

I have researched Microsoft Word online to see how it makes use of NLP and have found several features that make use of it.

One of the most used functions is the spelling and grammar checker, that checks each word as you type. This is enabled in the Proofing menu in File-Options. Word's inbuilt dictionary and grammar checker are used to cross reference against what is typed, any words that are not found in the dictionary are underlined red and alternatives are provided for the user to pick via a right click. For some words where there might only be a slight misspelling such as letters in the wrong order, the program will autocorrect. Any grammar errors are underlined in blue. The program uses rules and algorithms to check what has been written to spot any grammatical errors and then offer suggestions to correct. By performing the checks as the user works, they can correct any errors as they go which is likely to be easier and more efficient rather than calling the spelling and grammar check once the document is completed.

Another NLP application in Word is to provide synonyms and antonyms. When you right click on a word if there are alternatives then a synonyms menu will appear which will show a list of words of the same meaning. This can help the user broaden their range of words and avoid repetitive sounding phrases. For antonyms, the thesaurus needs to be called either from right clicking or Shift-F7, if any opposite meaning words are available, they will be shown. This can be useful if you can't think of the opposite meaning yourself.

Since February 2021, Word has also provided text prediction. As you type Word uses NLP to auto-predict what you are typing from anything from a single word to enough words to complete the sentence, these can be accepted by pressing the Tab key. This can greatly speed up the document creation process and even provide better words/phrases than the user would think of themselves.

Another great use of NLP in Word is the Dictate feature. The user can dictate into their microphone and the built-in speech recognition software of Word will output the spoken word into the text editor. This can be of great benefit to users who may have limitations that can affect them using a keyboard.

The transcribe feature available in Word on Microsoft 365 uses NLP. Users simply upload the audio file into Word and the file will be transcribed with each speaker separated if there is more than one detected. This will greatly speed up the transcribe process but on the other hand does make the task that would normally be performed by a secretary, redundant.