

11 December 2024

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Engl1200

Final Project Report

My goal with my final project was to develop a basic app that would help an English learner practice a specific area of the English language. What I found after some brief research is that English learners will struggle with subject-verb agreement- for example, a student might write “he watch tv” instead of “he watches tv”. So, my app idea became this: generate a correctly formatted sentence using a subject, a noun, and a verb. The words in that sentence are then presented in a random order along with the incorrect form of the verb. The user must then select the correct words in the correct order. Ideally, this app would do similar practice with other similar English trouble areas, as well as offering feedback on why a user was incorrect in their writing.

Given my limited development time, I chose to use Python (ease of use, familiarity) with the ‘tkinter’ library to build the app with a user interface. I had a few ideas about building this project, as it pertains to my progress in Computer Science:

1. I want to practice using Python- the vast majority of my CS classes have used Java, so building an app in python is a good refresher.
2. I have never really built a user interface for my scripts, let alone in python. Learning the tkinter library will be a useful skill for potential future projects.
3. Given the relatively simple nature of the app that I was trying to build, I wanted to try development using ChatGPT’s help. This would a) be representative of what coding stuff like this in the future will be like, and b) \*should\* help me develop the app faster in the limited time that I have.

That third point ended up being more interesting than I thought- I figured ChatGPT would not be terribly useful, essentially only functioning to help me learn the tkinter library. However, it surprised me by being able to write the sentence generation aspect of the app, as well as creating a basic outline for the user interface. It proved incredibly helpful, and even fixed its own code when I prompted it to. While a bit of an accidental discovery, I think ChatGPT could actually be used to quickly and easily create little practice programs like what I’ve created- someone who is familiar with coding and the correct answers would just have to verify that it’s working correctly, and make changes as needed.

My thought is that apps like the one I made could be created and used by English teachers to help their students practice English. I think that doing things this way has several advantages- first, the app can be easily tailored to the class. If they are using a limited selection of verbs, for example, then only those would be included. In areas where reliable internet access is uncommon, having an offline program like this is also advantageous because it would only require the teacher to have internet access – or no internet strictly needed if the program is made elsewhere. Subjectively, I also think the simplicity of an app like this could be better for some, where software bloat becomes distracting.