Review of: "Computer-Assisted Language Learning Tools for Punctuation in Dyslexia: Development and Evaluation"

Timothy Lethbridge[1]

1 University of Ottawa

This tool is designed to help people with reading difficulty improve their writing, with a focus on punctuation. It does this by reading the text out loud, so the writer can figure out where commas are needed.

The ability to proof-listen while the software highlights the words it is reading is a good idea.

The paper is backed up by lots of theory. Unfortunately the tool has some important weaknesses.

The instructions seem unclear for someone arriving at the site. It doesn't suggest to add commas (which is the point, as I understand it). If one clicks on 'Instructions', it says "do you hear any pauses? Do you need more pauses?". If the user thinks, "yes", what do they do? Presumably they are supposed to actually add commas; it should say so.

This is a site for people with reading and writing difficulties. Maybe it should say this, without having to click 'about'. It could say that in the instructions.

It would be good if it was possible for the instructions to be read aloud too.

Surely punctuation is more than commas! What about full stops (periods), or semicolons.

I do not see the point of the 5 attempts remaining that counts down to zero. The user can bypass this by copy and pasting their text into a new window with the same page.

I clicked 'Check my writing' and it says 'Sentence length: 0 words'. Perhaps that is because I had already added a full stop. On further testing, I see that if you type more text after the full stop, it will measure the length of that sentence, but not the previous sentence. It would be better if it would measure the length of the sentence you have just edited, not the last one.

If you check the text, you can no longer proof-listen or do anything more (apparently). There is no button for resuming (going back to proof-listening), even if you some of your 5 chances remaining.

If you click on 'Write, Listen, Check' at the top, all your text is erased! It turns out you can 'go back' in the browser to get the text back, but this is not clear.

You say "yellow, peach, and orange provided the most readable backgrounds." But your system only changes the background of the unimportant areas. The background of the text remains white, and the background of the instructions remains black.

In the paper you show it suggesting to add commas after 'So', but I could not get it to suggest commas anywhere! A core feature seems missing.

The chatbot is in early development and is not present, so should not be discussed.

The tool was last updated two years before I was asked to review this paper. I see no reference to actual user testing, and any subsequent improvements to the software.

Suggested improvement in text:

'Ghotit is a software that allows customisation' -> 'Ghotit is software that allows customisation'

Qeios ID: 9W9Q6F   ·   https://doi.org/10.32388/9W9Q6F

2/2