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**Students' images of curricular foreign languages:  
a focus on Portuguese Higher Education context**

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## Research Aim

- To describe 3rd year students' images of foreign languages in study (Chinese, English, French and German) taking a degree in Languages and Business Relationships at the University of Aveiro (school year 2003-2004).

## Participants

- Students from “Languages and Business Relations” degree (University of Aveiro; school year 2003-2004, 1st semester) = n.53
- Main scientific components: Management and Languages
- Foreign languages studied:

German (optional)	23 students
Chinese (compulsory)	53 students
French (optional)	30 students
English (compulsory)	53 students

## Data collection instruments

- **Questionnaire(n.53)**

- Characterize the public (linguistic and communicative profile).
- Identify and describe the images of foreign languages in study.

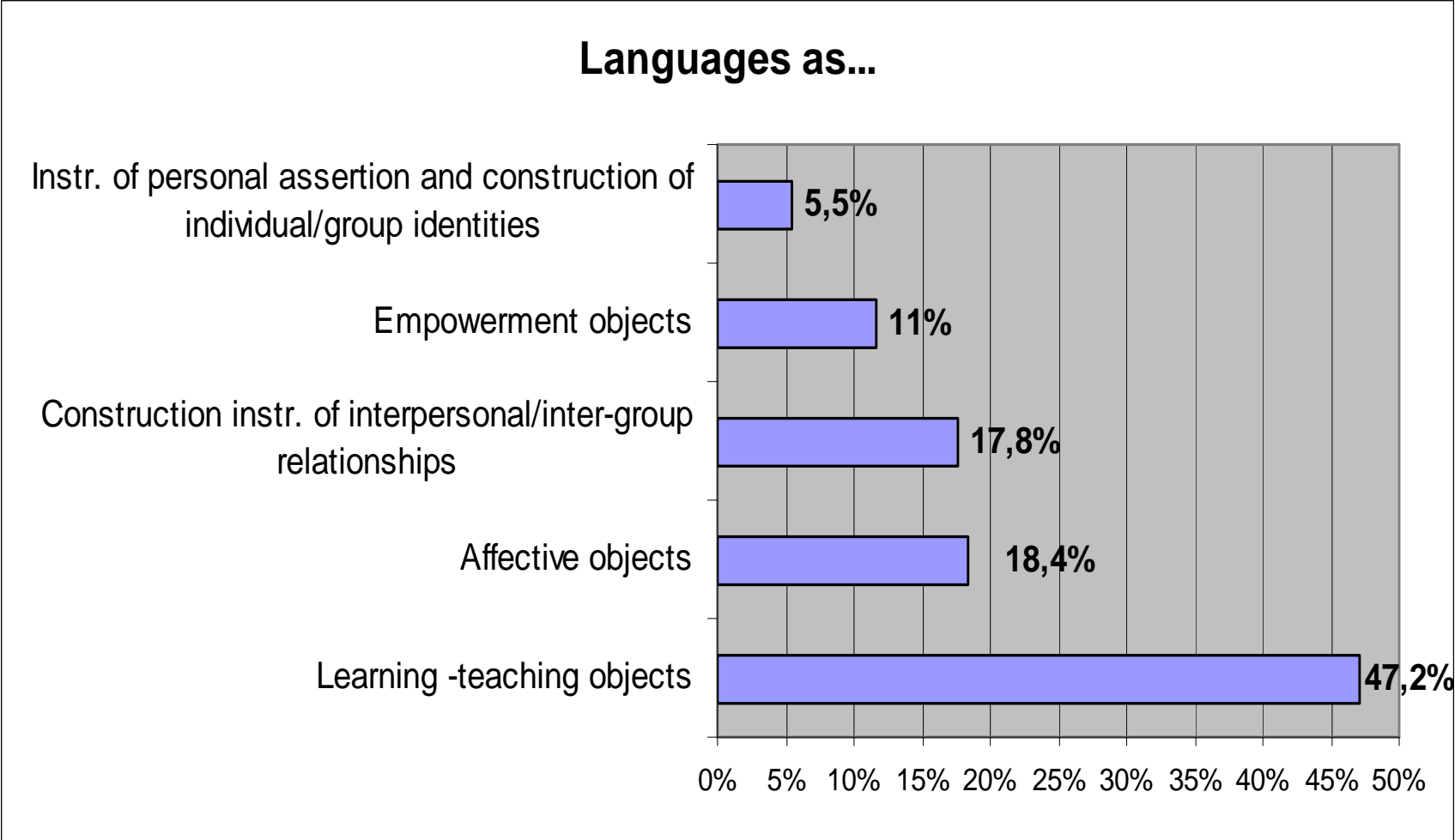
- **Didactical activity** (*Imagine you were asked to describe German/Chinese/French/English language to someone who had never been in touch with it. What would you say and why?*) **(n.122)**

- Understand how students relate with languages in study.
- Identify didactical activities that allow the diagnosis of images of languages.

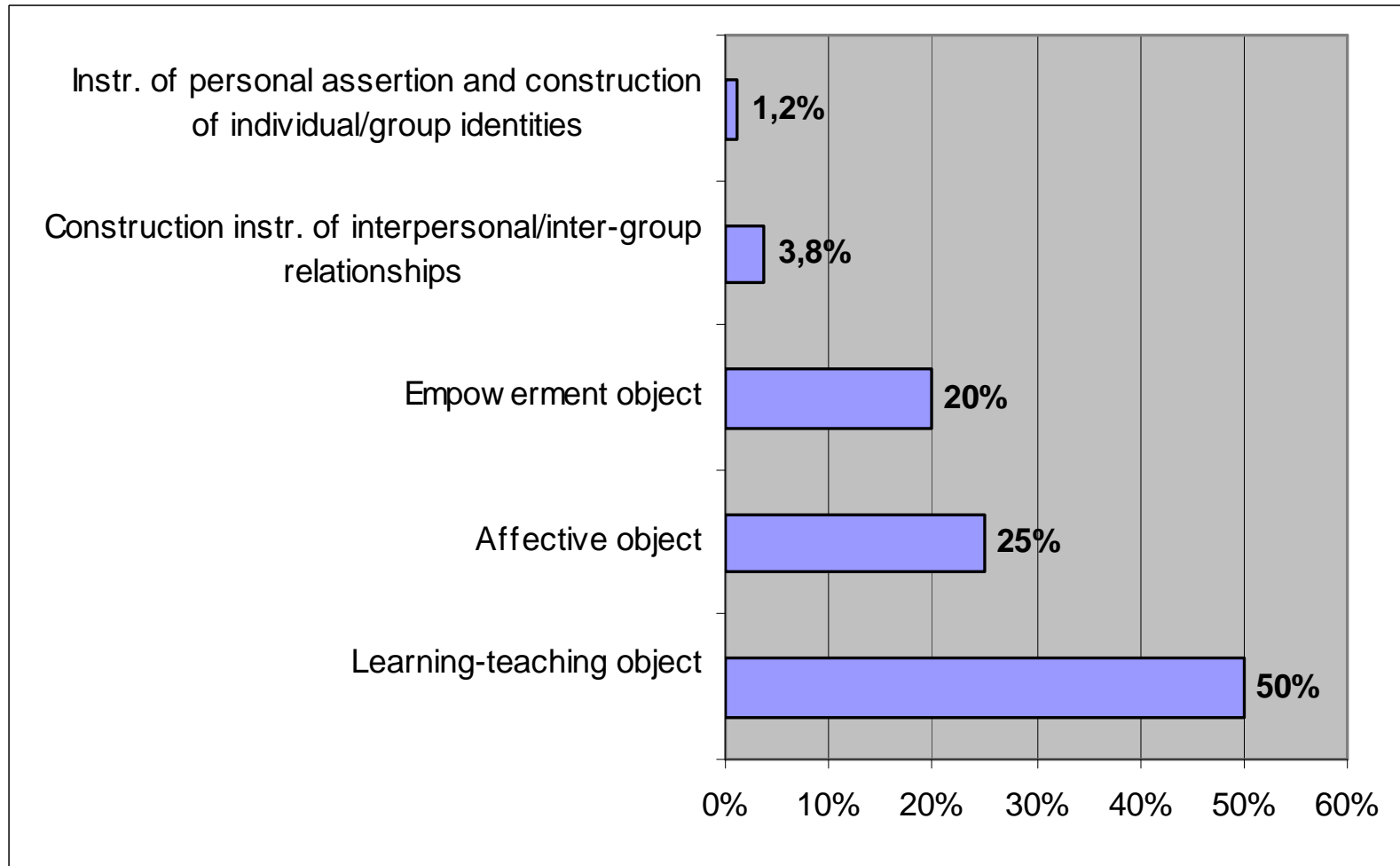
## Data analysis categories

(i) Languages as learning-teaching objects
(ii) Languages as affective objects
(iii) Languages as construction instruments of interpersonal and inter-group relationships
(iv) Languages as empowerment objects
(v) Languages as instruments of personal assertion and construction of individual and group identities

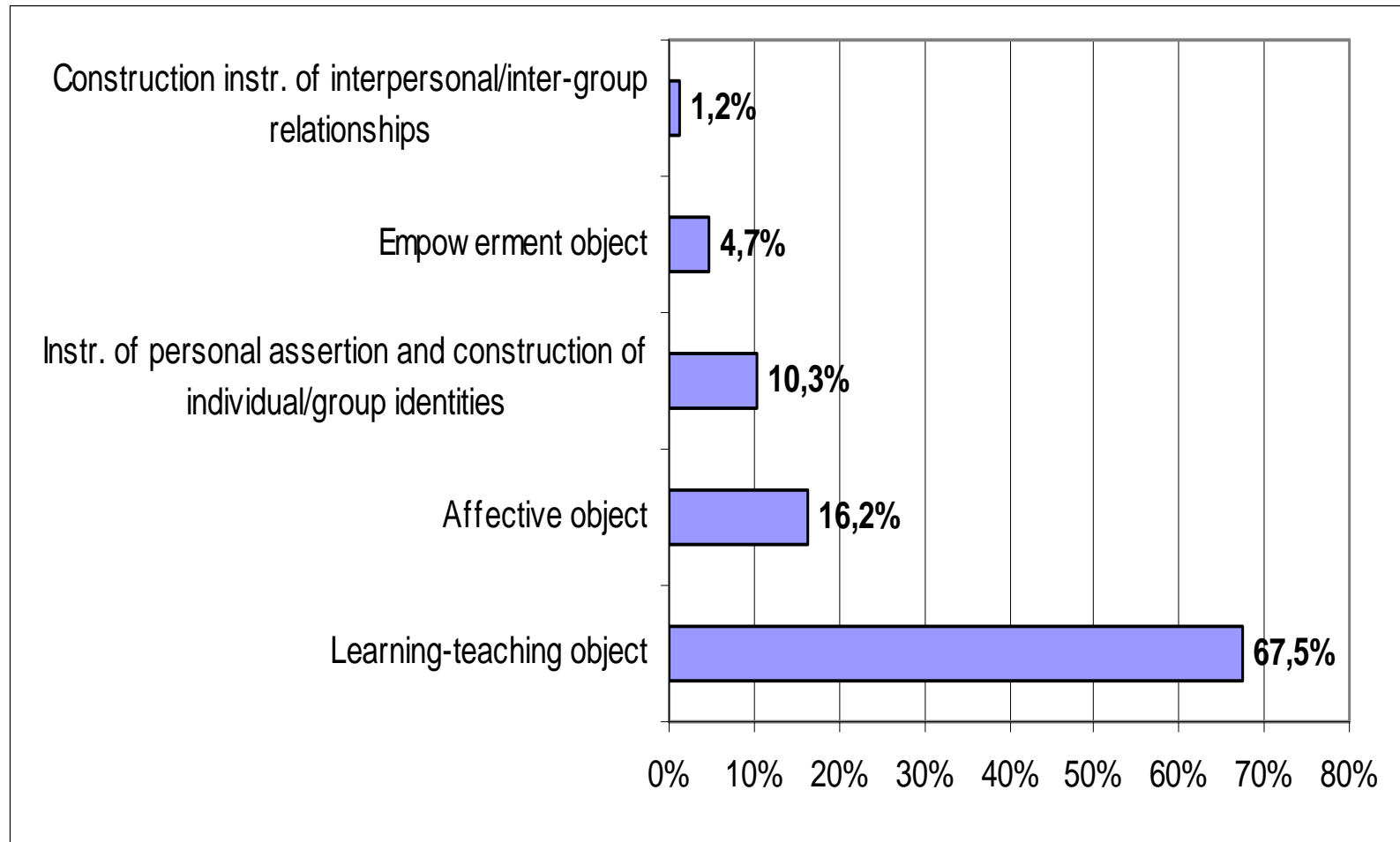
**Data analysis**



## German

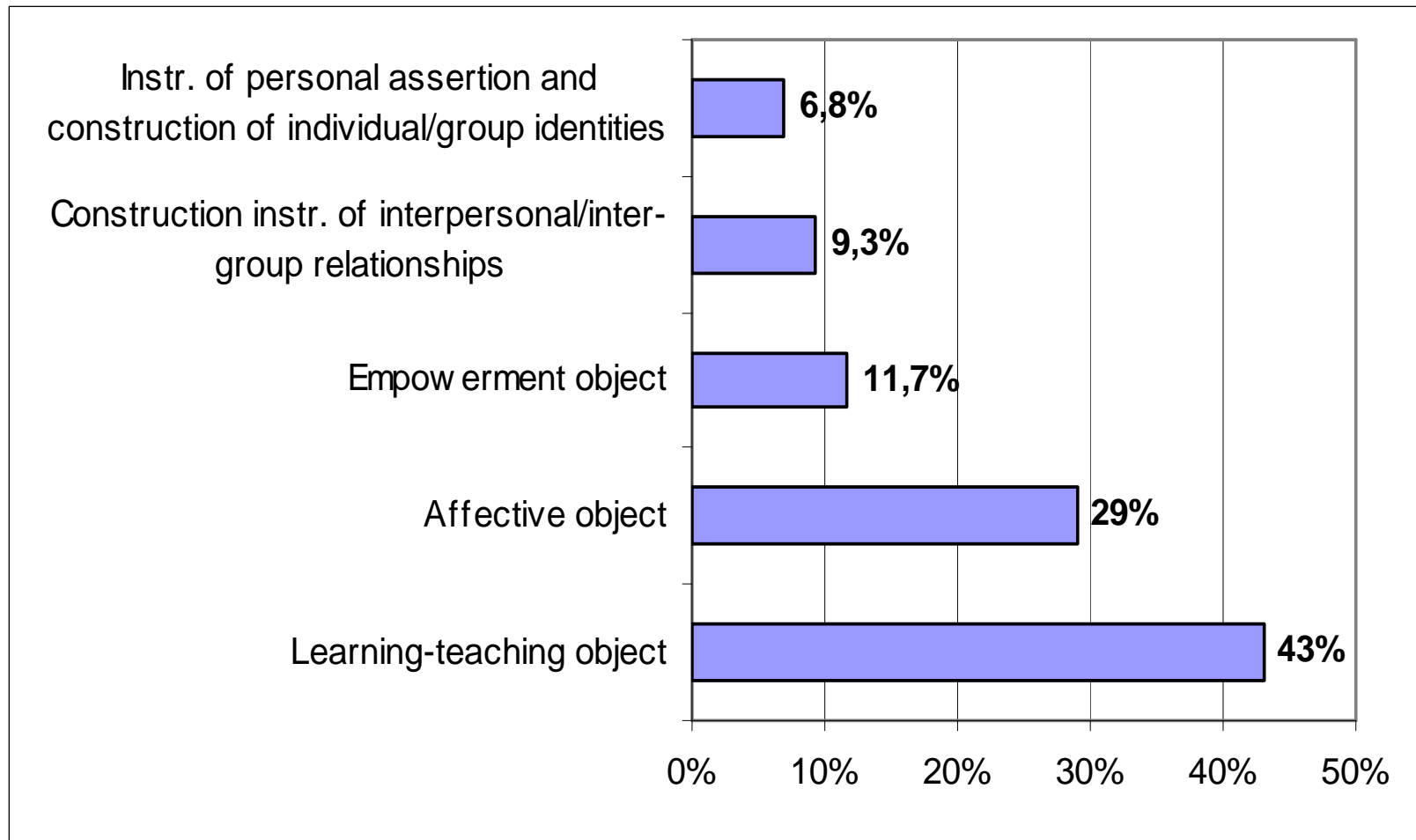


## Chinese

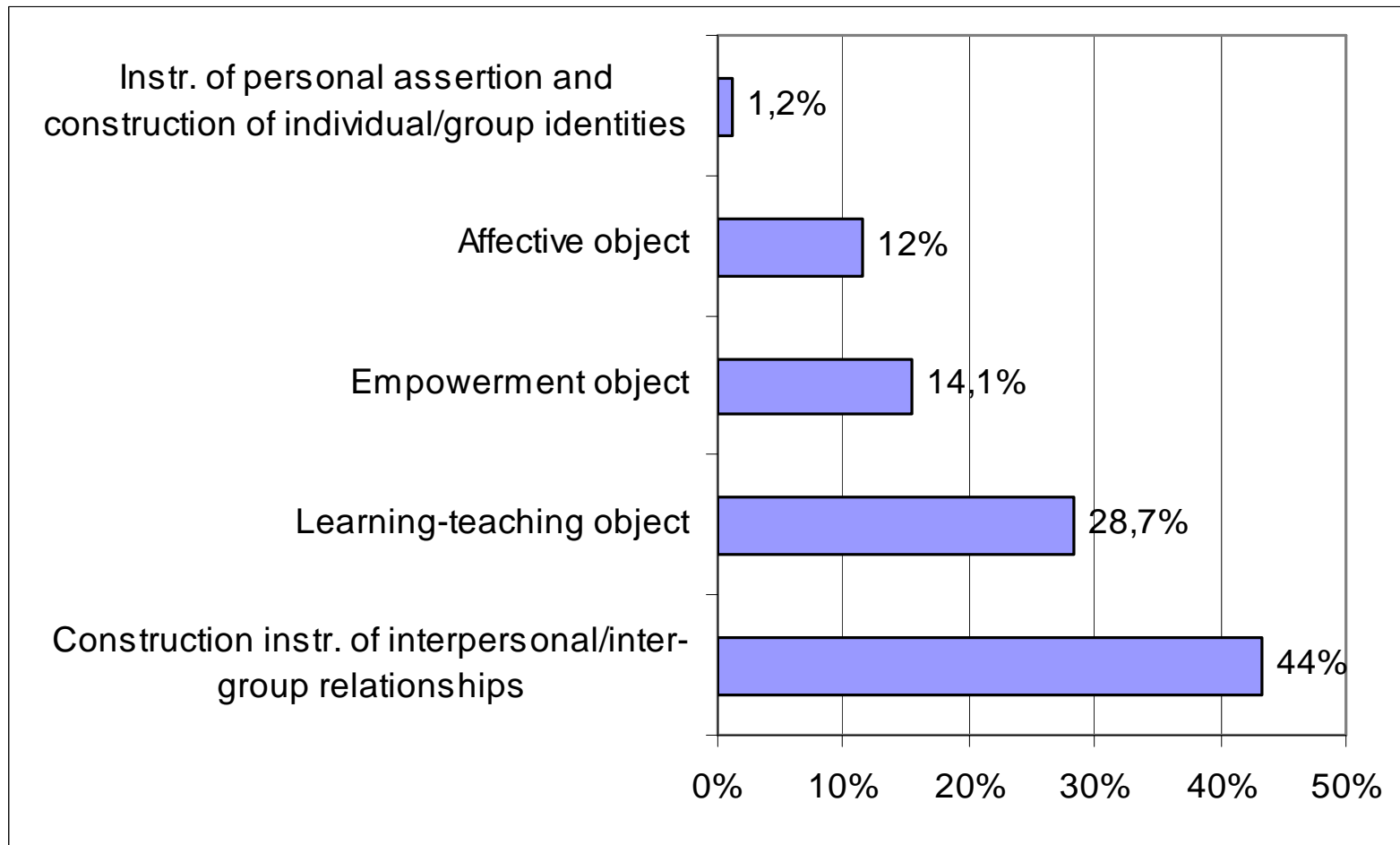




## French



## English



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## Conclusions

- highly schooled perception of languages – learning-teaching objects;
- reduced reflection of students about themselves as learners;



Foreign languages perceived as objects of formal acquisition – it is important for students and teachers to be aware of this reality so that it can be reconfigured.

## Conclusions

- students establish different relationships with each foreign language depending on learning, affective and utilitarian criteria:
- German - an excessively rigid grammatical language.
- Chinese - a surprise language and an instrument for discovering the Other; important in professional context.
- French - a language that arouses affection, language of elegance and romanticism.
- English - an utilitarian transactional language.

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## GERMAN

*The most difficult aspect is grammar and vocabulary (A3).*

*Grammar is what makes everything less interesting and more difficult (A5).*



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## CHINESE

*Knowing Chinese is knowing the other side of the world and admiring it (Ch18).*

*Chinese language in a western country is very important to anyone who wants to succeed in the business world (Ch17).*



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## FRENCH

*The idea of speaking French gives people the idea that we are chic, fashionable and romantic (F9).*

*This language is like chocolate melting in our mouths, the feeling is wonderful (F25).*





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## ENGLISH

*It is in books, recipes, handbooks, films, series (I4).*

*English is the worldwide language code (I19).*

