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Research Article

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Towards a Positive Pedagogy (PP) through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching French

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Abstract

In today's Albanian educational context, one of the most pressing challenges for schools and universities is how to preserve linguistic diversity while motivating students to learn languages other than English, which currently dominates the foreign language landscape. Within this framework, Positive Pedagogy offers a valuable approach by placing students' well-being, motivation, and personal potential at the center of the learning process, creating a supportive and engaging environment. In parallel, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have emerged as some of the most powerful tools for designing interactive and personalized learning experiences that reinforce both the emotional and cognitive dimensions of education. This article draws on more than twenty years of experience at the Alliance Française of Elbasan, which for over a decade has combined the principles of Positive Pedagogy with the use of ICT in teaching French as a foreign language. The findings highlight that this integrated approach has had a positive impact on student motivation and engagement, making learners more willing to participate actively, express themselves, and experience French not only as a language but also as a cultural journey. The case of the Alliance suggests that combining Positive Pedagogy with ICT can offer a concrete response to the challenge faced by educational institutions today: making the learning of diverse foreign languages more attractive and meaningful.

Keywords: Positive Pedagogy; ICT; French; Motivation; Alliance Française.

1. Introduction

In contemporary society, foreign language learning has become an indispensable need not only for intercultural communication but also for professional and academic development. Globalization, the increasing mobility of students and professionals, as well as the opening of labor markets, have transformed the mastery of foreign languages into an irreplaceable form of cultural and social capital. Yet, within this reality, the French language often faces specific challenges in motivating learners, particularly in countries like Albania, where English is widely perceived as the most

necessary language for education and employment. This situation complicates the role of French teachers, who must not only transmit linguistic knowledge but also design motivational strategies that help students perceive the value of the French language and the Francophone culture.

Within this context, Positive Pedagogy (PP) emerges as a promising approach. Rooted in the principles of positive psychology (Seligman, 2011; Fredrickson, 2009), it aims to create an environment in which students feel engaged, motivated, and capable of developing their full potential. PP does not consider learning solely as a cognitive process but rather as a holistic experience in which emotions, well-being, and collaboration are intertwined. According to Budzińska and Majchrzak (2021), this approach is directly relevant to foreign language education, as it emphasizes the importance of positive emotions and a supportive classroom climate.

A number of studies have shown that positive emotions, such as joy, curiosity, and enthusiasm, have a direct impact on foreign language learning outcomes. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) stress that "foreign language enjoyment" and "foreign language classroom anxiety" act as the two essential "legs" on which language learning walks: when enjoyment is high, learners tend to show greater engagement and motivation. This idea is further supported by Wu's recent review (2025), which argues that positive psychology has brought about a paradigmatic shift in language pedagogy, moving the focus away from deficits and towards learners' potential and positive experiences.

Beyond the emotional dimension, the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) plays a decisive role. The experience of recent decades has shown that language teaching can no longer rely exclusively on traditional formats; it must exploit the potential of digital tools to make learning more interactive and relevant to students' realities (Isisag, 2012; Saqlain, 2012). ICT has paved the way for new learning models in which learners are more active and engaged. Moradi (2025), in a study on the perceptions of foreign language teachers at Chinese universities, demonstrates that the success of ICT integration depends strongly on teachers' positive attitudes and their ability to adapt technology within a pedagogical framework centered on motivation and collaboration.

This practical perspective is particularly important for French in Albania. Many young learners perceive French as a challenge and often as an additional burden compared to English, which they already master at a satisfactory level, partly due to its pervasive use in social media. For this reason, the combined use of Positive Pedagogy and ICT can be seen as a means of breaking monotony, fostering creativity, and restoring learners' enthusiasm. My more than twenty years of experience at the Alliance Française of Elbasan, where I have worked with diverse age groups, together with my role as a lecturer of French at the University of Elbasan, show that when the classroom is transformed into a lively, open, and digital environment, students not only learn the language but also live it as a personal and cultural journey.

The purpose of this article is to examine the combination of Positive Pedagogy and ICT in teaching French as a foreign language, drawing on the practices of the Alliance

Française of Elbasan. Through this case study, the article seeks to demonstrate that technology does not have a transformative impact when used merely as a tool; rather, it acquires real value when guided by a pedagogical philosophy that places learners' well-being and motivation at the core.

2. Methodology

This article is based on a qualitative approach, which seeks to describe and analyze the impact of combining Positive Pedagogy with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the teaching of French as a foreign language. The study takes the form of a case study, drawing on the more than twenty years of experience of the Alliance Française of Elbasan.

The data on which the analysis relies are of three types:

1. Pedagogical practices implemented over the years at the Alliance, beginning with the integration of digital tools such as interactive whiteboards, digital textbooks, and a variety of digital platforms and applications;
2. Teaching materials and institutional support provided through ongoing collaborations with the Francophone network and international educational actors, which facilitated the use of digital textbooks and the organization of teacher training;
3. Personal observations and reflections (as teacher, pedagogical assistant, and more recently as director of the Alliance Française of Elbasan), which include insights into student reactions, changes in motivation, and long-term outcomes;

The chosen methodology follows a reflective and descriptive analysis, not intended to yield generalizable quantitative results, but rather to highlight good practices and lessons learned from a specific context. The analysis is structured according to the following steps:

- Establishing the theoretical framework on PP and the role of ICT in language learning;
- Describing the institutional context of the Alliance Française of Elbasan and its developments in ICT integration;
- Presenting the concrete practices implemented in the classroom;
- Observing the effects of these approaches on student motivation and performance;
- Discussing the results in relation to international literature;
- Drawing conclusions;

3. Theoretical Framework: Positive Pedagogy and ICT in Language Learning

➢ PP: Definitions and principles

PP is an educational approach rooted in positive psychology, developed by Martin Seligman in the early 2000s. In his book, Seligman (2011) presents the PERMA model, which highlights five core dimensions of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. In the educational field, this approach

aims to build environments in which learners not only acquire knowledge but also feel motivated and experience happiness in the learning process.

Figure 1. The PERMA Model of Positive Psychology

According to Budzińska & Majchrzak (2021), Positive Pedagogy in foreign language teaching emphasizes Foreign Language Enjoyment while reducing fear and language anxiety. This perspective not only promotes better academic outcomes but also supports the personal development of learners, who gain stronger self-confidence and a greater sense of cooperation.

➢ **Motivation and positive emotions in language learning**

One of the major challenges in teaching French today is sustaining learner motivation. Unlike English, which is often perceived as a "must-have" language, French is frequently viewed as optional, leading to reduced interest. At this point, PP plays a significant role. Research by Dewaele & MacIntyre (2016) shows that learners who experience higher levels of enjoyment and positive emotions in the foreign language classroom are more willing to take linguistic risks (such as speaking despite mistakes), experience less anxiety, and benefit more from the learning process. Wu (2025), in a comprehensive review of the literature, emphasizes that PP has contributed to the development of a new paradigm in which the focus is no longer on errors, but on small successes and individual progress. This is particularly important in contexts where French is perceived as a difficult language. Through activities that encourage cooperation, creativity, and interaction, teachers can foster students' intrinsic motivation, which is a central element of Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory.

➢ **The Role of ICT within Positive Pedagogy**

The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into language learning has profoundly transformed the way learners interact with their teachers and with one another. Isisag (2012) argues that ICT use not only enhances motivation but also creates opportunities for personalization and active participation. Similarly, Saqlain (2012), in a review of the literature on technology and language pedagogy, underlines that digital tools are most effective when employed not as technical add-ons but as integral components of a well-designed pedagogical approach.

More recent studies, such as that of Moradi (2025), show that teachers' positive attitudes toward technology and their ability to connect it with a humanizing teaching philosophy largely determine the success of its integration. Along the same lines, Bui (2022) stresses that ICT can genuinely increase learner motivation and enjoyment only when accompanied by a reflective and positive pedagogical stance.

4. The Case of the Alliance Française of Elbasan

The Alliance Française of Elbasan (AFE), founded in 1995, is one of the first cultural and educational institutions in Albania (alongside the wider Alliance Française network) to combine language teaching with modern technologies. For more than three decades, it has served as a Francophone hub in the region, blending French language courses with cultural activities, intercultural exchanges, and diverse educational projects. A distinctive feature of AFE is that it was among the first institutions in the country to invest in digital infrastructure for language teaching, making innovation an integral part of its pedagogical identity.

Thanks to the contribution of the French Embassy in Albania, as early as 2009, AFE was equipped with interactive whiteboards, opening a new chapter in the use of technology for foreign language teaching in the country. This step was soon followed by the introduction of digital textbooks accompanying the main teaching methods used in the language courses. Publications from the prestigious Hachette publishing house, such as *Alter Ego+*, *Cosmopolite*, *Adosphère*, *Adomania*, and *Les Loustics* for younger learners, offered digital versions that added a new dimension of interactivity to the classroom. These digital materials not only enriched the content of traditional textbooks but also provided opportunities for interactive exercises, authentic videos, and creative projects.

Beyond equipment and teaching resources, the continuous training of teaching staff has played a crucial role. In recent years, in collaboration with the French Embassy and the Alliance network in Albania, regular workshops on technology-based teaching have been organized, ensuring that teachers remain up to date with the latest didactic trends. This process has strengthened their ability to integrate ICT meaningfully, in ways that align with the real needs of learners.

Another important dimension has been my own approach, as director of AFE, to the principles of Positive Pedagogy. In my vision, shared by the teaching team, technology has never been used merely as a technical aid but as an instrument to foster a lively, supportive, and motivating classroom climate. ICT integration has always been viewed in terms of building learners' self-confidence, motivation, collaboration, and active participation.

➢ Digital Tools in Use

The experience of AFE demonstrates that digital tools, when used thoughtfully and systematically, do not remain simple technical instruments but become concrete supports for a philosophy rooted in Positive Pedagogy. They have given the classroom

a new dimension, creating spaces of cooperation, motivation, and creativity where learners feel more engaged and involved. Among the most frequently used tools in daily practice are:

- Interactive whiteboards, both in-class and online versions such as Miro and Jamboard, have been used to visualize ideas, create concept maps, and solve exercises collectively. They made the classroom more interactive and encouraged students to share their thoughts, thereby strengthening collaboration and creativity.
- Google Meet and Zoom were used for distance learning, maintaining the teacher–student connection and creating an open atmosphere of communication beyond the traditional classroom. Google Classroom served as a central platform for sharing materials, organizing assignments, and facilitating continuous interaction, which enhanced students' autonomy and sense of responsibility in the learning process.
- To foster creativity and visual expression, Canva was used for designing posters, presentations, and digital projects in French, enabling learners to experience the language as a medium of personal expression. Padlet became a collaborative space for sharing ideas, images, and reflections, thus building an atmosphere of cooperation and community within the classroom.
- Game-based tools such as LearningApps, Kahoot, and Quizlet transformed traditional exercises into dynamic and enjoyable activities. Through interactive quizzes, puzzles, and small challenges, learners significantly reduced their language anxiety, often linked to knowledge testing and experienced greater enjoyment in the learning process. They showed more enthusiasm to participate actively and to test their knowledge.
- On the cultural level, authentic resources from RFI Savoirs and TV5MONDE brought Francophone realities into the classroom through articles, videos, and reports, thereby strengthening intercultural competences and making learning more meaningful. Similarly, the digital library Culturethèque provided access to books and magazines in French, while French-language podcasts enhanced listening comprehension and helped students acquire the natural rhythm and intonation of the language. Finally, the use of Duolingo on mobile devices proved to be a valuable complementary tool, enabling learners to practice French independently and consistently, thereby linking language learning with their daily routines.

5. Results and observations

➢ Motivation as a key factor

One of the clearest outcomes of the combined approach of Positive Pedagogy and the use of ICT has been the noticeable increase in learner motivation. At the beginning, many students perceived learning French as tiring and less useful compared to English. However, through digital games, collaborative projects, and virtual cultural activities, French began to be perceived not only as a subject to be studied but also

as an experience connected with enjoyment and creativity. This finding is consistent with Dewaele & MacIntyre (2016), who emphasize that Foreign Language Enjoyment is one of the strongest predictors of long-term engagement.

- **Increased self-confidence and active participation**

Another significant observation was the growth of learners' self-confidence. Many students were initially reserved, hesitating to speak out of fear of making mistakes. Yet, under the influence of a positive classroom climate and through game-based and interactive activities, they began to take linguistic risks and express themselves more freely. This reflects Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, where the experience of positive emotions and small achievements creates a motivational cycle that stimulates progress.

- **The Role of the Teacher as "Climate Architect"**

A key observation was that technology had an impact primarily when accompanied by a humanizing approach from the teacher. The teacher was not merely a technical facilitator but rather a creator of a positive classroom atmosphere where every learner felt valued. This role corresponds to the notion of the teacher as the "architect of classroom climate", supported by studies such as Moradi (2025), which stress that teachers' positive attitudes largely determine the success of ICT integration.

- **Improved Collaboration and Classroom Climate**

The use of tools such as Padlet for group projects or Zoom and Google Meet for intercultural exchanges stimulated collaboration among students. These tools allowed learners not only to share ideas but also to learn from one another, developing a sense of belonging and solidarity. This finding aligns with the literature on Positive Pedagogy, which highlights the role of interpersonal relationships as one of the pillars of well-being in learning (Budzińska & Majchrzak, 2021).

- **Long-Term Impact on Learners**

A number of students from the Alliance Française of Elbasan who experienced this approach later chose to pursue academic or professional paths in France or other Francophone countries. For many of them, the positive experience at AFE was a decisive factor in shaping their decision. This demonstrates that motivation is not merely a temporary factor but can have long-lasting effects on educational and professional orientation.

6. Conclusion

This article sets out to highlight the impact of combining Positive Pedagogy with the use of ICT in teaching French as a foreign language, using the long-standing experience of the Alliance Française of Elbasan as an illustrative case. The results clearly showed that when technology is placed at the service of a pedagogical philosophy centered

on well-being, motivation, and the development of learners' potential, the learning process becomes more meaningful, more enjoyable, and more sustainable.

The experience of the Alliance demonstrates that learner motivation, often a challenge in French language teaching, can be significantly enhanced when the classroom is transformed into a lively and interactive space, where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth and small achievements are valued as important steps toward success. The integration of digital tools such and virtual intercultural activities not only made learning more dynamic but also strengthened learners' self-confidence and collaboration.

These findings are consistent with international literature (Seligman, 2011; Budzińska & Majchrzak, 2021; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Wu, 2025), which underlines the role of positive emotions and classroom climate in language achievement. Moreover, they suggest that Positive Pedagogy and ICT should not be seen as two separate elements but as a combination that creates a virtuous cycle of motivation and learning success.

From this experience, several practical recommendations can be drawn:

1. Foreign language teachers should embrace their role as *"architects of classroom climate"*, creating positive environments in which every learner feels included.
2. Educational institutions should provide continuous training for teachers in the pedagogical use of ICT, going beyond mere technical aspects.
3. Language policies should support innovative approaches that combine technology with humanizing principles as the most effective way to motivate new generations to learn foreign languages.

In conclusion, the case of the Alliance Française of Elbasan demonstrates that an integrated approach, which combines Positive Pedagogy with technology, can serve as an inspiring model for all those seeking to revitalize foreign language teaching at a time when student motivation poses an increasing challenge.

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