

11 ICLICE 2018 - 046 Shilpagauri P. Ganpule

Innovative Teaching Materials for Teaching *The Merchant of Venice* (1999)

Shilpagauri P. Ganpule

PDEA's Prof. Ramkrishna More Arts, Commerce and Science College, Akurdi, Pune, India
(Permanently Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India)
shilpagauriganpule@gmail.com

Abstract

The teaching of drama is regarded as the most noteworthy and significant area in an ESL classroom. Innovative teaching materials can be used to make the teaching of drama interesting and attention-grabbing. The use of innovative teaching materials serves to be beneficial in the ESL classroom. The paper presents a variety of teaching materials that can be used while teaching Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1999). The innovative teaching materials assist the teachers in the teaching of the play and make the teaching-learning process a gratifying activity for both the teachers and students. In brief, the task-based activities encourage the students to perform various tasks and speed up their learning process. Thus the present paper makes an attempt to demonstrate how the task-based activities enhance and augment the students' understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1999).

Keywords: Teaching Of Drama, ESL Classroom, Task-Based Activities, Students' Participation

Introduction

The paper puts forth varied innovative teaching materials that can be used in the teaching of drama. The innovative teaching materials make the teaching and learning of drama a meaningful experience for both the teacher and the students. The use of innovative teaching materials undeniably increases the students' understanding of drama. The paper presents different teaching materials that can be used while teaching William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1999). It attempts to demonstrate that the innovative teaching materials assist the students in appreciating drama. They increase the students' participation and enhance their appreciation of drama.

The Teaching of Drama through Innovative Teaching Materials

While teaching drama the teacher should always make his teaching "...more activity based, task oriented and learner centric" (Reddy, 2012, p. 42). Drama is "...not made of words alone, but of sights and sounds, stillness and motion, noise and silence, relationships and responses" (Styan, 1975, as cited in Lazar, 2009, p.133). Hence, while designing the teaching materials the teacher should always take into consideration the performance aspect of the play (Lazar, 2009). In the preparation of the teaching materials the main focus should be to assist the students "to gain proficiency in the target language (Ganpule, 2015, p. 1759). In brief, the use of the innovative teaching materials makes the teaching of drama in an ESL classroom a fascinating experience for both teachers and students.

Students' Pivotal Role in Task-Based Activities

The prerequisite of task-based teaching is the complete involvement and whole-hearted participation of students in the diverse task-based activities conducted in the classroom. The

teaching learning process revolves around the students. The teacher has a minimal role to play, that is, designing and executing the task-based activities and encouraging and motivating students to participate in the task-based activities. In brief, the students are at the centre of the task-based teaching (Van den Branden, 2006, Rodríguez-Bonces, J. and Rodríguez-Bonces, M., 2010). Teacher and students' roles change within a task-based approach. TBL presents learning and teaching as collaborative work.

The Case Study: The Teaching of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1999)

The present study focuses on the teaching of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1999). *The Merchant of Venice* (1999) is a tragicomedy written by William Shakespeare is full revenge, the casket scenes, the ring episode, the romance and the disguise of Portia, the play becomes absorbing and exciting to the students. The play has a fascinating plot with a lot of surprises and excitement which attracts the students' attention and makes them enjoy the play.

Use of Innovative Teaching Materials in The Teaching Of *The Merchant Of Venice* (1999)

The different innovative teaching materials can be used in the teaching of *The Merchant of Venice* (1999). They assist the students in understanding and appreciating the play. They enhance their appreciation of the play. The diverse teaching materials that can be used in the teaching of *The Merchant of Venice* (1999) are as follows.

1. Watch the PowerPoint presentation and make a list of important facts of William Shakespeare's life and his works.

In this task-based activity the teacher presents the power point presentation on William Shakespeare's life. The activity presents the important facts of William Shakespeare's life to the students. The power point presentation offers the students the life story of the playwright. It familiarizes them with the works of William Shakespeare. It develops their listening and writing skills.

- https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=2CS4V6Ie0ae_BNurnPgC&gws_rd=ssl#q=ppt++on+shaespeare
- https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=2CS4V6Ie0ae_BNurnPgC&gws_rd=ssl#q=ppt+on+william+shakespeare+work

2. Visit the different links given below and note down the important facts about William Shakespeare and the play *The Merchant of Venice* (1999).

In this activity the students are encouraged to do self- study by making them visit the links given below and to note down the important facts. To know more about William Shakespeare the students can be asked to refer to the following links:

- www.shakespearemag.com
- www.shakespearehelp.com/the-merchant-of-venice-lesson-plans/
- <http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/timeline/timeline.htm>

To know more about the play the students can visit the following links:

- <http://www.williamshakespeare.info/shakespeare-play-merchant-of-venice.htm>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Merchant_of_Venice#Discussion

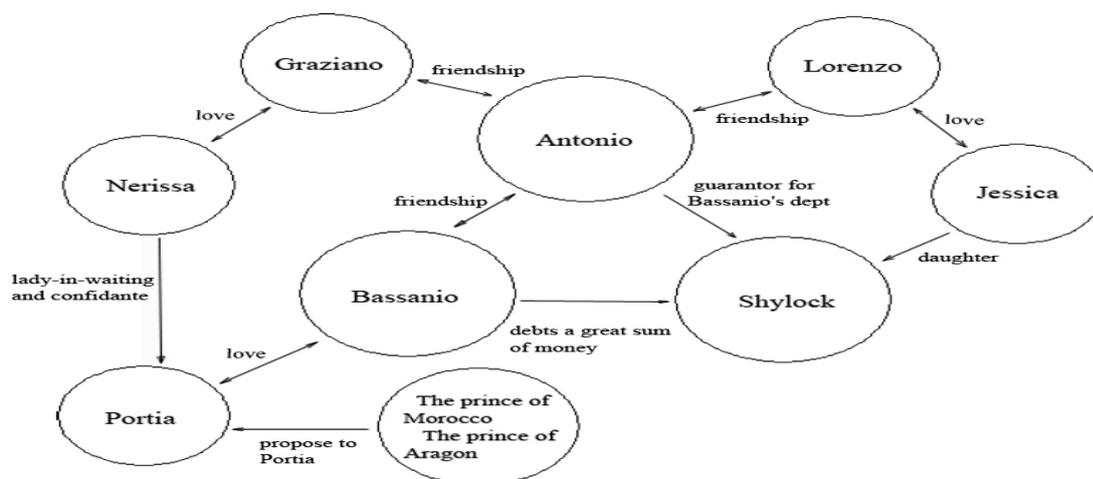
3. Watch the PowerPoint presentation and write down the important points.

Through this task-based activity the students get familiarized to the particulars of the play, such as, plot of the play, characters, setting, themes, motifs, symbols used in the play. The activity improves the students’ listening, reading, writing and note-taking skills of students.

- https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=YDa4V5RHizAuATkoaKgCQ&gws_rd=ssl#q=ppt+on+the+merchant++of++venice
- https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=2CS4V6Ie0ae_BNumPgC&gws_rd=ssl#q=ppt+on+merchant+of+venice
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3KpmAdtlaU>

4. Study the sociogram presenting different characters of the play.

This task-based activity makes the students draw a sociogram which displays the characters of the play. It helps the students to know the relationship amongst the characters. It enhances their thinking and predicting skills.



(Seetbm=isch&q=diagram+on+characters+in+shakespeare's+the+merchant+of+venice&imgc=FZ4xTYzKIR-IBM%3A)

5. Read the play.

The teacher allots the students different roles and asks them to read the text of the play. The students enjoy reading of the play. The reading of each scene and act are followed by discussion. This activity improves the students’ reading and thinking skills. The act wise reading of the text is followed by a discussion amongst the students regarding the characterization, setting and plot of the play. In this activity the students are encouraged to participate in the discussion followed by the reading of the different acts. This activity helps the students to acquaint with the characters, to know the setting, to apprehend the storyline and to comprehend the happenings in the plot structure. It also improves the students’ reading, listening and speaking skills. It enables the students to read written English correctly. It enables them to use appropriate sounds, juncture, stress and intonation patterns in reading English. It enables them to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the context. It enables the students to understand the lexical and structural meanings of the words, phrases and sentences. It helps the students recognize the meaning of various graphic signals that is, punctuation mark, paragraph indentation, capitalization, etc.. (Ganpule, 2014, p. 172) The teacher can also provide the audio of the play before the actual reading of the play in the class.

The link of the audio of the play is:

1. https://archive.org/details/merchant_of_venice_1005_librivox

6. Watch the video clips and participate in the discussion following them.

In this activity the video clips of different acts of the play are screened. After the screening the students are encouraged to participate in the discussion. This activity helps the students to develop their listening, speaking and cognitive skills.

7. Rewrite the following sentences in paragraph form in the correct sequence (Collie and Slater, 2009, p. 180).

This task-based activity makes the students rearrange the given sentences in the correct chronological sequence. This activity helps the students to know the niceties of the plot the play. It enhances their reading, writing and cognitive skills.

Worksheet 1

Rewrite the following sentences in paragraph form, in the correct sequence.

1. This is because some of the ships laden with cargo would return back within three months.
2. Antonio is a merchant living in Venice.
3. Bassanio likes a very rich young woman named Portia who lives in the town of Belmont.
4. Antonio and Bassanio are very good friends.
5. So, he decides to borrow three thousand ducats from a very rich Jew whose name is Shylock.
6. Antonio must return back the borrowed amount within three months.
7. Bassanio wants to marry this young woman.
8. Antonio wants to help his friends.
9. If he fails to do so, Shylock would cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body.
10. Antonio feels confident that he can repay the amount in the stipulated period of time.
11. This can be possible only if he becomes rich.

Worksheet 2

Rewrite the following sentences in paragraph form, in the correct sequence.

1. One of the caskets conveys the message that the one who has chosen that particular casket can marry Portia.
2. Her father has laid down a strange condition in his will.
3. The Prince of Arragon chooses the silver casket. He is disappointed to find 'the portrait of a blinking idiot.'
4. There are three caskets made of silver, gold and lead.
5. Many rich young men want to marry Portia.
6. The Prince of Morocco chooses the golden casket. He is disappointed to find in it a skull and a deriding message.
7. Just then news is received that Bassanio has arrived in Belmont with his friend, Gratiano.
8. He announces that he wishes to marry Portia.

Worksheet 3

Rewrite the following sentences in paragraph form, in the correct sequence.

1. It is really difficult to decide whether he should select the gold casket, the silver casket or the lead casket.
2. She wants him to offer her dowry of six thousand ducats to Shylock to calm him.
3. Bassanio's true friend, Lorenzo, who is an artist, elopes with Jessica, Shylock's daughter.
4. It so happens that Gratiano, the loquacious friend of Bassanio wishes to marry Nerissa who happens to be Portia's waiting woman.

5. Portia and Nerissa give rings to Bassanio and Gratiano.
6. Both of them wish that the rings should be kept secure. If the rings were to be lost, it would be construed to mean that their courtship is over.
7. The sad news that Antonio's vessels have been lost is announced.
8. It is also learnt that Shylock is urgently demanding his pound of flesh.
9. Portia understands the urgency of the matter and asks Bassanio to start for Venice immediately.
10. He rightly chooses the lead casket.
11. Thus he is eligible to marry Portia.
12. Portia asks Lorenzo and Jessica to stay in Belmont.
13. She leaves for Venice in the guise of a doctor of law.
14. Nerissa accompanies her as the clerk of the doctor of law.
15. Bassanio has to make a choice from the three caskets.

8. Read the passage carefully and answer the following questions.

The passages from the play are given to the students and they are asked to read them carefully. After reading the passages the students think and write the answers. This activity facilitates the students in improving their writing skill.

Worksheet 1

Shylock: This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary; seal me there
Your single bond, and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Antonio: Content, in faith; I'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio: You shall not seal to such a bond for me;
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Antonio: Why, fear not, man I will not forfeit it-
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond (Shakespeare, 1999, p.20).

Questions:

1. Comment on the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio.
2. Why did Antonio sign the bond?
3. What was the bond?
4. Comment on the character of Shylock.
5. What is the significance of the passage in plot of the play?

Worksheet 2

Portia: Soft! The Jew shall have all justice, soft, no haste!
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano: O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge!

Portia: Thereupon prepare thee to cut off the flesh;

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
 But just a pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more
 Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
 As makes it light or heavy in the substance
 Or the division of the twentieth part
 Of one poor scruple – nay, if the scale do turn
 But in the estimation of a hair,
 Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.
 Gratiano: A second Daniel, A Daniel, Jew!-
 Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
 Portia: Why doth the Jew pause? [To Shylock] Take thy forfeiture.
 Shylock: Give me my principal, and let me go (Shakespeare, 1999, pp.92-93).

Questions:

1. What is significance of the passage in plot of the play?
2. How did Portia teach a lesson to Shylock?
3. What is the stipulation for getting the pound of flesh?
4. Comment on Portia's wit.
5. Why did Shylock demand only for his principal amount?

Worksheet 3

Jessica: I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
 Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
 Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
 But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
 And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
 Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
 Give him this letter; do it secretly;
 And so farewell: I would not have my father
 See me in talk with thee.
 Launcelot: Adieu! Tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful
 pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian did not play
 the knave and get thee, I am much deceived.
 But, adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my
 manly spirit: adieu.
 Jessica: Farewell, good Launcelot.
 Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
 To be ashamed to be my father's child!
 But though I am a daughter to his blood,
 I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
 Become a Christian and thy loving wife (Shakespeare, 1999, p.32).

Questions:

1. Comment on Jessica's relation with her father.
2. Whom did Jessica give to Launcelot? Why did she want Launcelot to maintain secrecy?
3. Why did Jessica call her house "a hell"?
4. What is significance of the passage in plot of the play?
5. What assurance was given by Jessica to Lorenzo?

Worksheet 4

Bassanio: Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
 And, in the hearing of these many friends,
 I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
 Wherein I see myself--

Portia: Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
 In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
 And there's an oath of credit.

Bassanio: Nay, but hear me:

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
 I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio: I once did lend my body for his wealth;
 Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
 Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
 My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
 Will never more break faith advisedly.

Portia: Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
 And bid him keep it better than the other.

Antonio: Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bassanio: By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Portia: I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio;

For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me (Shakespeare, 1999, p.112).

Questions:

1. Comment on the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio.
2. What assurance did Antonio give to Portia for accepting Bassanio as husband? Why?
3. Why did Portia ask Bassanio to excuse her?
4. Why did Bassanio plead Portia to forgive him?
5. What is the significance of the ring episode in the plot of the play?

9. Guess what would have happened if....?

In this activity the students are divided into groups and each group is given an unlikely situation and is asked to think about the possibility of the situation. This activity makes the students to think independently about the specified situation. It also helps them to develop their speaking skills as they discuss things amongst themselves. It helps the students to deploy their cognitive sub-skills such as predicting, anticipating, guessing from the context, using the previous experience etc. (Ganpule, 2014, p.174).

1. Antonio would not have signed the bond.
2. Portia would not have taken the disguise of Balthazar.
3. Jessica would not have eloped with Lorenzo.

10. Fill in the grid with brief remarks.

Setting	Temporal	Genre
	Geographical	
	Physical	Tone
Plot	Rising Action	Theme
	Climax	
	Falling Action	Major Conflict

Grid 1: Elements of the Play

In this activity the students are presented with a grid. They are asked to fill it with appropriate details. This activity helps the students to revise the facts that they have already known. It helps them to enhance their writing skill. It helps them to organize the thoughts and ideas logically (Ganpule, 2014, p. 175).

11. Prepare a poster.

In this activity the students are divided into groups and are asked to prepare a poster on the given topics. This activity enhances the students' imaginative power. It appeals to the creativity of the students and also helps them in understanding the play (Ganpule, 2014, p.175).

1. Prepare a poster on the casket scenes.
2. Prepare a poster on the trial scene.
3. Prepare a poster on the life of Shakespeare.
4. Prepare a poster on the works of Shakespeare.

12. Write a letter on the given topic.

In this activity the students are asked to imagine themselves as characters and write a letter from the point of view of the given characters. This activity enhances the students' writing skills and cognitive skills. This activity appeals to the students' imaginative power and make them envisage the point of view of the characters. The students like this activity very much. They predict, anticipate and use their previous knowledge to write the letter. It enables the students to use proper punctuation marks in writing the letter and to use words appropriately (Ganpule, 2014, p.176).

1. A love letter written by Bassanio expressing his love for Portia.
2. A letter written by Jessica to Shylock before leaving the house with Lorenzo.

13. Choose a role card and give a performance.

In this activity a pair or group of students are asked to choose a role card and give a performance on the situation mentioned on the card. In this activity the students are given practice in oral communication. This activity builds their confidence, minimizes their stage fright and makes them use language in different situations. This activity also enhances their understanding of the play. The students enjoy this activity (Ganpule, 2014, pp.177-78).

1. Bassanio expressing his love for Portia
2. An agreement between Shylock and Antonio for a loan of three thousand ducats
3. Portia and Nerissa talking about the different suitors who had come
4. The Prince of Morocco's disappoint to find the 'portrait of a blinking idiot'
5. Elopement of Jessica with Lorenzo
6. The prince of Aragon's disappointment to choose the wrong casket
7. Bassanio's choice of the lead casket
8. Portia cross examining Shylock in the trial scene
9. Bassanio and Gratiano meeting Portia and Nerissa and getting enquired about the ring

14. Watch the movie *The Merchant of Venice* (1999) and write a review of the same.

In this activity after the screening of the film the students are asked to comment on the use of setting, music, props etc. and are asked to comment on the direction, caste etc. This activity assists the students to improve their writing skills. It also helps them to scrutinize the play as a whole (Ganpule, 2014, p.177). The links of the movie are:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bZWZEwY21Q>
- <http://fullmobilemovie.com/movies/the-merchant-of-venice>

Conclusion

Thus the paper presents a catalogue of diverse task-based activities that can be used for the teaching of *The Merchant of Venice* (1999). It points out that the students' vigorous involvement in the task-based activities augments their comprehension of the play. There is an integration of the language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing while conceptualizing the task-based activities. The development of the cognitive sub-skills is also the objective of the task-based activities. Thus, the paper demonstrates that the task-based activities play a noteworthy part in the teaching of drama.

References

- Bowen, T. *Teaching Approaches: Task-Based Learning*. Retrieved on January 16, 2016, from <http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/teaching-articles/teaching-approaches/teaching-approaches-task-based-learning/146502.article> Task-Based Language Learning: Old Approach, New Style.
- Branden, Van den K. 2006. *Task Based Language Education. From Theory To Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coolie, J. and Slater, S. 2009. *Literature In The Language Classroom*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Cope, W. P. Woodstock Middle School, Cherokee County and Kennesaw State University, Georgia, Signet Classics Edition of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: Retrieved on January 7, 2016 from <http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/MerchantOfVenice.pdf>
- Ganpule, S. 2014. Use of Task-Based Activities in the Teaching of Drama. Proceedings of ICOAH 2014 The International Conference on Art and Humanities (pp. 169-181). Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Ganpule, S. 2015. Innovative Techniques of Teaching Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Proceedings of ICLLL 2015 The International Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature (pp. 1759-1766). London: World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology. eISSN: 1307-6892
- Gray, T. A. A Shakespeare Timeline. 1998. 21 May 2005. Retrieved January 7, 2016, from <http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/timeline/timeline.htm>
- Lazar, G. 2009. *Literature And Language Teaching*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. *Task-Based Language Teaching: From Theory To Classroom Practice*. Retrieved January 9, 2016, from <https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/about/centres/lipis/docs/readings/plenary05-nunan-slides.pdf>
- Shakespeare, W. 1999. *The Merchant of Venice*. New Delhi: Frank Bros. and Co. Ltd.
- Shakespeare, W. 2014. *The Merchant of Venice*. S. Ganpule (Ed.) Pune: Snehavardhan Publishing House.
- Reddy, V. A. 2012. The Changing Trends In The Teaching Of Writing. In S. Kumar (Ed.), *The Magic Of ICT In English Language Teaching*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers Pvt. Ltd. ISBN: 978-81-311-0382-1.
- Rodríguez-Bonces, J. and Rodríguez-Bonces, M., 2010. *A New Lesson To Learn, Profile Issues In Teachers` Professional Development*, July 20, 2010. Retrieved on February 17, 2016 from http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?pid=S165707902010000200011&script=sci_arttext
- Willis, D. and Willis J. 2015. *Doing Task-Based Teaching*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<http://www.williamshakespeare.info/shakespeare-play-merchant-of-venice.htm>: Retrieved on January 7, 2016

www.shakespearemag.com: Retrieved on January 7, 2016

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Merchant_of_Venice#Discussion: Retrieved on January 7, 2016

www.shakespearehelp.com/the-merchant-of-venice-lesson-plans/: Retrieved on January 7, 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bZWZEwY21Q>: Retrieved on June 27, 2014.

<http://fullmobilemovie.com/movies/the-merchant-of-venice>: Retrieved on June 27, 2014.

https://archive.org/details/merchant_of_venice_1005_librivox: Retrieved on June 27, 2014.