# Exploring Application of Grammarly to English Speech Draft Writing: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations

**Pengbiao Zhang[*], Huan Yuan, Fengjunzi Wang**

Hubei Business College, Hubei Wuhan 430000

**Abstract:** This paper critically examines the efficacy of Grammarly, an AI-driven writing tool, in facilitating the English speech drafting process among college students. Employing a descriptive qualitative research methodology, the study rigorously assesses the impact of Grammarly on student performance metrics. Findings reveal a substantive enhancement in average test scores, escalating from 53 to 86 out of 100 subsequent to Grammarly integration. Nonetheless, discernible challenges persist across lexical, syntactic, and segmental dimensions. Consequently, this paper engages in a nuanced discussion, offering recommendations to address these inherent limitations, thereby fostering an informed utilization of Grammarly within the pedagogical landscape of English writing.

**Keywords:** Grammarly, English speech writing, recommendations

## Introduction

According to the "2021 China K12 Online English Development Blue Book" press conference, Chinese speakers now comprise 40% of the world's English-speaking population, surpassing the combined total of English speakers in the United Kingdom and the United States. This highlights the significant role of English speech for Chinese college students in global communication.

Abundant current literature studies English speech. Carnegie's *The Art of Public Speech* emphasizes rule-based learning for effective communication (2013)[1]. *Phonetics: Transcription, production, acoustics, and perception* explores the functions of phonetics in speech[2]. Lancaster's *Speechwriting: The Expert Guide* offers a definitive guide for speech writing (2018).[3] Prayudat's *Students' Writing Error in Parts of Speech* observes and finds students' errors in producing writing (2023).[4] Yet, fewer studies give guidance to college students to refine their speech writing effectively when combined with AI tools.

There are many online platforms which can help the students to check their grammar. To correct their writing, students usually use online grammar checkers such as Grammarly[5]. It can provide free services to speech writing for spelling, punctuation, grammatical issues and data-based evaluation, leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for precise suggestions[6]. However, challenges persist in lexical, syntactic, and segmental dimensions, prompting further discussion on optimizing Grammarly's utility within its limitations.

## 1. Research method

This research adopts qualitative descriptive methodology, focusing on specific fields or individuals. Qualitative studies often use purposeful sampling and offer nuanced interpretations rather than explicit conclusions. Taylor (2005, p.

236) notes that qualitative research relies on assumptions shaped by individual perspectives. [7]

This research utilizes document analysis, encompassing a range of printed, visual, digital, and physical content relevant to "Grammarly" and "English Speech Draft Writing". The analysis involves 30 speech drafts from college students, yielding 203 correctness suggestions and 16 clarity advisories. Resultantly, student text scores improved from 53 to 86 out of 100."

## 2. Opportunities

Due to limited tutor resources, Grammarly offers accessible and effective assistance through online registration. Students can input their speech drafts and receive suggestions. Correctness checks cover spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors at the lexical level, and address collocation at the syntactic level. Clarity checks improve transitions and cohesion, and manage sentence length and complexity at the syntactic level. Grammarly's data-driven feedback enhances structural integrity and content cohesion at the segmental level."

## 2.1 Correctness

Grammarly's correctness check provides immediate suggestions upon document input, addressing punctuation, spelling, collocation, tense, and subject-verb agreement. For instance, Figure 1 reveals ten issues for correction. Notably, "in today's age_" requires deletion of the blank after "age" to rectify a punctuation issue. Additionally, "Informations" should omit the "s" as it is an uncountable word. "To live" should be replaced with "living" to modify "they" properly, and "be" should be added before "immersed" for parallelism with "spend". These examples underscore Grammarly's effectiveness and precision in resolving lexical issues in English speech drafts through its correctness check.



Figure 1 Correctness Check

## 2.2 Clarity

Through clarity check, Grammarly aids students in identifying needless repetition and enhancing brevity and conciseness. This function targets redundant adverbials, structures, and lengthy expressions. For instance, in Figure 2, three redundant expressions are evident. "Due to the fact that" can be replaced with "because" for conciseness. "Leisurely" is redundant with "stroll", and "totally lacks the ability" can be replaced with "cannot". By addressing these syntactic issues, Grammarly enhances cohesion and ensures appropriate sentence length.
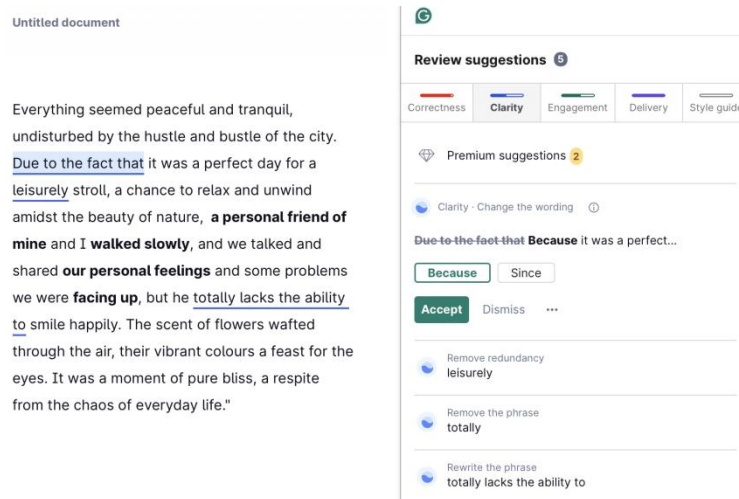


Figure 2 Clarity Check

## 2.3 Data-based feedback system

The data-based feedback system assesses speech drafts based on word count, readability, and vocabulary, providing an average score. This aids students in self-evaluation and refining their drafts at the segmental level. For instance, in Figure 3, a word length of 4.9, above the average, suggests proficiency in sentence structure. With a sentence length of 25.5, well beyond the average, it indicates a mastery of complex grammar. However, with a readability score of 41, it suggests the draft may be challenging for teenagers to comprehend, indicating a need for adjustments to enhance readability.



Figure 3 The Date-based Feedback

### 3. Challenges
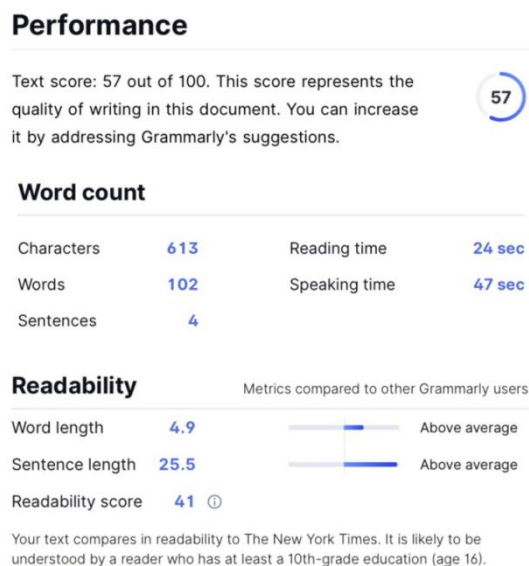
#### 3.1 Incapability for nuanced collocation and redundancy

In addressing issues such as spelling, punctuation, tense, and subject-verb agreement, Grammarly demonstrates efficacy. However, it may overlook nuanced problems related to improper collocation and meaning redundancy at the lexical and syntactic levels. For instance, in Figure 2, "a personal friend" and "a friend of mine" convey redundant meanings, suggesting the need to choose one. Similarly, "our personal feelings" contain redundant language, as "feelings" are inherently personal. Additionally, "face up" should be corrected to "face up to problems" to accurately convey "encounter problems". While Grammarly effectively handles basic issues, it may overlook more nuanced concerns.

#### 3.2 Inability for logic words

Logic words play a crucial role in English sentences, as English is inherently logical. These words include conjunctions like "and", "but" and "because", adverbs like "therefore", "besides" and "furthermore", as well as prepositional phrases like "for the purpose of", "by contrast" and "in short". However, Grammarly is unable to detect logic in sentences as it primarily focuses on identifying and correcting grammatical errors and providing suggestions. While Grammarly effectively assesses documents, it lacks the capability to revise logic words at the syntactic and segmental levels. For instance, in the sentence "In poor health, she continues to carry out her duties", Grammarly may perceive it as correct despite the hidden concession. Adding "although" before "in poor health" would clarify the logic. In summary, Grammarly serves as a functional grammar correction tool but does not address logic word usage in sentences at the syntactic and segmental levels.

#### 3.3 Malfunction for special genres like speech

Speech, as a genre, is both informative and operative, as per Katharina Reiss' Text Typology theory.[8] It should provide useful information concisely while evoking strong emotions to resonate with the audience. While Grammarly is effective in offering suggestions for correctness and grammar, it falls short in providing practical suggestions to enhance resonance. For instance, incorporating idioms like "a fish out of water" to express nervousness or adding sayings such as "Where there is life, there is hope" to enhance the ending's power and appeal cannot be facilitated by Grammarly. Therefore, Grammarly is limited in providing suggestions for articles in specialized genres like speeches at the segmental level.

### 4. Recommendations

While Grammarly offers helpful suggestions for visible lexical and syntactic issues such as spelling, punctuation, collocation, and grammatical errors, it may not adequately address more subtle issues like improper collocation, redundancy, logical word usage, or the incorporation of idioms and sayings in specialized genres. To address these nuanced challenges, students should seek improvement from tutors, utilize other AI-assistant tools like ChatGPT, consult professional books and papers, and engage with parallel documents and official media.

#### 4.1 Tutors and other AI tools

To address challenges such as invisible redundancy, collocation, and the addition of idioms and sayings at the lexical and syntactic levels, students can seek guidance from their tutors. Alternatively, other AI tools like ChatGPT can efficiently assist in adding idioms or sayings to speech drafts. By providing specific instructions such as "I am a college student writing a speech about AI in the future. I want to add three idioms and one saying to make it more natural and appealing", students can quickly obtain relevant idioms and sayings like "The only constant is change" and "Rome wasn't built in a day", which are suitable for enhancing the speech.

#### 4.2 Professional books and papers

Professional papers and books are invaluable resources, as they are the result of extensive research and investigation,

offering systematic knowledge and useful suggestions. By drawing from the work of previous scholars and researchers, students can gain valuable insights into segmental issues such as sentence structures and content development strategies. For instance, *A Basic Course in Writing* by Ding Wangdao provides guidance on sentence structures and composition techniques.[9] Additionally, reading professional papers allows students to stay updated on the latest findings in specific fields. For example, *The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Writing Scientific Review Articles* by Kacena M. A. explores the role of ChatGPT in assisting with the creation of credible, peer-reviewed scientific review articles.[10]

### 4.3 Parallel texts

Parallel texts, which cover similar topics in analogous genres, serve as valuable resources for students seeking inspiration and expertise in specific fields. By analyzing these texts, students can gain insights into language style, article framework, and logical structure. For instance, when preparing a speech on the dreams of college students, students can study famous parallel speeches such as Steve Jobs' Stanford Commencement Speech (2005) and J.K. Rowling's Harvard Commencement Speech (2008). Common traits observed in these speeches include the use of intriguing personal stories, the presentation of strong standpoints, the incorporation of supportive figures and cases, the inclusion of grounded idioms and meaningful sayings, the posing of thought-provoking questions, and the delivery of an appealing and profound conclusion.

### 5. Conclusion

Grammarly, as an AI tool, effectively addresses basic writing issues such as spelling, punctuation, collocation, grammar, and clarity at the lexical and syntactic levels. Its data-based assessment system aids students in self-assessment. However, given the unique characteristics of English speech, Grammarly may not provide constructive suggestions for issues like improper collocation, invisible redundancy, logic words, and idioms and sayings specific to speech genres. Therefore, students should seek assistance from tutors, other AI tools like ChatGPT, professional papers and books, and parallel texts to address these challenges.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### References

[1] Carnegie D. The Art of Public Speaking[M]. Massachusetts: Wyatt North Publishing, LLC; 2013.

[2] Reetz H, Jongman A. Phonetics: Transcription, production, acoustics, and perception[M]. New York: John Wiley & Sons; 2020.

[3] Lancaster S. Speechwriting: The expert guide[M]. England: The Crowood Press; 2018.

[4] Prayuda M S, Juliana J, Ambarwati N F, et al. Students' Writing Error in Parts of Speech: A Case Study of EFL Students[J]. Journal Education FKIP UNMA. 2023; 9(2): 659-665.

[5] Fitriana K, Nurazni L. Exploring English Department Students' Perceptions on Using Grammarly to Check the Grammar in Their Writing[J]. Journal of English Teaching. 2022; 8(1): 15-25.

[6] Fitria T N. Grammarly as AI-powered English writing assistant: Students' alternative for writing English[J]. Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching. 2021; 5(1): 65-78.

[7] Taylor L. Using qualitative research methods in test development and validation[J]. Research Notes, 2005, 21: 2-4.

[8] Reiss K. Type, kind and individuality of text: Decision making in translation[J]. The translation studies reader, 2000: 160-171.

[9] Ding Wangdao, Wubing. A Basic Course in Writing[M]. Beijing: Higher Education Press; 2014.

[10] Kacena M A, Plotkin L I, Fehrenbacher J C. The use of artificial intelligence in writing scientific review articles[J]. Current Osteoporosis Reports, 2024: 1-7.