



## A Survey on Intercultural Contact (IC) among Iranian EFL Students: Validating a Questionnaire

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### Abstract

Intercultural contact (IC) among students has received a great prominence in EFL and ESL contexts in recent years; therefore, this study was an attempt to modify and validate a questionnaire as an instrument to elicit the resources from which Iranian EFL students obtain their IC information. To reach this aim, a modified version of Peng and Wu's questionnaire with 26 items and five factors was administered among 200 male and female Iranian EFL students from different language institutes in Tabriz, Iran. To determine the reliability and validity of the modified questionnaire, the statistical analyses of the model and fitness of the questionnaire were conducted by SmartPLS3 software. The results of reliability analyses using three measures of Cronbach's alpha, combined reliability (CR) and average variance extraction (AVE) demonstrated that the questionnaire has a good reliability. Moreover, the results of construct crossvalidated communality ( $Q^2$ ) proved the construct validity of the questionnaire. Additionally, the results of correlation coefficient matrix and p value for all the latent variables demonstrated that all the paths and relationships in the model are significant and the model is a good fit. This study also clarifies the implication of such a questionnaire for ELT and presents some suggestions for future studies.

**Keywords:** intercultural contact, validity, reliability, EFL students

## **Introduction**

Undoubtedly, the progress in communication technology and social media and also the spread of globalization increases the demand for interaction and communication among people with disparate cultures in the world. According to Fritz, Mollenberg and Chen (2002), the importance of having competency in interaction with people of diverse cultural backgrounds has been increased due to globalization and internationalization.

Intercultural contact (IC) theory, called intergroup contact theory or contact hypothesis, was proposed by Allport (1954) after World War II, and it was an attempt to provide solution to reduce inter-group prejudice. Moreover, this theory considered different factors which influence intergroup contact in four favorable conditions: (1) equal status, (2) common goals, (3) intergroup cooperation, and (4) mutual support of authorities, laws and customs (Allport, 1954, p. 537).

Later on, a large number of studies focused on the relationship between intergroup contact, conditions of intergroup contact, prejudice reduction and attitudinal shift, and provided a broad theoretical base for IC (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Halualani, 2008; Pettigrew, 1986; Stephan, 1987).

Diverse types of IC have been emerged among language learners. Some of these studies were in artificial and laboratory environments (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990; Halualani, 2008; Smith, 1994). A body of existing research demonstrates that most of these studies only focused on the contact that appeared in the context of optimal conditions and do not adequately reflect everyday contact in actual lives (Bramel, 2004; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005; Halualani, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). On the other hand, many students have severe problems in dealing with intercultural issues, and the main part of this deficiency as the research literature suggests might be related to the kind of IC, they have access.

Review of variety of disciplines demonstrates that numerous definitions have been proposed for the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). But many researchers have consensus on the definition of ICC as a set of abilities for effective and appropriate interaction across

cultures in the various contexts (see Arasaratnam, 2015, 2016; Deardorff, 2009, 2015; Fantini, 2006; Hammer, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Other researchers argued about diverse components of ICC. For instance, attitudes and awareness were discussed in Byram's (1997) models of ICC. Also, knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness were identified as the main components of ICC (Fantini 2006; Deardorff, 2006; and Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009).

Variables like positive attitude toward other cultures, empathy, personal spiritual wellbeing, knowledge of other cultures and curiosity were studied as the main contributors to ICC (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Sandage & Jankowski, 2013; Pettigrew, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), and curiosity (Deardorff, 2006; Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998).

Regarding the theoretical framework between IC and ICC, some studies presented extensive evidence about the crucial role of IC in ICC development. Some studies showed that international students' direct contact with native speakers can enhance their intercultural attitude and skills (Campbell, 2012; Vezzali, Crisp, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2015; Yashima, 2010). Numerous studies indicated that blogging with native speakers and having direct contact among exchange students in foreign language and study abroad contexts can be a great encouragement for ICC development (Campbell, 2012; Elola & Oskoz, 2008; Jackson, 2006; Zhang, Cheung, & Lee, 2012).

In a study, Clément (1980) presented contact model and considered contact as a part of motivation, which was tested later by Clément and Kruidenier (1983). The findings revealed that pleasant and frequent contact can have a positive impact on language learners' confidence and motivation. Several years later, Kormos and Csizér (2007) studied intergroup contact's influence on language learning in a foreign language environment based on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis to realize types of IC that Hungarian students possibly experienced. In this study, they defined IC in a foreign language context, and it was based on language learners' perspectives. The results demonstrated a relationship between IC and ICC, and also revealed that IC can improve students' ICC and learning motivation in learning language and reduce anxiety against language (Kormos & Csizér, 2007).

Studies by Clément and Kruidenier (1983) and Kormos and Csizér (2007) classified IC into two forms of direct contact (direct spoken contact and direct written contact, including the language interaction with native speakers in a target language) and indirect contact (indirect interpersonal contact and indirect cultural products contact, including those with various cultural products in a target language (e.g., TV, internet, books, etc.)). Moreover, they demonstrated that there is a relationship between IC and ICC. In other words, they showed that IC can have a positive impact on students' ICC and learning motivation in learning a foreign language. In addition, it can reduce students' anxiety against language.

Other researchers studied the impact of IC on attitude, motivation, and reducing prejudice and conflict in certain conditions. They also considered it from socio psychological perspective. Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) studied the effects of intergroup contact and travel experience on attitude and learning motivation toward language. In another study, Halualani (2008) introduced direct intergroup contact as a shortcut to reduce prejudice and conflict in intergroup relations. Considering contact theory from socio psychological perspective, Kormos, Csizér, and Iwaniec (2014) claimed that contact with members of other cultures can change individuals and groups' attitudes and behaviors toward others.

Arasaratnam (2016) argues that cultural context has a great undeniable influence on intercultural communication. In comparison to western studies which have a holistic standpoint of specific cultures, many researchers in other parts of the world, especially in Asia, studied diverse conceptualizations of ICC based on their own cultural contexts (Dalib, Harun, & Yusof, 2017; Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2017; Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2018; Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2019; Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2020a; Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2020b). Furthermore, in Iranian cultural context, some researchers attempted to investigate the relationship between ICC and different concepts like students' attitude, motivation, teachers' beliefs (Pourakbari, Tabrizi, & Chalak, 2018; Shirazi & Shafiee 2017; Mozaffarzadeh & Ajideh 2019).

In an attempt to measure the effects of IC on ICC, Peng and Wu (2016) realized that there is a need to construct a scale to measure Chinese college students' IC. Therefore, based on the theoretical foundation of Kormos and

Csizér, (2007), first, they devised a questionnaire to measure IC of Chinese students and then through structural equation modeling approach they tried to show its effects on ICC. Review of the items in the questionnaire demonstrates that although it is an effective instrument to obtain IC information in Chinese context, it does not match with cultural features of Iranian EFL students' situation and needs some modifications to be used in the Iranian context. Thus, considering the lack of such a questionnaire, the researchers realized that the first step in doing any research to measure IC of Iranian EFL students is to obtain a reliable questionnaire, like Peng et al. (2016) IC questionnaire, to make it compatible with Iranian EFL context.

Based on several years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language, the researchers have witnessed Iranian EFL students do not seem to have enough ability in dealing with intercultural issues. As Rahimi and Soltani (2011) asserted Iranians are frequently unable to have successful intercultural communications due to the strict impact of their culture. Furthermore, Pourakbari et al. (2018) concluded that if students have a good belief about being good communicators, they are likely to better participate in intercultural encounters. Moreover, teachers' ability in transferring such skills is of prime importance. The results of the study by Nematil et al. (2014) on the role of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching revealed that although teachers may be aware of the role of culture in teaching a foreign language, they do not add cultural points to their teaching and are not able to improve their students' intercultural competence.

On the other hand, there are not enough accurate and reliable IC resources within our educational context to transfer such information. This might be partially related to the fact that Iranian schools still use some traditional methods or in the best form communicative language teaching methodology and do not consider the insights provided by intercultural studies in their teaching approaches. As Mozaffarzadeh and Ajideh (2019) asserted Iranian ELT textbooks are not sufficient materials to teach cultural skills like intercultural competence.

Additionally, no research, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, has been conducted on IC to identify how and to what extent Iranian EFL learners receive IC information. Thus, in order to fill the gap, the

researchers made an attempt to modify and then validate the IC questionnaire originally constructed by Peng et al. (2016), based on the theoretical paradigm of Kormos and Csizér's (2007), to use for IC in Iranian EFL context. Accordingly, the following research question was formulated: **Q1.** What are the structural attributes (factors) of intercultural contact scale for Iranian EFL students?

## Method

### Participants

The initial participants of the study included 300 students (100 for the pilot study and 200 for the main study) who were chosen from language institutes in Tabriz, Iran, based on convenience sampling. There were 110 males and 90 female students. All the participants were students or graduates in different majors and different education levels who were studying English in diverse English institutes in Tabriz, East Azarbaijan (Table 1).

Table 1 demonstrates demographic information of the research sample.

Table 1

*Demographic Information of the Participants*

Category	Subcategory	Frequency
Gender	Male	90
	Female	110
Age	18-23	59
	23-28	105
	28-33	31
	Over 33	5
Educational level	Bachelor student	65
	Graduate student	84
	Master's degree	34
	Postgraduate student	17

### Instruments

The most important instrument of the present research was an IC questionnaire, which was originally developed by Peng et al. (2016) in 6 factors of Domestic Social Media (DMS), Foreign Social Media (FMS), Domestic Intercultural Communication Activity (DICA), Foreign

Intercultural Communication Activity (FICA), Cultural Products (CP) and Multimedia and Courses (MMC) with 31 items. However, in order to use it as an instrument in this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured with the same participants. The value of Cronbach alpha was 0.87 which is higher than 0.7 (the threshold value for internal consistency), and therefore the questionnaire had a good reliability.

Furthermore, a statistical software entitled SmartPLS 3 was used to analyze the extracted information in confirmatory factor analysis. SmartPLS 3 was used because it has several advantages over other types of software. Firstly, it is not sensitive to the low number of samples. Secondly, it is not sensitive to low number of indexes within a construct, and thirdly normal distribution of the data is not necessary.

### **Procedure**

The theoretical foundation of this questionnaire is based on Kormos and Csizér's (2007) theoretical paradigm of IC. Moreover, a modified version of Peng et al. (2016) questionnaire was used as an initial framework, and the actual contact situation of Iranian EFL students was considered in modifying the first draft of the questionnaire to go through the stages of validation to obtain a questionnaire on IC compatible with Iranian EFL context. In modifying the questionnaire, the following stages were undertaken.

**Stage 1: Research Literature.** In the first step, the researchers conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature on IC and different components of exciting IC questionnaires, which led to the view that IC is different in different cultures or countries. Then, the researchers chose Peng et al. (2016) IC questionnaire and modified its factors and items, the process of which is explained in Stages 2 and 3. These modifications were done in different stages of experts' views, interview of EFL students, and piloting study.

**Stage 2: Experts' Views:** In this stage, based on two EFL professor's ideas, the first two factors of Domestic Social Media and Foreign Social Media in Peng et al.'s (2016) questionnaire merged together because of the differences between Chinese and Iranian society. They believed that in Chinese questionnaire, social media like QQ and WeChat were used as

Domestic Social Media and Skype alone was used as Foreign Social Media to extract IC among Chinese. However, in Iran there are just few Domestic Social Media like Soroush, and they are not even prevalent among Iranians let alone foreigners. This claim was confirmed in the next stage through interview with some EFL students. Also, some items were modified or deleted due to Iranian EFL context. For instance, there are not any foreign festival celebrations in our country to be used as domestic intercultural communication activity to measure Iranian EFL students' IC.

**Stage 3: Interview:** To make decision about the factors and items of the questionnaire an interview was conducted. In this stage 30 EFL students from an English Language Institute were interviewed. All the items in the Peng et al. (2016) questionnaire were evaluated by participants to see whether they are used by Iranian EFL students or not. Thus, based on the results of the interview, the researchers obtained a clear picture about some items, which led to further modifications. First, they were confident that merging Domestic Social Media and Foreign Social Media together as one factor based on experts' views is rational. Second, they suggested that there need to be some changes to the items in the social media section. For example, similar to the Chinese questionnaire, in the first version of the questionnaire, text communication, voice communication, and video communication were included as separate questions for each social media. However, the results of the interview demonstrated that because of some reasons like low internet speed, shyness and even religious issues most of the students used text communication more than others, and they hardly ever used video communication. These items merged together in this stage to be analyzed in the first pilot of the questionnaire. Moreover, some interviewees mentioned that they had the experience of file communication with foreigners. Therefore, the researchers decided to add file communication to each item in social media section.

The difference with the Peng et al. questionnaire is that the domestic social media (DSM) and foreign social media (FSM) merged together as one factor named social media (SM); therefore, the modified questionnaire has five factors as follow: social media (SM), domestic intercultural communication activity (DICA), foreign intercultural communication



activity (FICA), cultural products (CP) and multimedia (MM). The outcome was the basis for the proposed model presented in Figure 1.

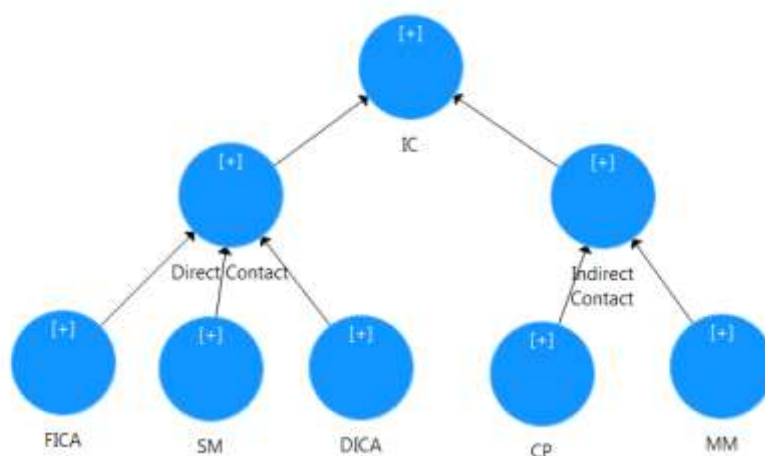


Figure 1. The Proposed Model for IC Based on the Modified IC Questionnaire

**Stage 4: Preparing the First Draft of the Questionnaire:** Using the above-mentioned model, and after modification of the questionnaire in the preceding stages, the first draft of the questionnaire was obtained. Therefore, an item pool was formed for each variable. The preliminary item pool included 55 items for 5 factors. These items were included in a standard questionnaire format, with a five-point Likert scale (1 for never, 2 for rarely, 3 for occasionally, 4 for frequently, and 5 for very frequently).

**Stage 5: Pilot study for validation purposes:** Having prepared the first draft, the researchers first asked a university professor of ELT, who has already conducted research in this area, to study it and comment on the items of the draft (i.e., content validity). Based on the expert's view, the researchers modified, deleted or added some items and chose 40 items for the second piloting in the next step. For instance, "participation in international conferences on campus", as a new item, was added to the factor of domestic intercultural communication activity (DICA), which was not existed in the original questionnaire.

Second, the questionnaire was written in both English and Persian and then administered to 20 participants, which is equal to 10% of the whole participants in the research, to ensure that all of the participants could understand the meaning of each item in the questionnaire. Fortunately, there were just few minor vocabulary ambiguities which were modified, and nearly all the participants mentioned that they extracted the same meaning from both the Persian and English versions. The value of Cronbach alpha for internal consistency of the items was 0.91, which demonstrates that the questionnaire has a good reliability.

Third, the revised version of the questionnaire was administered to a group of 100 Iranian EFL students for any further modification in case of need. However, for ethical considerations, first, each student was informed about the aim and scope of the study and was told that his or her participation in the study was voluntary and the answers would be kept confidential. The participants were asked to read the questionnaire carefully and fill it out in about 25 minutes. The students' answers provided some hints to modify the questionnaire even more. As mentioned in the interview section, following the original questionnaire by Peng et al. (2016), in social media part for each App like telegram, WhatsApp or Instagram three questions were distinctively modified as (1. Telegram text communication, 2. Telegram voice communication, and 3. Telegram video communication). However, after piloting, the extracted information demonstrated controversial results. For example, although most of the students used WhatsApp text communication as a medium for receiving intercultural information, rarely they used the same App for video communication, which is in line with the results of the students' interview in the previous stage. Also, the added item of file communication based on the interview results were selected by some of the students, which means that such communication is used by some EFL students as claimed by interviewed students. Therefore, three items of text, voice and video were mixed together and file communication was also added to them for each social media. As a result, after these modifications the final version of the questionnaire with 32 items was emerged.

**Stage 6: Main Study:** The piloted draft with 32 items was administered to a group of 200 Iranian EFL students based on convenience sampling, and

through confirmatory factor analysis with SmartPLS 3 software the items of 5, 6, 9, 13, 19 and 27 were deleted. These items were related to Imo text, voice, video communication, Facebook text, voice, video or file communication, blog text communication, foreign teachers' English training courses in language institutes, participating in an online course, and listening to English radios, respectively. Finally, the presented 5 factor model with 26 items was confirmed and the final version of the questionnaire emerged.

### **Design**

A quantitative method was used in the design of the present research. And in order to obtain the final version of the questionnaire, five factors of social media (SM), domestic intercultural communication activity (DICA), foreign intercultural communication activity (FICA), cultural products (CP) and multimedia (MM) were used as the latent variables to be confirmed based on the confirmatory factor analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of the model and fitness of the questionnaire were conducted by SmartPLS 3 software. This software analyzes the model through different statistical procedures. It has several advantages over other software like AMOS and LISREL. For instance, it can be used for the data without normal distribution or with small sample size, and even for complex models with several model relations (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, for the second research question, IBM SPSS Statistics 21 was used for analysis.

### **Results**

To answer the research question and reach to the fit model, the insignificant paths in the structural model and indicators with low factor loadings (less than 0.40) should be eliminated. These factor loadings were presented in the SmartPLS 3 in two layers of measurement model, and structural model. A measurement model, represents the relationship between latent variables and the observable variables, and structural model demonstrates the relationships among latent variables. In the present study, IC, Direct and Indirect Contact and their components (ovals) were

considered as latent variables, and questionnaire items (rectangles) were referred as observable variables.

**Evaluation of the SmartPLS 3 results for the fitness of the model:** After deleting the insignificant paths and items, the obtained results were analyzed for reliability, construct validity, discriminative validity and fitness of the model.

### **Construct Reliability and Validity**

The following three measures of Cronbach's alpha, combined reliability (CR) and average variance extraction (AVE) are used to demonstrate the internal consistency of the questionnaire (Table 2). The values of Cronbach alpha (ranging from 0.85 to 0.95) indicate that all constructs have values of higher than 0.7 (the threshold value for internal consistency). Also, the CR values for all the latent variables are higher than 0.6 which is a commonly accepted threshold for construct reliability and validity analyses. The results indicate that there is a great internal interrelation and strong relationship between latent variables and IC. Moreover, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results for all the latent variables are higher than the threshold level of 0.5 which means that all the latent variables have good variance explanation. All these three results together demonstrate that the newly developed questionnaire has a good reliability and construct validity. In other words, 26 item scale which 5 factors adequately reflects Iranian EFL students' IC.

Table 2  
*Construct Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale*

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
MM	0.85	0.86	0.89	0.58
FICA	0.85	0.86	0.90	0.70
CP	0.88	0.88	0.90	0.62
DICA	0.89	0.89	0.92	0.75
SM	0.90	0.90	0.92	0.67
IC	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.45

*Note.* CR, combined reliability; AVE, average variance extraction; factor abbreviations are explained in Table 1.

Another criterion to demonstrate the construct validity of the scale is Construct Crossvalidated Community (Q2). It measures the predictive relevance of the model based on dependent latent variable. Table 3 shows that Q2 is 0.45 which is higher than the threshold level of 0.3; the scale has a good predictive validity.

Table 3

*Construct Crossvalidated Community Analysis of the Scale*

	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)
CP	1200	1200	
DICA	800	800	
Direct Contact	2800	1177.30	0.58
FICA	800	800	
IC	5200	2834.11	0.45
Indirect Contact	2400	1224.75	0.49
MM	1200	1200	
SM	1200	1200	

### **Correlation coefficients of IC and its factors**

The results of correlation coefficient matrix for five factors of IC in Iranian EFL students demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between Direct Contact (DC) and its three relevant factors of SM 0.45, DICA 0.34 and FICA 0.30. The correlation coefficient of Indirect Contact (IN) and its two factors of CP and MM (0.60 and 0.49, respectively) is also significant which indicates that there is a relatively great relationship among these latent variables. Moreover, the significant correlation coefficient between IC and its two factors of DC and IC (0.66 and 0.42) there is a relatively strong relationship among these variables. Therefore, all these correlations demonstrate that IC questionnaire of Iranian EFL students with two dimensions and five factors is a good fit. Table 4 and Figure 2 clearly demonstrate these results.

Table 4  
Path Coefficient Matrix

	CP	DICA	Direct Contact	FICA	IC	Indirect Contact	MM	SM
CP						0.60		
DICA			0.34					
Direct Contact					0.66			
FICA			0.30					
IC								
Indirect Contact					0.42			
MM							0.49	
SM			0.45					

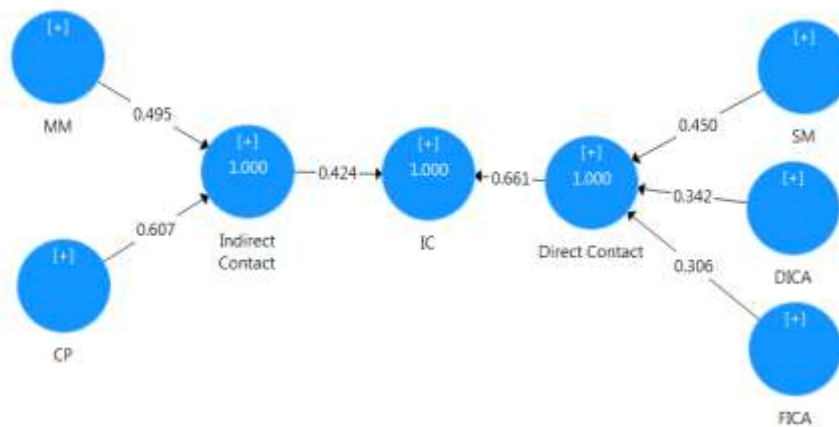


Figure 2. Pathways from Factors to IC

Moreover, P value for all the latent variables is 0.00, which shows that all the paths and relationships in the model are significant. Additionally, the Sample Mean, Standard Deviation and T Statistics of all the variables are presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Path Coefficient Results*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
CP -> Indirect Contact	0.60	0.60	0.02	28.78	0.00
DICA -> Direct Contact	0.34	0.34	0.01	29.36	0.00
Direct Contact -> IC	0.66	0.66	0.02	27.19	0.00
FICA -> Direct Contact	0.30	0.30	0.01	25.51	0.00
Indirect Contact -> IC	0.42	0.42	0.02	19.37	0.00
MM -> Indirect Contact	0.49	0.49	0.01	32.00	0.00
SM -> Direct Contact	0.45	0.44	0.01	33.92	0.00

### Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to modify and validate a questionnaire based on the Iranian EFL context to be used as a scale to elicit their IC resources. To reach this aim, Peng et al.'s (2016) questionnaire, based on the theoretical framework of Kormos and Csizér (2007), was chosen and validated in this study. Therefore, the validated questionnaire is in line with Kormos and Csizér's (2007) theory and compatible with the results of Peng et al. (2016).

As Arasaratnam (2016) argues intercultural communication is greatly influenced by cultural context; therefore, some modifications were conducted in the sample questionnaire (Peng et al., 2016), which was designed in Chinese context, to match it with Iranian EFL context. Then, the new questionnaire went through a strict data analysis to develop a validated questionnaire for Iranian EFL context. The Chinese questionnaire was designed based on six factors of the domestic social media (DSM), foreign social media (FSM) domestic intercultural communication activity (DICA), foreign intercultural communication activity (FICA), cultural products (CP)

and multimedia (MM) through exploratory factor analysis. But in the developed questionnaire, based on Iranian EFL context, the first two factors merged together because among few Domestic Social Media none of them are widely used for communication with foreigners, which is a common practice among scholars. For instance, Nadeem et al. (2017) believe that due to the cultural differences between western countries and Malaysia, a new model of ICC is needed for Malaysian context, and; accordingly, they proposed a model of ICC in Malaysian context. Thus, in line with such studies, following the modification of an existing questionnaire for another culture, a new model of IC, after some modification, was proposed with five factors, which went through validation processes so that we can obtain a questionnaire based on Iranian EFL cultural context.

Other latent variables of the validated questionnaire based on Iranian EFL culture are valid the same as the Peng et al. (2016) questionnaire. However, some items had to be changed to be matched with Iranian communication situations. For instance, QQ and WeChat applications were used in some of the items in Peng. et al. (2016) questionnaire as social media, but they are hardly ever, if never, used by Iranian students; therefore, they were modified to Telegram and Whatapp as commonly used social media in Iranian context. It is worth noting that the reason for the use of one type of social media against other types sometimes are not optional and some political situations in some countries like Iran have some decisive roles. So, although the features of these social media types might not differ that much, other factors in different cultures determine the widespread use of one type rather than other types.

As mentioned in the procedure, the interview with EFL students demonstrated that they rarely use video communication with foreigners. This is in line with Rahimi et al. (2011) who argued that because of severe effect of Iranian culture, Iranian students are not able to have successful intercultural communications. Although there might be many reasons for the use of different ways to receive intercultural contact information, the social, religious, political, and economic situation of Iranian context might be very significant in this selection which needs another study to make the clear the reasons behind particular choices of IC resources.



As Mozaffarzadeh (2019) found out, Iranian ELT textbooks are not suitable enough to transfer intercultural competence skills. Having such a questionnaire, which is modified with new approaches of IC, can be a great response for such concerns since it can measure the resources Iranian students receive their IC. Therefore, comparing such resources all together mentioned in this questionnaire, strengthening widely-used resources, and improving the low-used resources can be the next step on improving the Iranian students' IC.

Unlike many studies which investigated IC in artificial and laboratory environments (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990; Halualani, 2008; Smith, 1994) or optimal conditions (Bramel, 2004; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005; Halualani, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000), one advantage of such a questionnaire is that it is able to measure the students' IC in their real transactions and every day direct or indirect contact in actual lives.

Like many other studies, this study has its own limitations. The most important limitations of this study are sample size and convenience sampling. Other sampling with greater number of participants might be more representative of Iranian EFL context. Furthermore, since most of the participants are from East Azarbaijan and their native language is Turkish, the results of the study should be cautiously generalized to Iranian EFL cultural context with variety of ethnic groups and languages.

Moreover, certain delimitations are imposed on this study. The participants of the present study were from language institutes in Tabriz, Iran. Therefore, generalizations of the results to other communities like high schools would not be appropriate and would certainly need further research.

Finally, it should be mentioned that although the constructs in this validated questionnaire might be constant, the items for each factor should be updated from times to time as methods of receiving IC information might change because of many criteria like political, economic, technological changes in the modern world.

**Declaration of interest:** none

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