# STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON MOTIVATING EFL ONLINE LEARNING PRACTICES

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Received: 07-09-2021Accepted: 12-11-2021Published: 30-01-2022Abstract: Research has so far focused on challenges and problems encountered by either students or teachers<br/>about online learning. Meanwhile, research on finding out their positive and inspiring EFL online teaching and<br/>learning is not much given attention yet. Thus, to contribute to the previous related studies, this study is aimed at<br/>finding out the motivating EFL online learning practices from the students' view. The data of this research were<br/>collected from conducting online survey through a google link to 174 students of English Department, UIN<br/>Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah, Tulungagung, Indonesia who have experienced the shift platform of learning from<br/>offline to online. They were then interviewed at random. The results of this study reveal that the motivating EFL<br/>learning practices can be interchangiably carried out synchronously through their most favorable online<br/>application and asynchronously. Teacher-related factors and learning materials are also perceived to be the<br/>important elements to create motivating online teaching and learning.

Keywords: students' perspective; motivating online learning; motivating online teaching.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic has led to significance changes in education, namely the changing platform from fully offline in the classroom for instructional practices to online or distance learning. In this context, technology is proved to be significant to support the EFL learners' communicative language (Abbas & Elttayef, 2019). Still, this online learning platform in one hand brings about some benefits, in the other hand, it leads to some disadvantages such as intense stress on students (Moawad, 2020), lack of direct interaction between learners and teachers (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison. 2020). considerable cost (Bahasoan. Avuandiani. Mukhram, & Rahmat, 2020), difficulties of making connection with others (Reedy, 2019), network and connection problems (Cahyani,, Suwastini, Dantes, Jayantini, & Susanthi, 2021).

In Indonesian context, students' opinion about online learning has been investigated into two classifications. The *first* is study about the students' perspective on non-English Department towards online learning, for example, Krishnapatria (2020) who investigated International Business students' view about the implementation of e-learning. *The second*, studies on the perspective of students about online learning which are categorized on some different themes of research, such as problems and challenges encountered during online learning.

Take for example, Hasibuan (2021) studied about the obstacles encountered by students during online learning; Octaberlina & Muslimin (2020) explored EFL students' perspective towards online learning barriers. Nartiningrum & Nugroho (2020) investigated the EFL students' challenges during online learning. The other category is a study on EFL students' perspective on media used during

Students' perspective on motivating EFL online learning practice

online learning. Rojabi (2020) exploring EFL students' perception of online learning via microsoft teams and he found that Microsoft Team which is considered as something but the interaction and learning environment motivated students to participate in online learning. Hz and Daulay (2021) also studied EFL students' perspectives on online learning media i.e.: zoom cloud meeting. Unlike, those previous studies, it is hardly found a study which specifically ferret out the students' opinion about motivating EFL online practices during Covid 19 Pandemic.

There have been some related previous studies investigating EFL students' opinion about online learning. Kaufmann and Vallade (2020) focused their research on online learning environment which specifically explored students' perception of loneliness in online classroom. This study exemplified the significance of the roles of the instructors in building and maintaining rapport and climate. The other study conducted by Afrin (2020) with the research setting in Bangladesh explored the feedback of both EFL teachers and students in the perspectives of developing countries. The study which was done through a survey focused on finding out the problems faced by teacher and students online learning and how to overcome the problems for an effective teaching and learning (Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya, & Jha, 2021) carried out a study on students' preference about online learning in India found that they prefer to use smart phone for online learning.

From the above reviewed previous studies, it is hardly found a study which specifically focused on investigating the EFL learners' views on what EFL Online learning practices which are motivating. Therefore, it is essential to investigates the motivating EFL learning practices in order to fill in the gap of the previous studies. Moreover, this present research is important to contribute to creating a more joyful EFL online learning so that EFL learning objectives can be more successfully achieved. In addition, regarding the results of previous studies that learners as one of the main components of instruction, then this study is conducted in response to both the social and literature facts on complexity of weakness and strengths of EFL online learning. Thus, this article portrays students' views on finding out what make them keep motivated to attend online learning.

This research is conducted by referring to some

related theories, namely online learning application, motivating online learning practices, and motivating teaching practices.

### Online learning application

Online learning in this context is defined as teaching and learning activities which involve computers, mobile phones and interactive networks simultaneously. Thus, media and online learning application are among the important components of conducting online teaching and learning practices, in addition to teachers, students, curriculum, svllabus. learning materials, and internet accessibility. Online learning which is carried out either synchronously or asynchronously rely much on the use of learning application which is defined as software for learning process realization in the virtual space. Lim and Kim (2003) defined "application of learning" as the degree to which learners use and apply learned knowledge and skills during instruction or to current jobs. Learning application is also viewed as media employed to support the instructional practices (Hz & Daulay, 2021). In this context of study, earning application refers to any application, media, or tool used to support the online teaching and learning activities. It supports the flexibility and concede challenges and opportunities for both teachers and students (Abdulrahman, Basalama, & Widodo, 2018). Learning media refers to everything either physical or technical worthy in the learning process and it is helpfull for teachers to deliver instructional materials to students so that the learning objectives can be achieved. There are various kinds of learning application and media. The most usable learning media by the teachers and students are zoom cloud meeting and whats-app (Hz & Daulay, 2021), Google Hangouts, Google Classroom and LMS (Moodle) for course management and assessments (Almusharraf & Khahro, 2020), Google Doc (Khalil, 2018).

## Motivating online learning practices

Online learning practices are instructional activities conducted by making use of Internet and Web and the term motivating in this context of research refer to a theory of Self-determination (SDT). It is defined as a broad framework for understanding facilitate intrinsic factors that motivation. autonomous extrinsic motivation. and psychological wellness, all issues of direct relevance to educational settings (Ryan and Deci, 2020). They further explain that SDT assumes people are inherently prone toward psychological growth and integration, and thus toward learning, mastery and connection with others. However, these tendencies of proactive human are not seen as require automatic. Thev some supportive conditions to be robust. are three There fundamental needs i.e.: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy is a sense of initiative and ownership in one's deeds. It is supported by experiences of interest and value and undermined by experiences of being externally controlled, whether by punishments or rewards. Competence is the feeling of mastery which is a sense that one can grow and succeed. The need for competence is achieved within a well-structured environment which afford positive feedback, opportunities for growth, and optimal challenges, Meanwhile, relatedness is connection and a sense of belonging. This is facilitated by the conveyance of caring and respect.

The continuum of human motivation included in SDT outlines a range of different types of extrinsic motivation and the underlying psychological concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Hartnett, 2016). As accordance to SDT, motivation is built on the fundamental premise of learner autonomy. Hewson (2018) found the importance of students' emotional engagement, motivation and behaviour behind the screen for online learning. (Hartnett, 2016) further revealed that Motivation has been identified as a key factor in developing and sustaining a sense of community as well as learning and achievement in online contexts.

## Motivating teaching practices

Teaching and learning in a virtual learning environment has been taken into account as an alternate method for several decades to tackle limitations of traditional classroom instruction and to fulfill diverse learning and instructional needs from teachers and students. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. Since motivation is as the powerful engine of learning, teachers should conduct motivating teaching practices which further lead to helping learners to be motivated. Teachers' potential to promote learners' motivation is mostly centered on relatedness or meaningful teacher-student relationships (Muñoz & Ramirez,

2015). Optimally (intrinsically or autonomously) motivated faculty may be more likely to utilize teaching best practices as their high engagement facilitates innovation and excellence (Stupnisky, BrckaLorenz, Yuhas, Guay, 2018).

They further state that there are four teaching best practices which include: instructional clarity, higher order learning, reflective and integrative learning, and collaborative learning. Positive students' outcome can be yielded from the instructors who organize and communicate information in the classroom effectively. Bellon and Oates (2002) found some components which are meaningful to develop motivation in online courses are to create interaction between students and teacher, interest in the course content, an organizational structure, and a sense of personal connection.

Wright (2017) found that explanatory videos used in tandem with adequate pre-online-lesson-in class explanation and post-online-lesson follow up enable teachers ample time for student questions and rule clarification. A synchronous learning environment with more timely feedback would also provide opportunity to support student understanding. Besides, keeping in touch with inservice teachers and making interesting materials give positive impact on online teaching and learning (Mahpudoh, 2021).

## METHOD

This is descriptive quantitative research with survey as the main research design. The data for this research are the EFL learners' perspective about motivating online learning practices. Those data were collected through an online questionnaire survey with this link https://forms.gle/XiRk7vjTDYgwE. The participants were students of English Department of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung staying in the third semester. There are four classes: 3A (45 students), 3B (48 students), 3C (44 Students), 3D (41 students), and 3E (38 students). Thus, the total population is 216 students. By considering that all population have the same chance to be selected as the respondents of this survey, the sample was selected under the criteria of those who are willing to fill out the questionnaire. This criterion was taken so that the information put in the survey was believed to be reliable and valid. The data for this research are

Students' perspective on motivating EFL online learning practice

about students' opinion and claim on the most interesting online learning application and motivating online EFL learning and teaching practices. The data collected from the survey are in the form of both quantitative and qualitative.

quantitative data The were analyzed quantitatively to percentage number showing the tendency respondents' of the perspective. Subsequently, percentage this was then qualitatively analyzed to draw a conclusion concerning with the research objectives, namely the most favorable online learning application which the respondents perceive as motivational learning tool meaningful to build their learning motivation. Moreover, the qualitative data collected from open ended items of the survey and interview were analyzed descriptively as the steps provided by Huberman (2000). The first step is data reduction which means to reduce any information which is not related with the purposes of the research. Only information which tells about the research purposes which was considered as the main data to be analyzed. Then, the analysis was done through restating the data found from either survey or interview. Subsequently, was it described

qualitatively to find out the pattern and tendency of the data. Finally, it was interpreted by referring to some related theories in order to reveal points beyond the findings.

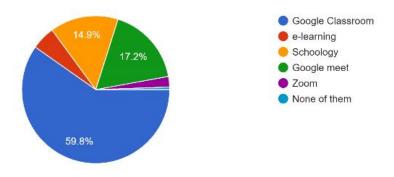
#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

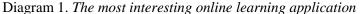
There are three important findings resulted from this study, namely the most favourable online learning application, motivating online learning activities and motivating online teaching practices.

#### The most favorable online learning application

Online learning activities are conducted by means of computers or mobile phones through various online learning application, such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Moodle, Schoology, Google Meet and interactive network simultaneously. This study reveals that most of the respondents 58.8 % (104 out of 174 respondents as seen in Diagram 1) claimed Google Classroom as the most interesting and easiest learning application for some reasons, i.e., they can write comment, upload files, send assignments, fill out their attendance, and save quota.

1. This learning application is interesting and easy to use in my online English class. 174 responses





It is considered as a friendly learning application, because even though students are in a poor internet connection, they keep being able to attend the learning activities as can be seen in the following quoted students' statements:

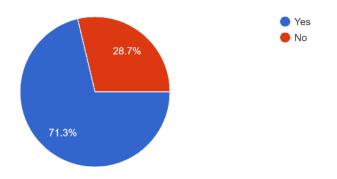
"Yes, because it's easy to upload my file." (Elrahma)

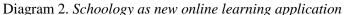
"...because in my opinion in google classroom we can also discuss by commenting, sending assignments, and filling out the attendance list. During this pandemic, it will be easier to save quotas and make it easier for those who live in places that have poor signal quality." (Siti Achya).

In line with this, some previous studies proved that Google Classroom is a good and easy-to-use tool, most of its features have not been used to its full capability (Jakkaew & Hemrungrote, 2017); is perceived to be the most popular among students (Amalia, Hidayati, Rosyani, Ikasari, Handayani, Yunita, & Isnaeni, 2020; Fitriningtiyas, Umamah, & Sumardi, 2019, Sudarsana, Putra, Astawa, & Yogantara, 2019) and is considered effective and good in the areas of ease of access, perceived usefulness, communication and interaction, instruction delivery, students' satisfaction towards the Google Classroom's learning activities 2016) (Shaharanee, Jamil, & Rodzi, and effectiveness of timing (Okmawati, 2020).

The second most favorable online learning application is Google Meet. The students considered this application as appropriate learning tool to meet and conduct learning practices virtually so that teachers' explanation and class discussion can be easily and clearly understood. It is perceived to be helpful and interesting media with which they can share instructional materials

3. Is Schoology new learning application for you? 174 responses





It gives students new experiences of using and making use of new online application to support their instructional activities. This finding is explicitly reflected in the students' statement below.

> "Schoology offers many features or facilities that can be enjoyed and are interesting and are very helpful in the learning process, both facilities for teachers and students who are guided. In addition, I can get new experiences with the new features of the application I use." (Kayla)

This indicates that digital generation who are easily adapted with technology do not encounter too much problem with technology advancement. They are sophisticated to utilize technology (Spangler, Kohun, Rodi, & DeLorenzo, 2015).

In short, the findings of the questionnaire survey ferret out that there are three most popular and interesting online learning application, namely Google classroom, Google Meet, and Schoology which are considered as making them be motivated to attend the online learning for various reasons. In addition, it is found the other online learning tools

and the other important files. This is clearly stated in the student's quoted statement below:

"In my opinion, the most interesting online application for me to support mu EF learning practices are Google Meet and Zoom. Why? Because in that platform we can discuss face to face and I sure that it more be clearly and easy to understand. Other than that, I think Google Classroom also interesting and quite helpful in sharing the material." (Rizky Putri)

This finding is parallel with the previous studies showing that Google Meet is amongst the most popular teleconference application (Gauthier & Husain, 2020; Sevilla, 2020).

The third most favorable learning application is Schoology. Even though most of the respondents (71.3%) stated that this application is considered new for them (See Diagram 2), there are 26 respondents (14.9%) who claimed that they recognized, familiar and feel comfortable to use this application.

Students' perspective on motivating EFL online learning practice namely E-learning, zoom, Duolingo, and Cake that Table 1. they prefer to use for a certain reason as seen in

No.	Online Learning	Quantity	Reason of Preference		
	Application				
1.	Google Classroom	104 respondents (59.8	Students can comment, send assignments, upload		
		%)	files, fill out the attendance list, save quotas, and		
			friendly connection for those living in a poor		
			connection		
2.	Google Meet	30 respondents (17.2%)	Students and teachers can conduct direct online face		
			to face discussion, economical/free, easy, and simple		
3.	Schoology	26 respondents (14.9%)	Interesting and helpful features		
4.	e-learning	9 respondents (5.2%)	No exact reason found		
5.	Zoom	4 respondents (2.3%)	Clear and easy fitures; virtual meeting		
6.	None of them	1 respondent (0.6%)	(Kahoot, Duolinggo, Whatsapp, telegram		
			simultaneously used with the other mention learning		
			application)		

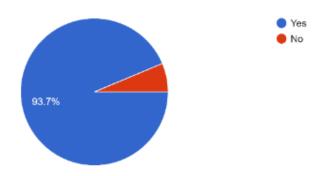
Table 1. Students' preference on the use of online learning application

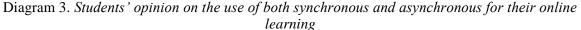
#### Motivating online learning activities

There are two important findings related to what motivating online learning activities: learning platform and learning activities. Firstly, it is found that they prefer to have both synchronous and asynchronous learning platforms. As can be seen in Diagram 3 that 93.7% respondents agree with using both learning platform. To attend virtual meeting is helpful for them to get clearer teachers' explanation. This is clearly stated in this students' quoted statement: "I enjoy online English learning practices if they are conducted both via Gmeet or Zoom so that my lecturers can explain the materials...".

This finding supports Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) who found the students' preference on the integration of google meet (synchronous) and google classroom (asynchronous).

3. I enjoy online English learning practices if they are are conducted both via Gmeet or Zoom so that my lecturers can explain the materials and con...ference learning application at the other meeting. 174 responses





Secondly, explaining the materials virtually is not sufficient without opening discussion session for students to clarify and ask some points of their interest. Thus, motivating online learning is built if teachers explain virtually and open discussion session. It was found that there are 142 out of 174 respondents (81.6%) (See Diagram 4) declared that they enjoy online learning if the teachers explain the learning materials virtually, open discussion session, give some exercises at every topic of discussion completed at a flexible time, and the students are acknowledged with the course outline (See Table 2). This finding is also clearly stated in the respondents' statements below: "Material explained by lecture and some questions or presentations." (Difani)

"...the teacher explains in an easy and

understandable way." (Alief)

"Explained by the lecturer and then presented and tested in every material" (Rofa)

4. I enjoy my online EFL learning activities if my lecturer...

174 responses

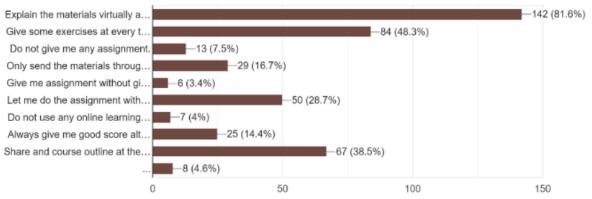


Diagram 4. Students' motivating learning activities and teacher' teaching practices

Table 2.	Motivating	online	learning	activities	

No	Motivating Learning Activities	Percentages	
1.	If they get sufficient virtual explanation about the materials and involved in the discussion session provided by the teachers	81.6%	
2.	If they are able to do some exercises at every topic of discussion given by their teachers	48.3%	
3.	If they are acknowledged with course outline shared by the teachers at the beginning of the semester	38.5%	
4.	If they are able to do and complete the tasks at their flexible time provided by their teachers.	28.7%	

#### *Motivating online teaching practices.*

This study found 8 important motivating online teaching practices:1) teachers' virtual explanation, 2) supplementary knowledge, 3) online discussion, 4) online interaction, 5) doing exercises, 6) teachers' feedback, 7) A humorous, friendly, and pleasant teacher, and 8) learning atmosphere.

Firstly, most students claimed that learning English through online platform should be conducted by giving them virtual explanation. This technique is believed to be motivating so that they can clearly understand and implement the materials well, as clearly stated in the respondent's statement:

"For me, to understand the material teachers should explain the materials virtually ... So students can understand and implement the material well." (Tesya) It was also found that explanation given in brief accompanied by repetition will strengthen the students' engagement in the online learning activities, as reflected in this student's statement that:

"A brief explanation and accompanied by repetition of the material explained to students in response that students already understand what is being explained" (Waqia)

Secondly, providing supplementary materials is able to create a motivating online learning atmosphere, as explicitly stated in the respondent' statement that "Providing useful supplementary knowledge beyond the subject matter being taught" (Elinda). The teaching materials are expected not to be taken from one main sources. They expect to have some additional related teaching materials. To learn various learning

*Students' perspective on motivating EFL online learning practice* resources will enhance the students' knowledge and learning experience.

Thirdly, motivating online teaching practices is online discussion. By getting involved in the discussion session opened by the teachers, the students can discuss their difficulties, ask for confirmation on some missing parts, even give and share their understanding to their classmates. "Explain the material virtually and open discussion session." (Rahma). Thus, this online open discussion is taken into account as the essential factors which can create motivational teaching activities.

Fourthly, a motivating EFL teaching practice can be built through online interaction between either teacher-students or students-students. This is reflected in the respondent's quotation "In the teaching practice there an interaction from one to the other and I feel it's a good interaction that share each other knowledge." (Rizka). To create an online interaction through sharing each other is meaningful to conduct not only motivating online teaching practices but also to improve their understanding during online teaching and learning. This is in line with the concept of collaborative and cooperative learning with which both teachers and students will take some benefit. Collaborative learning (CL) as defined by Laal & Ghodsi (2012) is teaching and learning approach which involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product proved to result in some benefits namely social, psychological, academic, and assessment benefits. Weizheng (2019) proved that teacherstudent interaction in EFL class can create an equality and harmony atmosphere and encourage the students to involve in the teaching activities.

The fifth significant element which can create motivating online learning is doing exercises. It was found that doing exercise related to the materials explained on the day can help learners to improve their English skills, as stated clearly in the student's quoted statement: "Explain the material and give an exercise, so my English skills will grow" (Depi). Doing exercises or assignments after explaining the materials is believed to be useful to review materials so that they get an enrichment by doing some related assignments. This can be seen in the students' quoted statements: "The teaching practices that I like is the lecturer explains our material face to face and give me an assignment to review the material that I get in that day" (Feni)

"By explaining the material and then trying to do some tasks to test the extent to which we understand the material even though not every meeting." (Lailatul)

The sixth motivating element is teachers' feedback. It was found that feedback given after the discussion session is essential to build an online motivating learning atmosphere. This is explicitly stated in the student' quoted statement:

"I enjoy all the teaching practices that give participants enough time to discuss and lecturers provide feedback. (Rizky)

"Classroom discussion and the feedback after learning session." (Yuni)

This empirical data declares that discussion session given following the teachers' lecturing then providing the students with teachers' feedback can make the students enjoy to attend the EFL online teaching and learning. The students' joy of attending the instruction indicates motivating learning. Moreover, teachers who can give positive feedback can lead to building fun and interesting learning atmosphere.

"Fun class and positive feedbacks." (Yofania)

The seventh key element of motivating EFL teaching is related teacher's characteristics namely humorous, friendly, and pleasant. Students perceive teachers who can carry out interesting way of teaching can create joyful learning atmosphere so that the students are interested. It was found that humorous teachers are thought to contribute to building motivating online learning. This can be clearly found in the student's quoted statement:

"Interesting lecturers when teaching, not awkward towards students. Have a sense of humour but still serious when it's time to study. explain in detail before giving assignments." (Novi).

Teachers who are able to explain patiently and pleasantly are perceived to be energizing factor which creates motivating learning atmosphere. Rantala & Määttä (2012) proved that teachers can provide circumstances that are favourable to the joy of learning. This finding is also supported by Martin, Budhrani, Kumar, & Ritzhaupt (2019) who found that online instructors take on several roles at different times of the course, not only as a course designer, facilitator and a mentor, but as "cheerleader," and even a "rule-setter" of the EFL instruction as well. Additionally, the nature, type, and tones of tutor communications in his class can greatly help to create a caring, encouraging, and trusting environment (Peacock & Cowan. 2019).

The eighth important element of motivating teaching practices is learning atmosphere. It is believed to be influential factor which can create EFL learning motivating. Teaching with a certain condition such as relax but keeping serious on the materials to be learnt is beneficial to be motivating teaching activities. It is claimed that motivating teaching practices which motivate students to learn online is demonstrated in a cheerful and blessing online atmosphere. This fact can be clearly seen in the student's quoted statement.

"Relax but serious class, we discuss the material thoroughly in a cheerful vibe and blessed class:)." (Khodiyoh)

In conclusion, this study found that there are some essential elements which are perceived to build EFL online learning motivation. Those factors cover teaching technique, learning materials, teaching and learning atmosphere, teachers' feedback, and teachers' characteristics. Concerning with teaching technique, the students believed that motivating EFL online learning can be created by providing them with virtual explanation about the learning materials which are followed by conducting online discussion and exercises. Moreover, they claimed that giving the students supplementary materials in addition to the main instructional materials is perceived as motivating online learning factor. Meanwhile, the teaching and learning atmosphere that make students enjoy attending online learning is the one which is relax, cheerful, blessing, but keeping on serious mode of learning so that the instructional objectives can be well achieved. In addition, teachers' feedback plays a very important role to create motivating EFL online learning. Moreover, friendly, humorous, and pleasant teachers are perceived to be among those which contribute to build motivating online learning.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study demonstrates two important students' perspectives on motivating EFL online learning. They are related with the most favourable online learning application and motivating online learning and teaching practices which make the EFL students' get involved in their online learning. Firstly, this study reveals that there are three most interesting and popular online learning application among the students, namely Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Schoology. Secondly, motivating online learning practices can be built for two conditions. They are learning platform and learning activities. Conducting both synchronous and asynchronous online learning practices is perceived to be motivating for the students. Then through this learning platform, teachers are able to upload and explain the instructional materials and conduct discussion and question-answer session as well. Moreover, there are teacher-related factors and learning materials which are perceived by the students to be able to create motivating online teaching practices. The first covers teaching technique, teaching and learning atmosphere, learning material, teachers' feedback, online discussion, online interaction, and teachers' characteristics. The latter is providing the students with the main topic of instruction and equipped with supplementary materials to enrich their knowledge about the lesson.

The research result is pedagogically implemented to create motivating EFL online learning practices. Still, this study was conducted in the level of higher education for a relatively small number of populations, then it is suggested for further researchers to conduct research at the same level of education with a more number and coverage of population from various types of colleges. It is also suggested to carry out a study on the same topic at different level of education such as secondary and elementary levels of education.

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