An Outlook of *Headways* Test: A Locally-Designed Online Test of English Language Proficiency for Indonesian Students

Sugeng Susilo Adi[1], Willibrordus Surya[2]
Department of Language Education, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya[1]
Founder of PT Heksa Adhitek Wayatama
& English Teacher at State Vocational High School 3 Denpasar[2]

sugengadi@ub.ac.id[1];wahanabahasa@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

The orientation of English competency tests in Indonesia so far still relies on tests administered by foreign products such as TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, or other tests designed by foreign nations. Therefore, a local Indonesian company named PT Heksa Adhitek Wayatama located in Bali is trying to develop an online English competency test. The test is called HedwayTest. There are several advantages in this test because Headway Test not only provides tests but also training and other added values. The test has gone through a development stage that begins with research, expert assessment, and field trials. This article tries to explain the features and characteristics of tests which include test content, test procedures, conversions, and scores. In addition, this article also explains how to add value and use tests in Indonesia, especially in the province of Bali.

Keywords: *online, English, proficiency, test, value*

Introduction

Currently, technology made by humans is growing. One of them is Society 5.0 which was initiated by the Japanese state. This concept allows us to use modern science-based (AI, Robot, IoT) for human needs with the aim that humans can live comfortably. To answer the challenges of the Society 5.0 era in the world of education, 21st century life skills or better known as 4C (Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration) are needed. Therefore, the development of science and technology needs to be balanced with the readiness of human resources to be able to compete in creating application innovations or at least be able to use existing technology effectively, efficiently and productively. In this case, English language skills taught in schools have a strategic role in accelerating the use of technology for students.

Technology as a medium for preparing graduates in welcoming Society 5.0 and the need for provide digital skills between schools, universities, lecturers, teacher, and infrastructure has been evident nowadays (Archiyesa, 2021). One of the domains of technology roles in education is online assessment. Online system is effective for giving assignments and quizzes to students (Efriana, 2021). Gazal & Alkattan, 2020, in Mahyoob (2020): the challenges were communications, assessment, online education experience, technology use tools, time management, anxiety, and coronavirus disease stress.

E-learning classes for English language teaching and learning is a necessary model that should be applied in this Society 5.0 era. Setyowati, Ratini, Hastuti (2021, 301) says that E-Learning class is not only students' problems but also teachers' problems. Teacher must adapt harder, they must think about the material, proper media and methods that can minimize the usage of internet access and proper assignments for the students. Some subjects can be done using

Google class room or other media but for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning need video conference such as Zoom or Google meets to have direct interaction.

Therefore, the next features of education are about the implementation of Information Technology and Communication (ICT) in learning. By implementing ICT in education, the goals of teaching and learning can be obtained more easily. Then other advantages are teachers can give online materials for students and assess the students' work through website or application. Due to the reasons, the lecturers are also urged to replace the old method of teaching with the modern one that is by implementing ICT in the teaching and learning process. (Yoestara, et al, 2020, 1).

The development of online assessment resources has a number of advantages over offline, pen and paper, tasks. They can be easily marked, provide instant feedback and can be taken repeatedly by students in order to assess and improve performance. Also, online tests can be taken unsupervised in students own time (Peat & Franklin, 2021: 2).

Headway Test: Indonesian Designed Online English Proficiency Assessment
HeadWay is a standard created as the main service to support education and the efforts to improve the quality of human resources. HTS is embarking on a testing service product called 'Headways Test' which has distinct competency areas and or components, including the levels.

Headways Testing Service is a division of Headways Inc. that was established as an educational institution to house practitioners, academics, and business management who are dedicated to contributing to the development of test models and materials in accordance with current needs as the primary alternative for educational support services and professional development. Headways Test runs an adaptive system that varies the test questions according to the proficiency level of the candidate. Thus, it requires shorter time and returns more accurate proficiency measurement than conventional tests.

Test of English Proficiency (henceforth TEP) is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers. TEP displays students TOEIC reference score and TOEFL Reference level, which can be used as a cross-referencing tool to check students learning outcomes. TEP is online based, scoring is done on Realtime and the score is displayed immediately upon completion of the test.

We recommend Headways Test to people who are too busy to go to a test site for TOEIC or TOEFL, People who study PC-English conversation program and want to check their progress regularly, For English placement test, People who go for job interviews on short notice and who want to impress their potential employers with their English proficiency but have no time for TOEIC or TOEFL.

Headways TestTM runs an adaptive system that varies the test questions according to the proficiency level of the candidate. Thus, it requires shorter time and returns more accurate proficiency measurement than conventional tests

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (henceforth CEFR) was published by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe in 2001. Headways Test–TEP, is a standardized test model with competency assessment that refers to CEFR A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 English Basic User Independent User Proficient User Headways TestTM score is displayed immediately upon completion of

the test. The scores are saved as history and can be browsed anytime on the Internet. Headways Test displays students TOEIC or TOEFL reference score, which can be used as a cross-referencing tool to check students learning outcomes

Headways Test is online-based. With Internet access, the test can be taken anytime, anywhere. Students can check students' proficiency level at students' own convenience. Since it came into full operation on March 2010, the accumulated total number of Headways Test candidates is 30,451 as of the end of April 2021.

Technology Support of Headway Test
The test takers are using Computer/Laptop that has an adequate internet connection and the internet quota is sufficient and the internet access speed is not less than 2 Mbps. Make sure students device hardware/software is working properly, including with audio speakers and student's browser is updated (recommended use: Chrome/Mozilla) While taking/conducting the test, students are not allowed to open a browser or other application. Our system will notice and give warnings when activities outside the procedure occurred. Make sure students choose a place and a supportive environment to do the test. Students need a Test Code (Authorization Code or TOKEN) to register/take the test. Our administrator will inform or send it via SMS. The Test Code (Authorization Code or TOKEN) is valid at certain times only.

We followed the procedure recommended in the Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR for Languages. 1. Familiarization (The project members and panelists familiarize themselves with CEFR and the relating procedure) 2. Specification (Content analysis of TEP test items and its relevance to CEFR) 3. Standardization Training & Benchmarking (Train panelists to develop a sense of CEFR levels) 4. Standard Setting (Panelists relate a set of TEP items to CEFR levels and decide borderlines between levels) 5. Validation (Analysis and reflection of the overall process and results). CEFR is now acknowledged not only in Europe but also in many other parts of the world as one of the international standards of foreign language proficiency scale. Language teaching practitioners use CEFR as a reference for language curriculum design, material development, and comparison of different examinations such as TOEIC and TOEFL. CEFR is also helpful for hiring and training new employees.

Headways Test consists of Listening and Reading Section that covers 100 numbers of question of 6 parts. Students have 60 minutes to work on the test students will see a picture and hear four statements. The statements will NOT be appeared on the screen. Therefore, students must listen carefully. students will hear a question spoken in English, followed by three responses, also spoken in English. students will hear a short talks or dialog involving two or more people. The conversation script is not printed; therefore, students must listen carefully Under each incomplete sentence are four words or phrases. Students must decide which option best completes the sentence. Under each gap of incomplete paragraph are four words or phrases. Students must decide which option best completes the sentences in accordance with the context. This part of the test consists of a number of brief readings. Following each reading are several questions with four possible answers.

Scores on the TEP (Test of English Proficiency) Listening and Reading test are determined by the number of correct answers, which is converted to a scaled score. The score report provides listening, reading and total scaled scores. The total scaled score is derived from adding the two scaled scores together. The scores are also converted with TOEFL and TOEIC. The conversation has been conducted by validation tests. The figure 1 below describes the conversion.

Figure 1. Headway Test conversion

Headways Test asked the candidates to complete a simple questionnaire before the test. The relationship with the Headways Test total score is examined by computing the past TOEFL or TOEIC scores (self-reported) taken from questionnaires voluntarily answered by past candidates of the Headways Test conducted between 1 Jan 2010 - 31 Dec 2010 when they sat for the test. If an unrealistic TOEFL or TOEIC score was given for the questionnaire at the Headways Test test, such data were excluded from our analysis. Data that is thought to consist of TOEFL PBT or ITP scores has been converted to TOEIC scores according to the TOEFL Total Score Comparison Table published by ETS. For candidates who took multiple HeadWay Test, only the latest results were used. In the end, the analysis was performed based on 1,224 sets of data.

Headways Test of English Proficiency Preparation Strategies
Our team has outlined 3 strategies to help with students TEP preparation. These strategies and tips offer a valuable approach to help students prepare for the exam. Students' success will depend on how well students prepare for the exam. The strategies below will provide students with the key elements to prepare for students TEP preparation and to progress quickly and improve students' grades.
1. Get to know everything about the exam,
   - How the questions are linked
   - the time students need to answer them.
   - their instructions.
   - the themes they tackle
2. Set students the right goals. This will give students an initial idea of how many more points students need to reach students target. To do so, students have two options:
   - working on students' weaknesses and/or excelling on students' strengths
   - Set students self the right goals •
   - Evaluate student's level. •

- ▪ Work out how many points students still need to "pass" students' test. •
- ▪ Identify which exercises students can gain the most points on.
3. Stick to an efficient methodology make sure students set up a proper working methodology. This methodology should be based upon the strategy students have adopted. A good preparation methodology is structured around two things: Establishing a schedule, and finding high-quality studying materials.

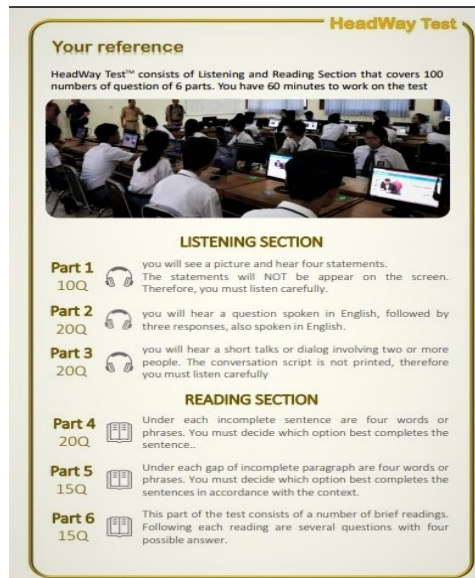The Figure 2 below describes the instruction procedure for the test takers.

Figure 2. Headway Test Instruction

Adequate English language skills will provide wider opportunities for students themselves in the future. What's more, Bali, which is a world tourism destination, really needs the support of human resources who are able to speak English with minimal proficiency. In the policy and Vocational Development Program, Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, it is stated that mastery of the English language is a very valuable long-term competitiveness in the era of the global economy, companies have diverted large investments from English language training for staff to a more efficient and effective recruitment selection process using valid and objective standards. Related to this and as a form of participation in efforts to improve the quality of human resources in Bali, Warmadewa College took the initiative to provide educational support services, namely the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) for high school/vocational and equivalent level students in the province of Bali with the Potential Development Program. It is for the general and vocational high school students in an effort to support the quality of education in the province of bali through standardization of English language proficiency using the Headway Test.

As an effort to participate in realizing the Vision of the Bali Provincial Education Office, namely; First, creating Intelligent and Competitive People Based on Nangun Sat Kerthi Loka Bali. It is for supporting the school's vision, mission and work programs related to its efforts to produce excellent and professional graduates. Thirdly, it is giving appreciation regarding students' English skills with the Headways test certification.

The benefits for learners are:

1. New experience with international standard English test model.
2. Motivation for learning achievement through Headways Test certification
3. Encouraging competitiveness, as well as for further education or taking an English test with international credentials.

For teachers, Headway Test possibly students to know the students' learning achievement objectively, and as feedback to be used in determining the learning model that suits the needs of students. For Institutions/Schools: 1. Mapping of student learning achievement at the school, village, sub-district, district to the whole of Bali, which is useful as a reference in making new policies and programs.

Headways Test has been used by more than 28,000 participants, ranging from students, students, employees and professionals. The test results or certification reports are automated and recorded by the cloud system, so it will be difficult to engineer or falsify. Educational institutions and companies that have carried out the Headways Test continue to grow significantly.

Add Value
As a form of our appreciation for the success of the leadership of the institution/institution in developing and implementing standardization with the Headways Test, we provide an Added Value Program, including:
Applicable terms and conditions
Headways Rewards As an appreciation to the Institution which is determined based on the number of participants and the achievement of the average score of the Headways Test. This program applies to self-funded institutions.
Educational Scholarships
Education fee assistance for outstanding students who have followed the standardized Headways Test, with the aim of helping to reduce the need for education costs.
Headways Contest
It is an annual program that aims to provide more motivation in developing the spirit of learning while increasing self-confidence, through organizing competitions/contests covering the fields of English and computers. And it is possible that more fields will be added.
Online Headways Class
It is an e-Learning "RUBIC" Online learning with the name "RUBIC" or the Smart People Learning Room is dedicated to facilitating the realization of Learning Freedom for students who already have a Headways Test certificate wherever they are. It's free, it's not paid to access the material available on the platform and is guided by professional and experienced speakers/resources in their fields.

Conclusion
The use of digital technology in education, especially in the form of online tests, will be an alternative to the conventional-based assessment system. As if, so far Indonesia still relies on the test system developed by foreign countries, then in the future it is time for the Indonesian people to be trusted to independently develop an online test model for English language competence. This will provide two benefits at once, firstly, the test model developed by the nation itself will be cheaper when compared to using only the test developed by a foreign nation. Second, it will encourage the Indonesian people to innovate creatively and eventually create a qualified English competency test. In this article, Headway Test has been trusted by the Bali provincial authorities to test the English competency of vocational students in Bali. Until 2021, the number of students who have taken the Headway Test has reached more than

28,000 students. Headway Test is advised to continue to develop its test model so that it can be aligned with tests from abroad.

References

Archiyesa, C.A. (2021). *Education Strategy towards Digital Competences in Welcoming Society 5.0*.https://budi.rahardjo.id/files/courses/2020/DL-%2023201905013-%20Report%20Rev%201-%20Chyntia%20Agni.pdf

Astri Yulia, Husin N.A., Faiz I., (2019). Channeling Assessments in English Language Learning via Interactive Online Platforms. *Studies in English Language and Education*, *6*(2), 228-238.

Efriana, L. (2021). Problems of Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic in EFL Classroom and the Solution. *JELITA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature.* *2*(1), 38-47. P-ISSN 2721-1096, E-ISSN 2721-1916

Fitriyah I. & Jannah M., (2021). Online Assessment Effect in EFL Classroom: An Investigation on Students and Teachers' Perceptions. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, *5*(2).

Köroğlu Z.C. (2021). Using Digital Formative Assessment to Evaluate EFL Learners' English Speaking Skills. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal.* ISSN 1692-5777. 22. 103-123.

Mahyoob, M. (2020). Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, *11*(4) 351-362. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.23

Peat M. & Franklin, S. (2021). Use of Online and Offline Formative and Summative Assessment Opportunities: Have They Had any Impact on Student Learning? *School of Biological Sciences*, The University of Sydney, Australia

Setyowati, R., Sopingi, Hastuti, I. (2021). Understanding on Online Assessments for EFL Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic (304-306). *2nd International Conference of Health, Science and Technology*

Si'arifah M., (2019). *Teachers' Online Assessment in English Language Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*. English Language Education Department Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Ukhrowiyah N.F., Nasihah M., & Pratawati F.M. (2021). Language Assessment in Online Learning: Challenges and Effective Strategies for ESP Classrooms. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching & Education*, *3*(1)

Yoestara M., Putri Z., Keumala, M., & Idami, Z. (2020). Pre-Service English Teachers' Perception towards Online. Assessment Method. *IJELR: International Journal of Education, Language and Religion*. *2*(2), 1-10. DOI: https://doi.org/10.35308/ijelr.v2i1.1933

Zhang C., Yan X., and Wang J. (2021). EFL Teachers' Online Assessment Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Changes and Mediating Factors. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 30.* 499–507.