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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56637

Title: Collocational Competence of EFL Majors in Najran University,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article titled "**Collocational Competence of EFL Majors in Najran University**" offers a critical investigation into the linguistic challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Saudi Arabia, specifically regarding their ability to translate English lexical collocations into Arabic. By focusing on a specific cohort at the rural Sharorah Province branch of Najran University, the author provides a targeted case study that highlights a significant gap in current second-language acquisition: the transition from receptive knowledge to productive translational competence. This research is highly relevant for applied linguistics and curriculum developers seeking to improve translation pedagogy in the Middle East.

The study employs a focused methodology, utilizing a translation test administered to fourth-level EFL learners. The test was designed to evaluate how students handle simple English collocations within sentences, moving beyond isolated word recognition to contextual application. This approach is grounded in the "Lexical Approach," which posits that language consists of multi-word "chunks" rather than just grammar and individual vocabulary. The author's decision to limit the sample size to reflect the specific demographic of a rural province allows for a high degree of qualitative depth in analyzing specific error types.

A major strength of the paper is the systematic classification of translational errors. The author identifies four distinct categories: **Wrong Translation**, **Violation of Arabic Collocation**, **Inaccuracy**, and **Excessive Wording**. This taxonomy is particularly useful because it differentiates between a complete lack of understanding and a failure in stylistic "naturalness" in the target language. The finding that "L1

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negative transfer"—the tendency to translate literally from the mother tongue—is a primary cause of error is a crucial observation. It demonstrates that even advanced learners often lack the "collocational sensitivity" required to produce idiomatic and natural-sounding Arabic.

The author effectively argues that collocational competence is a hallmark of native-like fluency. The paper explores how the lack of this competence leads to "wordy" and unnatural translations, even when the literal meaning is technically correct. This highlights a "collocational weakness" at both receptive and productive levels. The study's grounding in established research, such as the work of Woolard and Schmitt, provides a solid theoretical backbone for its claims regarding learner independence and vocabulary acquisition.

However, to elevate the manuscript for a high-impact academic journal, some minor revisions are recommended. While the error analysis is thorough, the inclusion of a table displaying the frequency of each error type across the sample would provide a clearer quantitative overview. Additionally, the paper would benefit from a more detailed "Pedagogical Implications" section. For example, the author could propose specific classroom activities or digital tools—such as corpus-based learning—that could help students at Najran University overcome L1 interference. Providing a few "before and after" examples of student translations would also help illustrate the "Inaccuracy" and "Excessive Wording" categories more vividly for the reader.

Furthermore, the author should consider a brief discussion on whether the "rural" setting of the Sharorah Province branch played a specific role in the students' exposure to natural English compared to more urban university settings. This would add a socio-linguistic layer to the research. From a structural standpoint, the article is logically organized and maintains a professional academic tone throughout. The bibliography is comprehensive and features key texts in the field of collocation and translation studies.

The conclusion is pragmatic, acknowledging that the current situation is "not entirely satisfactory" and calling for a shift in how collocations are taught. The author's final recommendations for improving collocational skills are well-aligned with the evidence presented. By addressing the minor points regarding quantitative data presentation and specific pedagogical strategies, the author will finalize a manuscript that serves as a vital resource for EFL instructors and translation scholars in the Arab world.

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In summary, this article represents a valuable contribution to the study of lexical competence. It captures the specific difficulties that arise when learners attempt to map the idiomatic structures of English onto Arabic. By documenting the types and causes of these errors, the author provides a necessary foundation for developing more effective translation curricula. With the suggested minor additions, this paper will be a highly informative piece of scholarship for its intended audience.

Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.