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Can a Tandem Tame a Bed Monster? Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Enjoyment, and Informality in a Tertiary Chitchatting E-Tandem

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the circulation of learner emotions during a tertiary chitchatting e-tandem called *Bab(b)elade*. In this online collaborative language learning project, students of French and Dutch develop each other's foreign language competence in an informal setting, away from 'classic' academic requirements. Using questionnaire data and introspective learner reports, we analyze the participants' ($N = 88$) foreign language enjoyment, foreign language anxiety, target language attitudes, and perceptions of learning progress. Results reveal that the (a) informality, (b) learner independence, and (c) interculturality of the authentic peer situation are prominent yet also ambiguous emotion triggers. They can be linked to speaking anxiety, stress, and discomfort, and at the same time bear the potential to boost students' enjoyment, positive target language attitudes, and speaking confidence. By stimulating the participants to navigate the affective ambiguity of spontaneous speaking settings, the e-tandem enhances self-reflexivity, learner involvement, and sentiments of progress. Well-considered pedagogical support that balances learner freedom and instructor guidance appears to be pivotal. This way, deliberately informal e-tandems can contribute to an emotionally controllable and stimulating language learning environment, offering a considerable return on investment for both students and instructors.

Keywords: e-tandem, positive psychology in SLA, informal learning environments, speaking confidence

INTRODUCTION

Cats, Baths, and Monsters Under the bed

Scrolling through social media, we came across a foreign language (FL) learning meme. A cat – an animal notorious for not really appreciating baths – crawls into a sink, until suddenly the water tap turns on. The meme itself is a snapshot of the panic-stricken pet acrobatically rushing away from the water. The caption added for the cat says “foreign language learners,” while with the running water it reads “a spontaneous conversation with a native speaker of the target language.” Our ‘like’ makes the algorithm show us another meme with the exact same captions. Now, we see a peacefully sleeping kid with a satisfied smile on the face. Under its bed, a clawing monster smirks menacingly.

The high number of likes and comments for these memes expresses wide relatability to a well-known issue in FL learning: engaging in a spontaneous, everyday conversation with a first language (L1) user of the target language (TL) is an emotional, fearful experience for many learners, often causing avoidance behavior. Woodrow (2006) indeed pinpoints such interactions as an important source of foreign language anxiety (FLA) (see also Aida, 1994; Price, 1991). However, options to extensively engage in authentic TL interaction are often quite scarce within the classroom, and most certainly also outside the classroom for TLs other than English. Therefore, it becomes key to find additional pedagogical avenues to help learners manage non-controlled speaking settings and equip them with confidence to interact meaningfully with L1 users.

Resnik and Schallmoser (2019) already demonstrate that e-tandems may provide leverage in this regard, in that they can stimulate enjoyment in FL learners’ spontaneous TL interactions. During such e-tandem projects, two or more learners get in touch over digital media to mutually support one another in the language learning processes of each other’s L1. However, to evaluate the pedagogical potential of e-tandems more fully, Resnik and Schallmoser call for a broader examination of learner emotions during these projects, for example, by considering the role of speaking anxiety or by further crystallizing foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and studying the links between its different dimensions. This reflects a more general plea from those promoting positive psychology in second language acquisition (SLA) for study designs integrating the interactions of a wider range of emotions and other socio-

affective variables (see, e.g., Dewaele et al., 2023; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Imai, 2010; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

The goal of this paper, therefore, is to assess whether and how e-tandems can constitute a positive learning environment regarding spontaneous speaking, an environment not so much premised on avoiding stressors as on building resilience, experiences of learning success, and wider personal and socio-cultural competences (cf. Clare et al., 2024). Central to this study is *Bab(b)elade*, a university-based yet informal e-tandem project between students of Dutch in Francophone Belgium and students of French in the Netherlands. We examine the circulation and interactions of four affective variables during this project: (1) FLE, (2) FLA, (3) attitudes toward the TL and (4) perceived progress regarding communicative competence and confidence.

After a further theoretical and pedagogical contextualization of FL emotions and their ramifications for collaborative tandem learning, we present the specific e-tandem project under investigation, along with our instruments and mixed-method approach. Correlation analyses then precede the results of qualitative content analyses that highlight the emotionally relevant features of our e-tandem as expressed by the participants. Both quantitative and qualitative patterns are finally discussed and summarized in view of concrete pedagogical implications.

THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Learner Emotions and the Learning Environment

Over the last decades, piggybacking onto positive psychology, research in SLA has increasingly evidenced the link between affect and cognition, manifesting the fundamental role of different emotions in boosting/debilitating the language learning process (MacIntyre, 2016). Central, now, is a view that learner emotions are constituted by and constitutive of the learning context, can co-occur simultaneously in changeable complexes, but, at the same time, stand by themselves, have unique networks of variables and exert varying functions (see Dewaele & Li, 2020). Assuming a linear continuum that opposes positive and negative emotions then becomes problematic. Emotions, such as FLE and FLA are not

harmoniously communicating vessels: a boost of one does not automatically imply a decrease or disappearance of the other (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). In certain proportions, both can be part of an activating emotional mix, where enjoyment does seem to have a somewhat larger impact on FL performance than anxiety, but with both emotions depending on the pedagogical and didactic environment (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018).

Therefore, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016) argue that there is much to be gained from investigating emotional constructs, such as FLE and FLA, simultaneously, considering their ratios (see also Fredrickson, 2013), interactions (Botes et al., 2022a) and, eventually, examining them along with other emotions (Dewaele et al., 2023). Further positioning the dynamics of learner emotions within the affective dimension of language learning, De Smet et al. (2018) underline the prominence of attitudes for emotional involvement in the learning process (see also Dewaele et al., 2022; MacIntyre et al., 2019). As such, they call for integrated investigation of learner emotions with TL attitudes. From a theoretical point of view, the above prompts us to consider not only the influence of singular emotions in a certain language learning setting, but also the interactions of a wider range of socio-affective and emotional variables in single study designs.

From a pedagogical point of view, the multi-faceted behavior of FL emotions and its link with didactic practices highlight the importance of environments where students can learn to recognize, manage, and optimize—that is, self-regulate—their intense and sometimes contradictory emotional experiences. Positive psychology may provide a relevant refuge for such emotion regulation. As MacIntyre & Gregersen (2012) point out, positive emotions broaden learner awareness, promote self-esteem and resilience in demanding situations and, ultimately, convey a sense of control over the situation. To establish such stimulating environments, one could aim for didactics that anticipate the affective strategies that language learners deploy in emotionally challenging settings. According to Oxford and Gkonou (2021), these strategies include seeking peer support and assisting someone else, enhancing cultural interest, looking for unusual learning experiences that can divert attention away from intense anxiety, reframing the appraisal of the learning situation by focusing on the intrinsic value of the task, and so on.

In the next section, we consider how e-tandems may facilitate such positive learning situations. We describe (a) the pedagogical principles of e-tandem approaches along with their influence on learner emotions or other socio-affective variables and (b) the practical-organizational constraints to set up a stimulating FL e-tandem experience.

E-Tandems as Positive Learning Environments?

Pedagogical Aspects

Quintessential to FL e-tandem learning is its participant-active and (largely) self-regulated character (Brammerts, 1996). E-tandem learning relies on the tenets of autonomy, learner involvement, reciprocity, interculturality, and authentic TL use.

Autonomy in language learning, as Benson (2001) sees it, refers to the capacity of language learners to monitor and take charge of their own learning management, learning content, and cognitive processing. It predominantly takes shape in interactional, social, and agentive contexts (Little, 1991). Working in tandem, where learners get explicit and mutual responsibility for their own learning process and that of their partner, is then found to facilitate such independence (Lewis et al., 1996) and to sharpen learners' agency and awareness regarding their specific needs, strengths, and weaknesses (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2017; Little, 1996; Schwienhorst, 2008).

Through independence and reciprocal relationships, e-tandems may also allow for both giving and receiving more targeted feedback that may feel less reproachful compared with classroom contexts (Bower & Kawaguchi, 2011; Sotillo, 2005; Ware & O'Dowd, 2008). Sharing the same learning situation and being able to provide mutual assistance is found to reduce nervousness, speaking discomfort, and FLA (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Ilic, 2015). Similarly, cooperating independently while creating a bond with a significant other – someone in the same boat – can fuel speaking confidence (Jilg & Southgate, 2014; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022), improve general emotion consciousness and control (Järvenoja & Järvelä, 2009; Zhang et al., 2022), and could stimulate well-being of all those involved in the learning process (Mercer & Gregersen, 2023).

Another significant feature of many e-tandems is their intercultural nature (O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016; Woodin,

2018). Intercultural learning environments offer opportunities for authentic TL contact, which may help students to understand FL interaction as meaningful socio-cultural exchange, beyond mere functional language exercising (see Supheert et al., 2022). Moreover, extracurricular authentic TL use, while establishing a strong sociocultural network in the TL, has been shown to mitigate speaking anxiety and to boost (self-perceived) proficiency (Dewaele, 2007; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2021). For e-tandem situations, an intercultural dimension is found to increase positive TL attitudes, FLE, and self-confidence (Resnik & Schallmoser, 2019; Woodin, 2018; Zhang et al., 2022) as well as willingness to speak (Jauregui et al., 2012).

Practical Aspects

From a didactic-organizational point of view, learner involvement in e-tandem projects has been found to hinge on task design, instructor guidance, participant matching, and mediums of communication. Regarding task design, firstly, it seems expedient to consider a balance between (1) a natural and free interaction setting strongly related to the participants' everyday lives, and (2) sufficiently concrete solution- and goal-oriented directives. Since both are said to boost motivation, engagement, and interaction quality in e-tandem learning (Appel & Gilabert, 2002; El Hariri, 2016; Gijzen, 2021; Marneffe, 2018), this prompts a second issue, namely that of instructor guidance.

The role of instructors loses none of its importance in learning situations where they are less explicitly visible (Beltz, 2003). Guillén (2015) notes that participants in e-tandem programs often feel comfortable with (semi-)guided projects. They appreciate having an external authority to help match them with partners, set clear task objectives, coach them in providing effective peer feedback, and prepare them for the independence they will encounter later on in the tandem (see also O'Dowd & Eberbach, 2004).

A third concern regards e-tandem partner matching. Within learning contexts of interculturality and out-of-comfort-zone-experiences, it is often recommended to maximize recognizability and relatability for learners. Matching students with similar backgrounds, study interests and learning objectives enables exchanges on specific needs, and simultaneously creates a much larger basis for conversations (St John, 1996). A good match would, in the end, allow learners to go beyond mere 'professional' peer

contact and open towards more everyday, friend-like relationships (Schwienhorst, 2003).

Finally, these interpersonal challenges are also connected to the means of communication through which an e-tandem is realized. Dunlap et al. (2015) point to the risks of a stressful communicative context in learning via online devices. They cite harder-to-grasp non-verbal cues, the indispensability of basic needs (such as a stable internet connection), but also high-demand competencies for an effective use of electronic means. Nonetheless, within the wide supply of both everyday communication tools and purpose-designed e-tandem platforms, it has been found that – especially for younger generations – informal and popular (social) media can be particularly effective. Everyday digital platforms provide authentic and relatable FL learning environments, which has been linked to increased emotional engagement, interpersonal openness, and overall task satisfaction (Litzler et al., 2018; Schallmoser & Resnik, 2022; Sung & Poole, 2017; Viberg & Grönlund, 2013).

In a nutshell, effective e-tandems are forms of independent, reciprocal, intercultural, and authentic FL learning that, nevertheless, require some important organizational considerations. In the next section, we describe how the e-tandem project central to the current study engages with these conditions.

Towards Chitchatting: Foreign Language Learning in *Bab(b)elade*-Mode

Our e-tandem was baptized *Bab(b)elade*, referring to the Tower of Babel (linguistic and cultural diversity), the noun *balade* in French (a convivial, casual walk), and the Dutch verb *babbelen* (spontaneous and informal 'chitchatting'). As such, the name carries the main features of the project.

Participants are second-year undergraduates of Dutch linguistics and literature at the University of Namur in French-speaking Belgium (hereafter UN) and first-year undergraduates of French language and culture at Utrecht University in the Netherlands (henceforth UU). The participants learn each other's L1 as a TL. The reasons for pairing first-year students with second-year students are practical-organizational. Although, at this tertiary level, we are privileged with an advanced audience – one that has already displayed motivation and interest in the language

they learn – the TLs are anything but evident modern languages in both social contexts. In the Netherlands, the position and attractiveness of French language and culture at school are fragile, and for many young people, the language is not part of their living spaces (Michel et al., 2021; Voogel, 2016). Francophones in Belgium too, given the socio-political context of the country, do not easily come into authentic contact with relatable and positive Dutch-speaking culture from Flanders or the Netherlands (Mettewie, 2015).

Although the tandem project is a compulsory course component in both universities, it focuses primarily on the above-mentioned learner independence, autonomy, and reciprocity in the FL learning process. To ensure balanced matching, participants are paired in groups of two or three based on a questionnaire about personal interests, lifestyle, and whether they use(d) the TL in their personal environments. As from the 2022–2023 edition, students receive the reason(s) for their matching to facilitate first contact. Participants report that such a list is reassuring and works to ‘break the ice’ during the first conversations. Over the course of three months (October–December), the participants conduct at least 10 online oral conversations of about 30 min at minimum. Each conversation takes place partly in French and partly in Dutch, in an ‘alternating monolingual mode’ to provide participants equal and ample chances to practice their TL (without disregarding that translanguaging may be used as a communicative and social resource at times during the project). Switching between the role of L1 expert and additional language (Lx) learner/user, this way the students stand on equal footing.

The project is explicitly not oriented towards specific (graded) ‘academic’ output. The emphasis for the students is on spontaneity, informality, and reflexivity over their own learning process and that of their tandem partner. The intent is to make participants reflexive Lx *learners* as well as everyday Lx *users*. Therefore, costless and everyday (non-purpose-designed) interaction platforms are suggested, and participants are only minimally controlled on organization, content, and language skills. They are free to arrange their calls in terms of time, location, medium of conversation and topics. For those groups where conversations proceed more arduously, a list of possible chitchat themes and questions is available. After the instructors have explained the details of the project in a preparatory session (including tips and tricks on giving feedback), they remain available as a coach

and point of contact. Guiding documents remain accessible online.

To boost the participants’ self-reflexivity, make them aware of the progress they are making, and allow them to better assess it, they take three brief recordings of their chats (in the beginning of the project, about halfway through, and at the end). Indirectly, these recordings may serve as proof that conversations have taken place. Parallel to the chitchatting sessions, the students also keep a joint logbook and provide concrete reciprocal feedback (informally during the conversations and in written form after the first, fifth, and last conversation). At the end, they write a brief, individual self-evaluation report on their learning evolution as well as on their positive and action points. As reported in their logbooks, all participants completed at least 10 sessions, with duration per session ranging between 30 min (the minimum) and 91 min.

To complete the project, students and teachers jointly organize a live meeting with the whole group during springtime, alternately in one of the university cities. *Bab(b)elade* started off in 2015 and has since been finetuned in collaboration with the cohorts involved. In order to gain clearer empirical insight, we recently started monitoring the participants’ emotional engagement with the project.

Research Questions

To assess whether or how informal e-tandems can provide positive learning environments, we explore the following research questions (RQs).

- RQ1: To what extent did our e-tandem participants experience FLE, FLA, positive/negative attitudes towards the TL and perceived progress regarding communicative competence and confidence?
- RQ2: How did learner emotions, attitudes, and feelings of progress interact?
- RQ3: Which particular features of the e-tandem did the participants say characterized their emotional experiences during the project?
- RQ4: How did the participants emotionally deal with the informal and intercultural environment of learner independence?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The data were gathered amongst the 5th, 6th, and 7th cohorts of the e-tandem project ($N = 88$), in both the Dutch department of the Francophone university (UN) and the French department of the Dutch university (UU). This collection always took place a few weeks after the end of the online conversations and the submission of the written self-evaluation report, but before the joint live meeting. If

the context of the e-tandem allows for it, and the program runs over a longer period, future studies with pre-post designs could possibly strengthen claims about the causal effects of e-tandems on different socio-affective variables.

In our sample, distribution of the background variables (see Table 1) revealed high similarities between the profiles of the Dutch and French learners, including self-declared personality traits and prior experience (living and/or studying) in the TL context.

Table 1. *Sample Overview (N = 88)*

	Gender (%)		Home language(s) (%)					Self-reported personality traits (%)		Experience in TL context (%)
	♀	♂	DU	FR	DU+FR	FR/DU+other	Other	Extravert	Perfectionist	
UN ($n = 55$)	82.2	17.8	1.9	77.7	13.2	7.2	0.0	34.1	80.2	24.3
UU ($n = 33$)	74.7	25.3	76.3	0.0	5.8	15.3	2.6	33.7	78.4	21.1

Note. UN = Francophone university, participants have Dutch as TL; UU = Dutch University, French as TL; DU = Dutch; FR = French; TL = target language.

Instrument and Procedure

To gather the empirical data, we developed an online questionnaire with 73 items (7-point scales) and five open questions, on (a) FLE, (b) FLA, (c) perceived progress regarding language competence and speaking confidence, (d) TL attitudes, and (e) the participants' personal background. Our questionnaire is a compilation of different existing scales which we adapted, translated, and complemented with our own items to fit the specific e-tandem context of this study. In the following, we describe the different groups of scales in our instrument, along with their sources.

- *FLE* was measured with 18 items based on the FLE scale in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). We also added nine e-tandem relevant items of our own, based on characteristics language learners themselves attribute to enjoyable language learning experiences (recorded in qualitative analyses of enjoyment in Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Resnik & Schallmoser, 2019; and Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2018).

- *FLA* was measured with five items based on the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) in Horwitz et al. (1986), more specifically, those items on speaking anxiety (in front of L1 speakers of the TL) transferable to our e-tandem context.
- *Perceived progress* was measured using 22 items on perceived progress regarding speaking confidence/stress, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical complexity, and understanding of the other's culture. All items began with the phrasing 'Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now ...'
- *Attitudes* were measured with eight items based on Mettewie (2015).
- Three items were used to gauge postures towards the live meeting after the project, and eight items were used for *personal background* information on university affiliation, home language(s), prior TL experience, age, gender, intro/extraversion, and perfectionism.

Open-ended items probed the most enjoyable and most negative aspects of the tandem, the different

conversation themes addressed by the participants, the cultural discoveries they made, and a closing question with space for any additions about the e-tandem experience. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 24), a series of factor analyses [principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation] were used to establish the construct validity of the scales. As Table 2 shows, the different analyses (separately based on the 32 items on emotions, the eight items on attitudes, and the 22 items on perceived progress) yielded 10 factors in total (see the Appendix for the English translation of all items within the retained factors, as well as a link to the full original questionnaires in Dutch and French).

For learner emotions, four factors were retained (three for enjoyment, one for anxiety; 58.9% of variance explained):

1. *Enjoyment – Atmosphere and Partner* (henceforth ‘ENJ atmos/part;’ number of items (n) = 10; internal consistency via Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$). Item example: We laughed a lot during our e-tandem. This factor echoes the dimensions of social enjoyment and teacher appreciation in previously inferred factor structures of FLE in classroom contexts (cf. Botes et al., 2021). Given that the partner in an e-tandem setting accounts for the social as well as for the ‘teacher’ aspect, both FLE dimensions are logically embedded in one component here.
2. *Enjoyment – Learning Situation, and its Authenticity, Informality, and Reciprocity* (henceforth ‘ENJ auth/inf/rec;’ $n = 10$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$). Item example: I liked the fact that we could use our target language in a natural way. This factor includes our own items on enjoyment and one item from the FLES, encompassing the pedagogical characteristics of the specific tandem-learning situation.
3. *Enjoyment – Personal Satisfaction* (henceforth ‘ENJ pers_satisfac;’ $n = 5$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .83$). Item example: I felt as though I was a better learner during the e-tandem than during classroom activities. This component is similar to the dimension of personal enjoyment found in other factor structures of the FLES (cf. Botes et al., 2021).

4. *Anxiety – Speaking Stress* (henceforth ‘ANX stress_speak;’ $n = 3$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$). Item example: It stressed me out when I had to speak during our e-tandem. This component is reminiscent of Aida’s (1994) factor of speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Two factors were retained for TL attitudes (67% of variance explained):

5. *Attitudes – Ease of TL* (henceforth ‘ATT ease;’ $n = 4$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$). Item example: After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is an easy language to speak.
6. *Attitudes – Attractiveness of TL* (henceforth ‘ATT attractiveness;’ $n = 3$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$). Item example: After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a beautiful language.

Four factors were retained for perceived progress, two of which regarded confidence and competences (68.1% of variance explained) and two regarding feeling more at ease (66.9% of variance explained):

7. *Perceived Progress – Competence and Confidence* (henceforth ‘PROG comp_conf;’ $n = 8$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .93$). Item example: Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel more confident in speaking French/Dutch. This component clusters items on perceived progress regarding language competence (vocabulary, correctness, complexity) and speaking confidence.
8. *Perceived Progress – Intercultural Discovery* (henceforth ‘PROG intercult;’ $n = 2$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .59$). Item example: Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now have a better understanding of Dutch/French society and culture. Here we find evaluations of progress regarding intercultural communication and competences.
9. *Perceived Progress – Being at Ease During Communication* (henceforth ‘PROG ease_comm;’ $n = 5$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$). Item example: Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel more at ease when I have to speak French/Dutch in conversations on unfamiliar topics. This factor represents the perceived

evolution (before and after the e-tandem) of ‘being at ease’ during spontaneous TL communication.

10. *Perceived Progress – Being at Ease With Errors* (henceforth ‘PROG ease_err;’ $n = 6$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$). Item example: Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel more at ease when I make vocabulary mistakes during a conversation in French/Dutch. Contained here are items that ask

whether, after the tandem, participants feel either more or less comfortable making mistakes when speaking in the TL.

These factors were then used for descriptive statistics, univariate analyses (ANOVAs), and Pearson correlations. Content analyses (Dörnyei, 2007) served to code the answers to the five open-ended questions (identifying and grouping recurrent themes).

Table 2. *Computed Factors*

	ENJ		ANX		ATT		PROG			
	<i>atmos/part</i>	<i>auth/inf/rec</i>	<i>pers_satisfac</i>	<i>stress_speak</i>	<i>ease</i>	<i>attractiveness</i>	<i>comp/conf</i>	<i>intercult</i>	<i>ease_comm</i>	<i>ease_err</i>
N	10	10	5	3	4	3	8	2	5	6
α	.92	.82	.84	.80	.79	.80	.93	.59	.86	.91

Note. N = number of questionnaire items included in the factor. ENJ = *Enjoyment*; ANX = *Anxiety*; ATT = *Attitudes*; PROG = *Perceived Progress*; *atmos/part* = *Atmosphere/Partner*; *auth/inf/rec* = *Authenticity/Informality/Reciprocity*; *pers_satisfac* = *Personal Satisfaction*; *stress_speak* = *Speaking Stress*; *comp/conf* = *Competence/Confidence*; *intercult* = *Intercultural Discovery*; *ease_comm* = *Ease of Communication*; *ease_err* = *Ease with Errors*.

To further cement the validity of the inductive-qualitative approach, we added introspective data from the participants’ self-evaluation reports. These reports echo the questionnaire answers but contain more granularity and context since they allow students to express their experiences in a more situated and holistic way. In what follows, we report the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results

After describing the general trends, attention will be given to the relationships within the socio-affective dimensions, followed by the interplay between the different variables.

General Trends

In general, *Bab(b)elade* entailed positive *emotions*. Social enjoyment, in terms of the tandem atmosphere and the connection with the partner, was high ($M = 6.1$, $\alpha = .86$, on a scale from 1 to 7). The participants also enjoyed the authentic, informal, and reciprocal

aspect of the learning situation ($M = 5.5$, $SD = .79$). On the personal level too, they generally experienced enjoyment and satisfaction ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 1.0$). *Anxiety* during the e-tandem was relatively low overall ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.6$). *Attitudes* after the project were on average strongly positive, both regarding ease ($M = 6.6$, $SD = 1.0$) and attractiveness of the TL ($M = 6.0$, $SD = .99$). After the 10 sessions, participants generally experienced slight feelings of *progress*, regarding speaking competence and confidence ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.2$), intercultural development ($M = 5.0$, $SD = 1.1$), and general communication comfort ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 1.0$), as well as being a little less worried about making errors ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.1$).

A series of one-way ANOVAs show that these scores remain relatively constant in relation to personal background variables (note that not all cohorts are always equally balanced). Speaking anxiety (though relatively low overall) was slightly higher ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$) among the Francophone learners of Dutch than among the Dutch learners of French. The latter also reported more progress regarding communication comfort than the Francophone participants ($p < .005$, $\eta^2 = .10$) and were a little less worried about making mistakes after the tandem ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$).

The 6th cohort (during the COVID-19 period) experienced higher personal enjoyment and satisfaction ($p < .005$, $\eta^2 = .12$) than the 5th cohort (pre-COVID), with the 7th cohort (post-COVID) again scoring similar to the 5th. Self-reported extraverts experienced slightly more social enjoyment ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$) and participants with previous experience in the TL context reported less anxiety ($p < .005$, $\eta^2 = .09$) and perceived the TL as slightly easier ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .07$).

Relationships Within the Socio-Affective Variables

Correlation analyses revealed significant positive links between the different dimensions of enjoyment, showing that these are related within the FLE construct but also stand by themselves. Table 3 shows a moderate correlation between the social and personal dimensions of enjoyment

($r(86) = .53$, $p < .001$). Similarly, there is a strong correlation between social enjoyment and enjoyment related to the authentic, informal, and reciprocal learning situation provided by the e-tandem ($r(86) = .61$, $p < .001$), as well as a moderate correlation between personal satisfaction and enjoyment through the authentic, informal, and reciprocal learning situation ($r(86) = .57$, $p < .001$). Remarkable, furthermore, is the significant (though rather weak) positive correlation between anxiety and enjoyment through the authenticity, informality, and reciprocity of the learning situation ($r(86) = .30$, $p < .01$). This correlation suggests that e-tandem participants experiencing anxiety can still enjoy and take advantage of an authentic speaking setting, as will be further illustrated in the qualitative results.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients for FL Emotions, TL Attitudes, and Perceived Progress

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. ENJ atmos/part	–	.61***	.53***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.36***	.44***	n.s.	n.s.
2. ENJ auth/inf/rec		–	.57***	.30***	n.s.	n.s.	.45***	.56***	n.s.	n.s.
3. ENJ pers_satisfac			–	n.s.	n.s.	.34***	.78***	.66***	n.s.	n.s.
4. ANX stress_speak				–	-.27**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	-.50***	-.31**
5. ATT easiness					–	.42***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
6. ATT attractivity						–	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
7. PROG comp/conf							–	.63***	.33**	.28*
8. PROG intercult								–	n.s.	n.s.
9. PROG ease_comm									–	.67***
10. PROG ease_err										–

Note. n.s. = non-significant, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. ENJ = *Enjoyment*; atmos/part = *Atmosphere/Partner*; auth/inf/rec = *Authenticity/Informality/Reciprocity*; pers_satisfac = *Personal Satisfaction*; ANX = *Anxiety*; stress_speak = *Speaking Stress*; ATT = *Attitudes*; PROG = *Perceived Progress*; comp/conf = *Competence/Confidence*; intercult = *Intercultural Discovery*; ease_comm = *Ease of Communication*; ease_err = *Ease with Error*.

Regarding attitudes, perceived ease of the TL is moderately linked to its perceived attractiveness ($r(86) = .42$, $p < .001$). A dynamic pattern emerges with sentiments of increased speaking confidence and competence strongly correlating with perceived progress regarding intercultural competences ($r(86) = .63$, $p < .001$), feeling more comfortable in spontaneous communication ($r(86) = .33$, $p < .01$) and being more at ease with making errors ($r(86) = .28$, $p < .05$). Being more at ease with making errors also relates to feeling more comfortable in spontaneous communication ($r(86) = .67$, $p < .001$).

Interplay Between Enjoyment/Anxiety, Target Language Attitudes, and Perceived Progress

Table 3 also displays the correlations between enjoyment/anxiety, TL attitudes, and perceived progress. Enjoyment on the social level ($r(86) = .36$, $p < .001$), on the level of the authentic, informal, and reciprocal learning situation ($r(86) = .45$, $p < .001$) and certainly on the personal level ($r(86) = .78$, $p < .001$) is linked to greater speaking confidence and competence. Making cultural discoveries and improving intercultural competences is associated with social enjoyment ($r(86) = .44$, $p < .001$), personal enjoyment ($r(86) = .66$, $p < .001$), enjoyment through the authentic learning situation ($r(86) = .56$, $p < .001$) and increased

speaking confidence and perceived competence ($r(86) = .63$, $p < .001$). Higher speaking anxiety, in turn, relates to less perceived progress in terms of speaking comfort ($r(86) = -.50$, $p < .001$) and error anxiety ($r(86) = -.31$, $p < .01$). Similarly, we observed at the attitudinal level a negative correlation between the perceived ease of the TL and speech anxiety ($r(86) = -.27$, $p < .01$). The attractiveness of the TL is also positively related to personal enjoyment and satisfaction ($r(86) = .34$, $p < .001$).

Now, what specific features of our e-tandem frame these quantitative tendencies? How do participants report to have experienced and dealt with their emotions during the project?

Qualitative Results: Positive and Negative E-Tandem Experiences

As explained in the methodology, we used content analyses to encode qualitative data (five open questionnaire items, backed up by the participants' auto-evaluation reports) about what the participants enjoyed the most and least about the e-tandem project. We identified eight recurring themes: perceived linguistic progress (mentioned by 74 participants in the questionnaires); organization and instructor guidance ($n = 58$); interpersonal encounter and cultural exchange ($n = 52$); being with peers ($n = 44$); informality, casualness, and everydayness ($n = 33$); mandatory 'academic' aspects ($n = 29$); awkwardness and stress ($n = 22$); (un)favorable partner matching ($n = 18$); and, finally, daring and confidence (made explicit seven times).

In the following, we further illustrate how these themes were emotionally relevant for the participants and impacted their learning involvement. We will see that some aspects of the tandem simultaneously elicited both positive and negative emotional experiences. The themes are therefore described in a non-frequency-based order so that this ambiguous but highly characteristic dynamic becomes apparent. The data excerpts are our English translations of the original quotes in French or Dutch.

Perceived Linguistic Progress

Students most frequently indicated that they enjoyed making concrete linguistic progress during the e-tandem. This progress involved more accurate pronunciation, more complex language use, a richer vocabulary, and sharpened

register proficiency. While most participants indicated to have considerably improved their TL skills, some participants experienced little or modest progress and pointed to the relatively short duration of the project as an obstacle for making greater gains (which explains the higher standard deviation in the quantitative results). Regardless, when describing their perceived language improvement, participants seemed very aware of their action points and emphasized the importance of specific feedback from peers. As demonstrated by Excerpt 1, realization of progress was not only seen as a private but also as a shared experience, reinforced by the reciprocity of the e-tandem learning environment:

Excerpt 1

At the beginning, we made many mistakes, it was not always fluent, we often had to look for the translations of words, we used words that were too formal. ... As the project went on, we saw a lot of progression. My Dutch and his French, although not perfect, are much better than at the beginning. We identified each other's biggest problems (my word order/sentence structure and his vocabulary/grammar) and often shared tips and tricks to help each other. (UN_21–22_01, self-evaluation report)

Interpersonal Encounter and Cultural Exchange

Next to 'pure' linguistic progress, the introduction to someone or something unknown also appeared to strengthen the participants' emotional involvement in their learning processes. Repeatedly quoted are increased enjoyment through the interpersonal setting and through direct contact with the TL. As phrased in Excerpts 2 and 3, the possibilities for everyday cultural exchange, personal encounters, and friendships appeared to broaden the participants' cultural perspectives and increase their perceived achievement and satisfaction:

Excerpt 2

I am very happy with the exchange. It was rich in (culinary and cultural) discoveries and I learned a lot. (UU_20–21_12, questionnaire)

Some participants, as in Excerpt 3, also emphasized that their personality trait of curiosity helped them to immerse themselves in an uncommonly informal, interpersonal, and intercultural learning situation:

Excerpt 3

I definitely met two very nice and different girls. It was not at all a burden to have to call each other, it was a moment of relaxation and fun. I'm very curious in life and I'm happy to have learned new things (other than language and linguistics). (UN_21–22_01, questionnaire)

At this point, it is also relevant to note that most participants (84.1%) looked forward to the live meeting at the end of the project. This positive feeling, however, did not automatically imply that the participants stayed in permanent contact: Only a few remained in touch after the e-tandem project was over, yet some of them kept the contact alive quite intensively (i.e., on a weekly basis) and until long after the project.

Being With Peers

Another recurring theme linked to emotional engagement and learning comfort was being with someone to whom participants could relate. This may involve a personality match, as previous quotes also touched on, or having similar life experiences, for example through an age connection. What the student in Excerpt 4 particularly enjoyed in the project is:

Excerpt 4

How well me and my Babelade partner matched personality-wise and the opportunity to speak with a Francophone of my age. (UU_20–21_01, questionnaire)

As shown in Excerpt 5, working with someone in the same boat provided more support and control over on the learning situation. This was explicitly noted to reduce speaking and error anxiety, especially as compared to regular classes:

Excerpt 5

What we liked was that we were not afraid to make mistakes. We felt more comfortable than in class because [name of tandem partner] was in the same situation as us. (UN_21–22_04, questionnaire)

(Un)favorable Partner Matching

The importance of the partner also became apparent from a more negative and emotionally deactivating perspective. As shown in the following excerpt, unfavorable matching, even for someone who initially felt positive towards the project, could cause disappointment, boredom, or resignation, and, ultimately, negatively impact perceived achievement and satisfaction. The participant in Excerpt 6 felt that the e-tandem was a:

Excerpt 6

[b]eautiful initiative, unless you have no affinity with your partner. I found myself with a partner who was not at all like me. The few conversation topics I brought up did not interest [name of partner]. So, I was not able to make much progress. (UN_19–20_05, questionnaire)

This theme illustrates once more that the emotional traits of language learners are not predetermined but strongly context-dependent. Whether the match is favorable or not is quite crucial but does not automatically imply that all favorable matches are entirely stressless.

Awkwardness and Stress

Though far less cited, a meaningful theme was the discomfort and awkwardness some participants felt during the e-tandem project when getting in touch with a peer they had not yet met. Some of them experienced (sometimes intense) anxiety and speaking inhibition linked to the spontaneity of the authentic interaction setting or speaking with an unfamiliar person in a new and unpredictable setting. Excerpts 7 and 8 highlight that the beginning of the project spawned the most intensely anxious feelings, often linked to insecurities about TL proficiency, discomfort of making first contact, and getting used to greater learner independence. However, these feelings of anxiety tended to vanish away:

Excerpt 7

At the beginning of the project, I was a bit anxious because I didn't know whether I could have a long conversation with someone who speaks Dutch. [...] We were both very stressed because we didn't know each other and we are two introverts, so the start was slow. [...] It got better, but [name of tandem partner] often

had problems with his anxiety. [...] Things quickly improved because we learned that we had the same hobbies. That gave us many opportunities and topics for our conversation. After the end of the first “meeting,” we felt more comfortable. (UN_21-22_01, self-evaluation report)

Excerpt 8

We were both anxious about having to speak in front of a screen and make contact. We wondered whether the partner would be able to understand us and whether we would find something to talk about. Luckily, [name of tandem partner] was very nice and friendly, and we got along very well. (UN_21-22_03, self-evaluation report)

These examples illustrate that – within or between learners, and within the same conversation – intense negative emotions can quickly fluctuate and eventually be transformed to positive feelings via the same aspects that can be linked to enjoyment, as the following theme touches upon.

Informality, Casualness, and Everydayness

The informal character of the e-tandem situation was appreciated by a considerable number of participants. This is, for example, reflected in the conversation topics the students reported having talked about: classes and exams, series and vlogs, gossiping about teachers, sharing tips for obtaining their drivers licenses, explaining where and how they go out for a drink, what music they listen to, and so on. At the beginning of December, many pairs also compared the different ways in which they organize the local festivities of *Sinterklaas/Saint-Nicolas*, a popular tradition in the Low Countries. The conversations, as such, were closely related to the participants’ daily lives as young people, which is said to have provoked more authentic interaction than classroom activities. Through these ordinary topics, the intercultural experiences of the participants did not merely consist of discovering diversities (the ‘exotic’), but also of realizing the many similarities shared with ‘the other.’ The fact that participants could use their ‘normal’ social media accounts to communicate with each other may also have contributed to this process. The stimulating effect of an everyday atmosphere is aptly expressed in Excerpt 9:

Excerpt 9

This project brings a new dimension to conversation: It asks us to be spontaneous, not to think about what we might say (as is often the case during classes, for example) ... This puts us in the position of a real conversation we might have in our daily lives. It really is a practical exercise. (UN_19-20_13, questionnaire)

Excerpt 10 shows that such friend-like informality also fueled enjoyment, as it seemed to strip TL use of more negative associations linked to classic ‘academic’ aspects, such as evaluation:

Excerpt 10

It was very nice because it was very informal, we talked as friends and not with a sense of evaluation. (UU_21-22_08, questionnaire)

Mandatory ‘Academic’ Aspects

A limited number of participants reported to have experienced the few compulsory aspects of the tandem as a hurdle to the fun. They mentioned the logbook, the final report, and the three 1-min self-recordings. As shown in Excerpts 11 and 12 (see also the punctuation), participants regarded the assignments as bureaucratic or less purposeful, and causally linked compulsivity with negative, deactivating emotions.

Excerpt 11

Some of the additional tasks are a bit annoying (recording audio fragments, for example). (UN_20-21_02, questionnaire),

Excerpt 12

That you have to write a report ... that it is a must-do-thing, making it [the e-tandem] less fun. (UU_21-22_06, questionnaire)

On the other hand, participants may also experience encouragement and feelings of progress precisely because feedback is tangible and concretely formalized. In Excerpt 13, the participant declares that:

Excerpt 13

It is always easier to have a written version of our mistakes, to not forget them. That is why I think the documents are very important: we keep track of our mistakes and so we can see our progression over time, and that is encouraging. (UN_21–22_06, self-evaluation report)

Organization and Instructor Guidance

Since participants were themselves responsible for practical arrangements, they often reported discomfort with respect to contacting their partner and planning the calls, for example due to their diverging (academic) schedules. The importance of instructor guidance and availability was frequently mentioned to diminish these feelings and other speaking obstacles linked to the novelty, independence, and reciprocity of the informal e-tandem learning environment. Excerpt 14 echoes the observation already made that the spontaneous, independent, and intercultural nature of the e-tandem environment can be stressful and embarrassing too:

Excerpt 14

It would have been nice if contacting the partner was better arranged. It is awkward and a bit uncomfortable to make contact only with a name, of someone from another country. (UU_20–21_01, questionnaire)

Daring and Confidence

Increased confidence and daring to speak, finally, were another piece in our participants' enjoyment jigsaw. Excerpt 15 explicitly associates speaking confidence with tandem features, such as the informality, conviviality, and the freedom of a non-compulsory and 'non-academic' environment. The participant summarizes:

Excerpt 15

A good thing about this project is that we don't have to conduct formal conversations. As for me, I dare to speak more with [name of tandem partner] than in a conversation class, for instance, because I know no teacher is listening. It's more pleasant. (UN_19–20_01, questionnaire).

DISCUSSION**Can a Tandem Tame a bed Monster?**

From the quantitative analyses, it appears that both the French-speaking learners of Dutch and the Dutch learners of French generally had high FLE during the e-tandem, positive TL attitudes, and relatively low foreign language speaking anxiety. As this study did not have a formal pre-post design, we cannot claim that our informal e-tandem 'increases' or 'decreases' certain socio-affective variables, with a potential (lasting) impact on the language learning process of our participants in other contexts (e.g., the regular classroom). Nevertheless, our participants' perceived feelings of (emotional) progress provide some indication. After the 10-session project, participants do report sentiments of progress on the levels of speaking competence, confidence, and comfort. Notably, a sense of intercultural discovery and development is linked to personal enjoyment, appreciation of authentic speaking settings, and increasing self-confidence in TL competencies. This study observes such findings for *Bab(b)elade* in higher education, but similar results also seem to apply to e-tandem projects with younger or less advanced language learners (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2017), provided that the learning challenge is tailored to the specific abilities and needs of the learners and that partners have an equal relationship.

Interesting, furthermore, is the proportion and relationship of enjoyment and anxiety among our participants (cf. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Fredrickson, 2013). From a quantitative perspective, we see a 1:2 ratio in favor of enjoyment, suggesting that while both emotions (anxiety and enjoyment) may indeed co-occur, participants on average experienced a stimulating, positive emotional balance without extremes during the tandem (see also Resnik & Schallmoser, 2019). Nonetheless, we also found a positive correlation between FLA and FLE, where most studies suggest a negative link (cf. Botes et al., 2022b). Dewaele et al. (2022) did find a weak positive relation between FLA and FLE, but remained cautious about interpreting that result, describing it as a possible sign of "a heightened emotional state, which could be beneficial to learning" (p. 16). In the current study, the underlying factor associated with this significant positive correlation is mainly the 'new' and 'unfamiliar' aspect of the authentic, informal, and interpersonal setting. This raises questions about the emotional effects of 'unpredictability' in the FL learning environment, that in some cases is found to be

associated with enjoyment and in others with anxiety (see, e.g., Dewaele et al., 2023; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019). Nested data models and idiodynamic approaches are needed in future e-tandem research to test the robustness of this relationship between FLE and FLA.

In this study, it is the qualitative analysis that helps to further unravel the heightened anxiety–enjoyment dynamic. From the content analysis, it appears that speaking anxiety mainly came up at the beginning of the project, sometimes relatively intensely. The participants impacted by this anxiety indeed linked it to doubts about the suitability of their own proficiency to engage in authentic TL conversations in an ostensibly uncontrolled and expository setting with extensive independence and mutual responsibility. Also playing a role are the overwhelming nature and awkwardness of the first contacts with an unknown peer who is at the same time an L1 speaker of the TL. In those cases of ‘beginner fear’ or ‘cold feet,’ space for more positive emotions generally arose as the interpersonal connection became stronger, the conversations richer, the feedback more concrete, and when a realization of adequate proficiency set in (see also Boudreau et al., 2018). As such, spontaneous conversations, learner independence, and authentic intercultural relationships may be linked to anxiety in some cases, but were redeployed by students to regulate their initial anxious feelings, overcome them, and fuel more positive experiences of increased confidence and greater personal satisfaction.

How to Tame a bed Monster in Tandem?

For instructors, these findings indicate that an often-present share of anxiety in FL learners should not necessarily lead to concerns. More important, for both anxious and already confident learners, is to facilitate sufficient enjoyment (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). The current study suggests that by emphasizing the development of meaningful intercultural relationships, peer support, independence, and informality, rather than focusing merely on the imperative of speaking, the act of speaking itself and the experience of speaking success can be enhanced (cf. Clare et al., 2024). However, learner independence, interculturality, informality, and reciprocity cannot be taken for granted. Such aspects must be facilitated in a nuanced fashion, so that participants realize that they are able to ‘match the

challenge.’ Indeed, several of our participants mentioned the importance of a supportive ‘authority’ to:

- Match students who could establish a meaningful connection,
- Guide first contact with an unknown peer
- Highlight the intrinsic value of the learning task (putting forward the attractiveness of the TL, peer support, and self-evaluation), and
- Assist in preparing well for the challenging independent, unpredictable, and intercultural learning situation (providing reasons for matching, feedback training, practical clarity, technological provisions and instructor availability)

As such, setting up an effective e-tandem, making enjoyable the very aspects that can sometimes lead to speaking anxiety, turns out to be a balancing game, one that can hardly be approached as a frivolous anything-goes didactic.

CONCLUSION

For numerous FL learners, a spontaneous conversation with an unfamiliar L1 speaker of the TL is an emotional experience. Many are confronted with error anxiety, stress or embarrassment, causing such conversations to run aground or even be avoided. The current study finds that an informal and explicitly non-school-like e-tandem may address this issue, in that it can entail FLE in the participants, as well as positive TL attitudes and perceived progress regarding speaking competence and confidence.

Paramount to success of an e-tandem, anyhow, appears to be a need to mesh instructor guidance and learner independence within a structured didactic and organizational framework that dialogues with the participants and their needs; a framework that provides learners with a graspable baseline and, from there, creates room for those aspects that are more difficult to generate in regular FL classes: spontaneous, authentic, and everyday ‘chitchats’ with the possibility of L1 peer feedback in a demanding but casual, self-reliant, and intercultural atmosphere of parity and camaraderie. As such, this study shows that deliberately informal e-tandems can constitute a positive and controllable learning environment for FL learners, helping them to navigate their learning more consciously, and to look the monster under their beds in the eye more confidently.

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Authors' Contributions

Both authors participated in the design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the results, drafting and writing the manuscript. Both authors read and approved this final version.

Consent to Participate

All participants provided consent for anonymous data collection.

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APPENDIX. Questionnaire Items

Questionnaire items (7-point scale) retained after PCA and used for the analyses (English translation; the full original questionnaires in French and Dutch can be found [here](#))

ENJ Atmosphere/Partner (10 items; $\alpha = .924$)

1. I didn't get bored during the e-tandem.
2. I liked our conversations during the e-tandem.
3. Our e-tandem was a positive environment.
4. My e-tandem partner was nice.
5. There was a good atmosphere during our e-tandem.
6. We laughed a lot during our e-tandem.
7. I felt at ease with my partner.
8. My e-tandem partner was friendly.
9. My e-tandem partner was encouraging.
10. My e-tandem partner and I formed a tight group.

ENJ Authenticity/Reciprocity (10 items; $\alpha = .818$)

1. It was cool to learn a foreign language in an informal way.
2. Finding conversation topics during the e-tandem was easy.
3. The topics we discussed during the e-tandem were interesting.
4. Compared to our classes/exercises, the topics of our e-tandem conversations were more interesting.
5. I liked the fact that my e-tandem partner and I were in the same learning situation.
6. I felt more at ease during the e-tandem conversations than during classes/exercises.
7. The language used during our e-tandem conversations was more authentic than the language used during classes/exercises.
8. I liked the fact that we could use our target language in a natural way.
9. I liked getting feedback from a peer.

10. I liked giving feedback to someone who has chosen to learn my L1.

ENJ Personal Satisfaction (5 items; $\alpha = .843$)

1. I feel proud of my accomplishments during the e-tandem.
2. I enjoyed learning a foreign language through an e-tandem.
3. I felt as though I was a better learner during the e-tandem than during classes/exercises.
4. I've learnt to express myself better in the target language during the e-tandem.
5. I've learnt interesting things during the e-tandem.

ANX Speaking Stress (3 items; $\alpha = .799$)

1. I could feel my heart pounding when my e-tandem partner asked me a question.
2. It stressed me out when I had to speak during our e-tandem.
3. Before the start of the e-tandem, I was afraid that my partner would laugh at me if I spoke French/Dutch.

ATT Ease (4 items; $\alpha = .790$)

1. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (difficult/easy) language to understand.
2. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (difficult/easy) language to speak.
3. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (difficult/easy) language to pronounce.
4. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a language with a (difficult/easy) grammar.

ATT Attractiveness (3 items; $\alpha = .800$)

1. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (dull/cool) language.
2. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (unpleasant-/pleasant-sounding) language.
3. After the e-tandem, I now think French/Dutch is a (ugly/beautiful) language.

PROG Competence/Confidence (8 items; $\alpha = .931$)

1. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel more confident in speaking French/Dutch.
2. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now have a richer vocabulary.
3. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now use my vocabulary more correct.
4. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now make more complex sentences.
5. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now make more correct sentences.
6. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, my pronunciation is now more correct.
7. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now participate more smoothly in a French/Dutch conversation.
8. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now understand more easily everyday conversations in French/Dutch.

PROG Intercultural Discovery (2 items; $\alpha = .592$)

1. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now have more fun in speaking French/Dutch with speakers of French/Dutch.
2. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now have a better understanding of Dutch/French society and culture.

PROG Being More at Ease During Communication (5 items; $\alpha = .858$)

*(Likert Scale Range: even more stressed to even more at ease)

1. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) during a spontaneous conversation with an unknown speaker of French/Dutch.
2. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) during an informal conversation with a French-/Dutch-speaker of my age.
3. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I have to speak French/Dutch in conversations on unfamiliar topics.

4. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I have to improvise in French/Dutch.
5. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) at having to video call in French/Dutch.

PROG Being More at Ease With Errors (6 items; $\alpha = .911$)

*(Likert Scale Range: even more stressed to even more at ease)

1. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I don't understand a speaker of French/Dutch.
2. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I make grammar mistakes during a conversation in French/Dutch.
3. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I make pronunciation errors during a conversation in French/Dutch.
4. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I make vocabulary mistakes during a conversation in French/Dutch.
5. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I falter at one or two words in speaking French/Dutch.
6. Comparing before and after the e-tandem, I now feel (even more stressed to even more at ease) when I don't manage to speak French/Dutch fluently.