

# Shifting Paradigms In English Language Teaching: A Comparative Study Of Traditional And Digital Approaches In Kerala

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## Abstract

*This study explores the effectiveness of traditional versus digital approaches to English language teaching in rural colleges of Palakkad, Kerala. Despite India's rich linguistic diversity, English has become a vital medium of instruction, particularly in a globalized job market. Utilizing a Likert-scale questionnaire, the research gathered perceptions from 50 college students regarding their experiences with both teaching methods. The findings reveal that the digital approach, characterized by interactive language labs, significantly enhances student engagement and language proficiency compared to traditional lecture-based methods. Statistical analysis indicated a meaningful difference in the effectiveness of the two approaches, with digital methods receiving a higher mean score. However, the study acknowledges that both methods have their respective advantages and disadvantages. Traditional methods provide structure and direct instructor support, while digital approaches foster active learning and collaboration. The research emphasizes the need for a balanced pedagogical framework that integrates the strengths of both approaches to better equip students with essential English language skills. Ultimately, continuous evaluation and adaptation of teaching methodologies are crucial for meeting the evolving demands of English language education in Kerala's rural context.*

**Keywords:** *English language teaching, Traditional methods of teaching, Modern Teaching Method, Language lab.*

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## I. Introduction

India is a vibrant tapestry of languages, with over 22 officially recognized tongues that reflect its rich cultural heritage. Despite this linguistic diversity, many states, particularly in the southern region like Kerala, have increasingly adopted English as the medium of instruction in numerous educational institutions. This preference for English stems from its role as a global lingua franca and its significance in academic and professional contexts. In Kerala, where the educational landscape is evolving rapidly, the emphasis on English facilitates access to higher education and enhances employability in a competitive job market. The strategic choice to prioritize English underscores the state's commitment to equipping students with essential skills for success in an interconnected world.

The landscape of English language teaching in Kerala is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by both traditional pedagogical practices and the integration of digital technologies. This comparative exploration of pedagogical paradigms highlights the distinctive approaches to teaching English that have evolved in the state, where a rich cultural heritage coexists with modern educational innovations. Traditional methods, often rooted in rote learning and grammar-centric approaches, have long dominated the classroom experience. However, the advent of digital tools and innovative teaching strategies is reshaping how English is taught and learned, offering new opportunities for engagement and interaction. By examining these contrasting paradigms, we can gain insights into the effectiveness of different teaching methodologies and their impact on

students' language proficiency. This exploration not only underscores the importance of adapting to contemporary educational demands but also emphasizes Kerala's commitment to enhancing English language education in a rapidly changing global context. The purpose of this investigation is to compare traditional and digital methods in English language teaching in rural colleges of Palakkad, Kerala.

## **II. Engaging Minds: Innovative Approaches To English Teaching**

It is an undeniable fact that one cannot envisage living a prosperous existence in a corporate, global world without the felicity of speaking English at all instances. As a result, the scenario of English teaching and learning in rural areas remains dire. Earlier, teaching English was limited to oral instruction in regional languages, which helped students grasp the subject matter rather than the subtleties of language structure. Students who are poorly grounded in vocabulary and structure get disinterested in their English classes.

According to (Rodgers, 2001), the instructor's selected teaching strategy has an enormous impact on how engaged a student is in the language learning process and how effectively their learning outcomes turn out. For decades, there has been a steady shift in the ways that English is taught, and different approaches have been found all around the state. Students' communication ability can be enhanced by curriculum and the selection of communicative tasks (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As technology advances, computer-aided learning has also become more popular and is employed extensively in today's technologically advanced society. According to period and era, all of these techniques have been shown to be successful, and new techniques have developed over time to meet evolving needs. According to the new school of thought, language training occurs in a specific setting, and the pedagogical knowledge and effective teaching techniques of the teachers are instruments that facilitate the process.

Modern teaching methods, particularly in rural colleges, have significantly transformed English language instruction. Language labs, equipped with audio-visual technology and interactive resources, allow students to practice listening, speaking, and comprehension skills in a supportive environment. These labs foster a student-centered approach, encouraging active participation and collaboration among peers. As a result, students develop greater confidence in their language abilities and a deeper appreciation for English, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective. This shift not only enhances language proficiency but also prepares students to engage with the global community, breaking down barriers that once limited their access to opportunities.

### **Statement Of Thesis**

With regard to different teaching approaches, the confrontation of new and old ideas is another way that modern education differs from traditional classroom instruction. Studies that have already been done have explained how the two intersect in the setting of teaching concepts, learning strategies, and so on. The typical educational approach under the previous notion had to be text-centered and teacher-centered. The majority of classes are given through lectures. To get ready for the test, the lecturer will require the students to learn the theoretical information from the textbook and recite the syllabus throughout the lecture. Teachers will assign students to learn theoretical information from books and practice thousands of practice test questions in order to get ready for the test.

The goal of education under the new educational paradigm is to stimulate students' creative thinking rather than to test them. Teaching and learning are highly creative processes, according to modern education. The main objective is to encourage, mentor, foster, and train students' creativity. Access to an assortment of resources, customized instruction, and interactive learning are all made attainable by language labs. Nonetheless, neither contemporary nor conventional teaching approaches are wholly superior or inferior. Traditional lecture-style instruction can be more successful at raising test results even though it is more tedious than high-tech classrooms.

**Table 1. perception of learners on English Teaching methods**

Questions	Response				
	0	1	2	3	4
I find traditional lectures to be an effective way to learn new material.					
I prefer the structure provided by traditional lectures.					
I often feel engaged during traditional lectures.					
Traditional lectures adequately prepare me for exams.					
I find traditional lectures to be too long or monotonous.					
I find the language lab to be an effective tool for improving my English skills.					
I enjoy using the interactive resources available in the language lab.					
The digital approach in the language lab enhances my understanding of language concepts.					
I feel more confident practicing speaking and listening in the language lab than in traditional lectures.					
I prefer the digital approach of the language lab over traditional lectures.					

"Not sure" = 0, "strongly disagree" = 1, "disagree" = 2, "agree" = 3, and "strongly agree" = 4 are the responses on the Likert scale survey.

The researcher eliminated redundancies discovered in two databases and used the generated search words to find potentially pertinent articles. The scope of the selected studies was then further reduced by screening abstracts, titles, and keywords. Studies that weren't released as peer-reviewed journal articles were also not included.

The purpose of this study was to compare the traditional method of teaching and digital method of using language lab for English language teaching. Fifty college students from rural colleges of Palakkad district responded to survey questions regarding their perceptions. Participants in the sample study were selected at random. English teaching methods were implemented in all the students. "Not sure" = 0, "strongly disagree" = 1, "disagree" = 2, "agree" = 3, and "strongly agree" = 4 are the responses on the Likert scale survey. Throughout these two months, they were involved in both approaches: language labs and conventional classroom instruction.

### III. Data Analysis

The effectiveness of teaching English to students at Rural Colleges of Kerala using the digital approach and the traditional way was compared using the Likert scale questionnaire method. The responses were statistically analysed using paired data analysis and the statistical tool used is Paired Sample "t" test.

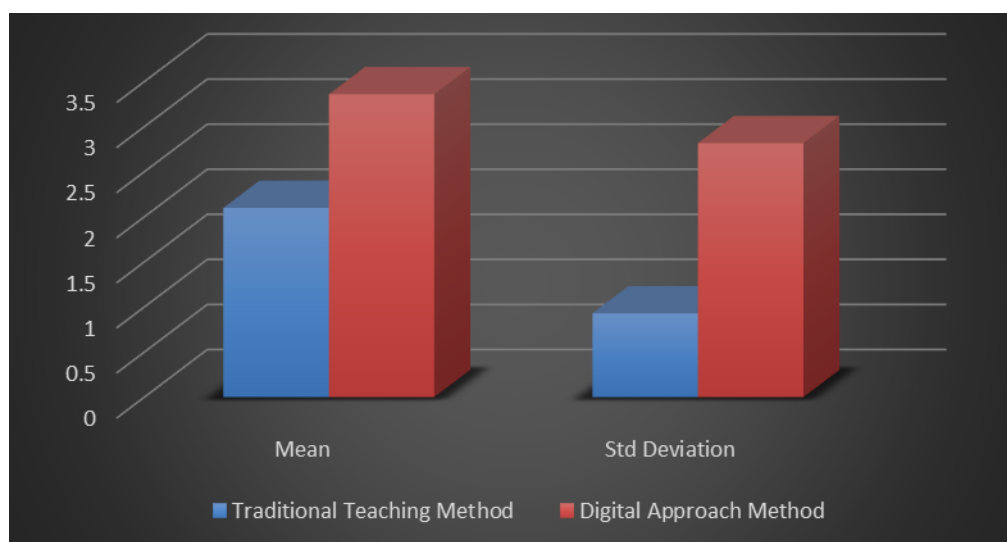
**Table II. T test Analysis of Method of Teaching**

Method of Teaching	Mean	N	Std Deviation	t Test
Traditional Teaching Method	2.100	50	0.931	3.067
Digital Approach Method	3.360	50	2.819	

\*Significant level at 0.05 and table Value is 2.009

The data from Table II conveys that the comparative statistics for the method of teaching in both traditional teaching method and Digital approach method, the mean were 2.100 and 3.360, and the standard deviation were 0.931 and 2.819. The researcher investigated the mean differences in the English teaching group using the t-test ( $t\text{-test} = t(50) = -3.067, P > 2.009$ ). Research suggests that there is a significant mean difference in the methods that English is learned, with the group that preferred the digital approach showing greater interest than the group that preferred the traditional technique. The differences between the two groups' approaches to teaching English are readily apparent by Table II's results. The digital approach method demonstrated greater adherence to the language lab facilities and higher mean scores.

The study's results indicate that the digital approach to English language teaching is more effective than traditional methods, yet it's important to recognize that both approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages.



**Figure I: Graphical representation of the Analysis of Method of Teaching**

### IV. Conclusion

Methods for teaching English have evolved in tandem with virtually every development in the linguistic, pedagogical, sociological, and psychological sciences. History suggests that no pedagogy is universally effective. In order to satisfy the demands of local institutions and the real needs of the students, a well-rounded pedagogy that combines traditionally formed local traditions with imported techniques that are well-received by the students is required. Following the research investigation, it concluded that the traditional methods of teaching English are inadequate to foster the level of communicative competence that is anticipated of English language learners in rural colleges.

The foregoing analysis of English language learning in Kerala indicates that it is critical to develop a shared framework for teaching English and to reconsider the long-standing Western-imported paradigm. Realizing how quickly English is becoming a lingua franca that promotes communication, the need for a new framework becomes imperative. The study also reveals that continuous research and improvements will always be required to provide the most qualitative and effective education for college students.

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