EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY LEARNING FOR B1-LEVEL STUDENTS THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

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Abstract. *Vocabulary knowledge is essential for learners who want to communicate clearly in English, but knowing a word involves more than memorising its translation. Learners also need to recognise a word, understand how it behaves in context, and use it appropriately. This article examines how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can support vocabulary learning among Bl-level English learners. Drawing on three established scholarly books, it discusses communicative principles, the role of meaningful use, and classroom techniques such as information-gap tasks, role-play, collaborative problem-solving, and feedback. The article proposes a practical, literature-based lesson sequence and explains how teachers can evaluate learning without making unsupported claims about experimental results. It argues that CLT can create purposeful opportunities to notice, retrieve, negotiate, and use new vocabulary when tasks are carefully scaffolded and language targets are explicit.*

Keywords: *vocabulary learning, B1 learners, Communicative Language Teaching, meaningful communication, vocabulary teaching*

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is a central part of communicative competence. Learners may understand grammar rules but still struggle to express an idea if they cannot retrieve the words and phrases they need. At B1 level, learners are generally working toward greater independence in familiar situations: describing experiences, explaining preferences, giving reasons, and handling everyday interactions. For this reason, vocabulary teaching should help learners move beyond isolated word lists toward meaningful and increasingly independent use.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) places purposeful communication at the centre of language learning. In a CLT classroom, learners use language to exchange information, express meanings, and complete communicative goals. Vocabulary is therefore taught not only as a set of definitions, but also as a resource learners need to complete tasks. This article addresses the following research question: How can Communicative Language Teaching support effective vocabulary learning among B1-level English learners?

2. Learner group and learning content

Who is taught? The intended group is B1-level learners of English, such as secondary-school or university students who can communicate about familiar topics but may need support with word choice, collocations, and spontaneous retrieval.

What is taught? The focus is on high-utility vocabulary connected to familiar themes (for example, travel, food, education, health, and everyday services), including word meaning, pronunciation, common collocations, and appropriate use in context. Rather than learning only decision, learners may practise chunks such as make a decision, a difficult decision, and change your mind.

How is it taught? The teacher introduces a manageable set of target items, provides a meaningful context, models useful language, and then guides learners through pair or group tasks that require them to use the vocabulary to achieve a clear outcome.

3. Literature review

Richards and Rodgers (2014) describe CLT as an approach that gives communicative competence a central role and uses classroom activities to promote meaningful language use. For vocabulary teaching, this suggests that learners need opportunities to use words to convey meaning rather than only repeat definitions. Pair work, role-play, and information-gap activities can create a reason to communicate, provided that the teacher selects language appropriate to the learners' level.

Nation (2001) explains that vocabulary learning involves several kinds of knowledge, including form, meaning, and use. Learners need to meet words, pay attention to them, and develop opportunities to retrieve and use them. CLT activities can support this process when the target vocabulary is made noticeable and learners use it more than once across related tasks. Communicative activity alone, however, does not guarantee that every target word will be learned; teachers should check whether the vocabulary has actually been understood and used.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) discuss teaching techniques associated with different. language-teaching methods and approaches, including communicative classroom practices. Their work supports the idea that classroom procedures should match the intended learning purpose. For B1 vocabulary lessons, communicative techniques are most useful when learners have enough preparation, clear task instructions, and support such as prompts or phrase banks before they work more independently.

3.1. Literature matrix

Source	Relevant contribution	Application to this topic
Richards & Rodgers (2014)	Explains CLT principles and communicative classroom activities.	Design pair/group tasks with a real communicative purpose.
Nation (2001)	Describes vocabulary knowledge and learning processes.	Teach form, meaning, collocation, and use; include retrieval and review.
Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011)	Connects teaching approaches with classroom techniques.	Scaffold role-play and information-gap work before freer use.

4. Methodology: applying CLT to vocabulary learning

This is a literature-based article, not an empirical study. It synthesises the three selected scholarly sources and develops a classroom application for B1-level learners. It does not report collected test scores or claim that an intervention has been experimentally proven by this article. The proposed teaching sequence below is a practical model that teachers can adapt to their own learners.

4.1. Suggested classroom procedure

1. Context and lead-in (5 minutes). Introduce a familiar situation, such as planning a weekend trip. Use a picture, short prompt, or quick discussion to activate learners' existing knowledge.

2. Present target vocabulary (8 minutes). Teach 6-8 useful items or chunks, including meaning, pronunciation, and a short example. Check understanding with simple questions and examples.

3. Controlled pair practice (7 minutes). Learners match words to meanings, complete short dialogues, or choose the most appropriate collocation. This gives support before freer communication.

4. Communicative information-gap task (10 minutes). Pairs receive different information about possible trips and must ask questions, compare options, and agree on a plan. A target phrase bank encourages the use of the new vocabulary.

5. Role-play or group decision (10 minutes). Learners perform a short role-play, such as discussing a budget, transport, and activities. They should use the target items to reach an outcome rather than simply recite them.

6. Feedback and retrieval (5 minutes). The teacher notes successful vocabulary use and recurring errors. Learners then recall several target items without looking and write one original sentence for each of two items.

4.2. Example target language

For a "Planning a trip" lesson, target items could include book accommodation, travel by train, affordable, recommend, local attractions, and make a reservation. Learners practise these items in a decision-making task: they compare two destinations and agree on the option that best fits a given budget and set of preferences. The task creates a meaningful reason to understand and use the vocabulary.

5. Discussion

CLT can make vocabulary practice more purposeful because learners use language to communicate a message, solve a problem, or reach a decision. It also provides opportunities to practise vocabulary with listening and speaking, and to notice how words combine in natural phrases. For B1 learners, familiar topics and structured support can reduce the difficulty of spontaneous communication.

There are also limitations. Some learners may avoid unfamiliar vocabulary and rely on words they already know. Group work can allow one confident learner to dominate, while quieter learners may have fewer opportunities to speak. A task may also focus on completing the outcome rather than using the target words accurately. Teachers can respond by assigning roles, giving each learner a speaking requirement, displaying a short phrase bank, monitoring pair work, and providing focused feedback after the task. Vocabulary checks should assess both recognition and use, not participation alone.

Possible indicators of progress include whether learners can match target words to meanings, use selected collocations appropriately in a short dialogue, and recall the items in a later lesson. These are suggested classroom assessment options, not results obtained in the present article. A future empirical study could compare pre-task and post-task vocabulary performance, provided that data are collected systematically and reported transparently.

6. Conclusion

Effective vocabulary learning for B1-level students requires more than memorising isolated translations. CLT offers a useful framework for connecting vocabulary with meaningful communication through information-gap activities, role-play, pair work, and collaborative decisions. To make these activities effective, teachers should choose level-appropriate vocabulary, highlight form and collocation, provide preparation and scaffolding, and check whether learners can retrieve and use the target items. The literature supports the rationale for this approach, while its effectiveness in a particular classroom should be evaluated using actual learner evidence rather than assumed in advance.

References

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