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Aplicación del Modelo PEE a la composición de ensayos en una clase de preparación para el Examen IELTS

Ender Orlando Velasco Tovar[1]

Abstract

Based on two case studies, this study investigates the application of the Point, Explanation, Example (PEE) model to essay composition in a multi-lingual IELTS preparation class. This model was incorporated into an eight-week programme of instruction to ESL adults in London, England. Students preparing for the IELTS exam were asked to write pre- and post-instruction essays on a given topic within 40 minutes. Employing the IELTS band descriptors (IELTS, 2013) and analyses of coherence and cohesion in line with Systemic Functional Linguistic concepts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; McCarthy, 1991), samples of students' writing were analysed. Data from students' pre- and post-instruction interviews was also gathered and analysed. The findings of this study suggest that the PEE model is to some extent effective in improving the essay composition performance of IELTS students, in particular in the area of cohesion and coherence. Students find the PEE model useful in regard to the clarity and structure that the model seems to add to their essays.

Keywords: cohesion and coherence, essay writing, IELTS, PEE model

Resumen

Basándose en dos casos, este estudio investiga la aplicación del modelo Point, Explanation, Example (PEE) a la composición de ensayos en una clase de preparación para el examen IELTS. Este modelo fue incorporado a un programa de ocho semanas de instrucción de ESL para adultos en Londres, Inglaterra. Estudiantes que se estaban preparando para el examen IELTS escribieron ensayos antes y después de la intervención pedagógica en un tiempo límite de 40 minutos. Basado en los estándares descriptores de bandas IELTS (IELTS, 2013) y análisis de coherencia y cohesión en línea con conceptos de Systemic Functional Linguistic (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; McCarthy, 1991), muestras de los escritos fueron analizadas. Datos de entrevistas realizadas antes y después de la intervención pedagógica también fueron recolectados y analizados. Los resultados de este estudio indican que el modelo PEE es de cierta forma eficaz en el mejoramiento de la capacidad de composición de ensayos de los estudiantes IELTS, en particular en el área de coherencia y cohesión. Los estudiantes parecen encontrar el modelo útil con relación a la claridad y estructura que el modelo aparenta dar a sus ensayos.

Palabras clave: coherencia y cohesión, escritura de ensayos, IELTS, modelo PEE

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Introduction

[M]y overall assessment of the academic standard of [this] essay is 'weak', meriting a score in the low 40's on our marking scale. My reason for this is essentially because of the disorganized manner of presentation of the content. The information is presented in a 'jumbled-up' fashion. I felt a need to do a scissors-and-paste job on the essay, re-ordering its content so as to introduce a logical flow to the argument, something which is sorely lacking in its present form. (Wall, Nickson, Jordan, Allwright & Houghton, 1988, p.119)

The above quote is a subject tutor's reaction when asked to comment on an essay produced by an ESL student enrolled in a course at a UK university. Hence, being able to write academic essays that meet certain standards is undoubtedly of significant importance for ESL students who are hoping to undertake higher education (HE) studies in English-speaking countries.

In order to be accepted into HE programmes, ESL students usually have to demonstrate their English proficiency through examinations such as the IELTS or TOEFL. The focus of this study will be on the essay part of the task 2 of the Academic IELTS exam.

Issues regarding ESL students' writing abilities are widely known. It is sometimes assumed that by having met the language requirement for an HE course through IELTS or other means, ESL students may be equipped with the necessary study skills and writing proficiency required to undertake academic programmes. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case, and harsh critiques have been made regarding ESL students' inability to write at the tertiary level (Horner & Min-Zhan, 1999; Keck, 2006; Olivas & Li, 2006; Woodrow, 2006; Yu, 2009).

In an attempt to alleviate some of the essay-writing issues ESL students encounter even before entering tertiary education, this study aimed to investigate the application of the Point, Explanation, Example (PEE) model to essay composition in a multi-lingual IELTS preparation class. This model was incorporated into an eight-week programme of instruction to ESL adults in London, England. The data collection instruments included analyses of students' essays before and after the instruction and pre/post instruction interviews.

Literature review

It has long been recognised that ESL students struggle with essay writing in L2 for a few reasons: the marked differences between the registers of written and spoken English (Biber, 1988); the high cultural, linguistic and pragmatic demands essays pose on EFL students (Gleason, 1999; Golder & Coirier, 1996); the language-specific tag attached to argumentative writing (Neff-van & Dafouz-Milne, 2008); and the negative washback resulting from writing under exam conditions (Messick, 1996). It could then be assumed that IELTS students are likely to be affected by similar issues when writing essays as part of their exams.

Task 2 of the Academic IELTS Test

A number of studies have investigated the task 2 of the Academic IELTS writing module (Archibald, 2002; Brown, 1998; Coomber, 1998; Elder & O'Loughlin, 2003; Green & Weir, 2002, 2003; Moore & Morton, 1999). However, they have mainly focused on approaches to preparation, impact of preparation programmes on candidates' performance, and score gains in relation to time spans, as opposed to the type instruction imparted to the learners to facilitate the teaching-learning of IELTS-related essay composition. This may suggest that other types of studies, perhaps of a more qualitative nature, could provide insights into how the process of essay writing can be facilitated to IELTS students, particularly if students are expected to employ more complex argumentation models at university e.g. Ramsay, Maier and Price's (2010) Assertion, Evidence, Reasoning (AER) model.

Cohesion and coherence

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have coined the term "texture" (p.2) to define the properties of a text. These properties are in turn defined by the concepts of cohesion and coherence. The former concept entails how the components in a text are bound together to form a whole unit, while the latter has to do with

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how a text is related to its social and cultural context (Eggins, 2004). There are four types of cohesion– through references, lexis, conjunctions, and ellipsis (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 532-578 for a detailed explanation). Another element of cohesion is thematic patterns (McCarthy, 1991), or the way themes are organised in a text to orientate readers.

Cohesion and coherence are used in IELTS as the criterion to determine whether or not information, ideas, and language are properly linked and organised in the essay message, and whether or not the message in an essay is clear and flows naturally (UCLES, 2007).

The PEE Model

The PEE model is defined as neither a theory nor an approach to writing essays, but instead as "a model guideline […] of how to structure a paragraph with a topic sentence and to develop that sentence through the appropriate use of explanations and examples" (Cole, 2013, para. 7). The figure below illustrates how this model may be applied.

Figure 1. Representation of the PEE model from Cole (2013)

"[POINT] There are those who argue that the internet has had an extremely positive influence on communication. [EXPLANATION] They say this because in the past it was sometime impossible to call people in other countries on the telephone, but now it is relatively simple to use a program such as Skype to talk to them for free or to send an email. [EXAMPLE] A good example here are the students who go to study abroad and are able to send messages home with no difficulty, when in the past they would have had to buy stamps and go to the post office which was much harder and more expensive."

While the PEE model seems a straight forward concept, there appear to be some discrepancies regarding its definition. For example, while Cole (2013) refers to the first E in PEE as "Example," other authors refer to it as "Evidence" (BBC, 2013). Equally, while the former author calls PEE a "model," the latter calls it a "technique," and others also call it a "chain" (TES, 2008).

It appears as though 'evidence' (following BBC and TES´s definition) is most commonly associated with quotations to back up main ideas of literary

essays carried out by English native-speaker students at the Key Stage 3 level in the UK. This can be clearly seen in simplistic explanations about the technique regularly found in material used to prepare English native-speaker students for their English GCSE exams, either as formal preparation (CGP, 2012, p. 16), or as exam tips (BBC, 2013; TES, 2008). Yet, many IELTS course books and preparation materials oft en seem to fail to provide the same kind of simplistic explanations (e.g. Harrison & Whitehead, 2006; Jakeman & McDowell, 2004; May, 2004), although other resources provide explanations regarding coherence in writing and ways of introducing topics and main ideas, and ways to develop an argument (e.g. Black & Capel, 2006; Jakeman & McDowell, 1999). Thus, it could be inferred that if English native-speaker students are trained from an early age to use the PEE model as part of their essay-writing skills, IELTS students should also receive the same kind of training, particularly if they are expected to write essays at university in the future.

The PEE Model in ESL writing teaching theory

The PEE model could be framed within the "Paragraph Pattern Approach" (Raimes, cited in Matsuda & Silva, 2010, p. 239), an approach more concerned with organisation of writing above the sentence level and how topic and secondary sentences are put together in order to form paragraphs and ultimately whole texts.

The PEE model fits well within the process approach to teaching ESL writing, as opposed to the model or genre ones (see Bathia, 1993; Hyland, 2000, 2003, 2006; Sidaway, 2006; Swales, 1990, 2004 for work on genre).

While process writing is concerned with activities such as drafting, editing, teacher's or peers' feedback, encouragement of expression of individuality, use of previous schemata, and writing fluency over accuracy (Flower & Hayes, 1977; Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012; White & Arndt, 1991), product writing is concerned with the rhetoric, content, organisation and linguistic features of written texts in order to replicate conventions and generate parallel texts (Steele, 1992; White, 1980).

There are contradictory views regarding which ESL writing teaching approach works best. Some studies and accounts have found process writing effective in improving students' writing abilities (Bello, 1997; Jarvis, 2002), whereas other studies have found genre writing more useful (Cheng, 2008; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Kongpetch, 2006). Other language professionals have found a combination of approaches the better option (Davies, 1988; Gabrielatos, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c).

A question could be posed about the effectiveness of the nature of knowledge acquired by students through these approaches when writing under exam conditions. There could be issues with the practicalities of re-drafting or using a model when sitting high-stakes proficiency tests. Thus, it is here where the PEE model could potentially serve as a practical tool to help IELTS students compose an essay that is cohesive and coherent in a relatively constrained period of time.

Methodology

Research design

It is hypothesised that the PEE model could benefit IELTS students' overall essay-composition performance. To test this hypothesis, teaching material based on the PEE model was designed and delivered over a period of eight weeks to a group of adult multilingual ESL students preparing for the IELTS exam in London, England.

The aim of this study was to investigate the application of the PEE model to essay composition following a case study approach (Denscombe, 2010; Freebody, 2006; Yin, 1994), with the view that this choice would enable the teacher-researcher to "[…] carry out an investigation where other [strategies] – such as experiments – [were] either not practicable or not ethically justifiable […]." (Bill, 2010, p. 11). That is, I felt that if control and experimental groups had been used within the same population, it would have been unprincipled from a teacher's point of view to deprive certain students of instruction that could have potentially been beneficial for the development of the participants' essay writing skills.

The study addressed three questions: Is the PEE model effective in improving students' IELTS essay-composition performance? If yes above, what area in particular does the PEE model help students with? What are the IELTS students' views on the usefulness of the PEE model after the instruction?

Research population

The IELTS preparation class employed in this study was held in a language centre in London, England. It was made up of twelve adult multilingual female ESL students between the ages of 21 and 32. All the students were first-time IELTS takers and the length and type of ESL instruction received prior to joining the study varied greatly. The sample for this study consisted of two adult females. The first student (hereafter referred to as JR) was originally from Latvia. She spoke Russian and Latvian as L1. The second student (hereafter referred to as AL) was originally from Germany. She spoke German as L1 and Polish and Russian as L2.

Data collection instruments

Essays and interviews were employed to collect data. Handwritten essays from the sampled students were collected at two stages—before and after the instruction. Students were given 40 minutes to write their essays on both occasions.

Although there are mixed views about using the same assessment instrument in a study before and after the instruction (Kozloff, 2014; Yuan-Shan & Shao-Wen, 2011), employing the same instrument was deemed appropriate because this would be an effective way of exploring potential changes e.g. lexical relations.

Semi-structured interviews were also implemented before and after the instruction.

Data analysis and interpretation

The framework for analysing the essays was based on the IELTS band descriptors for coherence and cohesion and task response (IELTS, 2013). Comments on essays were also supported by analyses of coherence and cohesion

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in line with Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and McCarthy's (1991) concepts to pinpoint specific examples of progression or regression regarding references, conjunctive relations, lexical chains, and thematic patterns.

Interviews were implemented and recorded. Students' interviews were then transcribed and analysed employing a relational analysis of proximity of concepts (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, pp. 76-87). The proximity of relationships between concepts was based on matters such as strength (i.e. weak or strong relationship) and connotation (i.e. positive or negative association).

Data collection stages

In week one, the pre-instruction IELTS-related essay was implemented. Students wrote an essay on the topic of 'views on engaging children in paid work,' with a minimum of 250 words, in 40 minutes, without any aids. The pre-instruction interviews were also planned and implemented.

In week two, initial essays were prepared and analysed for cohesion and coherence to assess students' composition skills before the instruction. The initial interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded, and analysed. The analysis of data was the basis to inform the content included in the subsequent instruction. A crucial aspect here was to carry out the interviews after the students had written their initial essays, to avoid giving them clues as to what a well-written essay should entail.

In weeks three through seven, three workshops incorporating the PEE model were designed and implemented. These workshops were mainly based on the PEE model, but also included elements of thematic patterns, how to introduce ideas in essays (Jakeman & McDowell, 1999), essay question types in IELTS, and general essay planning strategies. These workshops were incorporated into the IELTS preparation course and were not delivered as separate sessions.

In week eight, students rewrote the pre-instruction essay under the same conditions as in week one, without looking at the original piece of writing.

Essays from the two case studies were prepared and analysed. In the same week, the post-instruction interviews were planned and implemented. These were also transcribed, coded, and analysed.

Findings

Case study 1

The findings of this case study appeared to suggest that the PEE model was seemingly effective in improving JR's IELTS-essay composition performance, in particular in the area of cohesion and coherence. This was identified in both her essay analyses and interviews. For example, JR's initial essay in week one (appendix A) showed that although she had used paragraphs correctly, a clear central theme had not been presented adequately in each paragraph. The themes introduced in paragraphs seemed random and unrelated to one another, which made the information look rather incoherent and with a lack of overall progression, e.g. "Beside of that to get married for money is illegal, you can be fined or punished – getting to the prison." (lines 10-12), something that JR also seemed to recognise in her post-instruction interview

> "[…] here in the initial essay it's just something that I don't know what I'm trying to say, I don't understand myself."

There was a tendency to include irrelevant details in JR's initial essay and the use of further clarifications and/or concrete examples to support themes was non-existent. This was deemed as a weakness in terms of cohesion and coherence in her essay analysis, which she also put forward in her post-instruction interview

> "[…] in the first one, when I was writing I didn't explain the meaning, so I did a mess through the whole essay […] because I haven't used any words and it wasn't... the first one... it wasn't... uhm... perfect, I mean (untranscribable) no any cohesion and coherence […]"

Regarding lexical cohesion, 12% of words entered into lexical relations in JR's initial essay, as shown in table one below.

By contrast, JR's final essay in week eight (appendix B) showed that her attempt to apply the PEE model in various sections of her text, i.e. in the second, third, and fourth paragraphs (lines 7-15, 16-21 and 22-29 respectively) seemed to give her overall argument better organisation, progression, and clarity e.g. [POINT] "…understand the value of money…" (lines 7-8), [EXPLANATION] "… have an idea how hard parents are working to get money" (lines 11-12), [EXAMPLE] "… instead of asking for an Iphone or Ipad […] ask for a cheaper electronic device." (lines 12-15). This seeming improvement in the cohesion and coherence of her final essay was something JR also agreed with in her post-instruction interview

"[…] in the second I used the PEE model to create my new essay. […] I read it again and everything is clear for me. […] Uhm… argument, I really...uhm... I put a point, I explain it and did put in examples."
"Interviewer: Right. So out of the four... sort of [IELTS] descriptors, which one do you feel the PEE model has helped you the most with?
JR: Coherence and cohesion."

Regarding lexical cohesion, 18% of words formed lexical strings in JR's final essay, as shown in table two below.

The findings of this case study suggested that JR found the PEE model particularly useful in

regard to the clarity that can be added to an IELTS-related essay, as articulated in her post-instruction interview

"Yes, I do feel that it is useful […] because it is, well... you need to write your essay clearly and that makes the essay look clearly. I mean, you always need to uhm... explain what you meaning, you cannot leave just... you cannot say 'A' without saying the 'B' after"

Case study 2

Once again, the findings of this case study appeared to suggest that the PEE model was to some extent effective in improving AL's IELTS-essay composition performance in terms of cohesion and coherence. This was also identified in both the essay analyses and interviews. For instance, AL's initial essay in week one (appendix C) showed that although she had presented relevant ideas and her argument was explicit, the information and ideas had not been arranged coherently and there was no clear organisation, progression, linking, or flow in the response due to the fact that she had written a single clustered paragraph. Her whole essay seemed rather hectic, difficult to read, and it was difficult to determine where the breaks between main ideas were as shown in this excerpt:

[…] Children should go to school. If they can learn something by doing another activity for some time

Table 1. Lexical Relations Initial Essay Case Study 1

Numbers refer to lines in the essay. Ties between items are classification unless otherwise indicated with X (expectancy). This analysis is by no means exhaustive.
people (2) – children (3) – parents (4, 8) – children (9, 21) – mother (27) – mothers (29) – children (32) = 9
to get married for money (10) – illegal (11) – fined-punished-prison (12) – risk (6) = 6
money (7, 11, 19, 31)- economy-inflation (16) – selling (8, 19, 20) = 9

Table 2. Lexical Relations Final Essay Case Study 1

Numbers refer to lines in the essay. Ties between items are classification unless otherwise indicated with expectancy (X). This analysis is by no means exhaustive.
children (2, 17, 22, 30) – kids (5, 10, 21, 27) – youngsters (7, 16, 36, 38)- parents (27, 35, 37) = 15
payment (1) – work (2, 5, 31, 34) – (X) paying (4)–money (8, 9, 12, 28, 33) – (X) spend (9) – working (12) – getting paid (30) = 14
Iphone (13) – Ipad (13) – Christmas gift (14) – electronic device (15) = 4
knowledge (16) – skills (18) – cleaning-washing (19) – experience (21, 25) = 6
life (17) – upbringing (20) – future (21, 24) – adult life (29) = 5
responsible (23, 27, 35) = 3

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after school – why not? But never should the work be a replacement for school or take too many hours a day. Also it should not be a one-sided routine work, because this would lack the children the possibility to try out many different activities as they should in order to develop well. There is nothing to say against showing children different types of work in order to prepare them for their later life. But this should happen according to their age, and it will not necessarily be a good thing, if the child is not prepared enough to understand the aim of the activity. A child has no chance to understand […] (lines 19-31)

This was something that AL also seemed to recognise in her post-instruction interview:

[…] in the first essay I just wrote from the beginning to the end more or less in one paragraph […] I didn't structure the main body of the text that well, uhm... I didn't...erm... structure my thoughts that well into different arguments. It was more like...erm... just writing in the way I was thinking.

Regarding lexical cohesion, 14% of words entered into lexical relations in AL's initial essay, as shown in Table 3 below.

On the other hand, AL's final essay in week eight (appendix D) showed that her effort to apply the PEE model in various sections of her text, i.e. in the second, fourth, and fifth paragraphs (lines 6-15, 22-29 and 30-36 respectively) seemed to result in a clearer, more structured and more logically organised response e.g. [POINTS] "… gain professional skills […] learn about how the job market works and how difficult it can be to earn money" (lines 8-11), [EXAMPLE] "… a child helps

his or her parents in the shop…" (lines 13-15). This seeming improvement in the cohesion and coherence of her final essay was something AL also agreed with in her post-instruction interview:

Interviewer: "OK, and do you see that model, the PEE model, applied in any of your two essays, either the initial or final essay?
AL: "Yes, I applied it; I tried my best to apply it in the second one, in the final essay."
Interviewer: "OK. Now, during the teaching sessions of the past few weeks we have looked at the IELTS criteria for marking essays which includes task completion, cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. Do you think that the PEE model has helped you improve in any of these areas?
AL: "Yes. Certainly with cohesion and coherence."
Interviewer: "Cohesion and coherence (echoing answer). Could you elaborate on that a bit more? I mean, what... in which way has the model helped you?"
AL: "Well... structure my argument and make the text more readable (mispronounced), easier to read."

She seemed to elaborate on improvements of cohesion and coherence related to the structure of her final essay:

"You can see already from the layout that it's better structured. I have other paragraphs with empty lines in between, as you recommended me, and yes... I thought much more about the structure and about the paragraphs […]"
"[…] in the second one I thought more about structure, and... so in the second one everything is more simple, I think. So I really had only these three or four arguments and not much more,

Table 3. *Lexical Relations Initial Essay Case Study 2*

Numbers refer to lines in the essay. Ties between items are classification unless otherwise indicated with expectancy (X). This analysis is by no means exhaustive.
children (1, 9, 13, 15, 16, 19, 24, 26, 34, 39, 41) – child (2, 6, 29, 31)–household's (5) – families (9) – parents (11, 41) – household (32) – adult (33) = 21
(X) forced to work (1) – labour (2, 7, 32) – work (3, 4, 9, 18, 21, 23, 27, 35) – (X) make a living (12) – activity (31)–money (5, 9) – income (5, 33) – resources (12, 13) – financial support (38) – economy (41) = 22
children (1)–(X) play (15) – (X) learn (16, 19) – educated (16) – (X) develop talents (17) – school (19, 21, 22, 34) – (X) doing activity (20) – activities (25) – (X) develop (25) – teachers (38) – education (39) – institutions (37) = 16

whereas in the first essay I tried to give as much information as possible."

Regarding lexical cohesion, 15% of words formed lexical strings in AL's final essay, as shown in Table 4 below.

The findings of this case study also suggested that AL found the PEE model particularly useful in regard to the clarity that can be added to an IELTS-related essay, as articulated in her post-instruction interview

> Interviewer: "OK. And now, comparing the two essays, do you see any differences in the way you developed your ideas in both essays?"
> AL: "Yes, of course. As I said, I thought about the structure of the single argument much more. I really tried to have just one reason or argument in one paragraph...
> Interviewer: "... that's in the final essay..."
> AL: "Yes, in the final. So that's a big difference. My thoughts in the final one were much clearer."

The findings here also suggested that although AL found the PEE model useful in regard to the structure that can be given to an IELTS-related essay, she considered the model a further writing tool or choice rather than a necessity"

> AL: "The PEE model? Yes, it is definitely very useful... erm... especially...erm... as a preparation for the IELTS exam, I think. It helped me to think more about how I write, how I structure an argument, and it made me try to find out more about it and to read more about it, and of course it doesn't cover everything possible but it's a very good start, I think."
> "[…] my final is much better than the initial essay and I have a different approach now to writing...erm... I

know that these three things PEE- Point, Explanation, Example - I don't have to apply them, it's just a possibility to help me but it works really well."

Common occurrences in both case studies

In their initial interviews, both students articulated explicit awareness of some elements as part of well-written essays (e.g. generic structure). However, this knowledge had not seemed to materialise in their initial essays.

In their initial interviews, both students assessed planning as an important stage in the essay writing process, but both failed to make a written plan for their initial essays. On the other hand, after having worked on planning strategies during the instruction, both students made written plans for their final essays. This seemed to improve the organisation of their ideas.

In both cases, the structure appeared to improve in the final essays, it showed similarities, i.e. the body of the essay sandwiched between an introductory and a concluding paragraph. Although both students had received instruction on ways to organise writing through thematic patterns, only JR employed a split thematic pattern in her final essay.

The lexical relations in both final essays appeared to be longer and more frequent, suggesting a stronger focus on themes and a more adequate selection of lexis.

Discussion

These findings suggest that Cole's (2013) PEE model is seemingly effective in improving the cohesion and coherence of students' essays, but such

Table 4. *Lexical Relations Final Essay Case Study 2*

Numbers refer to lines in the essay. Ties between items are classification unless otherwise indicated with expectancy (X). This analysis is by no means exhaustive.
child (1, 13, 23, 23, 40, 45)–children (5, 6, 18, 28, 30, 37, 43) – childhood (25) – parents (14, 18) – families (17, 44) – family (17, 18) – (X) supporting (44) – (X) supported (46) = 22
labour (1) – paid work (4, 38) – work (7, 23) – job (10) – workers (28) – low paid jobs (34) – worker (34) – career (36) – market (10) – (X) earn money (11) – shop (14) – (X) buying and selling (15) – budget (17) – money (19) – Penny (21) – companies (29) – (X) gain professional skills (8) = 19
society (13) – countries (16, 27) – India (20) – people (41) – country (42) – government (42) = 7
childhood (25)–(X) playing (26) – (X) develop (26) – school (31, 35, 39)–education (32, 33) – (X) play (39) – play (39) – development (40, 41) – educated (41) – education system (45) = 14

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improvements may be unlikely to occur solely as a result of the application of such a model, and further work on other elements like essay planning strategies, essay structure, and lexical relations may be needed to truly see advances in cohesion and coherence.

These findings also suggest that there are inconsistencies between the theoretical knowledge students have and what they actually put into practice when performing under pressure. This could simply be a reflection of Messick's (1996) recognition that students get affected by negative washback resulting from writing under exam conditions.

These findings seem to echo the belief that writing in general is a never-ending process, and writing essays, as Golder and Coirier (1996) and Gleason (1999) argue, does pose high cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic demands onto EFL students. Findings also seem to add to the ideas previously put forward by Davies (1988), in which in order to master intricate genres such as essays, students need to be given practice in subtleties occurring at both top-down and bottom-up levels of writing.

One implication of the PEE model for ESL teaching is that although the model seems to have a more positive than negative effect on the essay-writing performance of IELTS students, such a model should not be portrayed as a replacement of other writing approaches. On the contrary, it should serve as a complementary tool embedded in a wider teaching ideology.

The findings of this research should be treated with caution due to the very nature of the study. These findings are indeed particular to the context in which this study was carried out and should not be considered as common occurrences that apply to all IELTS contexts.

A number of recommendations could be considered in future studies. First, in line with Archibald's (2002) research, higher quality assessment material could help to avoid potential issues with reliability of data. Second, the roles of teacher and researcher could be assigned to different people to help the objectivity of the study, i.e. marking could be carried out by external trained IELTS assessors. Third, the instruction relating to the PEE model could be imparted in sessions separate from the regular instruction to give essay-writing training a greater focus. Last, in order to provide further evidence of application and impact of what has been learned through instruction (recommended by Boston University, 2013; Heriot-Watt University, 2014), students could write a third essay sometime after the instruction to assess their ability to produce a coherent-cohesive essay through the application of the PEE model.

New directions for future research could look at: the application of the PEE model using a quantitative approach with IELTS preparation groups from different institutions; or the extent to which the model is effective with learners at specific bands within the IELTS scale—to expand on Green and Weir's (2002) findings that students within the lower spectrum of the IELTS bands tend to progress more than those within higher ones; or the application of the PEE model to oral argumentation in debates in general or within the IELTS speaking module.

Conclusion

Based on two case studies, this study investigated the application of the PEE model to essay composition in a multi-lingual IELTS preparation class. The findings of this study suggest that the PEE model is to some extent effective in improving the essay composition performance of IELTS students, in particular in the area of cohesion and coherence, as identified in both the essay analyses and interviews. Students find the PEE model useful in regard to the clarity and structure that the model seems to add to their essays. However, the PEE model only appears to be a relatively small but seemingly positive contribution to the bottom-up essay writing practice IELTS students ought to be given, at least until they understand and master more complex essay-writing argumentation skills required at tertiary level such as Ramsay, Maier, and Price's (2010) AER model.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Initial Essay Case Study 1 (over two pages)

Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

> *In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.*
>
> *What are your opinions on this?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

In my opinion this is completely wrong, people should never do that. Obviosly, children are not responsible for the decision, nowadays, parents are the only one who is making them.

They think they are going to win money easy, but that is not right, parents actually are selling their own children, which is sad.

Beside of that to get married for money is illegal, you can be fined or punished - getting to the prison. Taking that risk I would never adviced, it doesn't worth it.

As for as I know, all over the world economiy is going down, inflation is increasing and people hardly can survive, they getting blind and trying to find an easiest way how to earn some money, either they are selling themselves or they are selling their children.

I had never gone through this kind of experience and I would never do, but I did heard that mostly Europenian countries having a problems with that.

If I would be a mother I would 100% think before making this decision. The mothers who had done that don't deserve any forgiveness I would say that no any money can make you happy as your children are.

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Appendix B – Final Essay Case Study 1 (over two pages)

Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

> *In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.*
>
> *What are your opinions on this?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

There are mixed views regarding the payment to children for some kind of work. It is generally accepted that this is right, however others consider opposite. I tend to think that paying kids for work is paramount for three reasons.

Firstly, youngsters would understand the value of money. In other words they will have their own money to spend whatever they desire. Or also kids will ~~understand parents how hard parents are working to get money for~~ have an idea how hard parents are working to get money. In that case, instead of asking for an iphone or ipad as a ~~t~~ a Christmas gift they will ask for a cheaper electronic device.

Secondly, knowledge how to work will help youngsters later in life. By this I mean children have a chance to learn different skills such as ~~work at home~~ cleaning, washing during their upbringing. It ~~would~~ will be a positive influence for kids future ~~life~~ experience.

Lastly, children who get paid for some kind of work become responsible. They have an idea how their life will look like in future, they will have enough experience to live alone. By this I mean, they have no need of parents support. Kids will become responsible how to save money, ~~how to create savings~~ ~~at~~ and leave an adult life.
~~children who are~~
~~Overall, I getting getting paid for some kind~~
~~of work~~

Overall, I consider that getting paid to children for some kind of work is absolutely right because they will know how valuable money is they will learn ~~t~~ how to do work and they also

will be responsible. I would advice parents to engage their youngsters to work it would help parents as much as it would help youngsters.

Appendix C - Initial Essay Case Study 2 (one page)

Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

> *In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.*
>
> *What are your opinions on this?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Children should not be forced to work. Not only is this my personal opinion, but also is child labour forbidden today in many countries. When I use the word "work" here, I mean work, that will be paid and thus ~~contemplate~~ ~~money to the~~ ~~relatively big part of the~~ household's income. Just last week I saw a photography exhibition about child labour ~~...~~, which was common ~~...~~ still 100 years ago. And even today there are many countries, where children have to work for money, because their families are too poor, or because there is noone who cares for them. Sometimes it is understandable that parents try to use the recources they have to make a living, and in a way their children are a recource. But just because it is understandable it does not mean it is a good thing. Children should be given the possibility to play and to learn. Children should ~~...~~ be educated in different directions, so that they can develop their talents and chose the right field of work according to their abilities and interests later in life. Children should go to school. If they can learn something by doing another activity for some time after school — why not? But never should the work be a replacement for school or take too many hours a day. Also it should not be a one-sided routine work, because this would lack the children the possibility, to try out many different activities as they should in order to develop well. There is nothing to say against showing children different types of work in order to prepare them for their later life. But this should ~~...~~ according to their age, and it will ~~...~~ not necessarily be a good thing, if the child is not prepared enough to understand the ~~...~~ aim of the activity. A child has no chance to understand it is used for something like the labour market or household income as long as no adult explains it to him. That's why children should have the right to go to school everywhere in the world, and to not work. Also, of course, it should be one of the most important goals of politics of all countries, to provide the needed institutions, infrastructure, specialists (teachers and so on) and financial support for the education of their children. This will, without any doubt, improve the development of the country, and it will be the best for children, parents and the economy.

✓¹ shocking   ✓² for example in New York

Appendix D - Final Essay Case Study 2 (over two pages)

Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

> *In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.*
>
> *What are your opinions on this?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Child labour is a very controversial topic on which there are many different opinions. In this essay I would like to ~~explain~~ explain the most important arguments concerning the pros and contras of paid work when engaging children.

There is undoubtedly one huge advantage, when children are introduced to different kinds of work. They get the chance to gain professional skills early which they might need at a later stage of life again. At the same time they learn about how the job market works and how difficult it can be to earn money. Because of that knowledge they might have a more realistic picture of the society. If a child helps, for example, his or her parents in the shop, he or she will understand the process of buying and selling.

In poorer countries, this might be a necessity in many families, when the family budget is not big enough. If the children help the parents, the family will have more money. I have seen examples of that in India, where on some days there is just not

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On the other hand, we should not forget how easily a child can be misused for work. A child has no chance to understand that it might be lacked of its childhood and ~~and~~ does not get the time for playing it should have in order to develop in all directions. It happens in many countries still today that children are used as workers ~~for~~ big companies.

Connected to this is also the fact that the children can not go to school at the same time ~~thisto~~ and don't get a good education. This creates a circle, because without education they will stay in low paid jobs for their entire life. ~~The~~ A ~~that~~ worker who did not finish school has little prospects of ~~tttbbcy~~ making a successful career.

In my opinion, children should not be involved in paid work, if this means that they ~~can't~~ ~~get~~ go to school and play enough ~~x~~. Play ~~x~~ is essential for the development of a child, and well educated people are essential for ~~the~~ development of a country. Every government should focus on how to ensure children get what they need, which means supporting poor families and improving the education system. Every child deserves to be supported.

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