

# Enhancing Young EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning Through Contextualizing Animated Videos

Amir Abdalla Minalla

Department of Languages and Translation, University of Tabuk, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—Practicing target language contextually integrated with animated video in the classroom influences the way students use the language in their everyday situations. Contextualized animated videos as learning media based on young learners' characteristics can be appropriate for stimulating them to acquire vocabulary. This study attempts to examine the effectiveness of utilizing animated videos as learning media in learning vocabulary for enhancing young EFL learners' engagement in classroom activities. The study used experimental research in which participants from two groups (experimental and control) were involved. The context-based learning strategy is utilized to introduce new vocabulary items to the participants in the control group. While the new vocabulary items were presented to the experimental group's participants through context-based learning integrated with animated videos. The analysis of the data revealed that the participants who underwent vocabulary learning through context-based learning integrated with an animated video in the vocabulary learning treatment significantly outperformed those who underwent vocabulary learning through the context-based learning method. Integrating animated videos into vocabulary teaching proves its effectiveness with the four word classes of the content word type. It was very effective in learning verbs and adverbs compared to being learned via a context-based learning strategy separately. Hence, integrating animated videos is not just appropriate to facilitate vocabulary learning for young learners but also increases their motivation to engage in classroom learning.

**Index Terms**—animated, videos, learners, vocabulary, classroom, media

## I. INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a language always involves expanding one's vocabulary. Learning without a vocabulary would be impossible. Vocabulary learning is not limited to memorizing single words; it also involves understanding words in a realistic and meaningful context. Kasper and Wagner (2018) point out that word knowledge develops in a dynamic and situational manner as a result of user and context interactions. However, young students may find it difficult to comprehend the meaning of new vocabulary words in classes where traditional methods are only in use. Despite the fact that many studies have been conducted on vocabulary, few researchers have identified the most efficient methods of teaching vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary to young students presents a variety of difficulties, the majority of which are due to the differences between the characteristics of young students and the methods of teaching that teachers use (Cameron, 2003). Thus, learning media are now widely used in teaching vocabulary, especially animated ones, as a result of a significant technological paradigm change that alters both how teachers conduct their classes and how students learn. Animated videos suit well for stimulating young learners' interests and imaginations. Bishop and Cates (2001) state that animated videos are preferred as instructional materials over static images because they have entertaining sounds and music to go along with their colorful personalities and eye-catching visual presentations. In addition, presenting language in meaningful situations helps learners understand and interpret meanings. Since children are keen observers, they may understand and interpret language using contextual cues including gestures, body language, actions, intonation, imitation, and messages. (Slatterly & Willis, 2001; Cabrera & Martinez, 2001; Brewster et al., 2002).

According to the researcher's observations and information gained from 20 years of teaching English in EFL settings, most EFL learners, particularly young learners, avoid engaging in daily interactive situations. Their avoidance is due to their poor vocabulary knowledge, which is one of the main reasons. One of the most common EFL learners' difficulties in properly acquiring vocabulary is that EFL teachers employ ineffective teaching strategies and techniques. This study aims to find an effective strategy for teaching vocabulary in the classroom to enhance learners' engagement. Thus, it attempts to examine the effectiveness of utilizing animated videos as learning media integrated with context-based learning. Based on this objective, the study intends to answer this question: Is context-based learning integration with animated video an adequate strategy for teaching new vocabulary items to young learners? Students who are engaged and motivated often work hard to achieve their best in the classroom. Students could find animated learning films to be highly interesting, particularly EFL young learners. According to Rahayu and Kristiyantoro (2011), employing animated videos in the classroom can improve both learning outcomes and learning experiences. Because animated

videos catch students' attention, many senses are engaged, notably the ears and eyes, allowing students to absorb the information being conveyed. Children have a low level of concentration, so there should be a variety of activities to hold their interest. Young learners are more likely to concentrate on watching animated films than older students because of their brightness and colorfulness. Moreover, EFL teachers contextually need to connect vocabulary with learners' everyday situations as well.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The function of the media as a messenger is crucial for engaging students because the teacher cannot produce effective communication for the learning process alone. A successful learning process is one that enables students to use all of their senses effectively during learning activities. The integration of media into the learning process will create meaningful experiences for young learners while also making abstract concepts more real. Thus, using learning media in young EFL classes becomes crucial for enhancing their engagement in classroom learning, particularly visual stimulation. With no doubt, colorful visual presentations could capture young learners' attention and make the learning experience more engaging. Creating engaging and interesting classroom learning is helpful for learners to share their likes and dislikes because they usually have more opportunities to use their mother tongue outside classroom contexts than the target language.

### A. Contextualizing Language Instruction

The purpose of the contextualized language instruction method is to teach the target language to young students by giving them contextualized and meaningful texts rather than discrete grammar rules and isolated linguistic constructions (Adair-Hauck & Cumo-Johanssen, 1997). Teachers are attempting to contextualize their instruction within the students' lives by developing materials and activities that reflect students' backgrounds, interests, and experiences to enable students to interact with their lives (Hotchinson & Waters in Kusumawati, 2017). Therefore, it is appropriate for young learners to understand the meaning of language by being exposed to authentic usage of language that connects them with their everyday situations. In other words, it makes learning more meaningful, engaging, memorable, and applicable to real-life situations. According to Sinaga (2018), materials should be contextualized based on the students' experiences, circumstances, and first languages.

### B. Contextualizing Vocabulary Learning

It is important to emphasize that vocabulary is the core of EFL learning; hence, contextualized vocabulary instruction is crucial. It is supported by Brown in Rohayati (2013), who affirms that contextualization is essential for enhancing language learners' retention and attention, such as through providing storylines, recognizable events and people, and engaging in regular, everyday discussions. Besides, Paul in Rohayati (2013) also affirms that giving learners a relevant context helps them learn more effectively since it allows them to concentrate on the meaning rather than the structure of the words. The reason for utilizing contextualization as a vocabulary teaching strategy is that it can create a real atmosphere when using the words. It happens as a result of the words that are presented as daily words. Thus, Siangwan and Abhakorn's (2016) findings suggest that contextualized vocabulary instruction helps learners' memory by surrounding them with clues to enhance word recognition.

### C. Animated Videos as Learning Media

The process of learning is a set of complicated processes that need to be supported by the media. Media is something that is utilized to transmit information and instructional material (Wahyuni, 2013). The media is referred to as learning media if it contains a message or information with an instructional or learning aim. Thus, learning media is a tool that can be used within or outside of the classroom to support and aid students' learning experiences. According to Sadiman et al. (2008), instructional media is anything that can be utilized to transmit a message from the presenter to the recipient in order to pique students' interests, concerns, and attention in a way that facilitates learning. The technical, mechanical, and electronic components of the media are the most obvious characteristics that determine its purpose, form, and other physical traits (Kozma, 1991).

The function of the media as a messenger is crucial for engaging students because the teacher cannot produce effective communication for the learning process alone. A successful learning process is one that enables students to use all of their senses effectively during learning activities. The integration of media into the learning process will create meaningful experiences for young learners while also making abstract concepts more real (Permana, 2016). Moreover, during the learning process, the media could stimulate students' interests, emotions, and thoughts (Yuningsih et al., 2018). Oktradiksa and Agung (2017) and Karimah et al. (2020) found that learning media has recently had an effect on students' performance in developing speaking skills. The selection of suitable media for learning English influences both short-term and long-term goals of reaching maximum learning results, as the teacher desires them to be. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the instructor to choose the appropriate media that are meant to enhance the quality of learning English as a foreign language and achieve the purpose of learning. Using learning media in young EFL classes becomes crucial for enhancing their engagement in classroom learning, particularly the use of visual stimulation. With no doubt, colorful visual presentations could capture young learners' attention and make the learning experience more engaging.

Animation, in general, can be described as the process used to make still images appear to move. According to Harrison and Hummell (2010), animation is defined as the quick presentation of a number of still images designed to provide the illusion of motion. They went on to say that animated videos can improve students' knowledge of and skills with a variety of educational materials. With the advancement of technology today, animation videos can offer visual displays that significantly enhance the effectiveness of the learning process and outcomes. Animated videos are widely used to teach a variety of subjects. People tend to respond to moving objects, so animated messages are more likely to catch their attention than still ones (Schwartz, 2003). Because it's important to keep in mind that teaching children a foreign language at a young age has the goal of instilling in them the idea that learning a language is enjoyable (Pujiani et al., 2022; Cameron, 2001; Rixon et al., 1991; Slatterly & Willis, 2001; Brewster et al., 2002).

To enhance the process of learning and teaching, EFL teachers need to investigate more effective media to enrich learning situations. Audio-visual media can stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, concerns, and willingness so that teaching and learning processes occur (Sudjana & Rivai, 2011). The utilization of videos in English instruction is growing in popularity. In fact, video is one of many types of educational media that can be utilized to support the learning process. Yükselir and Kömür (2017) highlight how effective videos are at disseminating information in an interesting audiovisual design. They also demonstrated that video provides a realistic learning model, allowing pupils to learn practically rather than abstractly. Thus, watching films combines common elements like settings, action, emotions, gestures, etc., which serve as a significant stimulant for language production and practice. Additionally, young children enjoy watching animated videos because they are interesting, and the visual context helps them understand better.

When a student is more motivated to learn a language, their performance and presentation are improved and superior to those of other students. Thus, visual aids can help make teaching and learning more engaging and interactive. It is expected that the use of animated movies will increase student motivation to communicate, comprehend the material, and improve their learning outcomes. Children enjoy watching animated movies, which are developed by turning still images into moving ones (Syarifudin & Wahyu, 2013; Buchari et al., 2015). Thus, animated videos can be adapted to the demands of young learners and related to the growth of empathy in young viewers in order to effectively communicate with young audiences.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Both descriptive and experimental methods were used in the investigation. Thus, for attaining reliable results, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were used.

#### A. Participants

The participants of this study are Sudanese young children, whose age range is between seven and eight. Altogether, twenty males and females were randomly selected and assigned into two groups, group 'A' and group 'B'. Group 'A' is used to represent the control group, while Group 'B' is used to represent the experimental group. Participants in both groups had almost the same English background knowledge, so they had just completed Grade 1 of Book 1 of the national curriculum English book. They were familiar with the English alphabet and a few vocabulary of content words' type.

The participants in both groups used to be taught the same vocabulary items, but through two different methods. Participants in group A used to be taught new vocabulary items via a context-based learning method. While the participants in Group B were taught new vocabulary items via context-based learning integrated with animated videos (video films, movies, and cartoons). It means the experimental group's participants watched short videos that introduced vocabulary items that were made for the purpose of this research. Presenting new vocabulary items via context-based learning refers to introducing the meanings of these items using authentic materials that represent events from everyday life and the everyday speech patterns of native speakers. Presenting vocabulary in context integrated with animated video refers to introducing their meanings in context (using authentic materials to represent events from everyday life) with the aid of animated video.

#### B. Data Collection

The instruments of data collection consisted of oral achievement tests (pre and post) and a questionnaire. The pre-test was designed to determine to what extent the participants in both groups were homogeneous in understanding new vocabulary items when they were introduced via traditional methods. A pre-test is conducted after the participants of both groups spend four weeks learning vocabulary via the context-based learning method. Since they were described as beginners with the least exposure to the English language, few words were taught in the traditional method. The treatment period took almost 4 weeks, and the students were taught three units of the book. At the end of the treatment period, the posttest was used to assess the vocabulary development of the students in both groups.

The pre-test was applied to see if there was any significant difference in both groups' proficiency levels. Both pre- and post-tests are designed to be verbally tested. The items were rearranged in the post-test to prevent individuals from experiencing practice effects. The tests are vocabulary tests; each one consists of 30 questions that intend to test content words' type (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective). Twenty of these questions are multi-choice, and ten are wh-questions. Despite the fact that the study covers both content and function words, only content words are considered to be

analyzed for the purpose of this study. To be statistically acceptable, the test-and-retest technique was used to measure the reliability of the test. In this respect, a pilot was applied to a sample of seven pupils from the population of the study. The two tests' correlation coefficient was shown to be 0.84, which was appropriate for the purposes of the research.

Another instrument was the questionnaire, which was designed to reflect experimental group participants' experiences with animated videos as learning media for teaching vocabulary. The questionnaire posed five closed-ended questions about participants' attitudes toward animated videos as learning media, their appropriateness for vocabulary learning, and their influence on learners' performance. Pearson's correlation is used to calculate statistical evidence:  $R = 0.85$ ,  $\text{validity} = \sqrt{\text{reliability}} = 0.93$ . Therefore, these findings are supported by statistics. Additionally, two ELT experts evaluated the two instruments. The instruments were put into their final draft based on their feedback.

#### IV. FINDINGS

The following will make an attempt to answer the question raised in this study. It also highlights the aspects that characterize context-based learning integrated with animated video as a learning media that can be utilized to enhance young EFL learners' engagement in learning vocabulary. That is, to propose some recommendations that may be utilized for establishing classroom interaction that interestingly engages young learners in the classroom's vocabulary learning.

##### A. Data Analysis

It was found that the experimental group made significant progress while the control group made little progress in the overall analysis of the comparison between the pre- and post-tests and the questionnaire responses. This is due to the adoption of an experience of teaching vocabulary in which the new vocabulary items are presented via context-based learning integrated with animated videos (treatment). This learning experience interestingly enables young learners to pick out the meaning of words. It helps the young learners practice what they have been routinely taught.

TABLE 1  
PRE-TEST ANALYSIS

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	Sig(2- tailed)
Group A	10	11.35	2.824	.000	1.000
Group B	10	11.08	2.228	.000	1.000

As it has been shown in Table 1, there was no significant difference between the scores of the experimental group ( $M = 11.08$ ,  $SD = 2.228$ ) and the control group ( $M = 11.35$ ,  $SD = 2.824$ ),  $t = 1.000$ ,  $p > .05$ . The significance ( $P$ ) was greater than 0.05, which means statistically there was no significant difference in the mean scores between Group A (the control group) and Group B (the experimental group) in the pre-tests.

TABLE 2  
POST-TEST ANALYSIS

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	Sig(2- tailed)
Group A	10	11.84	2.029	.000	-23.684-
Group B	10	22.18	2.753	.000	-23.684-

In Table 2, it has been shown that in the post-tests, Group A (the control group) and Group B (the experimental group) had significantly different mean scores. The scores of the experimental group ( $M = 22.18$ ,  $SD = 2.753$ ) and the control group ( $M = 11.84$ ,  $SD = 2.029$ ),  $t = 23.684$ ,  $p < .05$ . The significance level ( $P$ ) was less than 0.05, which indicates there were significant differences. This significant difference in favor of Group B is a result of the use of context-based learning integrated with animated video. Thus, integrating animated video with the context-based learning strategy improved learners' comprehension of new vocabulary items more than using context-based learning separately.

##### B. Content Words' Analysis in Group B

In spite of the fact that the study covered both content and function words, only content words were used to be analyzed for the purpose of this study. The following figures show their performance in the content words in the pre- and post-tests for Group B. "S" is used in the following figures to refer to a student.

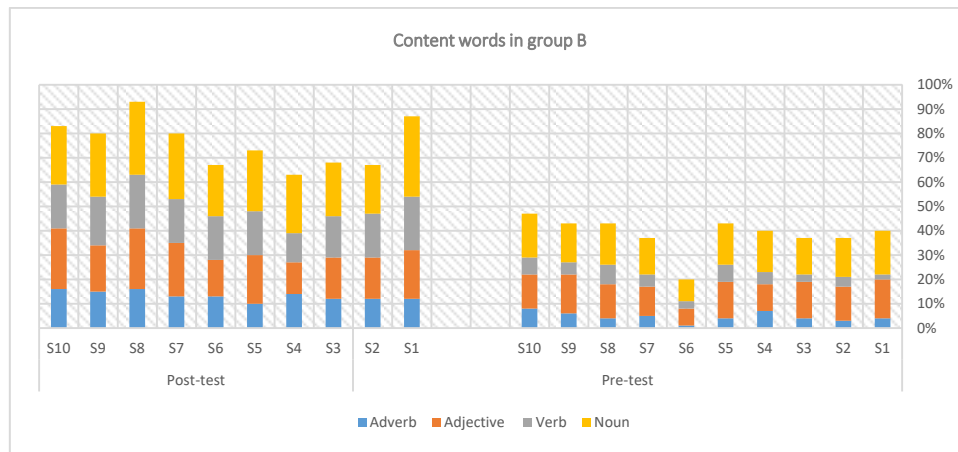


Figure 1.

The above Figure 1 shows the results of group B's participants (the experimental group) in pre- and post-tests. It obviously confirmed what was already proven in tables 1&2 that there are significant differences between participants' performance in the pre- and post-test. The remarkable progress in the post-test is due to integrating animated videos with context-based learning in teaching new vocabulary items. Thus, the participants' performance in the post-test in content words is significantly different from that in the pre-test. The participants' performance in the post-test improved in all word classes (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective). But their performance in verbs and adverbs remarkably progressed compared to their performance in the pre-test.

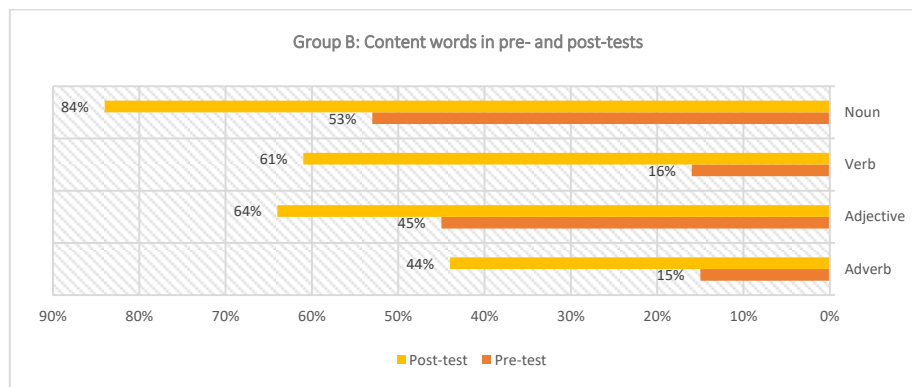


Figure 2.

The result in Figure 2 showed that there is a difference in students' learning outcomes after the new learning process (applying treatment). It indicates that students in the experimental group possess better performance in vocabulary learning compared to their performance in the pre-test. Participants made progress in the four word classes (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb), but their progress in the verb and adverb was remarkable. It means that using animated videos in vocabulary learning items is effective, particularly with verbs and adverbs.

### C. Content Words' Analysis in Group A

The following Figures 3 and 4 show the performance of the control group's participants in the content words in the pre- and post-tests.

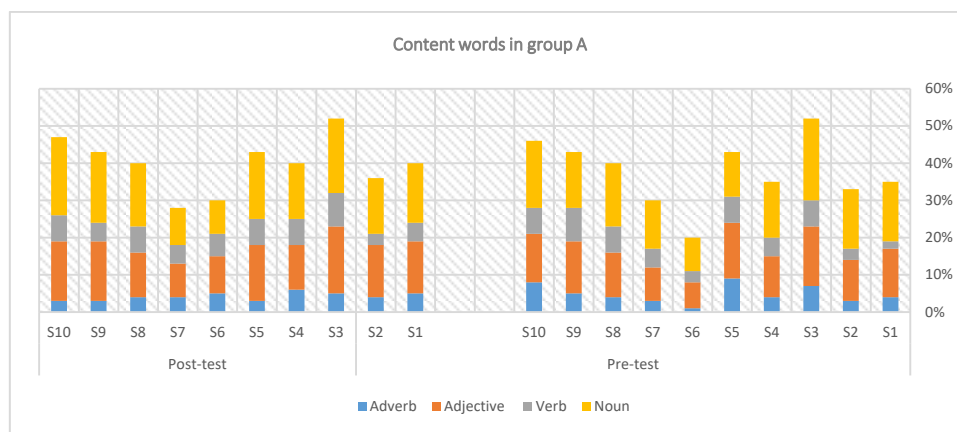


Figure 3.

The above Figure 3 indicates that the performance of participants' pre- and post-tests shows no significant difference. This result conformed to the results in Tables 1 and 2, in which the scores of the participants show no significant differences. That may be due to depending on the same teaching strategy (context-based learning), as well as the fact that there is no new factor that influences their performance and knowledge.

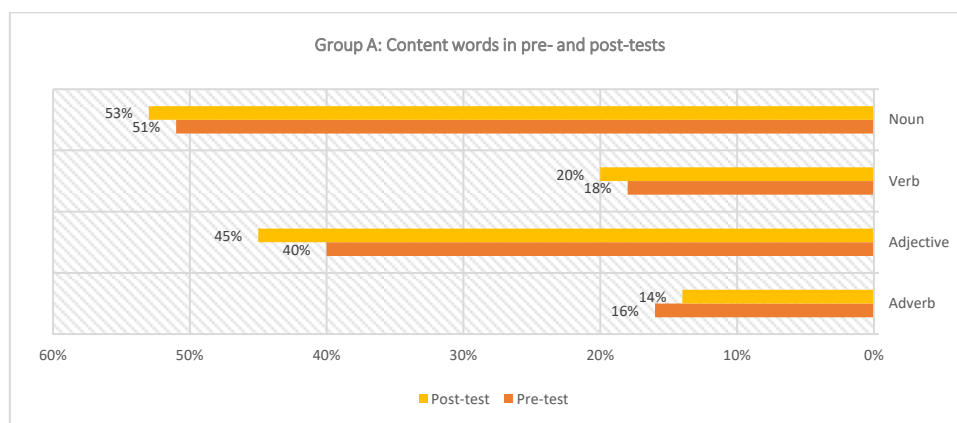


Figure 4.

The result in Figure 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in the control group's participants' performance in pre- and post-tests. Their performance is less than 50% in the four word classes except noun. Moreover, very little progress is recorded for verbs, from 40% in the pre-test to 45% in the post-test, and for adverbs, from 14% in the pre-test to 16% in the post-test. This may be due to the practice they do in the pre-test and again in the post-test.

#### D. Questionnaire's Analysis and Discussion

The questionnaire is designed to gather pupils' reactions to the use of animated video in vocabulary acquisition. It was only given to the experimental group participants after they had received the treatments. The questionnaire's questions are all closed-ended questions aimed at eliciting pupils' perspectives on the use of animated video. The questionnaire was made up of five statements about how animated videos affect vocabulary learning. As it has been shown, the participants who were taught via animated videos seemed to have a higher mean and higher scores than the other group. The questionnaire's result has shown that the majority of these participants agreed that learning via animated videos enhances vocabulary learning, increases learners' engagement, and makes classroom learning interactive and interesting. Since animated videos provide new vocabulary in contextualized visual representation, this helps young learners associate the new words with images, making it easier for them to understand and remember. According to Ridha et al. (2022), animated videos contextualize new words and their definitions, followed by graphical definitions, which all play a crucial role in assisting students to comprehend difficult words. Since Children who watch animation exhibit advanced cognitive and linguistic development (Ghilzai et al., 2017; Yousaf et al., 2015), visual information in language is easier for children to understand, and animated messages are more likely to catch their attention than still ones.

The young learners interestingly interact with the notion of presenting learning items in a video show (animated learning). Instructors must employ inspiring methods to pique students' attention in their lessons; animated videos are suitable to be used as motivation in language, particularly for young learners. According to Shreesha and Tyagi (2016) and Egounleti et al. (2018), the animation inspires and motivates students for improved learning. Since animated videos present a variety of characteristics that are appropriate for young learners to increase their enthusiasm to learn English

(Laksmi et al., 2021; Khalidiyah, 2015). Moreover, animated videos are more effective at grabbing young learners' attention than conventional text-based materials because they make use of colors, shapes, and movement. In addition, Kamelia et al. (2019) found that children's boredom was reduced with animated films.

Animated videos incorporate elements such as vibrant visuals, colorful characters, and dynamic storytelling that encourage learners to actively engage with the content. Salman et al. (2021) found that utilizing animated videos as an instructional tool encouraged students to participate in class activities and to enjoy and feel comfortable speaking English. Nuansari's (2021) study has shown that the use of animated videos is beneficial because the engaging content of animation films piques pupils' interest in creating their own sentences to narrate the story. Thus, animated videos are an effective strategy for enhancing students' classroom verbal engagement.

## V. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The limitation of this study is that it applied the treatment to a small number of participants in the experimental group for a short period of time. In addition, the study only used the content words' type for examining animated videos' effectiveness in learning vocabulary. Future researchers should consider applying the treatment to more participants throughout the school year, covering both word types (content and function words).

One of the most notable implications that can be inferred from this study is that a good knowledge of vocabulary has a great effect on the learners' improvement in other aspects of language. Learners' improvement in vocabulary learning enhances young learners' engagement in classroom learning. Based on this study's findings, it can be concluded that contextualized vocabulary learning integrated with animated videos creates realistic and meaningful learning situations that enhance learning positively.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The goal of teaching any language is to make it possible for students to interact with others. Word knowledge develops in a dynamic and situational manner as a result of user and context interactions. This study is to examine the effectiveness of utilizing context-based learning integrated with animated videos in teaching new vocabulary items for EFL young learners to enhance their engagement in classroom activities. Statistically, utilizing context-based learning integrated with animated videos in teaching vocabulary proved its effectiveness and improved young learners' overall learning experiences. Hence, three common results have been shown. The first is that the learners enjoy watching contextual animated videos because of the variety of characteristics that they have. The second result is that contextual animated videos are an effective learning media that motivates young learners to engage positively in classroom activities. The third result was that the contextual animated video had a good effect on the learners' attitudes towards classroom interaction as an enjoyable task. According to these results, the use of contextual animated videos in English lessons, particularly for vocabulary learning, has a substantial impact on increasing learners' comprehension of the language and their ability to participate in class activities. Animated videos are a better way for EFL teachers to engage their students as early as possible, especially young ones. Exposing learners to contextual animated videos facilitates their engagement and helps them seem natural when using the foreign language.

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**Amir A. Minalla** obtained his PhD in English Language Teaching from Sudan University of Science and Technology, Sudan in 2016. He earned his Master's degree (M.A.) in English Language Teaching from University of Gezira, Sudan in 2013 and his Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in English and literature in 2005.

He is currently associate professor and head of the Department of Languages and Translation at University College of Tayma, Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. He has several publications in Indexed Magazines. His main areas of interest are applied linguistics, teaching and learning, and problem-based learning.