Refactoring Dynamic Languages

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ABSTRACT

The need to create better support tools rises with the growing importance of programming as a skill among areas non related with any computation field. One important tool of an IDE is the refactoring tool which allow the users to safely improve their program quality.

Racket a descendant of Scheme that is widely used in introductory courses for teaching computer science. Racket has an IDE, DrRacket with is a simple and pedagogic IDE that do not have refactoring operations besides the rename.

In this paper, we present a refactoring tool for beginner users in DrRacket. Which provides simple refactoring operations for the typical errors made by beginner users. And it also provide an automatic detection of possible refactoring operations showing which refactoring operations could be applied.

1. INTRODUCTION

Programing relevance as a skill is growing in areas non related with any computation field. This urge to know how to program as a complementary skill to the main degree demands better support tools for the novice programmers. We consider a novice/beginner programmer as a user who had one semester of programming class.

There are several languages known to be suited for the initial contact with programming, such as Scheme, Racket, Python and JavaScript which are used in introductory courses around the world. In addition, there are integrated development environments (IDEs) which the main concern are users with little or no previous contact with programming [1]. The pedagogical aware IDE try to provide the tools and the means to create better programs while simplifying the complexity of a typical IDE [2].

One important module of an IDE is the embedded refactoring tool. The refactoring tool provides support to refactoring operations which are the process of improving the design of an existing code base [3] without changing the behavior of the program. Languages used in introductory courses already have refactoring tools available, however they were made for more advanced users and not for beginners. The lack of refactoring operations for beginner users makes those refactoring tools unfit for a beginner.

A refactoring tool for beginner users needs to improve code made by them, with refactoring operations for the typical errors made, and simple enough to be used by a beginner user. Automatic detection would also help the users to know the refactoring operations available and where they are applicable.

In contrast, the typical refactoring tools do not provide any support for the detection of code which might or should be refactored. On top of that, the IDEs in which most of those tools are embedded are too complex for beginners to use, such as Eclipse[4], IntelliJ [5], NetBeans [6], VisualStudio, Vim[7], Emacs[8]. Requiring the user to become familiar with Unix or DOS shell and for others need to understand the special commands to properly use the IDE. Therefore having a steep learning curve, which makes it difficult to beginners explore the tool. For instance, Eclipse has around 300 menu bar options and Visual studio 280 with is a massive amount of options for the user to select. On the other end, DrRacket has around 100. Regardless the number of options available, the options available in Eclipse or in Visual studio were in average more complex than the options available in DrRacket.

Provide a refactoring tool aimed (made) for beginners, students that have one semester of programing classes, that helps to improve typical design errors made and in addition can make suggestions showing the possible refactoring operations found. Such refactoring tool brings a new set of options for the beginners to use in order to safely improve their code and while they get used to a refactoring tool.

DrRacket, formely known as DrScheme is a pedagogical IDE [9] [10], tailor made for the Racket programming language, which currently does not have refactoring operations exept from the rename. DrRacket is already used in introductory courses around the world. Such refactoring tool would be an extension to the DrRacket IDE that is already used in several introductory courses, and known as a good language to learn how to program.

2. RELATED WORK

Several refactoring tools were analyzed to guide our development. Our focus was on dynamic languages which are used in introductory courses or that have similarities with

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Racket.

2.1 Scheme

A refactoring tool [11] for scheme, implemented in Lisp that uses two forms of information, AST (Abstract Syntax Tree) and PDG (Program Dependence Graph).

The AST represents the abstract syntactic structure of the program. While the PDG explicitly represents the key relationship of dependence between operations in the program. The graph vertices's represent program operations and the edges represent the flow of data and control between operations. However the PDG only has information of dependencies of the program. And if there are two semantically unrelated statements they could be placed arbitrarily with respect to each other. Using the AST as the main representation of the program ensures that statements are not arbitrarily reorder. And the PDG is only used as a notation to prove that transformations preserve the meaning and as quick way to retrieve needed dependence information. Contours are used with the PDG providing scope information, non existent in the PDG, to help reason about transformations in the PDG. With these structures it is possible to have a single formalism to reason effectively about flow dependencies and scope structure.

2.2 Haskell

HaRe [12] is a refactoring tool for Haskell that integrates with Emacs and Vim. The HaRe system uses an AST of the program to be refactored in order to reason about the transformations to do. The system has also a token stream in order to preserve the comments and the program layout by keeping information about the source code location and the comments of all tokens. It retrieves scope information from the AST, that allows to have refactoring operations that require binding information of variables. The system also allows the users to design their own refactoring operations using the HaRe API.

2.3 Python

2.3.1 Rope

Rope[13, p. 109] is a Python refactoring tool written in Python, which works like a Python library. In order to make it easier to create refactoring operations, Rope assumes that a Python program only has assignments and functions calls. Thus, by limitating the complexity of the languages reduces the complexity of the refactoring tool. Rope uses a Static Object Analysis, which analyses the modules or scope to get information about functions. Rope only analyses the scopes when they change and it only analyses the modules when asked by the user, because this approach is time consuming.

The other approach is the Dynamic Object Analysis that requires running the program in order to work. The Dynamic Object Analysis gathers type information and parameters passed to and returned from functions in order to get all the information needed. It stores the information collected by the analysis in a database. If Rope needs the information and there is nothing on the database the Static object inference starts trying to infer the object information. This approach makes the program run much slower, thus it is only active when the user decides.Rope uses an AST in order to store the syntax information about the programs.

2.3.2 Bicycle Repair Man

Bicycle Repair Man Bicycle Repair Man is a Refactoring Tool for Python written in Python. This refactoring tool can be added to IDEs and editors, such as Emacs, Vi, Eclipse, and Sublime Text. Bicycle Repair Man is an attempt to create the refactoring browser functionality for Python and has the following refactoring operations: extract method, extract variable, inline variable, move to module, and rename.

The tool has an AST to represent the program and a database that has information about several program entities and dependency information.

2.3.3 Pycharm-edu

Pycharm Educational Edition[1], or Pycharm edu, is a IDE for Python created by JetBrains, the creator of IntelliJ. The IDE was specially designed for the educational purpose, for programmers with little or no previous coding experience. Pycharm EDU is a simpler version of Pycharm community which is the free python IDE created by JetBrains. Therefore t is very similar to their normal IDEs it has interesting features as code completion, version control tools integration. However it has a simpler interface when compared with Pycharm Community and other IDEs such as Eclipse or Visual Studio.

It has integrated a python tutorial and the big advantage is the possibility of the teachers creating tasks/tutorials for the students. However the Refactoring Tool did not received the same care as the IDE itself. The refactoring operations are exactly the as the Pycharm community IDE wich were made for more advanced users. Therefore it does not provide specific refactoring operations to beginners.

2.4 Javascript

There are few refactoring tools for JavaScript but there is a framework [14] for refactoring JavaScript programs. In order to guarantee the correctness of the refactoring operation, the framework uses preconditions, expressed as query analyses provided by pointer analysis. Queries to the pointer analysis produces over-approximations of sets in a safe way to have correct refactoring operations. For example, while doing a rename operation, it over-approximates the set of expressions that must be modified when a property is renamed in a safe manner. To prove the concept, three refactoring operations were implemented, namely rename, encapsulate property, and extract module. By using over-approximations it is possible to be sure when a refactoring operation is valid. However, this approach has the disadvantage of not applying every possible refactoring operation, because the refactoring operations for which the framework cannot guarantee behavior preservation are prevented which accounts for 6.2% of all rejections.

3. ARCHITECTURE

In order to create correct refactorings the refactoring tool uses two sources of information, the def-use-relations and the AST of the program. The def-use-relations are visually represented in a form of Arrows in DrRacket, that information is especially relevant for refactoring operations such as Extrac-Function, Add-Prefix, Organize-Imports, etc.

[1]https://www.jetbrains.com/pycharm-edu/

The AST is represented by the syntax expressions (s-exp) which composes the racket program. In Racket everything is a syntax-expression and therefore accessing the list (tree) of the syntax-expressions has all the information that a normal AST provides.

[INSERT IMAGE HERE]

3.1 Syntax Expressions

The s-exp list represent the AST, which provides information about the structure of the program. The s-exp list are already being produced and used by the Racket language and in DrRacket. They represent the program and are computed in order to provide error information to the user. DrRacket already provides functions which computes the program's s-exp list and uses some of those functions in the online check syntax and in the check syntax button callback.

[insert images here explaining that]

3.1.1 Syntax Expression tree forms

DrRacket provides functions to compute the s-exp list in two different formats. One format is the expanded program, this format is used by the Check Syntax and the online check syntax, and computes the program with all the macros expanded. The other format is the non-expanded program and computes the program with the macros unexpanded.

The expanded program has the macros expanded and the identifier information correctly computed, however it is harder to extract the relevant information when compared with the non expanded program.

For example, the following program is represented in the expanded program, and in the non expanded program.

Listing 1: "example"

```
#lang racket
(if (= (+ 1 2) 1)
      #f
      #t)
```

Listing 2: "Syntax from Example"

```
#<syntax:3:0 (if (< 1 2) #t #f)>
```

Listing 3: "Expanded Syntax from example"

```
#<syntax:1:0 (module anonymous-module racket
  (#%module-begin (module configure-runtime
    (quote #%kernel)#%module-begin
      (#%require racket/runtime-config)
        (#%app configure (quote #f))))
          (#%app call-with-values (lambda ()
            (if (#%app < (quote 1) (quote 2))
              (quote #t) (quote #f))) print-values)))
```

The expanded program transforms the "and", "or", "when" and "unless" forms into ifs and that makes refactoring operations harder to implement.

Racket adds internal representation information to the expanded-program which for most refactoring operations are not needed.

However, the expanded program has important information regarding the binding information that is not available in the non-expanded form and is rather useful to detect if two identifiers refer to the same binding. In addition, the expanded program has a format that is likely to change in the future. Racket is an evolving language and the expanded form is a low level and internal form of representation of the program.

All those combined make it desirable to use the non expanded form for the refactoring operations whenever possible and use the expanded form only for the necessary operations.

Macros usage could make the refactoring operations incorrect by modifying the program behavior. However, since the refactoring tool is targeted at unexperienced programmers macros would be used often it is not considered part of the scope of this refactoring tool capabilities.

Nevertheless, if we intended to create a tool that supports macros the non expanded program is insufficient and the expanded program must be used. However there are no guarantees that would be enough to ensure the correctness of such refactoring operations due to the reflection capabilities of Racket.

3.2 Def-Use-Relations

Def-Use-Relations hold an important information in order to produce correct refactoring operations because they can be used to check whether or not there will be a duplicated name or even to compute the arguments of a function to be extracted. DrRacket already uses the def-use-relations in the system and they are visually represented by arrows in the GUI. The def-use-relations is computed by the online-compiler that runs in the background However it is only processed when a program is syntactically correct. (e.g. if a program has syntax errors there are no arrows produced in DrRacket)

3.3 Code-walker

The code-walker is used to parse the syntax tree represented by a syntax elements that is a list of s-exp in racket. A syntax element can contain either a symbol, a syntax-pair, a datum (number, boolean or string), or an empty list. While a syntax-pair is a pair containing a syntax object as it first element and a syntax pair, a syntax element or an empty list as the second argument. Each syntax-object has information about the line where they are defined and this information is to search for the correct elements.

Most of the time using the code-walker we are searching for a specific syntax element and location information contained in the syntax-object is used to skip the syntax blocks that are before the syntax element wanted in the first place.

The Code-walker is a core part of the refactoring tool ensuring that the selected syntax is correctly fed to the refactoring operations.

4. WRITTING

4.1 Syntax-Parse

The Syntax-Parse function provided by Racket is rather useful for the refactoring operations regarding mainly syntax information. It has a wide range of options to help matching the correct syntax it also have backtracking. With Backtracking it is possible to have several rules to be matched in the same syntax parser which helps to create more sophisticated rules.

4.1.1 Literal vs Datum-literal

One of the options in the syntax-parse is the possibility to specify if an element is a literal. The #:literals option specifies identifiers that should be treated as literals rather than pattern variables. This option helps to ensure that a refactoring operation made is targeted only to the correct elements of the language. Datum literals, represented by #:datum-literals are a complementary keyword to the literals. Datum-literals match symbols instead of an identifier and can be rather useful as the literals option because it provides a wider range of options.

However because of an unknown bug the literals option only works with the expanded-program and we are limited to use the datum-literals option. This could possible create incorrect refactoring transformations when the user renames the literals of the language. e.g(renaming the if, cond, let, defines, syntax, when, unless, etc)

4.2 Pretty Printing

Pretty Printing (E.g. Cond lets etc) The racket makes it easy to modify syntax using the syntax-parse to transform the AST into another AST. In order to produce indented code we choose to use a pretty-printer already incorporated in the language. However this pretty-printer does not follow the convention in the cond clauses should be surrounded by [] parenthesis. This is not considered a problem because Racket supports both representations. One possible solution is to use a different pretty-printer in order to keep the language convention.

5. REFACTORING OPERATIONS

5.1 Semantic problems

There are known semantic problems that might occur after doing a refactoring operation. One of those problem occurs when removing the and of the following example

Listing 4: "Example"

```
(and (< 1 (foo 2)) (< (foo 2) 3))
```

The refactoring transforms the code into this:

Listing 5: "Example"

```
(< 1 (foo 2) 3)
```

This refactoring operation has a semantic problem if the function "foo" has side effects, for example as said in the .

Listing 6: "Foo"

```
(define (foo arg)
  (displayln "foo"))
```

Instead of applying the side effect that is displaying the the string "foo" it will only display the it once. Therefore changing the meaning of the program.

We still kept this refactoring operation because in the vast majority of the cases this refactoring operation does not change the semantic of the program. Furthermore, the possible solution would limit excessively this refactoring operation. Considering Racket's reflection capabilities we would only apply this refactoring operation safely when the arguments of the function, in this case " < " were datums (number, boolean or string).

5.2 Extract Function

Extract function is an important refactoring operation that every refactoring tool should have. However there are some concerns to have into account. In order to extract a function it is necessary to compute the arguments needed to the correct use of the function. While giving the name to a function seams quite straightforward it is necessary to check for name duplication in order to produce a correct refactoring. (e.g. having two identifiers with the same name, in the same scope produces an incorrect program and therefore modifying the meaning of the program) Then computing the body and replacing it by the call should be straightforward. Another problem is where should the function extracted to. A function can not be defined in an expression, (e.g inside a let) but it could be defined in the top-level or in any other level that is accessible from the top level.

e.g: When extracting the (+ 1 2) to a function where should it be defined? Top-level? level-0 level-1 or in the current level, level-2?

Listing 7: "Example"

```
;;top-level
(define (level-0)
  (define (level-1)
    (define (level-2)
      (+ 1 2))
    (level-2))
  (level-1))
```

The fact is that is extremely difficult to know the answer to this question because it depends on what the user is doing and the user interpretation. Accordingly we think that the best solution is to let the user decide where he want the function defined.

5.2.1 Computing the arguments

In order to compute the arguments we have to know in which scope the variables are being defined, in other words, if the variables are defined inside or outside the extracted function.The variables defined outside the function to be extract are the candidates to be the argument of that function, however imported variables, whether from the language or from other libraries does not have to be passed as arguments. We considered two possible solutions: -Def-use-relations + Text information -Def-use-relations + AST

The first approach is simpler to implement and more direct than the second one. However it is less tolerant to future changes and to errors. The second one combines the Arrow information with the syntax information to check whether it is imported from the language or from other library.

We choose the second approach in order to provide a more stable solution to compute correctly the arguments of the new function.

5.3 Let to Define

Changing a let form to a define could be rather useful when the user notices that instead of a let form it should be a function.

There are several types of let forms, but the most common are the let and the let*. There is a subtle difference between this two keywords that influences directly the simplicity of the solution. the let defines variables independently, while let* can use the value of the variable defined before. e.g:

There is a global variable a defined with value 10. in the let we define variable a with 1 and variable b = a + 1 (let ([a 1] [b (+ a 1)]))

Listing 8: "Example"

```
(define a 10)
(let ([a 1]
      [b (+ a 1)])
      ...
      )
```

This let, because it defines the variables independently the value of b is 11.

Listing 9: "Example"

```
(define a 10)
(let* ([a 1]
      [b (+ a 1)])
      ...
      )
```

However in the case of let* the value of b is 2.

Named let is a let that has a name and can be called, like a function. The named let is directly mapped as a function and therefore might be useful to transform to a function. The same applies from a function to a named let. However this has a problem, a let form can be used in expressions, but the define can not. In the vast majority of cases this refactoring is correct, but when a let is used in an expression it is not correct and it changes the meaning of the program, transforming a correct program in a incorrect one. e.g

Listing 10: "Example"

```
(and (let* test ((a 1)) (< a 2)) (< b c))
```

Modifying this named let into a define would raise a syntax error because a define could not be used in an expression context.

This could be solved by using the local keyword that is an expression like the let form. However the local is not used very often and can confuse the users. This reason made us keep the refactoring operation without the local keyword that works for most of the cases.

5.4 Define to Let

Refactoring Define to Let Usefulness Vs Implementation difficulty Useful for when changing several defines and merging them into a let. the let would "swallow" all the range of the defines scope Interesting?

It would be let* and named let* If define is a function it does not work. Is that worth it?

5.5 Ambiguities

There are some cases where two types of syntax refactoring apply. Eg:

Listing 11: "Example"

```
(if ?x
    (begin ?y ...)
    #f)
```

The two different refactoring transformations are possible:

Listing 12: "Example"

```
(when ?x
      ?y ...)
```

Listing 13: "Example"

```
(and ?x (begin ?y ...))
```

The programmer could want in some situations choose one approach and in others choose the other one. For example if a programmer is creating a predicate may choose the and version, whereas if the programmer is using another control structure may prefer the when version.

This example shows how hard it is to have an semi-automated refactoring tool that gives suggestions. It could displays both possibilities, but that will create an precedent meaning that if a refactoring has several possibilities the tool has to display every one. Or it could only display that there is a refactoring opportunity. This requires further reflection to choose the best approach to the problem.

5.6 Implemented Refactoring Operations:

Is this worth it?

6. FEATURES

6.1 User FeedBack

It is important to give proper feedback to the user while the user is preforming the refactoring operations. It was studied the best form to inform users what were the conditions that did not allow a refactoring operation. And also, how to inform which are the steps in order to allow that refactoring operation to occur, instead of just disabling the refactoring button. However after an analysis it was clear that these situations rarely occur in Racket language and therefore it was not implemented. However if a language is statement based instead of expression based the situation changes and the importance of the User Feedback increases.

6.2 Refactoring Preview

An important goal of this refactoring tool is to let beginner users to know what refactoring operations exist, what they do, and how to use them. Previewing the outcome of a refactoring operation is an efficient form to help the users understand the result of a refactoring before even applying the refactoring. Previewing works by applying the refactoring operation in a copy version of the AST and displaying those changes to the user.

6.3 Wide-Scope Replacement

The Wide-Scope replacement brings the possibility to replace all the duplicated code with a function call. This is usually performed after an extract function refactoring. The Wide-Scope Replacement brings an huge improvement on the utility of the refactoring regarding the use of the extract function refactoring operation.

It searches for the code that is duplicated of the extracted function and then it replaces for the call of the extracted function. The Wide-Scope replacement refactoring operation is divided in two steps: detect duplicated code Replace the duplicated code

Replacing the duplicated code is the easy part, however the tool might has to compute the arguments for the duplicated code itself. The argument computation occurs when

the code is the same, but it has different variable names. This is not yet in this version of the refactoring tool.

6.3.1 Detecting duplicated code

Correctly detect code duplication is a key part for the correctness of this refactoring. Even the simplest form of duplicated code detection, when it only detects code duplication when the code is exactly equal, may have some problems regarding the bindings. For example, if the duplicated code is inside a let that changes some binding that must be taken into consideration. Racket already provides functions that compute if the bindings are the same. However that does not work if we consider the program in the not expanded form because there is not enough information for those bindings to work.

Therefore, in order to compute the correct bindings, it is necessary to use the expanded form of the program.

The naive solution is to use the expanded program to detect the duplicated code and then use this information to do the replacing of the duplicated code. However when expanding the program Racket adds necessary internal information to run the program itself that are not visible for the user. While this does not change the detecting of the duplicated code, this adds unnecessary information that would have to be removed. In order to solve this problem in a simple way we can use the expanded code to detect the correctly duplicated code and use the non expand program to compute which code will be replaced.

However this detection is a quadratic algorithm (TODO check this) which might have some performance problems for bigger programs.

Detecting duplicated code can be added to the automatic detection of possible refactoring operations to be applied. Notifying the users of a possible extract function operation if there is duplicated code. This is a rather useful notification because for programs that are bigger than the visible part of the screen. Which might be difficulty for the user to remember if a piece of code was duplicated or not.

6.3.2 Automatic Suggesting

Automatic Suggesting refactoring opportunities like the name suggests it suggests possible refactoring operations to the users. This feature is rather useful in order to have a general idea what possible refactoring operations can be done in a piece of software. It is also important for inexperienced users because with this feature, they can have an idea what refactoring operations can be applied or not.

In order to detect possible refactoring operations it parses the code from the beginning to the end and tries to check if a refactoring is applicable. To do that it tries to match every syntax expression using syntax parse. In other words it uses brute force to check whether a expression can be applied a refactoring operation or not. Automatic Suggesting is mainly applied to syntax refactoring operations, however it could be applied to the Extract-Function refactoring operation using the simple detection of duplicated code to inform the user that might be useful to extract a function instead of having duplicated code.

To properly display this information it highlights the source-code indicating that there is a possible refactoring. This feature could be improved by having a set of colors for the different types of refactoring operations. And the color intensity could be proportional to the level of suggestion. (e.g the recommended level to use extract function refactoring increases with the number of duplicated code found)

Table 1: Data Structures

Name	AST	PDG	Database	Others
Griswold	X	X		
HaRe	X			
Rope	X		X	
Bicycle	X		X	
Pycharm	X		X	
Javascript				X

7. ANALYSIS

This table summarizes the data structures of the refactoring tools deeply analyzed. It is clear that the AST of a program is an essential part of the refactoring tool information with every Refactoring tool having an AST to represent the program. Regarding the PDG and Database it has mainly information about the def-use-relation of the program. The PDG has also control flow information among others.

HaRe only uses the AST as a source of information of the program. Thus, by not having the def-use-relation or a PDG it has less information to perform the refactoring operations. However because HaRe is for the Haskell program language that is purely-functional programming language that extra information is not necessary to perform a good set of refactoring operations correctly.

Our developed tool uses the same types of information, namely the AST and the def-use-relations. Some tools like the one build by Griswold has more information available when compared to the one developed by us.

The refactoring tool developed by us uses the same data structures, the AST and def-use-relations. The def-use-relation is often represented as a database, sometimes that information is annotated in the AST, and onther times are extracted from the AST itself when it is possibel or even from the PDG. Some tools have more information about the program, either because they need that information to perform the refactoring operation or because they need to prove that the refactoring is correct.

Undoubtly the main difference is in the objectives of each refactoring tool. Some tools like the one build by Griswold focus on the correctness of the refactoring operations. Others, in the refactoring operations for professional or advanced users. However, the goal of our refactoring tool is to provide refactoring operations designed for beginners. Therefore we are not interested in having refactoring operations formerly proven correct or used in advanced and complex use cases. We intend to have simple, useful, and correct for the usual use cases a beginner would use. With this set of scope we exclude macros usage, classes and other complex structures not used by beginners.

8. EVALUATION

Case Study: (find a good ones) FP Project, Architecture Project. For SLATE Correctness: Here?

[INSERT EXAMPLES HERE]

Listing 14: "example"

```
(if (>= n_jogadas 35)
```

```
        #T
        #F)
```

Listing 15: "Refactoring and expression"

```
(and
  (and
   (eq? #t (movimento-valido? jogador jogada))
   (eq? #t (peca-jogador? jogador jogada)))
  (and
   (eq? #t (casa-destino-vazia? jogada))
   (eq? #t (casa-inicial-vazia? jogada))))
```

These are some real examples of pieces of code made for beginners, in the course project of the programming introductory course.

The examples show the usage of some of the refactoring operations previous presented and here is explained the motivation for their existence. This examples are appear repeatedly in almost every project. Thus, supporting the need to this kind of refactoring.

Beginners often use error and trial approach in code writing which led to peaces of code like the presented above. If the users had a refactoring tool that highlighted their code in areas that could be improved, they certainly would not have this kind of code.

9. CONCLUSION

The growing interest in programming as a skill combined with the need of areas non related with any computation field creating the need to improve the support given to the beginner user. Therefore a refactoring tool designed for beginners in a pedagogical environment such as DrRacket would benefit those users as it would help them in their first contact with a refactoring tool and improve their code safely.

Our solution tries to help those users to improve their programs and to facilitate the first contact with a refactoring tool. By having a refactoring tool designed for beginners in a pedagogical environment that suggests possible refactoring operations.

We also shown the practicability of the refactoring tool with simple refactoring operations that improved safely the beginners code.

10. FUTURE WORK

There are some improvements that we consider important. For example it would be a huge improvement to detect when a developer is refactoring in order to help the developer finish the refactoring by doing it automatically. This would be important specially for beginners that would help them finishing the transformations safely while teaching them refactoring operations.

Our automatic detecting of duplicated code is still very naive. Therefore improving the detection of duplicated to be smarter and understand if two variables represent the same even if the names are different, or even if the order of some commutative expressions is not the same.

It is possible to improve the automatic suggestion of refactoring operations by having different colors for different types of refactoring operations. This would let the user know what refactoring is being suggested without having to select the area. Another improvement that could be made is the color intensity of the suggestion. With a lower intensity for low "priority" refactoring operations and a high intensity for higher "priority". Thus giving the user a better knowledge of what is a better way to solve a problem or what is a strongly recommendation to change the code.

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