An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Japanese EFL Learners’ Motivation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Bioprofile
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Abstract
In the spring of 2020, many educational institutions around the world were thrust into novel and challenging situations due to the spread of COVID-19. These situations have been highly consequential for educators and students. The purpose of this study was to explore how the motivation of four Japanese, second-year university students to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) was affected by the sudden shift to virtual learning and scaling down of their study abroad program following international travel restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (referred to hereinafter as “the pandemic”). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was adopted to analyze the data obtained from semi-structured interviews. The five themes that emerged from the interviews suggested that the students’ motivation to learn English remained stable despite the shift to online learning and modification of the study abroad program. In this regard, the following was observed: (1) All participants expressed that they inherently enjoyed learning English; (2) They imagined themselves using English in their future work or travel; (3) They derived motivation from other EFL learners; (4) They realized the practical benefits of online learning; (5) They became proactive in seeking ways to supplement their EFL studies. Themes 1, 2, and 3 applied to the participants even before the pandemic. Themes 4 and 5 emerged as they had to adjust their studying practices in response to the pandemic-induced restrictions. The findings of this study provide insights into how EFL learners’ motivation has been affected by the pandemic, and they serve as an important reference for students and educators in the EFL field.

Keywords: EFL learning, motivation, online learning, pandemic

1. Introduction
The pandemic has had harsh and far-reaching ramifications across our lives. In particular, the field of education has been severely impacted. All over the world, schools of all levels have had to rethink and drastically modify schooling. For many, this meant that face-to-face classes had to be temporarily
replaced by online learning. Teachers were required to deliver classes through various online platforms despite inadequate training and/or preparation time, and students had to adjust to taking these online classes at home (Cowie, 2021; Efriana, 2021; Lee & Ogawa, 2021; Octoberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Rahim & Chandran, 2021).

In Japan, this shift to online learning has been challenging. The reason, as Cowie (2021) asserts, is that education in Japan has been “decidedly traditional” (p. 420). Even at the university level, the use of Learning Management Systems (LMSs) is not commonplace, Wi-Fi connections are not always reliable and widely available, and many students, though adept at using their smartphones, are unfamiliar with using such devices as laptop computers (Cowie, 2021).

These remote teaching-related challenges have all been true for the university whose students participated in this study. Moreover, as the pandemic also caused the imposition of strict travel restrictions on out-of-country travel, the university had to significantly alter its study abroad program. Instead of students spending a semester in a foreign country, they ended up experiencing study abroad online.

How these abrupt changes brought about by the pandemic affected students’ motivation to learn EFL is the focus of this research. Specifically, this study aimed to explore the experiences of four Japanese EFL learners, in their second year of university vis-a-vis their motivation to learn the English language during the pandemic. This study employed IPA to achieve its specific objective. To this end, the following two questions were addressed: (1) “How has the sudden shift to virtual learning affected students’ motivation to learn EFL?” and (2) “How has the change in the university’s study abroad program affected students’ motivation to learn EFL?”

While student motivation has been widely explored in the EFL context, there have hardly been any studies that examine how the motivation of EFL learners is impacted by particular challenges brought about by the pandemic. The results of this study can help in the following ways: (1) It can provide insights into how EFL learners’ motivation has been impacted by the pandemic; (2) It can be a useful reference for students, teachers, and schools concerning how they could maintain and/or increase the motivation of their students as alternative ways of schooling during the pandemic are being explored.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Motivation in the EFL Context
It is well established that motivation, defined by Gardner (1985, p. 50) as “language learners’ goals, their effortful behaviors, their desire to attain their goals, and their favorable attitudes toward the activity in question,” (Halvaei & Ansarin, 2018) and second language (L2) learning are inextricably linked (Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017; Halvaei & Ansarin, 2018; Lai, 2013; Pawlak, 2012; Tsai, 2012). In other words, learners’ motivation and success in acquiring L2 are positively correlated (Cocca & Cocca, 2019), and it is indeed one of the most crucial elements in learning a language (Dincer
& Yesilyurt, 2017; Lai, 2013). Over the years, L2 learning-related motivation has been conceptualized in different ways. Among the most prominent conceptualizations are Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model, Dornyei and Ushioda’s (2011) L2 motivational self-system, and Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory.

Given how essential motivation is in L2 learning, it has been extensively studied in relation to different aspects. For this study, how motivation relates to methods of delivery (i.e., online or face-to-face), usage of technology, and an opportunity to study abroad were found to be particularly relevant.

First, concerning the methods of delivery, Genc, Kulusakli, and Aydin (2016) conducted a study that looked at students’ motivation and attitude in terms of online distance education versus traditional classes. They found no significant difference between the two; i.e., if they are motivated to study English in face-to-face classes, they are motivated to do so in online classes as well (Genc et al., 2016). This result is in line with what Dimitroff, Dimitroff, and Alhashimi (2018) found in their study in which they compared the motivation of English as a second language (ESL) and EFL students. They concluded that one’s environment is not among the main factors that significantly affect students’ motivation to study English. Instead, having a positive attitude toward their learning is more consequential.

Second, different studies have found that technology can increase motivation in learning as its use makes students curious (Egan & Gibb, 1997; Genc et al. 2016). This concurs with the finding of Ilter’s (2009) study that using authentic films, videos, CDs, and e-learning, in general, has a positive effect on students’ motivation, though there’s a caveat that students find it boring if/when technology is always used. Liu and Lan (2016) also observed that collaborating on Google Docs increased students’ motivation as they enjoyed the learning experience more. In a more recent study, Lamb and Arisandy (2020) noted that young students’ Online Informal Learning of English (OILE), (such as watching YouTube videos or listening to music) is associated with a higher motivation to learn English.

Finally, the effect of the study abroad experience on the motivation of EFL learners has been beneficial. Tsai (2012) found that for EFL students who go to a different country to study, the experience of immersing themselves totally in a particular culture, along with its people and cultural products, facilitates intercultural learning. Intercultural learning can have a positive effect on their motivation to study English and their overall success in acquiring their target language.

Motivation in relation to EFL learning has been investigated comprehensively; however, studies that look into how motivation in EFL learning during the pandemic per se are still very limited. A study by Subakthiasih and Putri (2020) surveyed 90 university students in Bali, Indonesia to investigate their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to study EFL during the pandemic. The results of this study indicated that learners have higher intrinsic motivation (i.e., doing something because that activity itself is inherently enjoyable) than extrinsic motivation (i.e, doing something for external reasons, such as passing a test).

Many of the early pandemic-related studies on EFL seem to focus on identifying the barriers
to online learning that were experienced by teachers and students. For teachers, one of the challenges that has been identified in this regard is their lack of familiarity with e-learning. For instance, not all teachers are technologically savvy, so they may find using certain devices and online applications problematic (Efriana, 2021; Octoberlina & Muslimin, 2020). Another barrier was increased difficulties faced by teachers in explaining concepts and monitoring and controlling their students online as evidenced in the students contacting their teachers directly after class for further explanation (Efriana, 2021). For students, certain physiological repercussions, such as eye strain, arising out of online learning because of extended screen time has been identified as an impediment (Octoberlina & Muslimin, 2020). The lack of Internet infrastructure and support in addition to the prohibitive costs related to its use have also been determined to be among the obstacles (Efriana, 2021; Octoberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Rahim & Chandran, 2021). With all these barriers brought about by the sudden shift to online learning, Mayhoob (2020) has found that many students were left unsatisfied with their language learning experience. However, how all these challenges directly affect EFL students’ motivation remains unclear, thus requiring further investigation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Derived from phenomenology and hermeneutics, IPA is an idiographic method that focuses on a small group of individuals, and it aims to offer a “close” description of participants’ experiences of a particular phenomenon (Noon, 2018, p. 75). In IPA, it is the participants who are considered to be “experiential experts” (Noon, 2018, p. 75); therefore, researchers closely look at the narratives the participants share, then extract common/general as well as unique themes from them (Noon, 2018). This research method was chosen as the framework for this study given its effectiveness in capturing the richness and complexities of the participants’ experiences.

3.2. Setting and Participants

Cresswell (2013) states that in IPA, the number of study participants may vary from three to fifteen, while Clarke (2010) recommends having four to ten participants so that rich data can be generated (Noon, 2018). Through purposive sampling, four Japanese, second-year university EFL students in their second semester (three female students and one male student) were chosen. All four were selected as they are the founding members (and at the time of the study were the only members) of an English-speaking club established during the pandemic with the primary objective of providing its members with additional English-speaking practice. The university that they are enrolled in is a private liberal arts institution in Kyushu, Japan, which has the English language as its primary medium of instruction. Additionally, the university has a study abroad program that allows students to spend the Fall semester during their second year in a partner institution in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand.

The participants were 19–20 years old, and their average Test of English for International
Communication (TOEIC) score was 700, meaning they belonged to the higher-level class in their cohort. Also, they belonged to the batch that was arguably the most affected by the abrupt changes brought about by the pandemic, for they had the experience of being in a live classroom in their first year and then had to transfer to virtual learning in their second year. Moreover, they were in the process of preparing for their semester abroad when local and international travel restrictions were imposed which prevented them from leaving the country. For these reasons, they made suitable subjects for the purposes of this study.

3.3. Data Collection
Data collection commenced after obtaining the necessary approval from the university's in-house ethics review board. Each of the participants was separately interviewed by the researcher for 20–30 minutes. The interview was carried out as per the interview question sheet that was prepared for this study. All the interviews were fully audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the participants were assigned code names to ensure anonymity.

3.4. Data Analysis
As mentioned earlier, the IPA approach was employed to analyze the data through the following steps: (1) reading transcripts multiple times, (2) annotating and color-coding, and (3) looking for common themes. Arroll (2015) has recommended that if there are four to eight participants and at least three of them speak of a particular idea, that idea is to be classified as a main theme (Noon, 2018). This recommendation was followed for this study. Further, if at least two of the participants expressed a particular idea, it was determined as a sub-theme. In IPA, it is assumed that the participants have been truthful about the narratives that they have provided. This is how validity is achieved (Noon, 2018). Moreover, in this study, to check the data for accuracy, the participants were asked to review their interview transcripts.

4. Results and Discussion
In all, five main themes and two sub-themes were drawn from the interviews, which can be categorized further into two-time frames. Themes 1, 2, 3 and sub-theme 3a pertain to the pre-pandemic time frame, while themes 4, 5 and sub-theme 5a relate to the pandemic’s time frame. It must be noted that the results and discussion have been presented below in a combined manner to link this study’s findings to those of already existing research.
Table 1 Themes and sub-themes emerging from the study data

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Pre-pandemic</th>
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<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Positive feelings toward learning English</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> Imagined future L2 selves</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> Motivation from other EFL learners</td>
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  **Sub-theme 3a:** Sense of competition with others

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<th>During the pandemic</th>
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<td><strong>Theme 4:</strong> Positive response to change</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 5:</strong> Being proactive in their studies</td>
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  **Sub-theme 5a:** Proving one’s self

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**Theme 1: Positive Feelings Toward Learning English**

All four of the participants expressed positive feelings toward learning English. They used verbs such as “like,” “love,” “enjoy,” etc., and adjectives such as “interesting” and “fun” when asked about their English learning experience:

- Since I was a junior high school student, English [has been my] most favorite subject. Also [in] high school, I loved English. (P1)
- I [am] lucky to have been able to find the field that I [am] interested in, so if I hadn’t found English interesting, then I wouldn’t [be] motivated like this. (P2)
- When I go out and meet a foreigner, I [always say] “hi”. I think I like to talk with foreigner[s] [in English]. (P3)
- Communicating with foreigners in English is really fun. (P4)

These responses demonstrate that all of the participants intrinsically had the motivation, which Deci and Ryan (1985) defined as doing an activity because it is inherently enjoyable to the person. It has also been suggested that having a positive attitude toward learning English is linked to increased engagement in class (Dimitroff et al., 2018).

**Theme 2: Imagined Future L2 Selves**

All four of the participants reported that they imagined themselves using English in the future either for work or while they travel. Participants 2, 3, and 4 also imagined living abroad at some point and having to use English in their interactions there.

- [The] biggest motivation for me, is [that] English is [an] advantage for [my] future job [as a flight attendant]. (P1)
- I’m motivated [because I have] always imagined myself in the future . . . talking to people in English fluently [and] giving lecture[s] in English in Japan or a foreign country. (P2)
I imagine living in another country because I want to be [a] nail artist . . . I was looking at Instagram account[s] of nail artists abroad, like New York. It’s cool . . . I will be like [a] superstar artist. (P3)

[I imagine] living in another country for a short time [in the future], one year to three years . . . I just want to use English in other countries. (P4)

Imagining their future selves using English for work or travel illustrates Dornyei and Ushioda’s (2011) ideal L2 self, which is one of the components of their L2 motivational self-system. The ideal L2 self refers to the learner’s future L2 speaking self. The image of the ideal L2 self motivates the learners to acquire L2 skills (Lai, 2013). This could also be related to Gardner’s (1985) idea of instrumental orientation in that the participants are motivated to learn a language to improve their status economically, professionally, and/or socially (Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Halvaei & Ansarin, 2018; Lai, 2013).

**Theme 3: Motivation from Other EFL Learners**

Three of the participants expressed that they derive motivation from other EFL learners. When they see that their peers are working hard and pursuing their goals, they too are inspired and motivated to do the same.

- The students [at the college] have some goals related to English. Some student[s] [are] very motivated . . . I’[m] impressed with them. (P1)
- Especially when I talk [to my friends], I get motivation. When I [see] them studying . . . [I think] “Wow! I have to study. I want to study.” (P3)
- When I see [my friends], I really get [the] motivation. (P4)

**Sub-theme 3a: Sense of Competition with Others**

Two of the participants talked about getting motivation when they experienced competition with their peers.

- [In junior high school, I was motivated to learn English because there was] one girl who did not always study hard, but in English class, she could perform well. (P1)
- At first, I just wanted to be higher than others because I failed [to get into my first] university choice. When I came here, I didn’t want to get lower point[s] than others. (P4)

Theme 3 and sub-theme 3a are related to another component of Dornyei and Ushioda’s (2011) L2 motivational self-system, the L2 learning experience. In this case, the participants gained motivation from some of their peers because they found them inspiring and/or wanted to surpass what their peers could do (Lai, 2013).
Theme 4: Positive Response to Change

All four of the participants highlighted the fact that attending classes via Zoom saved them a lot of time and allowed them to do more self-study and/or rest before the classes started.

- Because we don’t need to [travel] to school, I [could] get more time to study. (P1)
- I didn’t have to prepare for school. I had more time to study in the morning. After I woke up . . . . I read some books, or I studied a little bit about vocabulary [before the first class]. . . . [Also,] I didn’t have to take a shower [and] dress up well . . . I was more relaxed [in] online classes. I was in pajamas, and I had a cup of coffee. (P2)
- I have more time to study other things like Chinese and Korean. (P3)
- I can sleep a lot . . . I don’t need to use [my] time to choose clothes. It’s kind of [a] hassle. (P4)

Participants 1, 2, and 4 highlighted the new skills gained through this novel instruction format.

- I was honestly kind of excited because it’s completely different from [the] lecture[s] I was used to. (P2)
- Because I used [the] computer a lot, I [learned how to] use it fluently. (P1)
- After changing to online [classes], I had to check the deadline[s] myself because teachers didn’t mention [them] so much. I checked the deadline every day. I took notes of [the deadlines]. [I had to organize]. It’s a good point. (P4)

Regarding the cancellation of their trips abroad, participants 1, 3, and 4 had some interesting things to share.

- It [would have been] my first time to go abroad, so firstly, I was shocked, but I’ve heard it is safer to stay [in] Japan. (P1)
- [It] is a blessing in disguise for me because I think [the] study abroad [program] is too expensive, and too short, just four months. (P3)
- [If I went abroad.] maybe, I would be lazy or just enjoy talking to foreigners and sightseeing. (P4)

These observations of the participants are consistent with a finding of Falout’s (2012) study in which he reported that learners who perceive themselves and their language learning positively are more likely to succeed in acquiring their target L2 as they are more likely to persist even when they experience barriers in their studies. In the case of the four participants of this study, they tended to view the changes that had to be implemented in a positive light, which must have helped them stay motivated.

Theme 5: Being Proactive about their Studies

Three of the participants actively looked for other ways to supplement their learning of EFL.
Participants 1 and 3 turned to online platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to get extra practice, whereas participant 3 joined an informal online class organized by one of their teachers in partnership with another university. Students from both of these institutes met once a week via Zoom to practice conversing in English.

- I found some English conversation [groups] on Instagram or Twitter. I often follow them. They provide [lots of] useful information. (P1)
- I watched YouTube a lot [maybe one hour per day] about how to pronounce and how to use idioms. (P4)
- We could get [an] opportunity to talk in English on Zoom [with students from the other university]. Having the opportunity to interact with other students is good for language learners. (P3)

Sub-theme 5a: Proving One’s Self

Two of the participants expressed their desire to show that they were different from the rest and that they could still learn English even though they were unable to go abroad:

- I thought the more difficult situation I am in, the more I have to be enthusiastic to prove that I can do it. When I heard from the Dean that [the] study abroad program had been canceled, I was extremely motivated . . . I am so eager to show that I can study English in Japan. (P2)
- When I hear[d] the news, I [was] really sad because I really wanted to go to the UK to study English, but when I saw on Instagram, every student posted “Oh my gosh, I wanted to go abroad.” [I thought] I don’t want to be like them . . . I don’t want to be [the] same [as the other] students [who are] just sad and depressed. I thought, “Oh, I have to change myself. It’s not [a] sad time. It’s [a] chance to improve my English more. (P4)

Theme 5 and sub-theme 5a, demonstrated yet again that the participants had intrinsic motivation in that they had an “inherent tendency to search for novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore and to learn” (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017, p. 5).

In summary, this study examined two questions: (1) “How has the sudden shift to virtual learning affected students’ motivation to learn EFL?” and (2) “How has the change in the university’s study abroad program affected students’ motivation to learn EFL?” The data showed that the motivation of all four participants to learn English remained stable despite the shift to online learning and modification of the study abroad program. The participants have intrinsic motivation, a clear vision of their ideal L2 self, an ability to derive motivation from their peers, and an ability to view and respond positively to the changes implemented to their studies. It can be argued that these are the qualities that enabled the participants to maintain their motivation to learn EFL during the pandemic.

These findings are consistent with the results of previous research conducted before the pandemic that examined the motivation of EFL learners. First, it was found that EFL students with
intrinsic motivation are more effective learners and have higher levels of engagement in class (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017; Halvaei & Ansarin, 2018). As well, one of the factors that was identified to facilitate successful distance language learning is having explicit reasons and goals for studying the target language (Xiao, 2012). This can be related to the concept of the ideal L2 self, which Lai (2013) pointed out to be strongly linked with intrinsic motivation. Moreover, it was demonstrated that peers can be influential to learners’ motivation; Halvaei and Ansarin (2018), for example, noted that activities such as discussions could be enhanced if students are surrounded by fellow learners who are also eager to speak English. Finally, it was found that a positive attitude toward EFL learning is associated with increased engagement in class (Dimitroff et al., 2018) and success in acquiring English proficiency (Cocca & Cocca, 2019).

On the whole, these are encouraging insights into the motivation of EFL learners during the pandemic. The findings suggest that one’s motivation is largely influenced by internal rather than external factors. Consequently, teachers and students could endeavour to cultivate the aforementioned qualities for students to maintain their motivation to learn EFL.

4.2. Limitations of this Study
This study has several limitations. First, only four students were interviewed, so the results are not generalizable, although in IPA, generalizability is not the main aim (Noon, 2018, p. 81). In the case of this study too, the goal was to shed light on the participants’ learning experiences during the pandemic and how these impacted their motivation to learn EFL. Also, given that the number of participants is at the lower end of the recommended number by Clarke (2010) and Cresswell (2013) when conducting IPA studies, one could argue that this may be treated as a case study. Another limitation of this study was that all four of the participants were high-level language learners, and as per their characterization, they had medium to high levels of motivation in the first place. The results may, therefore, have been different with students with lower levels of motivation or those who were intrinsically less motivated. Finally, one may argue that the participants could not have known the benefits of going to a study abroad location without actually having had that experience. They were merely speculating about its merits and demerits because they had no choice. As mentioned previously, it has been found that study abroad experiences can have a positive effect on a student’s motivation and overall success in language acquisition (Tsai, 2012).

4.3. Future Research
As we are all still in the early stages of this new global reality, the pandemic, there are still many unknowns. Consequently, there are numerous avenues to be explored in the EFL field. If further research is conducted involving students who may not have the same language level or motivation, it could yield results that are different from those of this study. Moreover, interviewing the previous cohorts of EFL students who were able to experience studying abroad for a semester could be useful in
finding out how their motivation may or may not have changed based on their experience. Conversely, studying the younger/later student cohorts who, unlike the participants of this study, began their college education itself in the online mode could yield interesting and useful insights.

4.4. Recommendations

The participants of this study reported that they maintained their medium to high levels of motivation in learning EFL throughout the changes they experienced in the wake of the pandemic. However, it is easy to imagine that many other students may not feel the same way. One way in which teachers can help protect, maintain, and/or increase students’ motivation is by helping them to be more aware of their motivational orientations and strengthen their intrinsic motivation as recommended by Halvaei and Ansarin (2018). Moreover, Lai (2013) stated that especially for EFL learners, their imagined L2 self can be a “powerful light” (p. 98) that can help them navigate their language learning experience. Consequently, Lai (2013) proposed that teachers support students by helping them define their vision based on what they intend to achieve. Also, it would be greatly beneficial if teachers can help students foster a positive attitude toward themselves and their language learning experience as it was found that students who have a positive outlook have higher class engagement (Dimitroff et al., 2018) and better coping mechanisms when impediments arise. They are also more likely to be proactive in their studies (Falout, 2012). Finally, some of the early pandemic-related studies within the EFL context have indicated that students and teachers faced considerable barriers to studying during the pandemic (Efriana, 2021; Octoberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Rahim & Chandran, 2021). Therefore, it would be advantageous that these stakeholders are made cognizant of the various challenges that need to be dealt with in eventualities like the pandemic. A better understanding of the challenges and coping mechanisms can lead to greater cooperation and compassion while everyone strives to work as effectively as possible, individually and in cooperation with each other, in such challenging times.

5. Conclusion

Using IPA, this study examined how the motivation of four Japanese students in their second year at university to study EFL was affected by two significant changes implemented by the university as a result of the pandemic, i.e., the abrupt move from face-to-face classes to online learning and the modification of their study abroad program. In all, five themes were extracted from the interviews with these four students, which were further categorized into two time frames. The first category comprised themes that have been true for the participants even before the pandemic set in; these include the participants genuinely enjoying learning and using English, deriving motivation from the future images they have of themselves using the language for work or travel, and being motivated by other EFL learners who work hard. The second category included themes that emerged due to the students’ learning experiences during the pandemic, whereby they recognized the practical benefits of online learning as opposed to face-to-face classes and became proactive themselves in searching for avenues
beyond their university classes to supplement their EFL learning.

As previously mentioned, IPA-based studies seek to shed light on the experiences of a particular group of people within a particular context who have gone through the same experience (Noon, 2018). For the four participants of this study, the emergent themes seem to indicate that their motivation to study English remained stable even in the face of considerable changes in their education consequent to the pandemic-induced restrictions. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the growing pandemic-related literature on EFL, provide insights into how EFL learners’ motivation has been affected by the pandemic, and serve as a useful reference for not only students but also educators in the field of EFL.

References


Appendix A
Interview Question Sheet

How would you describe your experience while learning English as a foreign language?

How did you feel when you found out that the classes were moving online?

What do you think are the advantages of online classes?

What do you think are the disadvantages of online classes?

What do you think are the advantages of live classes?

What do you think are the disadvantages of live classes?

Do you prefer online classes or live classes?

What were the things you did differently last semester given our switch to online learning?

Did you find that your interest in studying English changed in the 2020 Spring semester compared to the semester prior?

How did you cope with the new challenges?

What strategies did you find helpful?

Did you find it easier or more difficult to complete the tasks assigned in your language classes?

How do you feel about the change in the study abroad program?

Do you think the possibility of spending a semester abroad made you want to study English more?