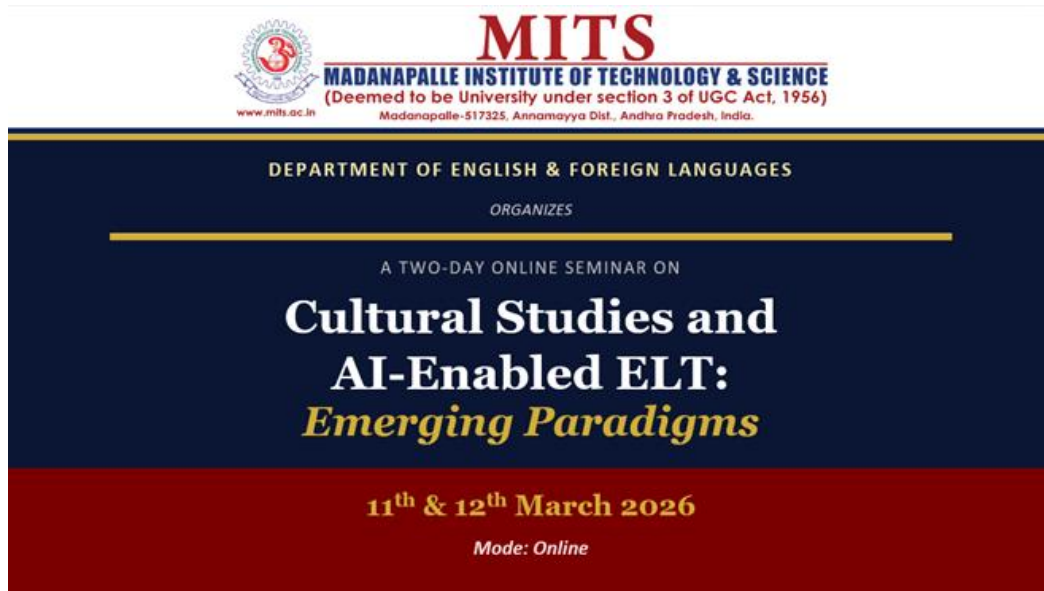


A Report on **Two-Day Seminar** titled
"Cultural Studies and AI-Enabled ELT: Emerging Paradigms"
Organized by **Department of English & Foreign Languages**
on **11th & 12th March 2026**

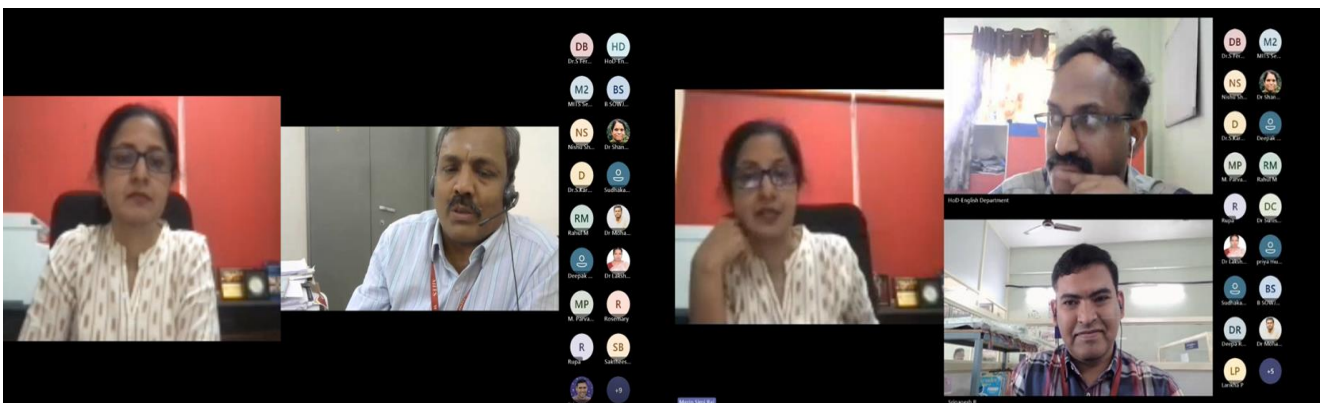


Report Submitted by **Dr. R. Sriganesh**, Assistant Professor, Department of English & Foreign Languages.
Report Received on **17.03.2026**
Mode of Conduct: **Offline**

The Department of English & Foreign Languages, MITS Deemed to be University, organized a Two-Day Online Seminar on "Cultural Studies and AI-Enabled ELT: Emerging Paradigms" on 11th and 12th March 2026. The seminar brought together scholars and educators to explore the emerging academic pursuits on cultural studies and artificial intelligence in the context of English Language Teaching.

Inaugural Session (March 11, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.)
Welcome Note:

Dr. R. Sriganesh, Assistant Professor, welcomed the chief guest and resource person of Day One Forenoon session, Dr. Merin Simi Raj, Principal of MITS, Dr. P. Ramanathan, Head, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Dr. Aju Aravind, participants from across the nation.



Opening Remarks:

Dr. S. Shanmuga Priya presented the opening remarks highlighting the objectives of the seminar and the fact that participants have enthusiastically joined from a wide spectrum of institutions, including Central University of Kerala, NIT Trichy, several state universities, private deemed-to-be universities, and engineering colleges across the country. Dr. Shanmuga Priya also introduced the three expert sessions of the seminar: "Remembering Through Machines: AI, Archives and Cultural Memory" by Dr. Merin Simi Raj; "Ghosts, Bodies and Unfinished Lives: The Cultural Policies of Realism in Malayalam Cinema" by Dr. Aju Aravind; and "Revolutionizing Language Learning: The Integration of AI in English Language Teaching" by Dr. Y. Vijaya Babu. She highlighted how the three sessions would collectively address the intersection of technology, culture, and language learning.

Inaugural Address (Dr. P. Ramanathan): Dr. P. Ramanathan formally inaugurated the seminar, affirming the importance of AI-based language teaching and cultural studies. He stressed on the critical inquiry and encouraging scholars to engage critically with technological developments in education and culture. He congratulated the organizers of the seminar for their sincere efforts.

Address by Chief Guest (Dr. Merin Simi Raj): Dr. Merin Simi Raj, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Madras, delivered the Chief Guest’s address where expressed gratitude to the university for curating such an interdisciplinary area of academic interest.

Address by HoD (Dr. Aju Aravind): Dr. Aju Aravind, Associate Professor & Head, Department of English & Foreign Languages, addressed the seminar with his remarks about the importance of the seminar in the wake of highly revolutionary technological change.

Vote of Thanks: Dr. R. Sriganesh concluded the inauguration proceedings with a heartfelt vote of thanks to the chief guest, resource persons, organizing committee, and all participants for making the seminar an enriching academic event.

Day One Forenoon (10:10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)

Dr. Merin Simi Raj:

The forenoon session of Day One proved to be one of the most intellectually stimulating sessions of the seminar. Dr. Merin Simi Raj, Associate Professor, IIT Madras, offered participants a rich introduction to the evolving landscape of memory studies in the digital age.

Dr. Simi Raj illuminated how personal memory is increasingly becoming shareable digital memory, and how the rise of multiple non-human mediators is fundamentally reshaping the way we remember and record. She also drew attention to the broader cultural shift from mere storage of memory to active digital memory management — a transition that carries profound implications for how societies preserve, interact with, interpret and reinterpret their past. She highlighted the fact that we not only reinterpret the past but actively create a past that was initially not there using AI.



Equally compelling was her observation that we have moved from an era where authoritative figures controlled and manipulated historical narratives, to one where both empowered individuals and machines actively shape the construction of history.

The session was followed by an engaging Q&A, during which participants raised thoughtful questions that further enriched the discussion.

In a formal Vote of Thanks, Dr. Sriganesh remarked that the session provided participants with a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of memory studies, leaving them with much to reflect on and carrying into their own academic and professional contexts.

Day Two Session One (9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.)

Dr. Aju Aravind

Ghosts, Bodies and Unfinished Lives: The Cultural Policies of Realism in Malayalam Cinema

The seminar explored how Malayalam cinema has historically engaged with questions of patriarchy, fear, and realism, particularly through several representations of ghosts.

The discussion highlighted how films such as *Bhargavi Nilayam* initiated a cinematic movement that symbolically “liberated” the souls of the *tharavad* from patriarchal control.

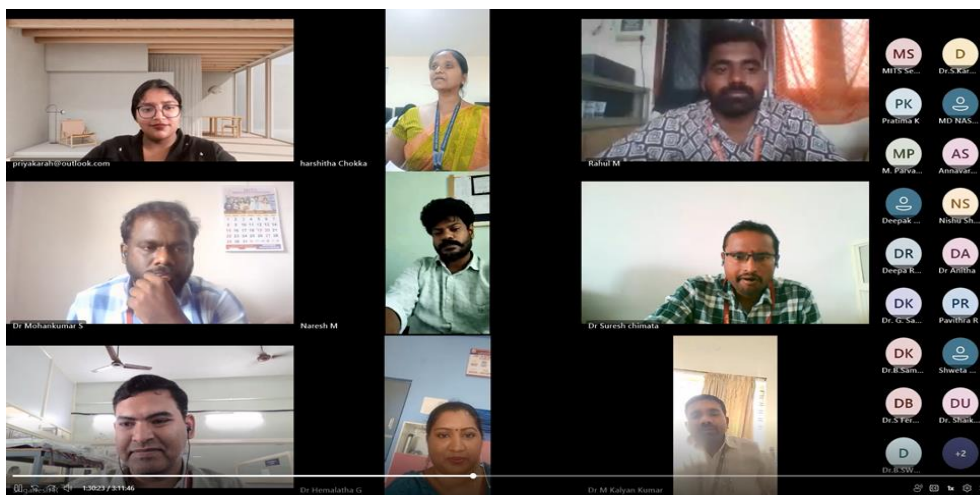
A key point raised was the visual evolution of Malayalam cinema—from the plain, white, minimalistic costumes of early films to the more decorative and stylised aesthetics seen in later works like *Manichithrathazhu* and contemporary films such as *Sarvam Maya*.



The seminar also examined symbolic devices used to evoke fear: moving curtains, black cats, and other atmospheric elements. The portrayal of male fear in these films was read as exposing a crisis of masculinity—where men confront forces (often embodied by women or female spirits) that destabilize their authority and rationality. Instead of treating fear as something to be destroyed, Malayalam cinema often frames it as something that should be accepted.

This was connected to *Manichithrathazhu*, where the male gaze and its limitations can be interpreted through theorists like Gayatri Spivak, especially in relation to the “doubly suppressed” position of women—subaltern oppressed both by patriarchy and by the narratives constructed around them.

The seminar concluded with a discussion of *Ghost Inn* and similar films, where fear becomes not only a narrative device but also a form of adventure and a site of capitalist engagement. Dr. S. Mohankumar presented the Vote of Thanks to the resource person.



Dr. Y Vijaya Babu
Revolutionizing Language Learning: The Integration of AI in English Language Teaching

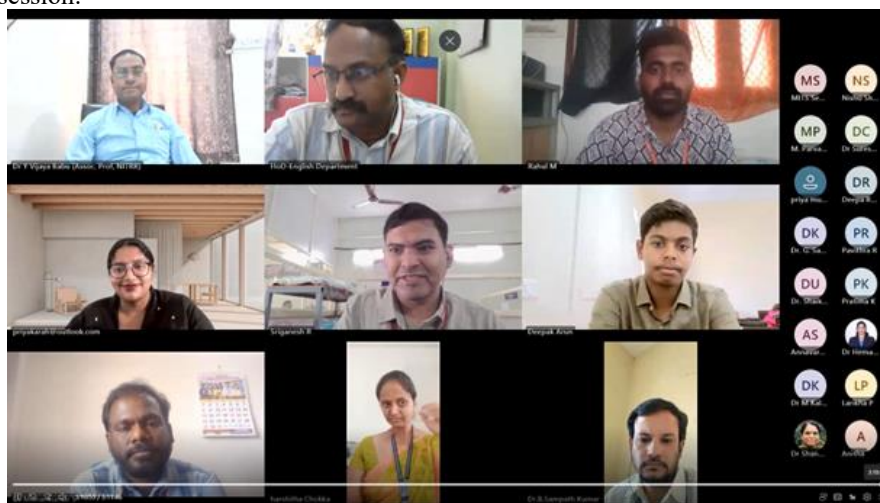
The seminar examined how AI is reshaping English Language Teaching by enabling adaptive and personalized learning. Moving away from content-driven instruction, AI tools reduce Teacher Talk Time and increase meaningful student engagement, while platforms like Duolingo, Memrise, and Babel demonstrate the flexibility such technology affords. Teachers, however, must retain autonomy over syllabus design, with AI serving as a support rather than a replacement. The resource person added that challenges such as financial constraints and uneven technology quality remain significant barriers, alongside emerging possibilities in gamification, humanoid teaching, and AI voice tools. The seminar concluded that while AI integration is a revolutionary step — particularly with mobile technology — it must be guided by ethical standards. The consensus was clear: AI enhances the teaching and learning experience but does not diminish the essential role of the teacher or the learner's autonomy.



The seminar concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Sriganesh.

Valedictory Session:

The two-day seminar concluded with a Valedictory Session that brought the proceedings to a befitting close. Dr. R. Sriganesh presented a comprehensive report covering all three expert sessions, summarizing the key insights and scholarly contributions of each speaker. This was followed by feedback from participant Ms. Priyadarshini, who reflected on the enriching experience of the seminar and appreciated the relevance of the themes to current research and classroom practice. Dr. Aju Aravind then delivered the concluding remarks, expressing gratitude to all the resource persons, participants, and the organizing committee, and reaffirming the department's commitment to fostering quality academic engagement. The formal proceedings concluded with a group photo session.



The seminar successfully fostered interdisciplinary dialogue on the role of AI and cultural studies in redefining English Language Teaching. The sessions were well-received and are expected to inspire further research and collaborative initiatives within the department.

