Exploring Students' Perceptions on Wayground: A Next-Generation Platform for English Proficiency Test

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Abstract

The dynamic application of digital learning platforms, including innovative systems like Wayground, has significantly transformed the administration of English language tests such as the English Proficiency Test (EPT). As technology becomes increasingly integrated into educational environments, digital assessment tools are no longer optional but essential for supporting efficient and standardized testing practices. This study explores students' perceptions of Wayground, a next-generation online platform used to conduct the EPT at Politeknik Negeri Jember. Using a quantitative approach, data were gathered from 217 students across nine departments through structured questionnaires. The results indicate that most respondents appreciate Wayground for its practicality, efficiency, and engaging user interface. Although some minor technical challenges were identified, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with both the platform's features and its exam supervision services. Overall, Wayground is viewed as a reliable, accessible, and user-friendly platform with strong potential to enhance digital transformation in English language assessment. The future implementations of the English Proficiency Test should continue leveraging digital platforms like Wayground while simultaneously refining test content difficulty and strengthening technical and support infrastructures to ensure a more balanced, reliable, and equitable assessment experience for all participants.

Keywords: Wayground, English Proficiency Test, Students' Perceptions, Digital platform

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed educational practices across the globe, reshaping how learners access information, interact with content, and demonstrate their competencies. As digital natives, today's students have grown up surrounded by technology, giving them a unique familiarity with digital tools and a preference for interactive, online learning environments. Cilliers (2017) emphasizes that this generation thrives in technology-enhanced learning spaces that integrate continuous assessment and immediate feedback. This shift has made digital platforms not only complementary tools but essential components of modern pedagogy, particularly in language education (Prensky, 2001; Selwyn, 2016)

In the field of English language teaching, online learning and assessment systems have witnessed significant expansion. According to UNESCO (2023), more than 60% of higher education institutions worldwide now incorporate digital assessment in some form,

marking a notable increase compared to less than 30% a decade ago. Researchers have repeatedly highlighted the pedagogical benefits of this transformation. Segaran and Hashim (2022), as well as Redecker & Johannessen (2013), and also Gikandi et al. (2011) found that technology-based assessments enhance student engagement by offering multimodal input such as audio, video, and interactive question formats. Likewise, Şad and Özer (2019) demonstrated that online assessment environments promote authenticity and learner motivation, as students feel more comfortable using interfaces that resemble the digital tools encountered in their everyday activities.

Within higher education in Indonesia, the demand for efficient digital assessment systems continues to grow in response to increasing student populations and institutional commitments to digital transformation. Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbud, 2022) show that over 1.5 million tertiary students nationwide have participated in online assessments since the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the long-term integration of digital tools in academic evaluation. This transition is particularly significant for English proficiency assessment, which necessitates standardized, scalable, and reliable testing instruments (Bloxham, S., & Boyd, 2007; OECD, 2020; Stödberg, 2012). It is particularly significant to ensure validity and consistency across diverse learner populations.

The English Proficiency Test (EPT) plays a critical role in assessing students' abilities in reading, listening, vocabulary, and grammar. Traditionally, EPTs were administered through paper-based formats that required significant logistical support, manual grading, and extended processing time. Such methods often delayed feedback and limited opportunities for data-driven instructional planning. However, with the growth of digital platforms, online EPTs have emerged as more practical, equitable, and accessible alternatives. Wijayati et al. (2021), Burstein et al. (2004), and also Chapelle & Douglas (2006) argue that online English assessments reduce administrative burdens while increasing scoring accuracy through automated evaluation systems.

Wayground represents a digital innovation developed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment process through a user-friendly interface and integrated evaluation features. As a next-generation assessment platform, Wayground facilitates the administration of listening comprehension assessments, vocabulary analysis, and grammar testing, all of which are supported by automated scoring systems and immediate feedback mechanisms. These functionalities are consistent with global developments in computer-assisted language testing (CALT), which emphasize the importance of timely feedback in supporting learner achievement (Alderson, 2000; Chapelle, C. A., & Voss, 2017). In addition, Wayground provides real-time monitoring capabilities that allow instructors to observe student progress during assessments and maintain the integrity and security of the testing environment.

In several respects, Wayground exhibits functionalities comparable to other widely adopted educational technologies, including ProProfs, Quizizz, and Kahoot!. Darmawan et al. (2020) and Plass et al. (2015) argue that the interactive design features embedded in such platforms are effective in sustaining learner attention and promoting active participation during assessments. Furthermore, a study conducted by Collen (2021) revealed that 78% of language learners reported greater confidence when completing

digital assessments compared to traditional paper-based examinations, primarily due to increased familiarity with digital interfaces and reduced test-related anxiety. In line with these findings, Pramudita et al. (2023) emphasize that online assessment tools enhance student motivation and lower anxiety levels by offering a more dynamic, engaging, and less intimidating testing environment.

The relevance of digital assessment platforms such as Wayground extends beyond operational convenience, as they also support broader institutional and pedagogical objectives. The OECD (2020) emphasizes that digital assessment systems enable large-scale data collection, which can be utilized by educational institutions to enhance curriculum design and systematically monitor learning outcomes. Through automated analytics, educators are able to identify recurring error patterns, diagnose skill gaps, and design targeted intervention strategies more efficiently than is possible with conventional manual assessment methods. These advancements demonstrate the contribution of online platforms to more efficient, data-driven, and evidence-based language instruction (OECD, 2020; Siemens & Long, 2011).

In light of the accelerating pace of digital transformation in higher education, examining students' perceptions of Wayground as a medium for administering English Proficiency Tests becomes increasingly important. Learner perceptions play a critical role in determining not only the effectiveness of assessment practices but also students' performance, engagement, and acceptance of emerging technologies. Previous research has indicated that positive perceptions significantly enhance students' willingness to engage with digital assessment environments (Al-Fraihat et al., 2020). Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate students' perceptions of Wayground as an English proficiency testing platform at Politeknik Negeri Jember (Polije), with the aim of providing empirical evidence that may inform future platform development, institutional policy-making, and the broader implementation of digital assessment in language education.

Method

This research employed a quantitative descriptive approach, using questionnaires as the primary instrument to collect data on students' perspectives regarding the implementation of the English Proficiency Test (EPT) through Wayground. The participants consisted of 217 students representing nine departments at Politeknik Negeri Jember (Polije), including Engineering, Health, Language, Communication and Tourism, Animal Husbandry, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Production, Agribusiness Management, Information Technology, and Business. The participation of students from such diverse academic backgrounds ensured that the findings reflected a wide range of experiences and viewpoints regarding the digital testing platform.

The instrument used in this study contained 10 questions which were adapted from the previous study by Pramudita et al. (2023). The questions were distributed and collected online through Google Forms to facilitate ease of access and efficient data management. The questionnaire was composed of two primary types of items: five 4-point Likert-scale statements and five short-answer prompts, allowing the researchers to gather both structured and open-ended responses.

The Likert-scale section asked students to express their level of agreement toward the use of Wayground as the platform for the 2025 EPT, their perceived difficulty level

of the Listening section, and their perceived difficulty level of the Vocabulary and Grammar section. Students were also asked to evaluate the quality of service provided by the UPA Bahasa proctors during the test, particularly in terms of their ability to assist with directions and technical issues, as well as the overall quality of UPA Bahasa services throughout the entire testing process. These items enabled the researchers to obtain quantifiable data regarding students' satisfaction and perceptions of the testing system.

The short-answer section invited students to elaborate on the technical challenges they encountered while completing the EPT on Wayground and to suggest any alternative platforms they believed would be suitable for future implementations. Students were further encouraged to provide comments, criticisms, and recommendations for improving UPA Bahasa services. They were also asked to describe their preferred testing option if given a choice, along with any positive experiences or advantages they observed when using Wayground. These open-ended responses offered rich, detailed insights that complemented the numerical trends identified in the Likert-scale items.

All questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively. Responses from the Likert-scale statements were converted into percentage distributions to reveal general tendencies and dominant patterns across the participant population. Meanwhile, the short-answer responses were examined thematically to identify recurring ideas, concerns, highlights, and suggestions. This combined analytical approach allowed the study to capture both the measurable and the expressive dimensions of student perceptions, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of their experiences with the EPT implementation through Wayground.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of students' overall perception of the English Proficiency Test (EPT) implementation through Wayground demonstrates a predominantly positive response.

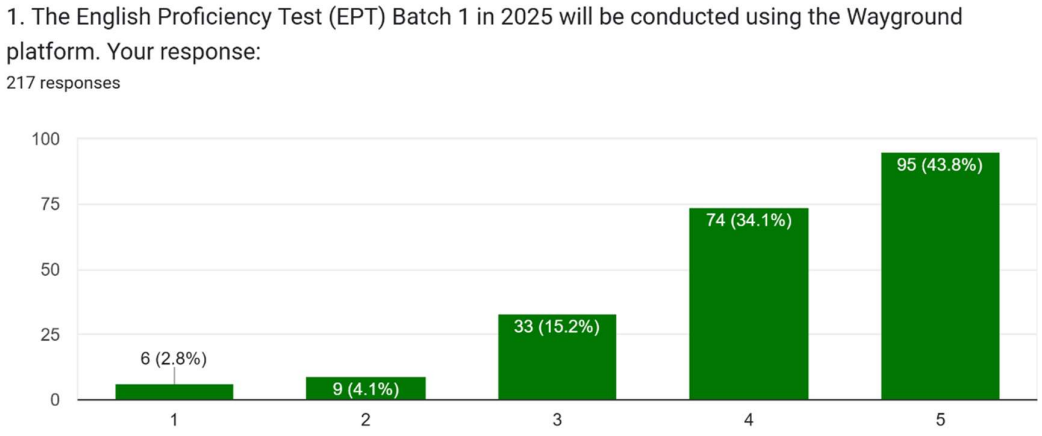


Figure 1. Result of Question Number 1

The finding reveals that a large majority of respondents expressed favorable views toward the digital testing system, with most indicating agreement or strong agreement. Specifically, 77.9% of the students believed that conducting the EPT via Wayground was effective, practical, and beneficial. This strong positive response suggests that the platform met students' expectations in terms of usability and performance. These results are consistent with the work of Segaran and Hashim (2022), who found that online assessment platforms contribute to improved engagement and a more confident learning environment among digital-native learners. The alignment of student perceptions with previous literature indicates that Wayground successfully provided a reliable and user-friendly medium for test delivery.

Preferences regarding test formats further reinforce students' positive reception of digital testing. An overwhelming proportion of the participants favored completing the test online through Wayground rather than using traditional paper-based worksheets. Only a small minority preferred pencil-and-paper testing, showing that the majority of students are more comfortable with technology-mediated assessment environments. This preference reflects ongoing shifts in student learning habits and familiarity with digital tools, supporting Cilliers' (2017) argument that contemporary learners prefer technologically integrated educational practices. The high level of acceptance toward online formats underscores the relevance and suitability of digital testing in current academic settings.

Students also highlighted several positive aspects of the Wayground platform. Many described the system as effective, efficient, and easy to use, indicating that the platform facilitated a smooth testing experience. Others appreciated its practicality and enjoyable features, with some noting that it made the assessment process more engaging. These positive sentiments demonstrate that students valued the platform not only for its functionality but also for its convenience and user-centered design. The emphasis on efficiency and practicality aligns with observations by Wijayati et al. (2021), who reported that digital testing environments often enhance test-taking experiences by reducing logistical barriers and improving accessibility.

Despite the overall positive perceptions, students' evaluations of the test content suggested areas for improvement, particularly in terms of difficulty. The Listening section was perceived as challenging by the majority of participants.

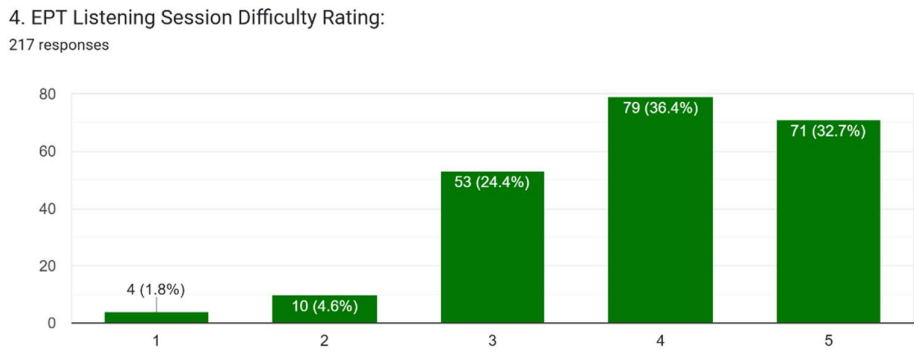


Figure 2. Result of Question Number 4

Nearly 69% of participants categorized it as either difficult or very difficult, indicating that this part of the assessment required considerable effort and may not fully align with students' proficiency levels. While the platform itself appeared to function well, the difficulty ratings suggest that adjustments in content calibration may be beneficial to ensure fairness and alignment with students' expected competencies.

A similar pattern emerged in the Vocabulary and Grammar section. Most respondents rated this part of the test as moderate to difficult, reflecting their perception that it demanded substantial linguistic and cognitive ability. This trend corresponds with the observations of Pramudita et al. (2023), who noted that vocabulary and grammar tasks delivered in digital formats often impose higher cognitive loads as students must interpret and process information quickly and independently. These findings indicate the need for reviewing the complexity of the test items to maintain an appropriate balance between challenge and accessibility.

In terms of technical performance, students generally encountered few difficulties during the test. Nearly half of the participants reported no significant technical issues, which suggests that the Wayground system provided sufficient stability for most users. However, some students did experience problems such as unstable internet connections, device crashes, earphone malfunctions, or quiz refresh interruptions. These challenges mirror common issues reported in digital assessment literature, as highlighted by Aina and Ogegbo (2021) as well as Hillier (2014) who emphasized that hardware and connectivity remain recurring constraints in online testing environments. Although the proportion of affected students was relatively small, acknowledging these issues is essential for improving future implementations.

Finally, students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the support provided by proctors and technical staff during the test administration. A majority of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance they received, indicating that the supervision team played an effective role in addressing student needs and ensuring a smooth testing process. The minimal number of dissatisfaction responses further underscores the effectiveness of the coordination and communication strategies implemented during the test. High satisfaction levels in this area demonstrate the

importance of competent support services in enhancing the overall quality of digital assessment experiences.

Conclusion

Wayground has emerged as a credible and pedagogically valuable platform for administering the English Proficiency Test at Polije. Students' positive perceptions of its usability, efficiency, and interface design indicate strong alignment with contemporary expectations for digital-based assessment. The automated scoring feature enhances its practicality by delivering immediate and consistent feedback, which is particularly beneficial for large cohorts and continuous proficiency monitoring. Although certain challenges, mainly related to internet stability, were reported, these issues are largely external to the platform itself and can be addressed through improved digital infrastructure and institutional support. Overall, Wayground demonstrates substantial potential to strengthen assessment practices through technology that is both intuitive and responsive to learner needs. However, the present study is limited by its focus on perception-based data from a single institutional context, which means that it does not capture deeper insights into actual learning outcomes, long-term performance trends, or cross-institutional variability.

The broader implications extend to ongoing digital transformation efforts within higher education. Institutions aiming to modernize their language assessment systems may adopt Wayground as a viable model, as it illustrates how digital tools can streamline test administration while preserving reliability and student engagement. Enhanced investment in connectivity, technical training, and user support would further increase the platform's effectiveness and scalability. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal studies, include comparative analysis with other digital testing platforms, or integrate performance-based metrics to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Wayground's effectiveness across diverse educational settings. By promoting an assessment environment that is accessible, stable, and pedagogically grounded, Wayground can contribute to a more efficient, equitable, and data-driven approach to language evaluation across tertiary education settings.

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