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Investigating the Role of E-contact and Self-disclosure on Improving Turkish-Kurdish Interethnic Relations

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RUNNING HEAD: E-CONTACT AND SELF-DISCLOSURE

**Investigating the Role of E-contact and Self-disclosure on Improving Turkish-Kurdish
Interethnic Relations**

Abstract

While recent research has started to pay more attention to the role of contact strategies on promoting intergroup harmony between Turkish and Kurdish communities, the effectiveness of a novel form of indirect contact strategy, E-contact - where participants engage in a cooperative and structured online interaction with an individual from the outgroup – has not yet been tested. Across two studies ($N_{Study\ 1} = 110$, $N_{Study\ 2} = 176$), we investigated the effects of E-contact among Turks on promoting positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Kurds, testing outgroup trust and intergroup anxiety as mediators and incorporating a distinction between lower and higher self-disclosure conditions. As expected, E-contact led to more positive outgroup attitudes, as well as greater approach tendencies and decreased avoidance tendencies through increased outgroup trust (Studies 1 and 2) and reduced intergroup anxiety (Study 2). Study 2 also found that E-contact produced lower perceived interethnic conflict through increased outgroup trust. While both lower and higher personal disclosure conditions provided similar effects in the two studies, E-contact with heightened self-disclosure was especially effective at promoting more positive outgroup attitudes and reducing avoidance tendencies. Findings highlight potential benefits of using E-contact as a prejudice-reduction strategy in conflict settings.

Keywords. Electronic contact; Intergroup conflict; Self-disclosure; Attitudes; Trust

Investigating the Role of E-contact and Self-disclosure on Improving Turkish-Kurdish Interethnic Relations

Since its introduction by Allport (1954), an extensive body of research has shown intergroup contact to be a useful strategy to reduce prejudice across various intergroup contexts (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). While ample research has examined how and when intergroup contact promotes positive outgroup attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007), recent studies have now shifted focus to examine a) whether contact functions as an effective peace building strategy in conflictual intergroup contexts (e.g., Al Ramiah and Hewstone, 2013; Hewstone et al., 2014; Tropp, Hawi, O'Brien, Gheorghiu, Zetes, & Butz, 2017) and b) whether alternative contact strategies which do not require direct (face-to-face) interactions can successfully reduce prejudice (e.g., White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997; Crisp & Turner, 2012).

Integrating these two research avenues, we aimed to test a recently developed computer-mediated intergroup contact technique, E-contact (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012), in the context of Turkish-Kurdish interethnic relationships, which is characterized by a high level of perceived conflict, intergroup threat, as well as collective victimhood beliefs (Bagci & Çelebi, 2017a; Bagci, Piyale, Karakose, & Sen, 2018; Dixon & Ergin, 2010). While at the neighborhood and school levels, the two communities are not visibly segregated and casual intergroup contact is prevalent, the association between contact and intergroup attitudes is complex. For example, previous research has shown the association between direct intergroup contact and positive outgroup attitudes among Turks and Kurds to be moderated by various factors such as perceived interethnic conflict (Bagci & Celebi, 2017a) and less structured indirect contact strategies such as imagined contact to simulate positive, yet conditional contact experiences loaded with the expectancy of intergroup tension (Bagci, Stathi, & Piyale, 2019). These findings highlight the necessity of implementing alternative contact strategies

that provide a practical and safe intergroup setting. Across two studies, we investigated whether E-contact can improve outgroup attitudes and behavioral intentions (Studies 1 and 2), as well as reduce perceived interethnic conflict (Study 2) through increased outgroup trust and decreased intergroup anxiety, in the context of Turkish-Kurdish protracted conflict. We further aimed to extend previous research by comparing the differential role of two E-contact strategies that included lower versus higher personal disclosure.

E-contact as a strategy to promote positive intergroup relations

Today, with an increasing understanding of the use of internet as a socially meaningful tool that facilitates intergroup contact by providing anxiety-free contact opportunities (e.g., Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006), there is a growing research literature integrating the benefits of computer-mediated online communication to the traditional contact research (White, Maunder, & Verrelli, 2020). Such benefits are likely to become even more critical in conflict-ridden settings (Walther, 2009), where group members often avoid direct contact and more importantly, are exposed to the detrimental effects of negative intergroup contact (e.g., Paolini, Harwood, Hewstone, & Neumann, 2018; Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010). While previous research demonstrated virtual or online intergroup contact experiences to be related to improved intergroup relationships in conflict-ridden and prejudicial contexts, especially when long-lasting group memberships are salient (Alvídrez, Piñeiro-Naval, Marcos-Ramos, & Rojas-Solís, 2015), the majority of existing research relies on less structured and natural online communications that may still be characterized by polarization and segregation across group lines (e.g., Ruesch, 2011; Schwab, Sagioglou, & Greitemeyer, 2019), or short contact manipulations through online comments which are less likely to promote deeper interpersonal processes during contact (Kim & Wojcieszak, 2018).

The current studies extend previous research testing online intergroup contact in conflict settings, by using a recently developed, structured online contact paradigm, E-contact,

which provides benefits over and beyond alternative computer-mediated contact strategies and other indirect contact forms (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; White et al., 2020). E-contact has been described as a bridge between direct and indirect forms of contact, since it involves a synchronous online text-based chat and the engagement of the self in the immediate contact situation (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; White, Abu-Rayya, & Weitzel, 2014; White, Harvey, & Abu-Rayya, 2015). Thus, the E-contact procedure requires group members to be actively involved in an online chat where they communicate with another individual from a target outgroup. Moreover, compared to direct contact and other types of indirect contact strategies, E-contact's mechanisms are theoretically underpinned by Allport's (1954) four contact conditions that are facilitative for building meaningful contact experiences; the online intergroup connection involves each group member making a contribution to achieving a common goal in a cooperative manner, who are generally of equal status, and whose interaction is supported by an authority figure (White et al., 2020).

Previous E-contact studies demonstrated E-contact to be an effective source of positive outgroup attitudes through greater knowledge (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012); positive intergroup emotions (White, Abu-Rayya, Bliuc, & Faulkner, 2015); reduced fear, anger, and stereotyping (Maunder, White, & Verrelli, 2019), as well as reduced prejudice and avoidance (White, Verrelli, Maunder, & Kervinen, 2019). Although these studies suggest E-contact to work effectively on attitudes and behaviors towards highly stigmatized groups such as schizophrenics, Muslims, sexual minorities, and transgender people (Boccanfuso, White, & Maunder, 2020), only limited research has previously tested its potential effects in actual conflict settings (but see White, Turner, Verrelli, Harvey, & Hanna, 2019), examined specific mediators involved (e.g., White & Abu-Rayya, 2012), and investigated factors that may increase the effectiveness of the strategy by inducing, for example, dual identities (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012).

Advancing the E-contact strategy: Integrating increased self-disclosure

A potential step in advancing the efficacy of the E-contact paradigm may be through improving its self-disclosure component, since E-contact's major assertion is about the engagement of the self into the immediate contact procedure (White et al., 2015). The importance of self-disclosure in promoting intimate intergroup relationships has been previously highlighted (e.g., Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011; Turner et al., 2007; Turner, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2013) and intergroup self-disclosure has been found to elicit even more intimate intergroup processes such as affirmation of the ideal self (Bagci, Kumashiro, Rutland, Smith, & Blumberg, 2017), as well as empathy and trust, and reduced intergroup anxiety (e.g., Turner et al., 2013). Although the standard E-contact procedure already involves a degree of self-disclosure including the sharing of opinions and one's revelation of his/her particular social group (e.g., religion, mental state, sexual orientation, Maunder et al., 2019; White, Verrelli, et al., 2019), we intended to increase the depth of intimacy during the online chat by elaborating the level of self-disclosure via engaging participants in a more interpersonal task such as revealing a personal experience. Hence, we proposed that such an increased self-disclosure is likely to make the online intergroup interaction more interpersonal and thereby strengthen the effectiveness of a lower self-disclosure condition.

There are further reasons why increased personal disclosure may bolster cross-group online interactions in particular. First, there is evidence that when communicating with a stranger, people tend to disclose more online than offline, since people are likely to feel more in control, for example, having more time to think about what to type and to edit the message before pressing 'send' (Joinson, 2001; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). People may also feel freer to disclose more due to the lack of non-verbal cues, such as physical appearance (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006) and express their true selves to a greater extent via computer-

mediated communication compared to face-to-face interactions (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimmons, 2002), overall showing self-disclosure to accentuate the engagement of the self during the chat.

Intergroup anxiety and trust as mediating mechanisms

We further investigated mechanisms whereby the E-contact procedure would improve attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Kurdish group members. One potential mechanism we suggest is intergroup anxiety which is known to be an important precursor of negative outgroup attitudes and behaviors (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Renfro, 2002). Previous research has long suggested intergroup anxiety to be a critical explanatory variable for the effects of both direct (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) and indirect contact strategies (e.g., Turner, West, & Christie, 2013) across various intergroup contexts including conflictual ones (Tausch, Hewstone, Kenworthy, Cairns, & Christ, 2007). Likewise, E-contact is likely to decrease intergroup anxiety by providing an indirect form of contact which does not necessitate individuals to anticipate negative feelings upon direct physical interaction (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006). Confirming this, previous E-contact research has revealed E-contact to be effective on outgroup attitudes via decreased intergroup anxiety (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; White et al., 2018).

A further mediating mechanism we suggested was outgroup trust which has been indicated to be one of the critical prerequisites of successful intergroup reconciliation (Çelebi, Verkuyten, Köse, & Maliepaard, 2014; Tam, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2009). The development of intergroup trust is key for positive intergroup outcomes especially in conflictual intergroup settings where the setting imposes various political, social, and psychological barriers for the formation of intergroup trust (Çelebi et al., 2014). High quality direct intergroup contact has been consistently associated with more intergroup trust in conflict-ridden intergroup settings (Hewstone et al., 2014; Tam et al., 2009) and function as a

mediator between other indirect forms of contact and attitudes (e.g., Dhont & Van Hiel, 2009; Vezzali, Capozza, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2012). To our knowledge, however, previous research has not yet examined whether E-contact promotes outgroup attitudes and behaviors through outgroup trust.

We argue that outgroup trust may be a particularly important mechanism, since trust may be easier to implement in a positive, structured online contact setting where Allport's contact conditions are satisfied (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012). That way, the online contact condition which partly prevents physical barriers and intergroup anxieties may facilitate the building of a trustworthy intergroup environment. Furthermore, the E-contact procedure involves the self and sharing of interpersonal information which is likely to promote outgroup trust. Previous research has indeed shown self-disclosure to be closely associated with intergroup trust (e.g., Turner et al., 2007). Therefore, we proposed that both E-contact procedures (particularly E-contact with increased self-disclosure) would be effective on improving outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies through improved outgroup trust and decreased intergroup anxiety.

The current research

In summary, through two studies, we aimed to examine the effect of E-contact on Turkish participants' attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Kurds by comparing lower and high personal disclosure E-contact and testing intergroup anxiety and trust as mediators of these effects. The current studies tested two different scripts to manipulate the level of self-disclosure, while Study 2 also examined whether E-contact strategies reduced perceived interethnic conflict. To our knowledge, this is the first study to adapt E-contact for use in a setting of protracted and ongoing interethnic conflict (but see White, Turner, et al., 2019) by integrating the role of heightened personal disclosure, and investigating outgroup trust - an

indispensable prerequisite of reconciliation processes in conflict settings, as a mediator in addition to intergroup anxiety.

Based on the literature reviewed, we predicted that both lower and higher self-disclosure E-contact conditions would improve attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Kurdish group members through decreased intergroup anxiety and increased outgroup trust. We additionally expected higher self-disclosure E-contact, compared to lower self-disclosure E-contact, to be more effective in changing outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies.

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedure

Potential participants were invited to the study through posters and emails sent via the university system advertising a social psychological study about online communication. A total of 128 undergraduate students were recruited from a university in Istanbul, Turkey. We excluded eight participants who self-reported as Kurdish, five participants who failed to complete the task, and five participants who were suspicious about the aim of the study. This resulted in a final sample of 110 participants ($M_{age} = 21.34$, $SD = 1.73$, 31 Males and 79 Females, mean socio-economic status on a range from 1 to 7 = 4.46, $SD = .86$)¹. The study used a between-subjects design in which participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (37 participants in the lower self-disclosure E-contact condition, 34 participants in the higher self-disclosure E-contact condition, and 39 participants in the control condition).²

¹ The dataset included a small number of participants from other minority groups ($n = 10$), who are more *assimilated* ethnic groups in Turkey. An initial comparison of this group showed that the means of other minority groups were not significantly different compared to those of Turks. Therefore, we included this group in the total sample in order to maintain a relatively higher sample size. Findings excluding this group showed similar results to the current findings.

² A post-hoc Gpower analysis indicated that for an effect size of .18 detected in the subsequent MANOVA analysis, alpha level of .05, three groups, five dependent variables and a total of 128 participants, our power was > .99.

The procedure was adapted from previous research using E-contact in various intergroup contexts (White, Turner, et al., 2019; White, Verrelli, et al., 2019). Participants who were assigned to the E-contact conditions in separate lab cubicles were informed that they were going to have a synchronous online chat with a partner who was waiting in another cubicle, under the supervision of a chat moderator. Participants in the control condition were told that they would be following the instructions of the moderator during the experiment. Unbeknownst to the participants, all responses received by participants during the online interaction were pre-programmed.

At the beginning of the online interaction, the moderator asked the participant and his/her partner to introduce themselves to each other. At this stage in both E-contact procedures, the chat partner (named as Rojda or Baran to implicate common Kurdish names) revealed his/her ethnic group and then both the participant and the chat partner answered on a series of questions directed by the chat moderator. After a quick introduction, the moderator asked participants to collaboratively work on two solutions to facilitate adaptation of first year students to the university (the cooperation task). The only difference between the two E-contact conditions was the specific two questions the moderator asked after the cooperation task. Specifically, in the lower self-disclosure condition, the moderator asked about one popular holiday destination in Turkey and one specific strategy that will lead students to be successful in exams, whereas in the high self-disclosure condition, the moderator asked about an embarrassing/awkward experience and a pleasurable experience participants had during university time. In the control condition, participants were asked to spend the next five minutes imagining walking outside and instructed to write the scene they imagine during the experiment (see Appendix A for the scripts). This control condition, frequently used as a control procedure in imagined contact research (e.g., Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007), has

been also used as a baseline condition in previous E-contact research and was suggested to control for engagement and positive affect (White, Turner et al., 2019).

As in previous E-contact research (e.g., White, Turner, et al., 2019; White, Verrelli, et al., 2019), we designed the moderator and the chat partner's responses so that the interactions were characterized by optimal contact conditions, focusing on a common, cooperative task (e.g., giving advice to new students). While the presence of the moderator was likely to ascertain the support of the authority during the interactions, both participants and their chat partners were students from the same university, which presumably satisfied the condition of equal status. Previous research has also suggested that equal status is likely to be achieved by allowing participants to contribute equally to a common goal (White, Maunder, et al., 2020). We also matched interaction partners by sex across all online interactions in order to make sure that group differences pertain specifically to the ethnic group.

In order to make the online interaction look real, we also designated time intervals before the next person responds. Therefore, participants could see the process of the chat partner or the moderator (e.g., Rojda/Baran is typing....). The interactions in both conditions took between 20-30 minutes in both E-contact procedures, depending on the length of typing and waiting from the part of the participant. After the online chat, participants were asked to notify the lab assistant and engage in the second phase of the experiment where they needed to fill out an online questionnaire. At the end of the sessions, participants were given 20 TL for their participation. We debriefed participants one month after their participation through emails, once all data collection was completed.

Measures

The demographic form included information about age, gender, ethnic group, and subjective socio-economic status. The main variable list included *outgroup attitudes* measured by a single-item feeling thermometer asking participants to report how warm they felt towards

Kurdish group members (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993). Participants were asked to indicate their overall feelings towards Kurds (ranging from 0 = *extremely unfavorable* to 100 = *extremely favorable*). We further assessed behavioral tendencies using an index of both approach and avoidance behavioral intentions adapted from Turner, West, et al. (2013). *Approach tendencies* assessed the extent to which participants would display positive behavioral tendencies towards a Kurdish person they meet (4 items, e.g., 'If I meet a Kurdish person, I would like to spend time with him/her', $\alpha = .96$). *Avoidance tendencies* were measured by three items indicating the degree of avoidance upon meeting a Kurdish person (e.g., 'If I meet a Kurdish person, I would like to avoid him/her', $\alpha = .92$). For both measures, the response scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). We further used a seven-item *intergroup anxiety* scale to measure how much participants would feel anxious during a group project with a group of Kurdish people, adapted from Stephan and Stephan, 1985 (e.g., 'anxious/confident/relaxed,..?', $\alpha = .92$, ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). *Outgroup trust* was assessed by Dhont and Van Hiel's (2011) four-item outgroup trust scale adapting the target group to Kurds (e.g., 'I think Kurds in our country are trustworthy', $\alpha = .82$, ranging from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*).

Manipulation checks included first 'pleasantness of the task' to examine whether the lower and higher personal disclosure E-contact procedures were similar in terms of pleasantness ('To what extent did you find this interaction pleasant?', ranging from 1 = *not pleasant at all* to 7 = *very pleasant*). This aimed to confirm that in both groups, participants enjoyed the online task equally, and ascertained that the online interaction included the 'fun' component which is considered necessary for the success of online interaction interventions (e.g., Amichai-Hamburger & Hayat, 2013). Next, we examined the contents of participants' responses to the two questions after the cooperative task and explored whether participants in the higher self-disclosure condition disclosed more compared to the higher self-disclosure

condition. Therefore, two independent raters assessed the level of self-disclosure for each answer based on three aspects ('How interpersonal is the response?', 'How detailed is the response?' and 'To what extent the participant shared emotions and thoughts?'), based on a scale from 0 = *not at all* to 10 = *very much*). We first averaged each raters' ratings on the two answers for each dimension and then checked for interrater reliabilities which were acceptable ($r = .42$ for interpersonal, $r = .77$ for detail, and $r = .69$ for sharing, all $p < .001$). Next, for each dimension, we averaged the raters' responses to obtain a self-disclosure index.

Results

An independent samples t-test demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the lower ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.51$) and higher self-disclosure conditions ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.46$) in terms of pleasantness, $t(69) = -.63$, $p = .55$. Furthermore, participants' responses in the higher self-disclosure condition ($M = 5.98$, $SD = 1.55$) were more interpersonal compared to participants' responses in the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.19$), $t(64) = 5.71$, $p < .001$. Participants were also rated as providing more details in the higher self-disclosure condition ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.83$) compared to the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(57.33) = 2.75$, $p = .008$, and shared more emotions/thoughts with their interaction partners ($M = 6.68$, $SD = 1.61$ for higher self-disclosure and $M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.34$ for lower self-disclosure), $t(64) = 3.46$, $p = .001$.

Group comparisons

We initially conducted a MANOVA test with condition as the independent variable and all other variables as dependent constructs. As preliminary analyses did not show any significant associations between the main variables and age, gender, and socio-economic status, these variables were not further controlled in the main analyses. The MANOVA test revealed that there was a significant multivariate effect of condition, $F(10, 206) = 3.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. Univariate effects demonstrated that condition had a significant effect on

outgroup attitudes, $F(2, 107) = 13.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$; participants in the higher self-disclosure condition displayed more positive attitudes towards Kurds ($M = 8.47, SD = 2.18$) than in the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 7.24, SD = 2.66$), $p = .03$, and the control condition ($M = 5.64, SD = 2.27$), $p < .001$. The comparison between the control condition and the lower self-disclosure E-contact procedure was also significant, $p = .004$.

Condition also had a strong and significant effect on approach behavioral tendencies, $F(2, 107) = 5.55, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .09$. Both lower ($M = 5.45, SD = 1.55$) and higher self-disclosure conditions ($M = 5.41, SD = 1.52$) improved approach tendencies compared to the control condition ($M = 4.40, SD = 1.61$), $p = .004$ and $p = .007$, respectively. However, the difference between the two E-contact conditions was not significant, $p = .91$.

There was a significant univariate effect of condition on outgroup trust, $F(2, 107) = 4.10, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Accordingly, participants in the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 5.28, SD = 1.39$) reported improved outgroup trust compared to those in the control condition ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.41$), $p = .01$. Participants in the higher self-disclosure condition ($M = 5.22, SD = 1.28$) also revealed more outgroup trust compared to the control condition, $p = .02$. The difference between the two E-contact conditions was not significant, $p = .86$.

The univariate effects of condition on outgroup avoidance was marginally significant, $F(2, 107) = 2.98, p = .055, \eta_p^2 = .05$, and demonstrated that only the higher self-disclosure condition ($M = 1.44, SD = .78$) led to a significant decrease in avoidance ($M = 2.09, SD = 1.45$ for the control group), $p = .02$. The comparison between the control group and the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 1.61, SD = 1.20$) was not significant, $p = .08$, as the difference between the two E-contact procedures ($p = .55$).

The effect of condition on intergroup anxiety was not significant, $F(2, 107) = 2.55, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Additional post hoc analyses revealed, however, that whilst participants in the higher self-disclosure condition ($M = 2.32, SD = 1.40$) did not report a significantly different

level of intergroup anxiety to participants in the control condition ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.45$), $p = .60$, participants in the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.05$) reported lower intergroup anxiety than in the control condition, $p = .03$. The difference between the two E-contact conditions was not significant, $p = .12$. See Table 1 for means and standard deviations across condition.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations across Conditions in Study 1

Condition	Outgroup attitudes	Approach tendencies	Outgroup trust	Avoidance tendencies	Intergroup anxiety
Control Condition	5.64 (2.27)	4.40 (1.61)	4.47 (1.41)	2.09 (1.45)	2.48 (1.45)
Lower SD E-contact	7.24 (2.66)	5.45 (1.55)	5.28 (1.39)	1.61 (1.20)	1.82 (1.05)
Higher SD E-contact	8.47 (2.18)	5.41 (1.52)	5.22 (1.28)	1.44 (.78)	2.32 (1.40)

Note. SD = Self-disclosure.

Mediation analyses

We conducted mediation analyses on MPlus Version 7 (Muthen & Muthen, 1998) using the following criteria: $\chi^2/df < 3$, $CFI \geq .93$, $RMSEA \leq .07$, and $SRMR \leq .07$ (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Indirect effects were computed with the Model Indirect Command and Bootstrapping method (1000 samples) using 95% confidence intervals. Since the effect of lower self-disclosure condition on intergroup anxiety was significant, we included a path only from this condition to intergroup anxiety. Since our sample size was small for a latent model (Kline, 2005) and an initial model indicated a bad fit for our measurement model ($RMSEA = .13$), we conducted a path analysis using two dummy-coded variables considering the control group as the reference group (Lower self-disclosure: Lower self-disclosure = 1, higher self-disclosure = 0, and control = 0; Higher self-disclosure: Lower self-disclosure = 0, higher self-disclosure = 1, and control = 0), and outgroup attitudes, approach and avoidance behavioral tendencies as the outcome variables. The model was just-identified, therefore revealed no

model fit indices. Accordingly, both E-contact procedures increased outgroup trust, explaining 6% of the variance in that variable. In turn, outgroup trust was significantly associated with greater approach tendencies and positive attitudes, and lower avoidance tendencies. Results demonstrated that the effect of both lower and higher self-disclosure conditions on outgroup attitudes were significantly mediated by outgroup trust ($\beta = .10$, $SE = .05$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.02, .19] and $\beta = .09$, $SE = .04$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [.01, .16], respectively). Similarly, both conditions increased outgroup trust which, in turn, related to higher levels of approach tendencies ($\beta = .16$, $SE = .06$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.03, .29] and $\beta = .14$, $SE = .06$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.03, .25], respectively). Finally, outgroup trust also significantly mediated the effects of both conditions ($\beta = -.13$, $SE = .06$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [-.24, -.02] for lower self-disclosure E-contact and $\beta = -.11$, $SE = .05$, $p = .02$, 95% CI = [-.21, -.02] for E-contact with higher self-disclosure) on avoidance tendencies.

The lower self-disclosure E-contact procedure explained 4% of the variance in intergroup anxiety. While anxiety was not significantly associated with outgroup approach or avoidance tendencies, it was significantly associated with lower outgroup attitudes. However, this mediational path did not reach significance level ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .03$, $p = .12$, 95% CI [-.003, .08]). Figure 1 displays the final mediation model.

-----Insert Figure 1-----

Discussion

Findings of Study 1 showed that E-contact, as a structured computer-mediated online intergroup contact procedure, improved Turkish participants' attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Kurds, confirming our initial hypothesis. Therefore, in line with previous work (e.g., Maunder, White et al., 2019; White, Turner et al., 2019; White, Verrelli et al., 2019), we found E-contact to be a potential prejudice-reducing tool in the unique context of Turkish-Kurdish relationships. We further showed that although both lower and higher self-

disclosure conditions were equally effective in improving trust and approach tendencies, the manipulation of increased personal disclosure seemed to provide only some advantages in terms of outgroup attitudes and avoidance, partially confirming our initial hypothesis where we expected higher self-disclosure to be more effective than lower self-disclosure in the E-contact procedure.

Extending previous work and confirming our initial expectation, we found that the effects of E-contact were mediated by outgroup trust, which is a critical mechanism in reconciliation processes (Tam et al., 2009). However, only lower self-disclosure condition significantly reduced anxiety. One reason may have been the inclusion of a negative experience for self-disclosure, which may have increased participants' general tendency to display anxiety in their online interaction, overall necessitating Study 2 in which we used a different self-disclosure manipulation.

Study 2

In Study 2, we changed our self-disclosure manipulation to an easier and a more positive task, since transcripts from participants' responses in Study 1 indicated that although we asked about both a shameful and enjoyable experience to balance the experienced state affect, the fact of self-disclosing about one's negative experience may have been challenging for participants. Indeed, five of the participants did not self-disclose about these negative experiences and findings have shown intergroup anxiety to be (although non-significant) higher in the higher self-disclosure condition compared to the lower self-disclosure condition, overall suggesting the need to improve this manipulation. We also extended our dependent variables by including perceived interethnic conflict as a potential outcome. Previous research in Turkey has demonstrated that direct intergroup contact was positively associated with lower levels of perceived interethnic conflict (Bagci & Çelebi, 2017b); thereby we assumed that both lower and higher self-disclosure E-contact conditions would decrease the perception

of conflict and this association would be mediated by increased trust and decreased intergroup anxiety. As in Study 1, we also expected to reveal some advantages of greater self-disclosure. Third, we recruited a larger sample from a different university to increase the generalizability of the findings. We tested the same set of hypotheses as in Study 1.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 191 university students were recruited as participants from a university in Istanbul, Turkey, with similar socio-demographic characteristics to the university in Study 1. Six participants were removed for self-reporting their ethnic identity as Kurdish, and nine because they indicated suspicion about the E-contact task. The final sample was therefore composed of 176 participants ($M_{age} = 20.76$, $SD = 1.45$, 51 males and 125 females, mean socio-economic status on a range from 1 to 7 = 4.86, $SD = 1.09$). The procedure was the same as Study 1 in terms of participant recruitment except in Study 2 we gave participants course credits instead of monetary payment. A total of 52 participants were allocated to the higher self-disclosure condition, with another 52 participants allocated to the lower self-disclosure condition and 72 participants to the control condition.³

We also made a change to the online scripts such that after the same cooperation task in Study 1, the moderator asked participants a single self-disclosure item where they reported their life stories in a couple of sentences in the increased self-disclosure E-contact (See Appendix B for further details). In the lower self-disclosure E-contact procedure, we asked for details of the last vacation the participants experienced. The control condition, similar to Study 1, included the mental imagery of a recent holiday experience.

Measures

³ A post-hoc Gpower analysis demonstrated that for an effect size of .06, alpha level of .05, three groups, six dependent variables, and a sample size of 176 participants, achieved power was .88.

The same measures as in Study 1 were used. We further used a single item to measure *perceived interethnic conflict* ('To what extent do you think there is conflict between Turks and Kurds?', Bağcı & Çelebi, 2017a, ranging from 1 = *None* to 7 = *Too much*). The reliabilities for all scales ranged between .76 and .96.

As in Study 1, we included *manipulation checks* first to ascertain whether the two E-contact conditions were similar in terms of pleasantness and positivity ('To what extent was this experience pleasant?' and 'To what extent was this experience positive?', ranging from 1 = *None* to 7 = *A lot*). Similar to Study 1, two independent raters rated the responses on two different aspects ('how interpersonal was the response?' and 'how detailed was the response?')⁴. Interrater reliabilities across the two raters' independent ratings were acceptable ($r = .42$ for interpersonal, $r = .50$ for detail, both $p < .001$).

Results

Findings revealed that there was no significant difference between the lower ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.59$) and higher self-disclosure E-contact conditions ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.27$) in terms of pleasantness, $t(102) = .55$, $p = .59$. There was also no significant difference between the two conditions as regards positivity, $t(97.81) = -.81$, $p = .42$ ($M = 5.75$, $SD = .97$ for lower self-disclosure and $M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.19$ for higher self-disclosure). Further independent samples t-tests demonstrated that the responses in the higher self-disclosure condition were significantly more interpersonal ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.54$) and more detailed ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.28$) compared to the lower self-disclosure condition ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.34$ for interpersonal and $M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.47$ for detail), $t(102) = -3.06$, $p = .003$ and $t(102) = -2.88$, $p = .005$, respectively.

Group comparisons

⁴We also measured to what extent participants' responses included sharing of thoughts and emotions. However, the interrater reliability for this item was low, $r = .27$, $p < .001$. Therefore, we did not include this aspect in the manipulation check.

The MANOVA test revealed that there was a significant multivariate effect of condition, $F(12, 336) = 1.77, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .06$. The univariate effect of condition on outgroup attitudes approached significance level, $F(2, 173) = 2.61, p = .076, \eta_p^2 = .03$. LSD post-hoc tests demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the higher self-disclosure ($M = 7.67, SD = 2.39$) and control conditions ($M = 6.74, SD = 2.30$), $p = .03$. The difference between the lower ($M = 7.44, SD = 2.55$) and higher self-disclosure conditions, as well as between the lower self-disclosure and control groups were not significant, $p = .63$ and $p = .11$, respectively.

The effect of condition on approach tendencies was significant, $F(2, 173) = 4.90, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .05$; participants in both lower ($M = 5.14, SD = 1.26$) and higher self-disclosure E-contact ($M = 5.25, SD = 1.63$) conditions reported higher levels of approach tendencies towards Kurds compared to the participants in the control condition ($M = 4.48, SD = 1.59$), $p = .02$ and $p = .005$, respectively. The difference between the two E-contact conditions was not significant, $p = .70$.

The univariate effect of condition on outgroup trust was also significant, $F(2, 173) = 7.11, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$. Accordingly, both lower ($M = 5.32, SD = 1.08$) and higher self-disclosure conditions ($M = 5.22, SD = 1.29$) promoted outgroup trust compared to the control group ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.17$), $p = .001$ and $p = .004$, respectively. The two E-contact conditions did not significantly differ from each other ($p = .66$).

The effect of condition on intergroup anxiety was significant, $F(2, 173) = 4.68, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Accordingly, participants in both lower self-disclosure E-contact ($M = 2.55, SD = 1.35$) and E-contact with higher self-disclosure conditions ($M = 2.46, SD = 1.27$) reported significantly lower levels of intergroup anxiety compared to participants in the control condition ($M = 3.13, SD = 1.41$), $p = .02$ and $p = .007$, respectively. The difference between the two E-contact conditions was not significant, $p = .72$.

There was also a significant difference across groups on outgroup avoidance tendencies, $F(2, 173) = 3.74, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Findings revealed that while the lower self-disclosure E-contact condition ($M = 1.80, SD = 1.02$) did not significantly reduce avoidance tendencies (control group $M = 2.14, SD = 1.33$), $p = .11$, E-contact with heightened self-disclosure ($M = 1.56, SD = 1.13$) significantly reduced it, $p = .008$. The two E-contact conditions were not significantly different from one another, $p = .31$. A final univariate test demonstrated that the effect of condition on perceived interethnic conflict was not significant, $F(2, 173) = .51, p = .60, \eta_p^2 = .01$.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations across Conditions in Study 2

Condition	Outgroup attitudes	Approach tendencies	Outgroup trust	Avoidance tendencies	Intergroup anxiety	Perceived conflict
Control Condition	6.74 (2.30)	4.48 (1.59)	4.59 (1.17)	2.14 (1.33)	3.13 (1.41)	4.68 (1.46)
Lower SD E-contact	7.44 (2.55)	5.14 (1.26)	5.32 (1.08)	1.80 (1.02)	2.55 (1.35)	4.46 (1.54)
Higher SD E-contact	7.67 (2.39)	5.25 (1.63)	5.22 (1.29)	1.56 (1.13)	2.46 (1.27)	4.73 (1.37)

Note. SD = Self-disclosure.

Mediation analyses

Similar to Study 1, we conducted a path analysis which was just-identified, therefore chi-square statistics could not be computed. Findings revealed that both conditions were significantly associated with outgroup trust and intergroup anxiety in opposite ways as expected, and in turn, both variables predicted outgroup attitudes, as well as avoidance and approach tendencies. Only outgroup trust, but not intergroup anxiety, mediated the effects of E-contact conditions on perceived conflict. See Table 3 and Figure 2 for the final mediation model.

-----Insert Figure 2-----

Table 3. Indirect Effects between E-contact Conditions and the Outcome Variables in Study 2

	β (SE)	95% CI [Lower bound, Upper bound]
Lower SD -> Trust -> Attitudes	.14 (.04)**	[.05, .22]
Higher SD -> Trust -> Attitudes	.12 (.04)**	[.03, .20]
Lower SD -> Anxiety -> Attitudes	.03 (.02)†	[-.008, .07]
Higher SD -> Anxiety -> Attitudes	.04 (.02)†	[-.007, .08]
Lower SD -> Trust -> Approach	.12 (.04)**	[.05, .20]
Higher SD -> Trust -> Approach	.11 (.04)**	[.03, .19]
Lower SD -> Anxiety -> Approach	.04 (.02)*	[-.002, .09]
Higher SD -> Anxiety -> Approach	.05 (.02)*	[.00, .10]
Lower SD -> Trust -> Avoidance	-.10 (.03)**	[-.16, -.04]
Higher SD -> Trust -> Avoidance	-.09 (.03)**	[-.15, -.02]
Lower SD -> Anxiety -> Avoidance	-.07 (.03)*	[-.13, -.004]
Higher SD -> Anxiety -> Avoidance	-.08 (.03)*	[-.14, -.01]
Lower SD -> Trust -> Conflict	-.06 (.03)*	[-.11, .002]
Higher SD -> Trust -> Conflict	-.05 (.03)*	[-.10, .005]
Lower SD -> Anxiety -> Conflict	-.02 (.02)	[-.06, .02]
Higher SD -> Anxiety -> Conflict	-.03 (.02)	[-.07, .02]

Notes. SD = Self-disclosure. † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

General Discussion

The aim of the current study was to test the effectiveness of E-contact as a means of promoting more positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies among Turks towards Kurdish people via outgroup trust and intergroup anxiety, while also considering whether higher (versus lower) self-disclosure makes E-contact even a more effective prejudice reduction strategy. Replicating previous E-contact research in prejudicial (e.g., Boccanfuso et al., 2020; Maunder et al., 2019) and conflictual intergroup contexts (White, Turner, et al., 2019), we found E-contact to be an effective strategy in the Turkish-Kurdish context where the formation of positive intergroup contact has important implications among both Turks and Kurds (Bagci & Turnuklu, 2019). Confirming our initial expectations, in both studies, E-

contact has been shown to provide a robust effect through a structured procedure, providing a safe and positive intergroup environment where group members can interact.

Our expectation that increased self-disclosure would enhance the effects of E-contact was only partially confirmed. In both studies, comparisons between lower and higher self-disclosure conditions did not reveal major differences, although it is possible to notice some advantages of increased self-disclosure. In Study 1, for example, we found both conditions to improve outgroup attitudes, but participants in the higher self-disclosure condition reported more positivity towards Kurds compared to the lower self-disclosure condition. In Study 2, while increased self-disclosure condition was not significantly different than the lower self-disclosure condition, only participants who engaged in higher personal disclosure reported more positive attitudes compared to the control group, in line with previous studies which distinguish self-disclosure as an important aspect of intergroup contact experiences (Davies et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2007). In both studies, only higher self-disclosure E-contact reduced outgroup avoidance relative to the control condition. Thus, in a context characterized by high levels of conflict, an enhanced personal disclosure component may be beneficial when implementing E-contact, particularly in terms of providing more positive attitudes and reducing avoidant behaviors.

Extending previously researched social psychological mechanisms involved in the E-contact procedure such as intergroup anxiety (White et al., 2019) and confirming our initial hypothesis, we demonstrated outgroup trust to be an important mediator explaining E-contact effects. Outgroup trust has been previously indicated to be a major determinant of intergroup reconciliation in conflictual intergroup settings (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2006). The mediating effects of intergroup anxiety were weaker, and non-significant in Study 1. One reason for this maybe the self-disclosure manipulation used in Study 1, where participants were asked to report both a positive and negative personal experience. Although this manipulation seemed

to provide a moderate-to-high level of self-disclosure, it may be the reason why intergroup anxiety (in the higher self-disclosure condition) was not reduced. In Study 2, we found a significant reduction in intergroup anxiety, however a comparison of the manipulation checks indicated that participants were rated to self-disclose *less*, compared to Study 1. This shows that although increased self-disclosure may promote some aspects of the strategy, caution should be taken as it is possible that asking participants to reveal too intimate information may, at the same time, become a source of intergroup anxiety.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although our study contributes to the literature by testing the implications of the E-contact strategy in a highly conflictual intergroup context, extending the previously shown mediating mechanisms, as well as testing two different forms of E-contact (lower versus higher self-disclosure), a number of limitations should be acknowledged. First, our E-contact procedure was a short-term manipulation where participants engaged in an online intergroup communication for only 20-30 minutes. Although previous research has pointed to the long-term effects of the E-contact (White et al., 2015), these have not been previously tested in conflict settings where positive intergroup relationships can be easily deteriorated; this requires the use of follow-up measures to understand the stability of attitudinal and behavioral change among participants. Multiple sessions of E-contact may be critical for the sustainability of positive intergroup relationships (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012). One alternative may be the use of E-contact through smartphones and over a longer period of time, and use daily diaries to understand the exchange of intimacy between the participants and their chat partners over time.

We included suspicion checks and removed any participants who suspected that the conversation was not with a real person, nevertheless some remaining participants may have felt that the context did not reflect an everyday interaction. Related to this, future research will

need to continue to refine the E-contact interaction to make it feel more natural and realistic, similar to the original real-world application of E-contact that has previously been found to improve long-term intergroup relations between Muslim and Catholic high-school students (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012). Given the segregated nature of many intergroup contexts, various psychological barriers such as intergroup anxiety, and the invisibility of some minority group members, E-contact interventions will continue to thrive (White et al., 2020). The widespread use of internet and online chat programs in school and organizational contexts allow for the application of E-contact in these real-world contexts to promote positive intergroup relations (White et al., 2020; White & Abu-Rayya, 2012).

A related issue was the generalizability of our findings to non-student samples drawn from various parts of Turkey. Participants in the current study were students of two private universities (in Istanbul) that generally hold positive social norms about intercultural contact. Previous research has shown that individuals in the Eastern and Western parts of Turkey may display different levels of outgroup attitudes and attribution of responsibility for conflict (e.g., Bagci & Çelebi, 2017a). Given that the general contact literature assumes prejudice reduction strategies to work more effectively among highly intolerant individuals (see Turner et al. 2020, for a recent review), it was impressive that we observed improvements amongst the current open-minded sample. In fact, we expect that E-contact may be even more effective among participants who are less tolerant and hold outgroup hostility. Moreover, compared to the imagined contact procedure where the conversations are freely imagined, and thereby may involve some conflictual issues between the two groups (Bagci, Stathi, & Piyale, 2019), the structured nature of the E-contact scenario, as well as the existence of equal status and a cooperative goal-directed task, suggest that E-contact may provide a safe and positive online intergroup interaction for minority status groups too.

A further limitation was the self-disclosure manipulation; while in Study 1, participants' scripts revealed a moderate to high level of self-disclosure, the intimacy of the questions we used in this study also seemed to be a barrier in decreasing intergroup anxiety. In Study 2, our manipulation led to lower levels of self-disclosure in general, but was similarly effective on the outcome variables. It is also surprising that greater self-disclosure did not particularly enhance trust, in light of previous research (e.g., Turner et al., 2007). Hence, future research should test the additive value of self-disclosure to the E-contact strategy by adjusting the nature of self-disclosure involved in the procedure. For example, some participants may have not felt comfortable self-disclosing too early in the interaction. Indeed, theories of friendship development propose that close relationships develop as a result of *gradual escalation* of the breadth and intimacy of the information that two individuals disclose to one another; disclosure too fast (or indeed, not fast enough) may result in the friendship faltering (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Reis & Shaver, 1988). Other research investigating consumer's online self-disclosure revealed that reciprocity, as well as sequence, to be important factors predicting the extent to which participants revealed intimate information about themselves (Moon, 2000). Perhaps, then, a step by step procedure of self-disclosure where participants start off with less intimate levels of self-disclosure and then gradually escalate levels of intimacy may maximize the benefits of E-contact without intimidating participants. This can be also achieved through multiple E-contact procedures where participants can freely disclose personal information about themselves as the interpersonal interaction involves greater intimacy and trust.

Another possible advancement is the assessment of personality traits which may be particularly relevant for the level of intimacy and self-disclosure involved during the online chat. Previous research has shown that personality plays a predictive role in the amount of actual self-disclosure (e.g., Pedersen & Breglio, 1968). Later research has further shown that personality factors may also determine the extent to which individuals self-disclose in online

interactions. For example, extraversion have been previously found to relate to higher levels of self-disclosure in online interactions (Chen, Pan, & Guo, 2016), and neuroticism was found to be associated with lower self-disclosure (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014).

Conclusion

The current study tested the effectiveness of a recently developed contact strategy – E-contact – which provides important advantages over more traditional contact formats, enabling group members to engage in a structured, cooperative, and goal-directed online interaction, including the involvement of the self but with no face-to-face contact required. Our study demonstrates that E-contact can have positive implications for the reduction of negative intergroup relationships in the Turkish-Kurdish context, especially when it includes self-disclosure. Future research should investigate new conditions under which the benefits of E-contact on intergroup relations can be maximized.

Statement of Interest: We, as authors, declare that the current work does not include any conflict of interest.

Data availability: Data would be available upon request.

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Appendix A. E-contact Script between a Turkish, Pre-programmed Kurdish Interaction Partner, and Chat Moderator in Study 1

Lower Self-disclosure Condition

Moderator	Hi guys, and welcome to today's discussion. The two students we have trialling unichat are [Participant] and Rojda. To start off, it might be a good idea to introduce yourselves one by one. So, firstly, what do you like to do in your spare time, Rojda?
Rojda	Hi [Participant]! Nice to meet u :) I am a Kurdish student who was born in Diyarbakir and i came here to study at uni. Most of my family is still in Diyarbakır, therefore I live in campus with two more people. I am usually in campus on weekdays. On weekends, I usually go to small cafes in Şile with my friends.
Moderator	Thanks, Rojda. And what about you [Participant]? What do you like to do in your spare time?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Great [participant]. Rojda, what do you study at Işık University and which courses have you chosen?
Rojda	I'm studying architecture. This is my third year and I have chosen 5 courses. Most of the subjects are free electives and departmental electives. Next semester, I will probably take the thesis course and maybe start a brief internship.
Moderator	Which courses have you chosen [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Ok, thanks for your responses guys. Now, what I would like you to do is to work on an activity together. I need both of you to come up with a piece of advice for freshman students coming to Işık University. So, thinking about your experience in first year, what advice would you give to students in terms of how they can best make the transition from School to University? Rojda, would you like to start us off?
Rojda	sure, ummm... to make as many friends as possible. To be open to new experiences and try new things, which will also allow you to meet people. Having friends or even just distantly knowing people helps with the academic side of uni. You hve people to ask questions, to study with, to support you, and give advice. So youre not in it alone and it also in a weird way teaches you to be independent and build your confidence. That wuld be my advice... what do you think [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Thank to both of you. Those are some great suggestions, you two make a good team! In this trial, we are also gathering information about holiday places that students can go to. Now, think of the most popular holiday places in Turkey. Why do you think these places are so popular? Rojda?

Rojda	Hmmmm, there's actually a lot. But I'd say the most famous is Antalya with its beaches and seaside. There are nice hotels and so many places to explore. Loads of foreign tourists who love the sun usually go there.
Moderator	What do you think [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	It was nice to think about holiday places! Now, the last question before we end the chat. Can you give students one strategy that would help them be successful in their exams? Rojda?
Rojda	This is easy! Definitely studying on time and attending all classes. The more early you start studying, the more time you have to understand the subject. Youll have time to ask questions and think about critical topics. It is also important to participate in class by taking part in class discussions.
Moderator	[Participant], can you write one strategy too?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Ok, as we're running out of time we're going to have to end the chat now. Thanks very much for your contribution today guys!!
Rojda	No worries. it was nice chitting with u today [Participant]. Hopefullt meet u around campus some time :)
Participant	Types response...

Higher Self-disclosure Condition

Moderator	Hi guys, and welcome to today's discussion. The two students we have trialling unichat are [Participant] and Rojda. To start off, it might be a good idea to introduce yourselves one by one. So, firstly, what do you like to do in your spare time, Rojda? Please include in your answer if you're a member of any clubs and societies on campus.
Rojda	Hi [Participant]! Nice to meet u :) I am a Kurdish student who was born in Diyarbakir and i came here to study at uni. Most of my family is still in Diyarbakır, therefore I live in campus with two more people. I am usually in campus on weekdays. On weekends, I usually go to small cafes in Şile with my friends.
Moderator	Thanks, Rojda. And what about you [Participant]? What do you like to do in your spare time?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Great [participant]. Rojda, what do you study at Işık University and which courses have you chosen?
Rojda	I'm studying architecture. This is my third year and I have chosen 5 subjects. Most of the subjects are free electives and departmental electives. Next semester, I will probably take the thesis course and maybe start a brief internship.
Moderator	Which courses have you chosen [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...

Moderator	Ok, thanks for your responses guys. Now, what I would like you to do is to work on an activity together. I need both of you to come up with a piece of advice for freshman students coming to Işık University. So, thinking about your experience in first year, what advice would you give to students in terms of how they can best make the transition from School to University? Rojda, would you like to start us off?
Rojda	sure, ummm... to make as many friends as possible. To be open to new experiences and try new things, which will also allow you to meet people. Having friends or even just distantly knowing people helps with the academic side of uni. You hve people to ask questions, to study with, to support you, and give advice. So youre not in it alone and it also in a weird way teaches you to be independent and build your confidence. That wuld be my advice... what do you think [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Thank to both of you. Those are some great suggestions, you two make a good team! Now I want you to remember an embarrassing experience you had during your time at the uni, what happened and how did you feel? Rojda?
Rojda	When I was a sophomore, I was getting prepared for the midterm of PSY 222. I didn't sleep well the night before and I was quite stressed out. The day of the exam, I entered the classroom and sat down for the exam, waiting for the questions. When I saw the questions, I realized that I entered another course's midterm! I had to tell the invigilator that I was in the wrong classroom and got out in a rush. I remember everyone was laughing at me and I felt very embarrassed.
Moderator	How about you [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Now think about a pleasurable experience you had in the uni. What do you think Rojda?
Rojda	That's an easy one :) I remember the end of first year. The day when the final exams were over. This was a really nice weather and everyone was chilling outside, chatting and relaxing. I was with my friends. I was soo happy.
Moderator	[Participant], could you also tell us one such experience?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Ok, as we're running out of time we're going to have to end the chat now. Thanks very much for your contribution today guys!!
Rojda	No worries. it was nice chtting with u today [Participant]. Hopefullt meet u around campus some time :)
Participant	Types response...

Appendix B. E-contact Script between a Turk (i.e., the Participant), Pre-programmed Kurdish Interaction Partner, and Chat Moderator in Study 2

Lower Self-disclosure Condition

Moderator	Hi guys, and welcome to today's discussion. The two students we have trialling unichat are [Participant] and Rojda (Baran). To start off, it might be a good idea to introduce yourselves one by one. So, firstly, Rojda, how do you spend your time here?
Rojda	ok. Hi [Participant]! Nice to meet u :). I am a Kurdish student who was born in Diyarbakır and i came here for studying at uni. Most of my family is still in Diyarbakır, therefore I live in campus with two more people. I am in campus most of the week days. On weekends, I usually go to small cafes in Besiktas with my friends.
Moderator	Thanks, Rojda. And what about you [Participant]? What do you do in your spare time here?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Great [Participant]. Now Rojda, which subject are you studying at Koc, and what kind of courses you have taken this semester?
Rojda	sounds good [Participant] :) i'm currently studying law and I am in my third year. This semester I have taken 5 courses and most of them are free electives and departmental electives. In the summer holidays, I am thinking of doing a voluntary internship.
Moderator	What about you [participant]?
Participant	Types response....
Moderator	Ok, thanks for that guys. Now, what I would like you both to do is complete a task for us in pairs. Work together to come up with two advices together (1 each) to give to freshman students coming to Işık University. So, thinking about your experience in first year, what advice would you give to students in terms of how they can best make the transition from School to University? Rojda, would you like to start us off?
Rojda	sure, ummm... to make as many friends as possible. To be open to new experiences and try new things, which will also allow you to meet people. Having friends or even just distantly knowing people helps with the academic side of uni. You hve people to ask questions, to study with, to support you, and give advice. So youre not in it alone and it also in a weird way teaches you to be independent and build your confidence. That wuld be my advice... what do you think [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Thank to both of you. Those are some great suggestions, you two make a good team!

	Now, I want you to share about your recent holiday. Could please share with your chat partner your experience?
Rojda	Hmm, two years back I went to Datça with my family. We stayed for a week there. It was a really really nice place. chill and calm. I visited Palamutbükü. The beach was amazing. I swam a lot! The hotel we stayed was also nice. It was not that much a big hotel but it was still cute. I think Datça was one of the best places I have been. I hope to visit it again in the future.
Moderator	How about you [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Ok, nice to talk about recent holidays! as we're running out of time we're going to have to end the chat now. Thanks very much for your contribution today guys!!
Rojda	No worries. it was nice chitting with u today [Participant]. Hopefullt meet u around campus some time :)
Participant	Types response...

Higher Self-disclosure Condition

Moderator	Hi guys, and welcome to today's discussion. The two students we have trialling unichat are [Participant] and Rojda (Baran). To start off, it might be a good idea to introduce yourselves one by one. So, firstly, Rojda, how do you spend your time here?
Rojda	ok. Hi [Participant]! Nice to meet u :). I am a Kurdish student who was born in Diyarbakır and I came here for studying at uni. Most of my family is still in Diyarbakır, therefore I live in campus with two more people. I am in campus most of the week days. On weekends, I usually go to small cafes in Besiktas with my friends.
Moderator	Thanks, Rojda. And what about you [Participant]? What do you do in your spare time here?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Great [Participant]. Now Rojda, which subject are you studying at Koc, and what kind of courses you have taken this semester?
Rojda	sounds good [Participant] :) I'm currently studying law and I am in my third year. This semester I have taken 5 courses and most of them are free electives and departmental electives. In the summer holidays, I am thinking of doing a voluntary internship.
Moderator	What about you [participant]?
Participant	Types response....

Moderator	<p>Ok, thanks for that guys. Now, what I would like you both to do is complete a task for us in pairs. Work together to come up with two advices together (1 each) to give to freshman students coming to Koc University.</p> <p>So, thinking about your experience in first year, what advice would you give to students in terms of how they can best make the transition from School to University? Rojda, would you like to start us off?</p>
Rojda	<p>sure, ummm... to make as many friends as possible. To be open to new experiences and try new things, which will also allow you to meet people. Having friends or even just distantly knowing people helps with the academic side of uni. You hve people to ask questions, to study with, to support you, and give advice. So youre not in it alone and it also in a weird way teaches you to be independent and build your confidence.</p> <p>That wuld be my advice... what do you think [Participant]?</p>
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	<p>Thank to both of you. Those are some great suggestions, you two make a good team!</p> <p>Right now, I would like you to take 3-4 minutes to share your life story with each other. Please tell your partner about your life story. You can choose a particular part you wish to talk about.</p>
Rojda	<p>I was born in Diyarbakir, It is a very modern and big city. I was raised and spent my whole childhood there. I was not in a very good primary school, but it was not that bad actually. During high school, I had very nice friendships. We are still in touch with my best friend who was my desk mate in high school.</p> <p>We spent a lot of time together indeed. She is now in Ankara, I really miss her and wish to see her soon. After high school, I came here to Koç to study law, I really love what I study and I am enjoying campus facilities. I also met my boyfriend here. This year I have started participating in Dance Club. I am not a good dancer, but I am interested in learning basics.</p>
Moderator	How about you [Participant]?
Participant	Types response...
Moderator	Thank you Rojda and [Participant], for sharing with us! as we're running out of time we're going to have to end the chat now. Thanks very much for your contribution today guys!!
Rojda	No worries. it was nice chtting with u today [Participant]. Hopefullt meet u around campus some time :)
Participant	Types response...