

Oral and Written Production of Iranian English Learners: Scale of Fluency, Grammatical accuracy, Grammatical complexity and Lexical complexity

Elham Kavandi

Zanjan university of Medical Sciences

Abstract

This study is an attempt to explore fluency, grammatical accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity among female student teachers of English in West Azerbaijan, Iran. To find out the students four measures in the oral and written productions, we asked the individual participants to write a narrative out of the practical sequence of the story and retell the same story orally after several hours. We repeated this process for three weeks. We obtained and analyzed the data using the formula of fluency, grammatical accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity. The result showed that the participant's performance in written form developed progressively. but only in one case it developed regressively. In oral form the development followed different pattern in different cases.

Introduction

One of the challenges of working on second language acquisition (SLA) is to capture the ongoing emergence of complexity, fluency, and accuracy in the learner. The desire to investigate 'motors of change' (Thelton and Smith 1994) contributes to this challenge. While much has been learned about the SLA process since its inception, most researchers in the field have operated within a 'developmental ladder' metaphor (Fischer et al. 2003) and under certain assumptions and postulates that follow from it, assumptions concerning linguistic competence that we have inherited from linguistics.

It logically follows that they are continually created to meet new needs and circumstances' (Toolan in Leather and van Dam 2003). The dynamism of language central to this position frames questions concerning SLA in a rather different way.

Review of Related Literature

DIAN Larsen Freeman (2007) from university of Michigan argues that seeing language as a complex, dynamic system and language use/acquisition as dynamic adaptedness ('a make-do' solution) to a specific context proves a useful way of understanding change in progress, such as that which occurs with a developing L2 system. This emergentist shift of perspective provides another way of understanding previously observed characteristics of learner language, that is that its development is not discrete and stage-like but more like the waxing and waning of patterns; that, from a target-language perspective, certain aspects of the behavior are progressive, others, regressive; that change can be gradual and it can be sudden; and that the latter notably heralds the emergence of a new order qualitatively different and novel from

earlier organizations. In addition, when group data are disaggregated, it is clear that there are many paths to development. By closely examining the oral and written production of five Chinese learners of English, the emergence of complexity, fluency, and accuracy can be seen, not as the unfolding of some prearranged plan, but rather as the system adapting to a changing context, in which the language resources of each individual are uniquely transformed through use.

Research Questions

- 1- Will there be any differences in the development of fluency in the oral and written production of Iranian would be Female English teachers?
- 2- Will there be any differences in the development of grammatical accuracy in the oral and written production of Iranian would be Female English teachers?
- 3- Will there be any differences in the development of Grammatical Complexity in the oral and written production of Iranian would be Female English teachers?
- 4- Will there be any differences in the development of Lexical Complexity in the oral and written production of Iranian would be Female English teachers?

Method

For a dynamical description, it is desirable to use a time-series design, which is a series of observations of participants that are frequent enough to capture the relevant properties underlying the developmental process (van Geert and Steenbeek 2005b). To this basic design, I have added the feature of having students perform the same task at different points in time.

I concede that a repeated-task design makes it difficult to distinguish performance differences due to task repetition from those of more general language development. Bygate (2001), for instance, has demonstrated how complexity and fluency (but not accuracy) improves when learners repeat a task, and Yuan and Ellis (2003), among others, have shown how planning time affects task performance. However, using the same task several times was one way of dealing with the fact that 'even subtle differences in a task can affect performance profoundly', leaving unanswered the question of whether the subject has control over the language resources or not. I wanted to be able to look at performance variability that might be an 'important harbinger of change, or indeed the manifestation of the very process of change, not variable performance that could be due to differences in tasks or contexts. Still, of course, I had no control over how the participants chose to engage with or carry out the task, their fluid attitudes and motivation being part of the changing context.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluency also called volubility and eloquence.

Accuracy

Accuracy is the condition or quality of being true, correct or exact. It is freedom from error or defect. It is precision, exactness or correctness. Accuracy is the proximity of measurement results to the true value, precision, the repeatedly, or reproducibility of measurement.

Grammatical complexity

A definition of grammatical complexity is based on three ideas. First, language differs in the degree to which they overtly and obligatorily mark semantic distinctions. Second, a particular aspect of one grammar may differ from that aspect in another's in terms of the number of rules or foundational elements required to generate surface forms. Third, grammars differ in the degree to which they are festooned with irregularity.

Lexical complexity

A lexical definition is usually the type expected from a request for definition, and it is generally expected that such a definition will be stated as simply as possible in order to convey information to the widest audience.

Simple definition of complexity is the quality or state of not being simple, the quality or state of being complex.

Subjects

In the summer 1395 pilot study, one of the Iranian female TEFL student at the age of 22 was included in this research. Her English language proficiency could be characterized impressionistically as high intermediate. She is a senior student in Farhangiyen university of Uremia. The study was replicated during summer and repeated three times.

Procedure

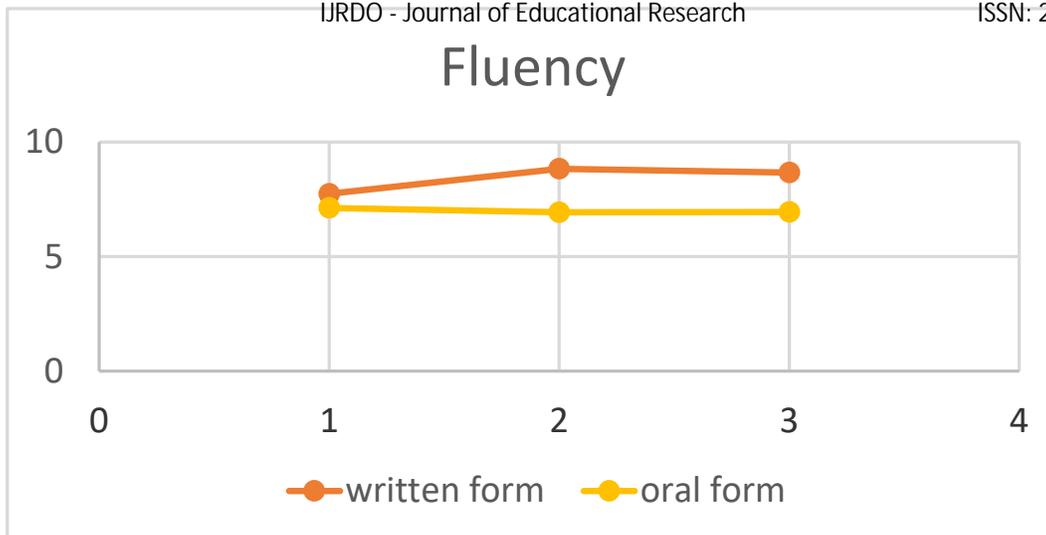
The participant was asked to carry out the same tasks 3 times over a three weeks time period, or in other words, to do the same tasks once every week. The participants were asked to write a summery about some pictures that belong to old movie and she wanted to share, without worrying about whether or not it was in perfect English and without consulting a dictionary. At first week participant wrote summery, just after two or three hour she recorded an oral summery of pictures. Three week after writing and telling the story orally, (i.e. the same story each time), the participant was asked to give the papers and data. Both renditions were untimed. Furthermore, the participant received no feedback on their performance. Her oral performance was recorded and transcribed, but the data being reported on here will largely be drawn from the written narratives.

Then, the amount of accuracy, fluency, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity according to the formula were counted and analyses were inferred.

Analyses

In this study for inducting and representing data and information in the best way, different charts were used.

A line chart or line graph is a type of chart which displays information as a series of data points called 'markers' connected by straight line segments. It is a basic type of chart common in many fields.



A bar chart or graph is rectangular bars with length proportional to the values that they represent. The bars can be plotted vertically or horizontally. A vertical bar chart is sometimes called a column bar chart.

A table is a collection of data about a particular subject that is stored in records (rows) and fields (columns).

Tabel1: The amount of fluency in written and oral form.

A.M	1st week	2nd week	3rd week
written form	7/742	8/831	8/662
oral form	7/121	6/934	6/947

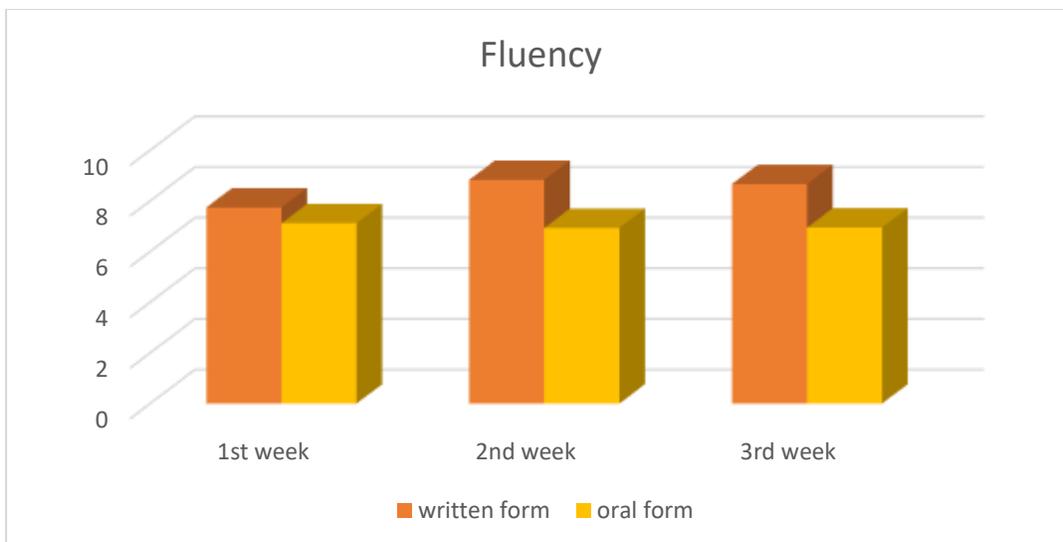
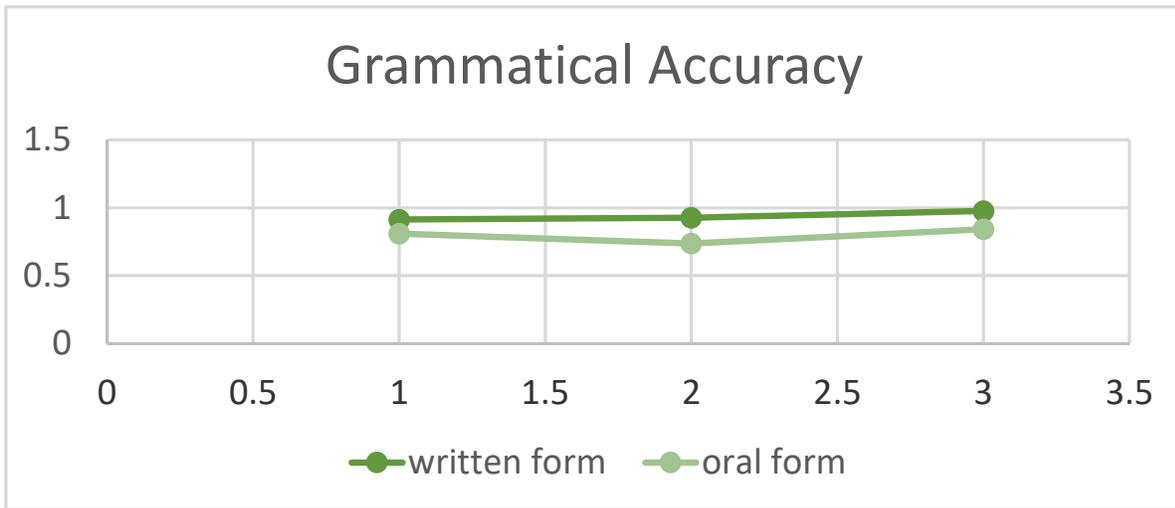


Figure 1: The graphic representation of fluency.

The charts above give some statistical information about fluency in written and oral form. The amount of fluency in written form improved progressively from first week to second week but



at the third week it had a slight decrease.

The amount of fluency in oral form had a gentle fluctuation because, between first and second week it decreased but between second and third week it developed slowly. As a whole view we can see that fluency in written form upraised and in oral form descended.

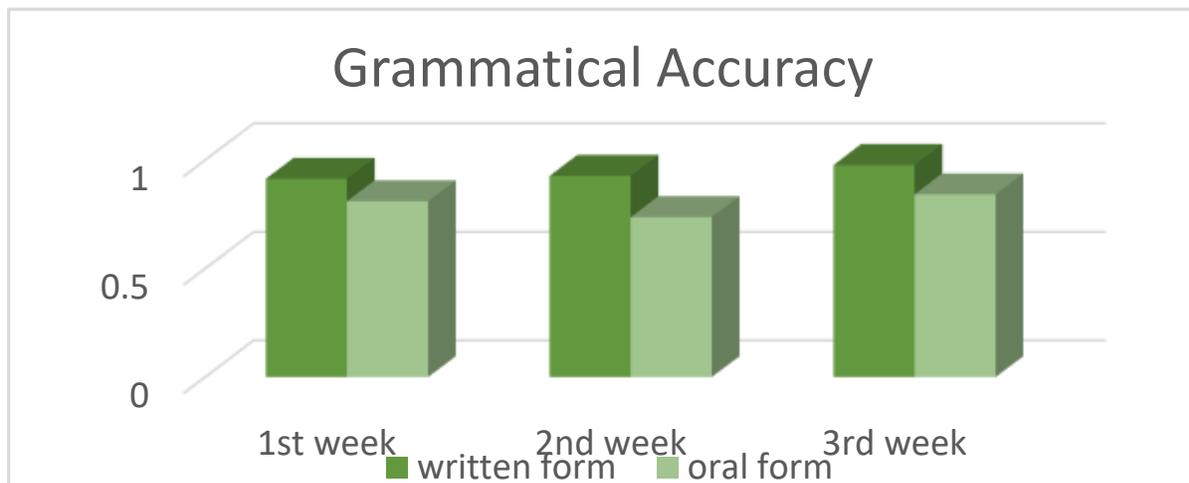
Tabel2: The amount of grammatical accuracy in written and oral form.

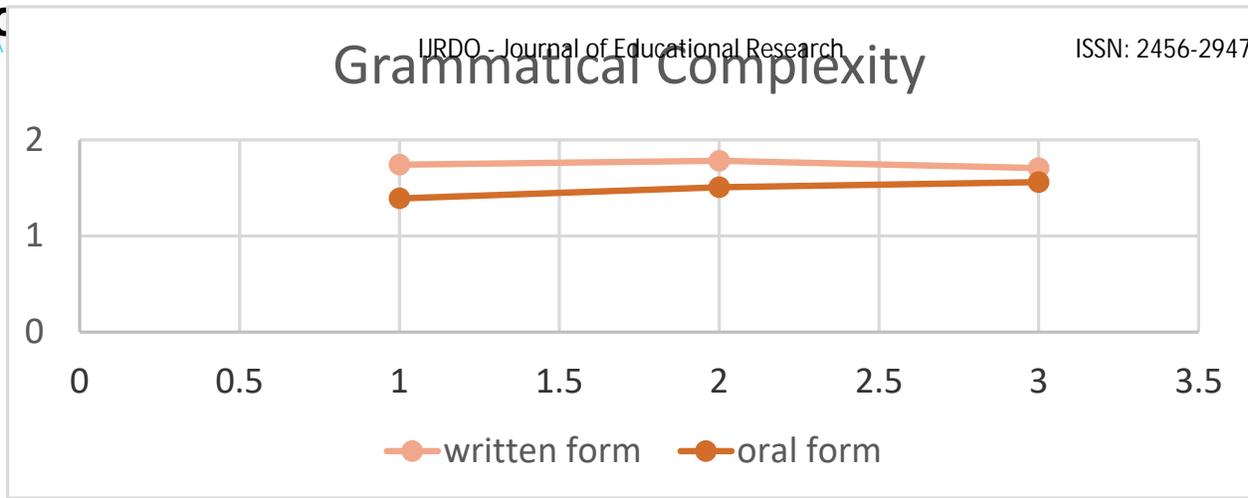
A.M	1st week	2nd week	3rd week
written form	0/914	0/927	0/977
oral form	0/81	0/737	0/842

Figure 2:

The graphic representation of grammatical accuracy.

The graphs in Figure 2 show that grammatical accuracy in written form rose gradually within





three weeks. But in oral form level of grammatical accuracy at first came down and then at the last week it grew. Generally grammatical accuracy after practicing during three weeks, developed in both written and oral form.

A.M	1st week	2nd week	3rd week
written form	1/742	1/783	1/707
oral form	1/391	1/508	1/561

Tabel3: The amount of grammatical complexity in written and oral form.

The statistics about graphs above represented that grammatical complexity in written form developed till second week but at the third week it decreased steadily. In the oral form we had a progressive development during all weeks.

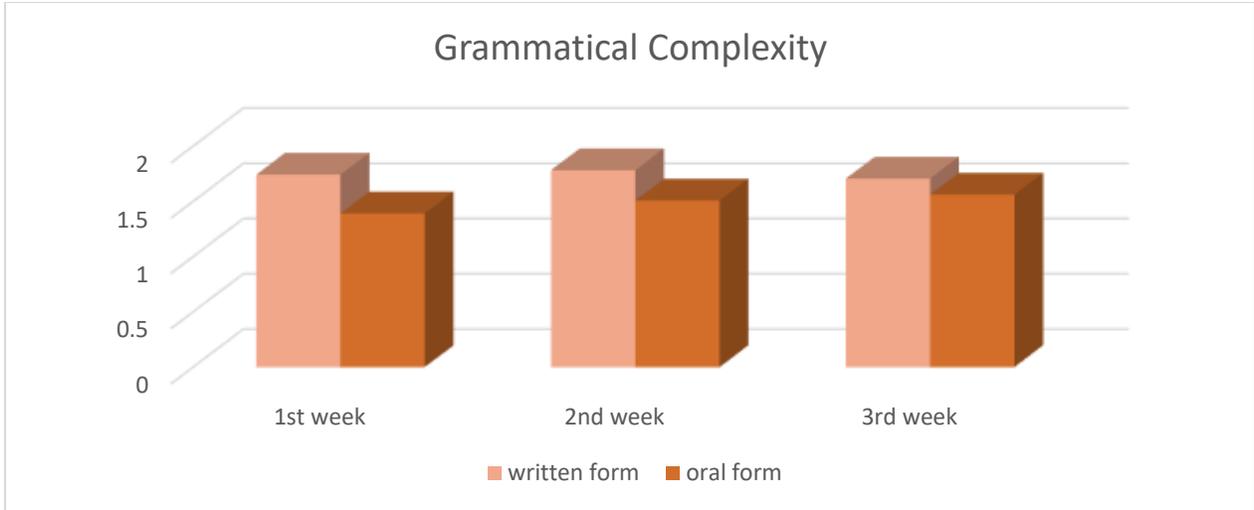
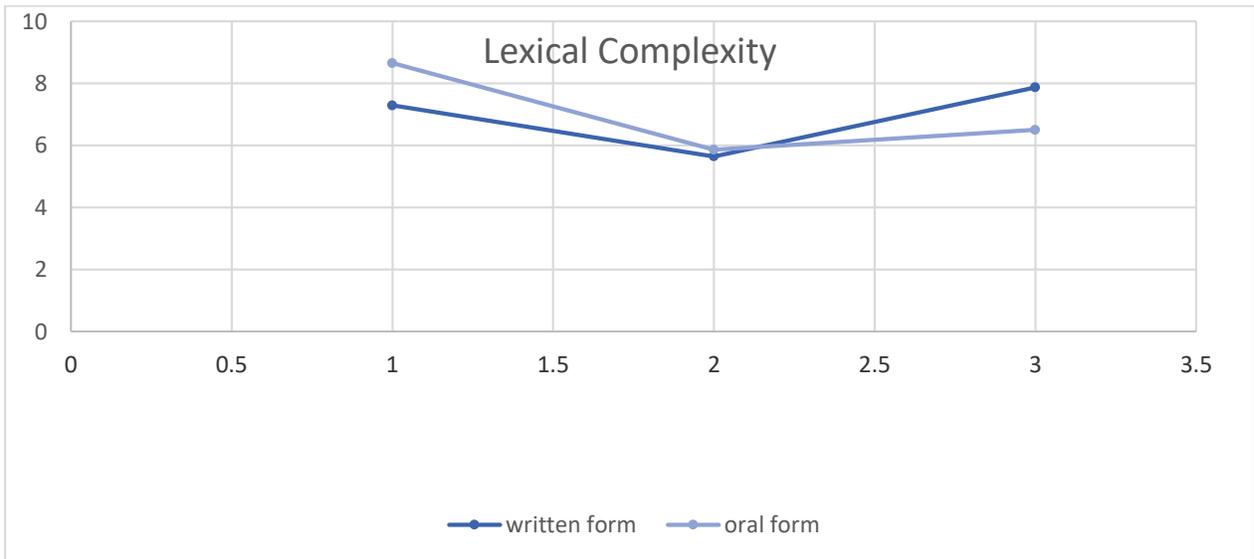


Figure 3: The graphic representation of grammatical complexity.



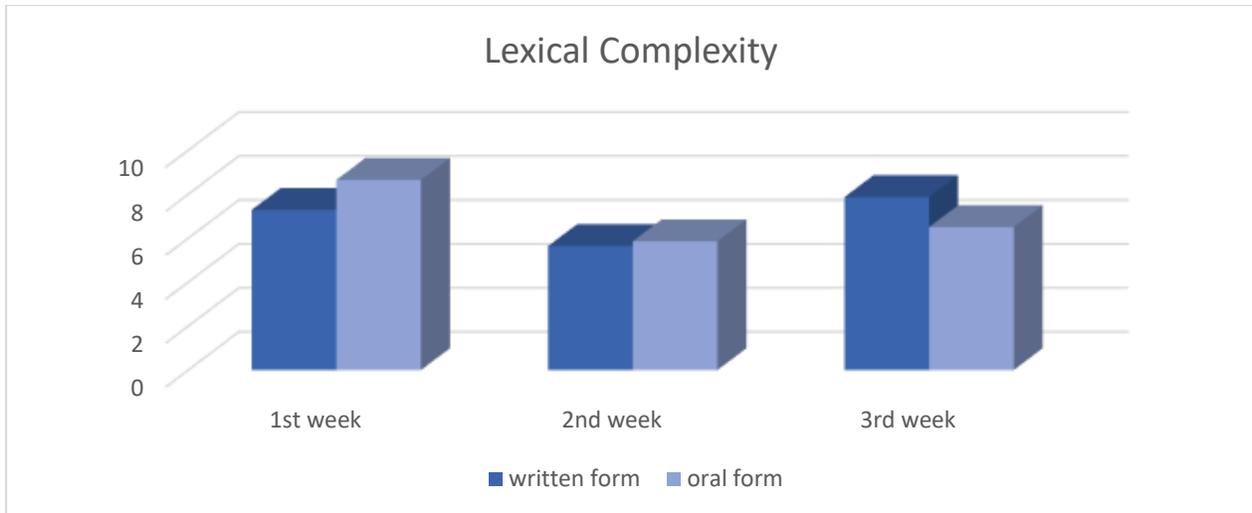


Figure 4: The graphic representation of lexical complexity.

A.M	1st week	2nd week	3rd week
written form	7/29	5/641	7/869
oral form	8/655	5/86	6/502

Tabel4: The amount of lexical complexity in written and oral form.

The figures above demonstrated that the amount of lexical complexity in both written and oral form within three weeks had a dramatic variation. At first it increased then decreased and at last again increased with a considerable amount.

Results

According to charts below, the results showed that the participant’s performance in written form developed aggressively and in oral form the development followed the pattern of fluctuation and it changed significantly.

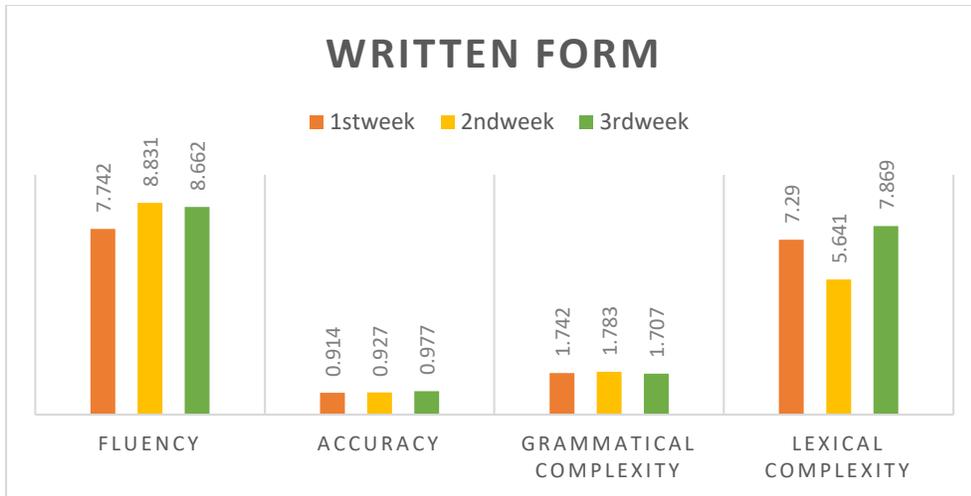


Figure 5: The graphic representation of written form.

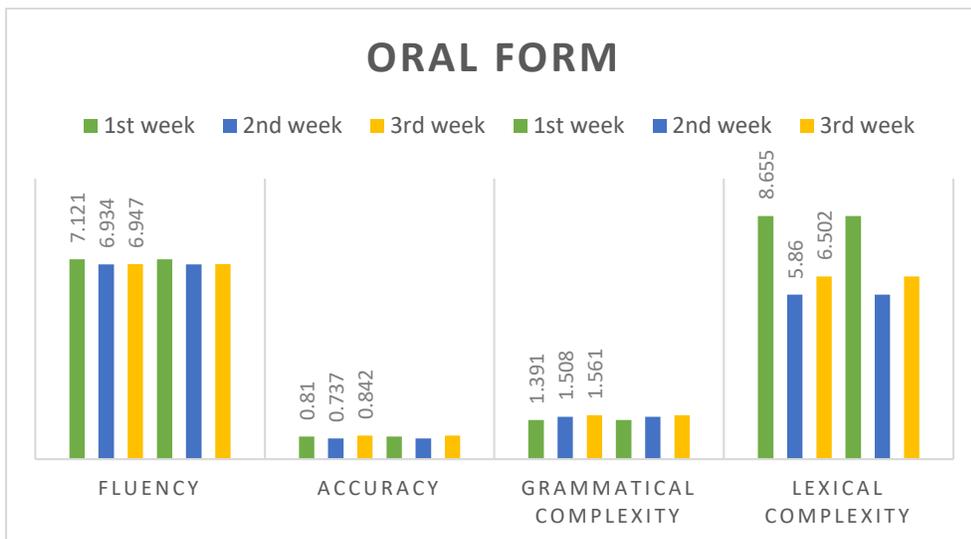


Figure 6: The graphic representation of oral form.

Conclusion

So, we conclude that teachers shouldn't expect individual students to follow always development pattern. Performance of students will differ in different context and situation. We couldn't set an exact rule for these practices because every participant acts differently in each practices and her or his performance and result will be various according to situation, physical mood, mental mood and etc.

So we couldn't anticipate each student to improve in each test.

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