis, and observe some of the uses to which it is put in casual conversation. Centered in the emotive system, 'proto-politeness' is understood as 'the rapid and constant display of internal states.' Evidence is presented from English, Japanese, and Bahasa Indonesia.

Specifically, our focus is on the acoustic features that accompany expressions pertaining to distance, in-group status, turn-taking, etc. Typical examples from English include words like 'really', 'beginning to', '(not) very', etc. From Bahasa Indonesia, one finds words like *amat* 'very', *aneh* 'strange', *aneka* 'all kinds of', etc. The features being tracked are speech rate, key, intonation contour, F0, F1, F2, etc. In situations where key words or phrases are taken as 'polite', their acoustic form is remarkably consistent, both across tokens uttered by the same speaker, and those uttered by different speakers of the same register (with decreasing frequency over larger numbers and different groups).

These observations are significant because they suggest that a 'grammar of sound' underlies the use of affective language--i.e. both polite expressions and the conditions which give rise to them. Wierzbicka (1999) proposes a metalanguage consisting of conceptual primitives and lexical universals which can be assembled into simple propositions for the purpose of defining emotion terms. The question we attempt to answer is whether speech sounds cannot also be isolated and recombined in different ways to signal affective meaning. We submit that the remarkable consistency of form across tokens should be seen as the residue a general strategy of negotiating face wants and needs through the systematic manipulation of acoustic parameters.

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