

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: **IJAR: 54424**

Date: 20/10/2025

Title: *Contemporary Challenges in Foreign Language Learning in Higher Education: Rethinking the Interactions between Digital Tools, Cultural Intelligence, and Cognitive Load for a Balanced Active Pedagogy*

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality		√		
Clarity			√	
Significance		√		

Reviewer Name: **Dr. Anam Zehra**

Date: 21/10/2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication:

This paper presents a timely and conceptually rich discussion on the intersection of **digital pedagogy**, **cultural intelligence (CI)**, and **cognitive load (CL)** in higher education foreign language (FL) learning. It integrates theoretical and empirical perspectives drawn from projects at the Escola Superior de Educação de Viseu (Portugal), providing evidence-based insights into the cognitive and cultural challenges of implementing active learning pedagogies with digital tools. The study stands out for its interdisciplinary scope and applied educational value but requires minor refinement in organization and language clarity.

Recommendation: Accept after minor revision

STRENGTHS

- Innovative Framework:** The paper successfully bridges multiple domains, foreign language pedagogy, digital education, cognitive psychology, and cultural intelligence, creating an integrated framework for active learning in higher education.
- Empirical Foundation:** Uses concrete classroom experimentation (JASM Project, ESEV) to validate theoretical claims, linking research and pedagogical practice effectively.
- Relevance and Global Perspective:** Addresses universal challenges of digital inclusion, intercultural communication, and cognitive overload, making the findings transferable across contexts.
- Balanced Discussion:** Recognizes both the potential and pitfalls of digital tools in FL learning, emphasizing cognitive sustainability and inclusive pedagogy.
- Practical Utility:** Offers actionable insights through SWOT analysis and evidence-based recommendations that could inform teacher training and institutional policy.

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WEAKNESSES

- Language Density:** The manuscript contains long, complex sentences that may affect readability for international audiences; editorial simplification is recommended.
- Formatting Issues:** Citations and reference entries require consistent APA 7th edition formatting (e.g., italics, DOI alignment, capitalization).
- Limited Quantitative Evidence:** Though methodologically strong, the argument would benefit from limited statistical or coded qualitative data to support findings.
- Section Flow:** Some conceptual overlaps exist between the introduction, discussion, and conclusion; thematic condensation would improve cohesion.
- Visual Representation:** Inclusion of conceptual diagrams or figures summarizing the digital–CI–CL relationship could enhance reader engagement.