Measuring Inter-Group Attitudes with Different Languages:
Using an Inter-Language Simulation

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on language as one of the main means for daily communication, and investigates how language differences between groups affect attitudes toward people in the out-group. We also analyzed how attitudes would be changed if language comprehension was to progress. To examine the effects of language differences, we used a gaming simulation, “Inter-Language Simulation (ILS).” Participants in the simulation were 193 Japanese undergraduate students. The ILS simulates a situation in which people encounter another group with a different language. There were two imaginary languages (A and B), created by the researchers, and participants were given one rule of the language of the two. In each simulation, seven or eight people with the A language met the same number of people with the B language. The simulation was repeated eight times with different participants. After the ILS, participants filled out questionnaires. The causal model, which showed how out-group language comprehension and the number of successful contacts affected the attitude toward the out-group, was tested by SEM. The results showed that the better the participants understood the out-group language, the more successful contacts they had, which gave rise to a positive image of the out-group, and thereafter their behavioral intention toward the out-group was promoted.

Key Words: gaming simulation, inter-cultural attitude, language, inter-cultural contact