

Smart Reading Companion for Early Learners

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ABSTRACT

This project presents a Smart Reading Companion designed to support early learners in improving reading skills and voice recognition. The system combines interactive exercises, AI-based speech transcription, and real-time feedback to adapt to the learner's pace. By analyzing spoken words, calculating accuracy, and measuring reading speed, the application provides personalized feedback to foster literacy development. This paper discusses the system design, implementation, features, advantages, and potential applications for early education.

Keywords: Smart Reading Companion, Early Learners, Speech Recognition, Literacy, Interactive Learning

1. Introduction

Reading is a foundational skill for children, critical to their academic development. Traditional methods often struggle to provide real-time feedback and personalized learning experiences. The Smart Reading Companion leverages programming and AI to provide interactive reading sessions where learners can read, speak, and receive immediate feedback. This project emphasizes enhancing reading skills, measuring pronunciation accuracy, and evaluating reading speed in young learners.

2. Literature Review / Previous Work

Existing educational applications provide e-books, interactive stories, or simple quizzes. However, few applications focus on real-time speech recognition and personalized feedback for early learners. Voice-enabled AI systems, gamified learning apps, and adaptive reading assistants have shown improved engagement and skill development in early childhood education. This project integrates these concepts into a desktop application using Python, Tkinter, and AI-based transcription for accurate evaluation.

3. System Design / Methodology

The Smart Reading Companion consists of the following components:

User Interface (Tkinter)

- Provides multiple interactive slides: instructions, text entry, speech recording, and results.
- Fullscreen and zoomed modes for accessibility.

Speech Recording Module (sounddevice)

- Records user's voice for a fixed duration.
- Saves audio as a WAV file for transcription.

AI Transcription Module (Groq API)

- Uses Groq's Whisper model to convert recorded audio into text.
- Handles API calls and error management for robust transcription.

Accuracy & Speed Evaluation (Levenshtein distance)

- Compares user's spoken words with typed text to calculate pronunciation accuracy.
- Calculates reading speed in Words Per Minute (WPM).

Feedback System

- Provides real-time results including accuracy percentage, speed, and suggestions.
- Encourages learners with motivational messages based on performance.

Flow

- User writes a word/sentence → speaks it → system records → transcribes → calculates metrics → displays results.

Applications / Use Cases

- **Home Education:** Parents can use the system to help children practice reading at home.
- **Preschools / Kindergartens:** Teachers can integrate the companion into classroom activities.
- **Special Education:** Helps identify pronunciation challenges early.
- **Gamified Learning:** Encourages engagement with interactive feedback and motivational messages.

Advantages / Benefits

- **Personalized Feedback:** Accuracy and speed metrics tailored to each learner.
- **Interactive Interface:** Multi-slide UI keeps learners engaged.
- **Improved Reading Skills:** Encourages frequent practice and confidence.
- **Error Handling:** Manages recording or transcription failures without disrupting the session.
- **Portable and Accessible:** Runs on any system with Python and necessary libraries installed.

Challenges / Limitations

- **API Dependency:** Requires a valid Groq API key for transcription.
- **Voice Recognition Accuracy:** May vary based on pronunciation, accent, or background noise.
- **Device Requirements:** Needs a microphone and adequate system resources.
- **Limited Content:** Currently allows single sentence or word practice; future expansion needed.

Future Scope / Recommendations

- **Multilingual Support:** Add other languages for wider applicability.
- **Expanded Content Library:** Include stories, lessons, and exercises for extended learning.
- **Mobile App Version:** Port the project to tablets or smartphones.
- **Gamification Enhancements:** Introduce rewards, badges, and progress tracking.
- **AI Improvements:** Use advanced models for better transcription and pronunciation analysis.

4. Conclusion

The Smart Reading Companion provides an interactive platform for early learners to practice reading with real-time speech recognition and personalized feedback. By combining programming, AI, and a user-friendly interface, the project fosters literacy development and engagement. Its implementation demonstrates the potential of AI-assisted educational tools in early childhood learning.

References

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