

The Quality of Pupil Participation
in ESL Classrooms: An Evaluation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem Statement

Current research (e.g. Dreyer, 1990; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Cook, 1991) has shown that many second language pupils lack conversational competence and have considerable difficulties in coping with language in its normal communicative use. Furthermore, research into classroom processes has been motivated by the recognition that the successful outcome of language lessons may depend on the interaction occurring in the classroom. With regard to the second language classroom, it has been hypothesized that classroom interaction can be a major variable affecting Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In fact, according to interactionist theory, verbal interaction is of crucial importance for language learning as it helps to make the "facts" of the L2 (Second Language) salient to the learner (cf. Ellis, 1994).

However, despite this research, there seems to be no clear evidence that the extent to which learners participate in the classroom affects their rate of development. Studies which focus on the quantity of pupil participation (Naiman et. al., 1978) have not come to a conclusive answer as to whether or not quantity of participation can account for improvement in communicative proficiency. The question is therefore not so much how often pupils participate, but how they participate, i.e. the quality of their participation.

In this study, quality refers to the nature of pupil participation in terms of its level of development, i.e. are responses merely automatic reactions triggered by teacher questions or are the pupils generating new ideas and questions on their own initiative? The quality of learner participation seems to be determined by the degree of control the learners have over the discourse (Cathcart, 1986; House, 1986).

Therefore, we need to examine the discourse constructed in ESL classrooms to determine to what extent the interaction restricts pupils to a responding role or allows pupils the freedom to participate productively. The degree of control pupils have over the discourse will affect the quality of participation. In classrooms where participation is strictly controlled there may be few opportunities for pupils to practise communicative strategies.

Additionally, this study recognizes the affective atmosphere of the classroom as another factor which influences learner participation (e.g. Tuckman, 1972; Krashen, 1982). If pupils feel threatened by or afraid of how the teacher will react, then they will not participate readily. The following questions need to be addressed :

- * Does the quality of pupil participation have a bearing on L2 development? If so, what characteristics of pupil participation can be observed in ESL classrooms today?
- * What is the degree of control (i.e. initiation, types of responses, etc.) pupils have over the discourse?
- * Does the affective atmosphere facilitate or inhibit pupil participation?

In order to determine what characteristics (types) of pupil talk (pupil participation) are present, from which the quality of participation can be determined, this study focuses on the spoken discourse in ESL classrooms.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

- * observe the interaction in ESL classrooms to determine the quality of pupil participation,
- * determine the degree of control pupils have over the interaction, and
- * gauge the affective atmosphere of the classroom in order to determine to what extent the atmosphere facilitates or inhibits the interaction.

1.3 General Hypotheses

This study is based on the following hypotheses:

- * the quality of pupil participation is not very good,
- * the pupils have a very limited degree of control with regard to the interactions in the classroom, and
- * the affective atmosphere in the classroom does not seem to facilitate interaction.

1.4 Method of Research

An extensive literary survey which focuses on the role of input and interaction in classroom settings was conducted. Park's (1991) Verbal Interaction Analysis Instrument was used to analyze and describe verbal interaction in classroom settings and Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form was used to gauge affective atmosphere in the ESL classroom.

The focus of this study is entirely descriptive. Ten lessons in an Afrikaans Medium High School were observed and the verbal interactions observed in the classrooms were recorded on audio cassette. The observed and recorded data were then analyzed by means of the aforementioned instruments.

1.5 Programme of Study

Chapter 2 deals with literature pertaining to the role of input and interaction in naturalistic language acquisition. The relevance of input and interaction is considered and features of "Motherese" and "Foreigner Talk" are discussed to ascertain the characteristics of the linguistic environment to which language learners are exposed in "naturalistic settings".

Chapter 3 focuses on input and interaction in classroom language acquisition. Classroom interaction is described and classroom vs naturalistic environments are discussed.

Chapter 4 focuses on interaction in ESL classrooms in terms of the quantity and quality of pupil participation. The most important features of “Teacher Talk” and “Classroom Discourse” are discussed in order to describe the major features that characterize the linguistic environment in L2 classrooms.

Chapter 5 discusses the method of research used in this study. The two instruments used in this study are discussed and explained in detail.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the analyzed data. The chapter aims at answering the questions posed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 7 contains a brief conclusion and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF INPUT AND INTERACTION IN NATURALISTIC LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2.1 Introduction

In many instances, First Language Acquisition is remarkable for the speed with which it takes place. By the time a child enters primary school, he or she is a sophisticated language user operating a communicative system which no computer can match. The speed of acquisition and the fact that it occurs without overt instruction, for all children, has led to the belief that there is some 'innate' predisposition in the human infant to acquire language. This is often referred to as the 'language faculty' of the human with which each newborn child is endowed.

By itself, however, this faculty is not enough. Scarcella and Oxford (1992:29) point out that if innate mechanisms in themselves were sufficient, students could learn English by themselves. However, students do not learn English on their own. Their previous experience and ongoing experiences provide data for the innate mechanisms. A child growing up in the first two or three years requires interaction with other language-users in order to bring the 'language faculty' into operation with a particular language. Input and interaction also play an important role in SLA because these experiences help students to make sense of their linguistic input and communicative encounters.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the role of “Motherese” as well as the various viewpoints regarding the role of input and interaction in Naturalistic Language Acquisition. Classroom and naturalistic environments are discussed to serve as a comparison between the acquisition of language in free environments and in structured environments. This study does place more emphasis on the structured (classroom) environment.

2.2 The Role of Input: Different Views

Ellis (1994:243) summarizes the different views about the role of input under three basic approaches, namely: the behaviourist, the mentalist and the interactionist.

Table 1 provides a summary of these different views.

2.2.1 Behaviourist View

The behaviouristic view of L2 acquisition proposes a direct relationship between input and output. This approach negates the notion of the 'mind' as an object for inquiry and therefore also ignores the internal processing that takes place within the language learner. Hence, input is comprised of stimuli and feedback. By means of stimuli, the person speaking to the learner provides language samples which the learner proposedly internalizes by sheer imitation. According to Ellis (1994:243), "feedback takes the form of positive reinforcement or correction, depending on whether the learner's output is perceived to be target-like".

Thus, the behaviourist model of learning emphasizes the possibility of L2 acquisition by manipulating the input to provide appropriate stimuli and by ensuring that adequate feedback is always available. The learner is regarded as a passive medium and acquisition is thus controlled by external factors.

2.2.2 Mentalist View

Mentalist theories emphasize the importance of the learner's language acquisition device, the so-called 'black box'. Mentalist theories argue that, although input is important, it is degenerate and cannot account for the acquisition of linguistic competence. Input is viewed as a mere trigger which activates the language acquisition device. As Ellis (1994) puts it: "Learners are equipped with innate knowledge of the possible forms that any single language can take, and use the information supplied by the input to arrive at the forms that apply in the case of the L2 they are trying to learn." Input in itself is thus viewed as insufficient to enable learners to arrive at the grammatical rules of the target language.

2.2.3 The Interactionist Approach

The third view is the interactionist approach and comprises two distinct branches. In the first branch, cognitive interactionist theorists pose that input does have a determining function in language acquisition, but only within the constraints imposed by the learner's internal mechanisms. On the other hand, the second branch of interactionist theories has a more social orientation. Here verbal interaction is

regarded as being crucially important for language learning as it enables the learner to clarify the "facts" of the target language.

Table 1: Views on the importance of Input

Behaviourist	Nativist	Interactionist
1 Learner is viewed as a 'language producing machine'.	Learner is viewed as a 'grand initiator'.	Learner is viewed as an interactor.
2 Linguistic environment crucial. Input language made available to learner as stimuli and feedback.	Input: trigger which activates internal mechanisms.	Acquisition: result of interaction between learner's mental abilities and linguistic environment. Input: determined by learner's processing mechanisms.
3 Progress explained in terms of what happens outside the learner.	Progress explained in terms of learner-internal factors	Progress explained in terms of interaction between learner mental abilities and the linguistic environment

2.3 Input and Interaction and First Language Acquisition

The importance of input and interaction in first language acquisition are now discussed.

2.3.1 Motherese

Under normal circumstances, in Western cultures, the human infant is certainly helped in his or her language acquisition by the typical behaviour of the adults in the home environment. The characteristically simplified speech style adopted by someone who spends a lot of time interacting with a young child is called caretaker speech or motherese.

2.3.2 Characteristics of Motherese

Research has indicated that caretakers adjust their speech formally so that the input that children receive is clearer and linguistically simpler than the speech they address to other adults. Ellis (1984:85) mentions the following general adjustments:

- * Motherese is characterised by a lower mean length of utterance than that of adult-adult speech. Caretakers avoid sentence embeddings and they produce sentences which express a limited range of syntactical and semantic relations.
- * High frequency of simple one clause utterances.
- * Modifications in the pronunciation of certain sounds, voice pitch and intonation. Mothers tune the pitch intonation and rhythm of their speech to the perceptive sensitivity of their children.
- * High frequency of certain language functions such as instructions.

- * Frequent use of topic incorporation devices such as repetitions, expansions and also various topic constraints such as the 'here-and-now' principle (talking about topics which can be understood in terms of objects physically present and actions that are taking place at the time). They avoid talking about activities that are displaced in time and space until the child has developed the necessary concepts to understand them.
- * Low type-token ratio. In other words, parents restrict the range of vocabulary items and use a higher ratio of content words.
- * Motherese is also characterized by interactional modifications.

Furthermore, Ellis (1984:85) points out that caretaker-child interaction cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of properties of just the adult's language. Rather, it needs to be seen as "a process involving the joint contributions of child and adult".

Ellis then refers to the Bristol Language Development Study which has aimed at recasting the study of Motherese in a more interactive framework using an adaptation of Halliday's (1980) model of discourse. This led to the identification of strategies used by both participants for building a shared field of attention through language and sustaining discourse.

An important question regarding the contribution of the caretaker is whether her speech is 'finely tuned'. According to Krashen (1981a), it is only 'roughly tuned'. In other words, the caretaker does not adjust her speech to suit the precise stage of the child's development but makes only approximate adjustments. There seems to

be some evidence for this. Newport et al. (1977) found that, with the exception of the mother's yes / no questions and deixis, there were few significant relationships between the mother's speech and the child's linguistic knowledge. The researchers concluded that fine tuning is therefore not a requirement for the universal aspects of language although it may aid some language specific items.

2.3.3 Effect of Motherese on First Language Acquisition

Researchers have considered the purposes served by caretaker-talk. Ellis (1984:86) identifies three possible functions, namely:

- * to aid communication
- * to teach language
- * to socialize the child.

The motivation is to communicate, to understand and be understood. This leads the parent to modify his or her speech in order to facilitate the exchange of meanings.

Ellis (1984:87) identifies two mutually compatible hypotheses regarding the effect caretaker speech (Motherese) has on first language development, namely:

- * The universal characteristics of caretaker-child interaction determine the order of the learner's linguistic development.

- * Differences in the rate of first language development are the result of differences in specific characteristics of caretaker-child interaction.

Research suggests that it is the interaction rather than the formal adjustments of caretaker language that help to accelerate development. Ellis (1984:87) points out that fast learners receive more directives and polar questions that serve to sustain and extend the learner's involvement in conversations.

When the adult acts as the initiator of the interaction, she can best do so in a directing mode, but as soon as the learner initiates discourse the adult can facilitate development by acknowledging, clarifying and confirming through polar questions.

An additional feature of caretaker-child interaction associated with rapid development is talk about topics related to contiguous objects and ongoing activities in which both interlocutors are engaged. It is only once the child has increased his mastery of the language system, that the range of topics expand to include past and future events and displaced activity.

Development accelerates when the caretaker adopts a supportive role. In this style of learning, the child is allowed to initiate conversations and the adult helps to maintain a unitary topic and purpose through the use of continuing moves that acknowledge and request additional information. This contrasts sharply with the tutorial style where the learner is the respondent and the mother controls the discourse by means of closed questions and evaluations of the child's contributions.

It is the regularity and invariance of the caretaker's utterances together with the fact that they are tied to objects and activity of shared attention that enables the learner to relate what he can see to what he can hear. This insight allows the child access to both the phonological representations he acquires and also how objects and actions are coded in language.

However, it is by using his linguistic resources in production that the child is able to clarify the semantic and grammatical systems of language. It is therefore imperative that he can get into conversations and play his part in sustaining it. The child is motivated to become a communicator and he develops his discourse skills to achieve this end. In the process of doing so he obtains vital feedback on how meaningful his efforts are and subconsciously adjusts his linguistic representations to match those of the adult speaker.

2.4 The Role of Input and Interaction in SLA

The importance of foreigner talk, its influence on SLA and the importance of input and interaction in SLA are now discussed.

2.4.1 Foreigner Talk

Foreigner talk is the language used by native speakers when they address non-native speakers. Like Motherese, foreigner talk involves a range of input modifications. Ellis (1984) identifies the following characteristics of Foreigner Talk:

- * Exaggerated enunciation.
- * Greater overall loudness.
- * Use of full forms rather than contractions.
- * Parataxis in preference to hypotaxis.
- * Reduction of inflections.
- * Absence of function words.
- * Special lexicon.

According to Ellis (1984:90) Foreigner Talk is not a discrete register but rather like Motherese, in the sense that it can be described as a continuum of adjustments. At one end of this continuum there are extensive formal and discourse modifications while at the other end the speech may be entirely grammatical and contain only discourse adjustments.

The type of Foreigner Talk used depends on various factors, e.g.:

- * Status relationships between conversational participants.
- * Age of the L2 learners.

It is important to note that it is not only the native speaker who makes adjustments to his speech but the L2 learner also uses various strategies to maximize his potential for communicating in the target language when he has limited resources. These strategies are generally referred to as communication strategies and are consciously employed by the learner because he lacks the linguistic resources to express his intended meaning. General strategies are:

- * *Reduction strategies:* the learner reduces either or both of the formal and functional properties of the intended message (eg. topic switching and message abandonment).
- * *Achievement strategies:* the learner develops an alternative plan for accomplishing his general goal (eg. circumlocution, mime, word-coinage).
(Ellis, 1984:90)

Foreigner Talk and communication strategies can be described as two sides of the same coin. The solution to the breakdown in communication is not sought separately by the native speaker, but rather it is a joint effort (verbal interaction between foreign language learner and native speaker) to establish and maintain a mutually accepted topic.

2.4.2 The Influence of Foreigner Talk on SLA

As in the case of First Language Acquisition, it can be hypothesized that native speaker-learner interaction has a bearing on the route or rate of SLA or both.

Hatch (1978) states that interaction has an influence on the route of SLA. In this regard Hatch makes three claims, namely:

- * frequency of specific syntactic forms in the speech directed at the learner influences the language forms he produces.
- * conversations provide the learner with large units which are incorporated into sentence structure.
- * conversations with different interlocutors (adults and children) provide the learner with a variety of input which is of benefit to language development in different ways.

However, Ellis (1984:92) perceives a logical difficulty with reference to the last point mentioned above. He states: "If the route of development is determined by the types of interaction in which the learner participates and if these types are substantially different depending on the interlocutors, why is it that children and adults appear to follow the same 'natural' order of development?" This suggests that the input frequency may not be the most important determinant of the route of SLA.

If, as Hatch (1978) suggests, interaction determines the route of SLA then it does so by constraining the forms to which the learner is exposed and by providing the learner with ready-made chunks of language which he can incorporate into his utterances.

The learner's main concern is communication. It is by learning to communicate that he systematically acquires the grammar of the L2. Ellis (1984:94) emphasizes the role of the linguistic environment as shaped jointly by learner and native-speaker and plays down the role of internal processing factors.

2.5 Conclusion

Studies of mother tongue acquisition have recently been able to demonstrate some of the parameters of communicative activity which may influence the rate at which the child acquires his first language (eg. Cross, 1977; Ellis & Wells, 1980) and also the different uses to which children put their linguistic knowledge. Consequently, there is significant growing evidence that the quality of the verbal interactions the child participates in affects the learning process in L1 acquisition.

If L1 and L2 acquisition can be considered to be similar processes, as McLaughlin (1978) poses, it follows that the communicative opportunities enjoyed by the L1 learner will contribute to the rate and route of L2 acquisition. In naturalistic language acquisition the initial emphasis is on quantity of participation. However, as the child's command of the language improves and his vocabulary increases, it is inevitably so that the mother focuses on the quality of his contributions by continually correcting errors and sustaining the interaction. This aids the child in the development of his linguistic competence and performance and appears to be true for L2 acquisition as well.

CHAPTER 3: INPUT AND INTERACTION IN CLASSROOM LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the role of input and interaction with regards to L2 learning in the classroom. The difference between naturalistic and classroom language acquisition (structured vs unstructured) is discussed. Various views on the importance of input are brought forward and the characteristics and importance of language-promoting interaction is highlighted.

3.2 Input and Interaction in the Classroom

Many people are engaged in learning a language other than their mother tongue. Some may do this independently but the majority of foreign language learners do so with the aid of institutionalized (classroom as opposed to a naturalistic setting) instruction.

Burt and Dulay (1981:77) note that "Language learning is a two way street. Learners, and all the mental and physical machinery they come with, comprise one dimension. The environment, including the teacher, the classroom and the surrounding community is the other." According to Dreyer (1991), research has now been focused on the language of the classroom rather than predominantly on the learner as in the past. Studies of classroom talk tend to suggest that the classroom

is a microcosm of its own, with its own rules and conventions and that the language used there is not natural. It differs from the language used on the outside, in 'real life'.

Ellis (1980:29) mentions that recent research into second language acquisition has been based on the assumption that the primary reason for learning a second language is that the learner needs to communicate in that language. The primary concern then, is what the learner can do with the target language in inter-personal interaction. This raises the question as to why input and specifically interaction should be necessary in Second Language Acquisition.

3.2.1 Classroom Input

Ellis (1986: 127) states that it is axiomatic that in order for SLA to take place there must be:

- * some second language data made available to the learner as input.
- * a set of internal learner mechanisms to account for how the second language data are processed.

Research on how talk is distributed in classrooms has raised the fundamental question of the value of talk as a contributing factor to language learning and acquisition. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991: 120), "research, theory and practical experience all point to the fact that input is crucial to language learning.

'Input' refers to the language which the learners hear (or read) - that is, the language samples to which they are exposed."

Ellis (1994: 243) agrees with the fact that all theories of L2 acquisition acknowledge the need for input but states that they differ greatly in the importance attached to it. Hence, the role of input in L2 acquisition is a controversial one and merits some discussion.

According to Krashen's input hypothesis, humans acquire language by understanding messages or comprehensible input. Krashen (1981a) popularized the term 'comprehensible input'. The term implies that not all the language to which second language learners are exposed is understandable. He hypothesized that target language data which was understandable, but with effort, and which was slightly more advanced than the learner's current level of comfortable understanding, would promote learning. He called this type of input 'i+1" (where the 'i' represents the learner's current stage of interlanguage development and the '+1' designates that the input is challenging but not overwhelming to the learner).

Krashen (1985: 2) also mentions that we are able to understand language containing grammar with the help of context. This context includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world and previously acquired linguistic competence. He cites two corollaries of the input hypothesis:

- i. Speaking is the product of acquisition and not its cause. In other words,

speech 'emerges' on its own and is a result of building competence via comprehensible input. Speech cannot be taught directly.

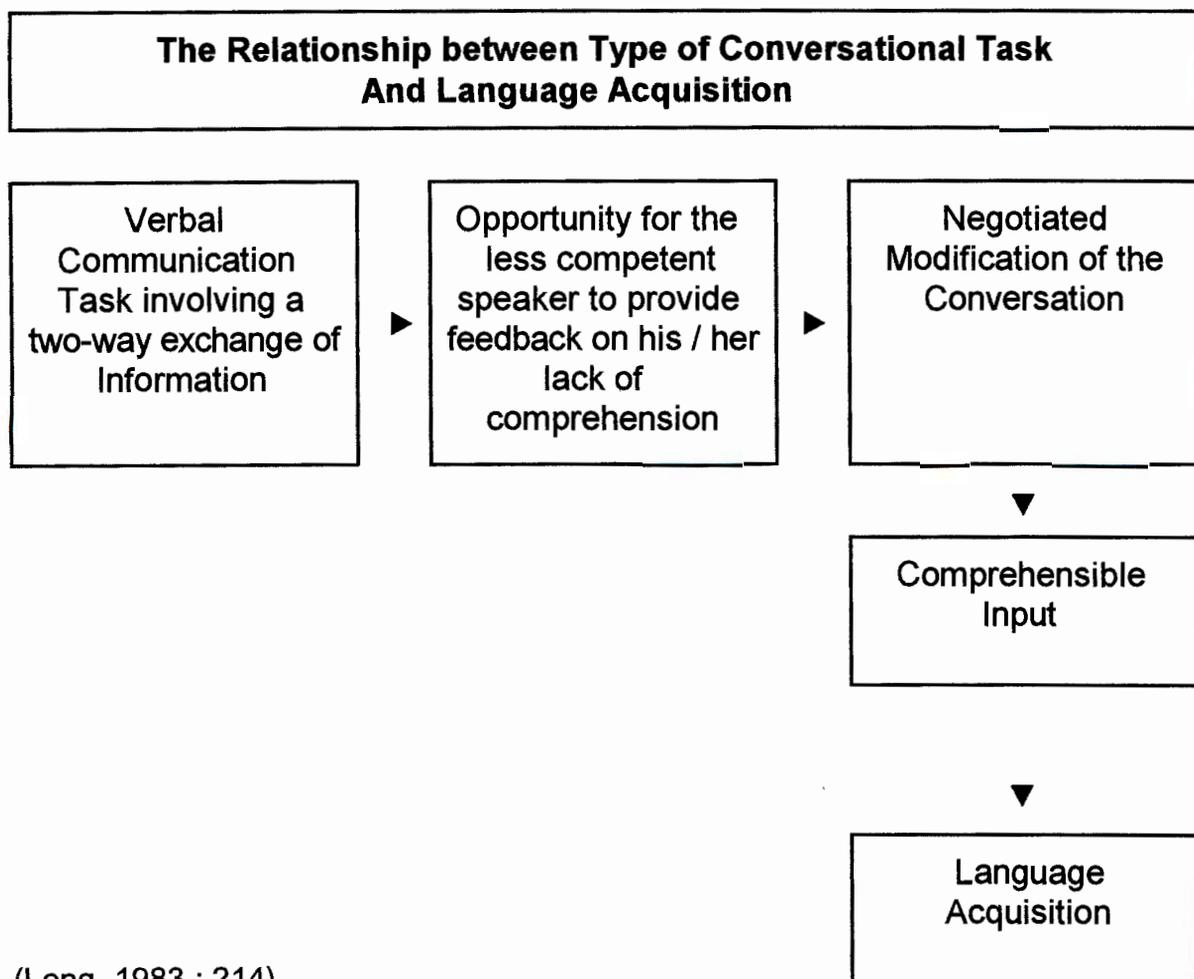
- ii. If the input is comprehended and is sufficient, the necessary grammar will automatically be provided.

Allwright and Bailey (1991: 121) do not entirely agree. They mention that Krashen's concept of input is problematic in various ways and state, firstly, that not all obvious incomprehensible input is of absolutely no value to the learner, since there is much to be learned beyond the level of linguistic forms and their apparent meanings. Secondly, it is not easy to see how mere exposure to input, even if comprehensible, actually promotes language development.

Long (1983: 214) provides a model to account for the relationships between negotiated interactions, comprehensible input and language acquisition (cf. Figure 1). This model differs from Krashen's notion that SLA comprises a sequence of events. Rather, it emphasizes the primacy of conversation (interaction) and its role in getting comprehensible input.

Krashen (1982: 61), on the other hand, is of the opinion that "comprehensible input is responsible for progress in language acquisition. Output is possible as a result of acquired competence. When performers speak, they encourage input (people to speak to them). This is conversation."

Figure 1:



(Long, 1983 : 214)

Swain (1983) argues that although comprehensible input may be sufficient for acquiring semantic competence in the target language, 'comprehensible output' is necessary in order to gain grammatical competence. In other words, the language learner must struggle with producing output which is comprehensible to the interlocutors in order to master the grammatical structures of the target language. This mastery would come about as a result of the negotiations in the process of interaction. This 'negotiated interaction' refers to the modifications that occur in conversations between native speakers and L2 learners.

Allwright and Bailey (1991:122) state that Long's model does not explicitly state that language acquisition can best be seen as the work involved in the negotiation process rather than as the product (outcome) of an encounter with comprehensible input per se. According to them, three of the most important processes involved in the negotiation for meaning during interaction are:

- * *Comprehension checks*: The speaker queries the interlocutors to determine whether they have understood what has been said.
- * *Confirmation checks*: This refers to the speaker's query as to whether not the speaker's expressed understanding of the interlocutor's meaning is correct.
- * *Clarification checks*: This includes requests for further information or help in order to understand something previously said by the interlocutor.

It is evident from the above, divergent views that input is an essential environmental ingredient. However, it is important to note that the learner does not acquire all that he hears. According to Krashen (1985) the internal language processor (Chomsky's LAD) plays a significant role. The importance of input for second language acquisition has inevitable implications for the language teacher since the teacher usually has the task of providing comprehensible input.

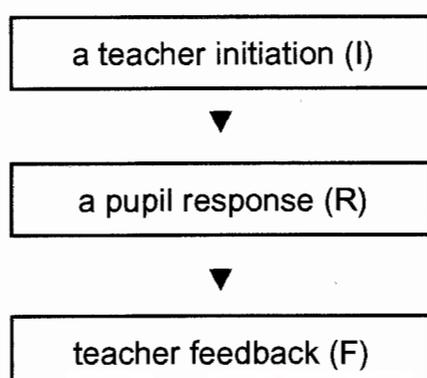
Also, in the process of interacting, learners have opportunities to negotiate meaning by seeking further input. In order to study this negotiation process it is necessary to examine the joint contributions of native speaker and L2 learner by considering the discourse they construct. Ellis(1984:95) concludes that when a learner is interacting

naturally with a fully competent speaker (or another learner) he is trying to use language to accomplish actions. Linguistic knowledge therefore, is a by-product of communicative competence.

Ellis (1984:95) further states that the traditional view of classroom second language development (SLD) differs greatly from naturalistic SLD. "The difference that is envisaged is that between a free learner who uses language to convey messages and a 'captive' learner who approaches the language as if it is a formal puzzle." Implicitly then, learners need the opportunity to participate in the same kinds of interactions as naturalistic learners in order to develop the capacity for what has earlier been called 'communicative speech'.

3.2.2 Classroom Interaction

Ellis (1984:97) points out that it is when interaction is viewed as discourse rather than input that the differences between classroom and naturalistic settings becomes apparent. The predominant type of discourse in classrooms is three-phase:



This IRF framework is common in L2 classrooms and the pattern of conversation differs considerably from the discourse patterns in naturalistic settings. Pupils rarely initiate and never follow-up. The majority of their verbal activity is restricted to a responding role.

The problem with this is that when the learner is required to use the language outside the classroom, in the real world, he will not be restricted to a responding role only. Rather, he will be required to initiate and develop the discussion using a wide variety of speech acts. Consequently, classrooms in which the IRF pattern dominates are not acquisition rich settings which facilitate interaction in real life. However, it is also true, that opportunities are not as important as the quality of the interaction. Countless monosyllabic responses certainly do not facilitate acquisition.

The question now arises as to whether or not these differences are important as far as second language acquisition is concerned. Various scholars have proposed that the most effective way of developing successful L2 competence in a classroom is to ensure that the L2 learners have enough opportunities to participate in discourse directed at the exchange of information (Krashen, 1982; Swain, 1983; Prabhu, 1987).

Hence, Ellis (1994: 602) states that "the failure of many classroom learners derives from the lack of comprehensible input and/or comprehensible output." Various studies (Krashen, 1982; Swain, 1983; Prabhu, 1987) have provided convincing evidence that learner's can learn 'naturally' in a communicative classroom setting.

Prabhu (1987) developed the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) which aimed to develop linguistic competence by following a task-based approach to language teaching. In an evaluation of the CTP-project, Beretta and Davies (1985) conclude that the results are, on the whole, positive and provide tentative support for the CTP.

Ellis (1994: 603) summarizes the interpretations of research on communicative classrooms as follows:

- * "Giving beginner learners opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom helps to develop communicative abilities and also results in linguistic abilities no worse than those developed through more traditional, form-focused approaches.
- * Communicative classroom settings may not be sufficient to ensure the development of high levels of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence although they may be very successful in developing fluency and effective discourse skills."

It is mainly by using his linguistic resources in production (output) that the learner is able to clarify both the semantic and grammatical systems of language. To this end it is therefore crucial that the learner has the opportunities to get into conversations and play his part in sustaining it. In fact, Allwright (1984:156) states that the first and foremost reason for getting pupils to interact is that communication practice in

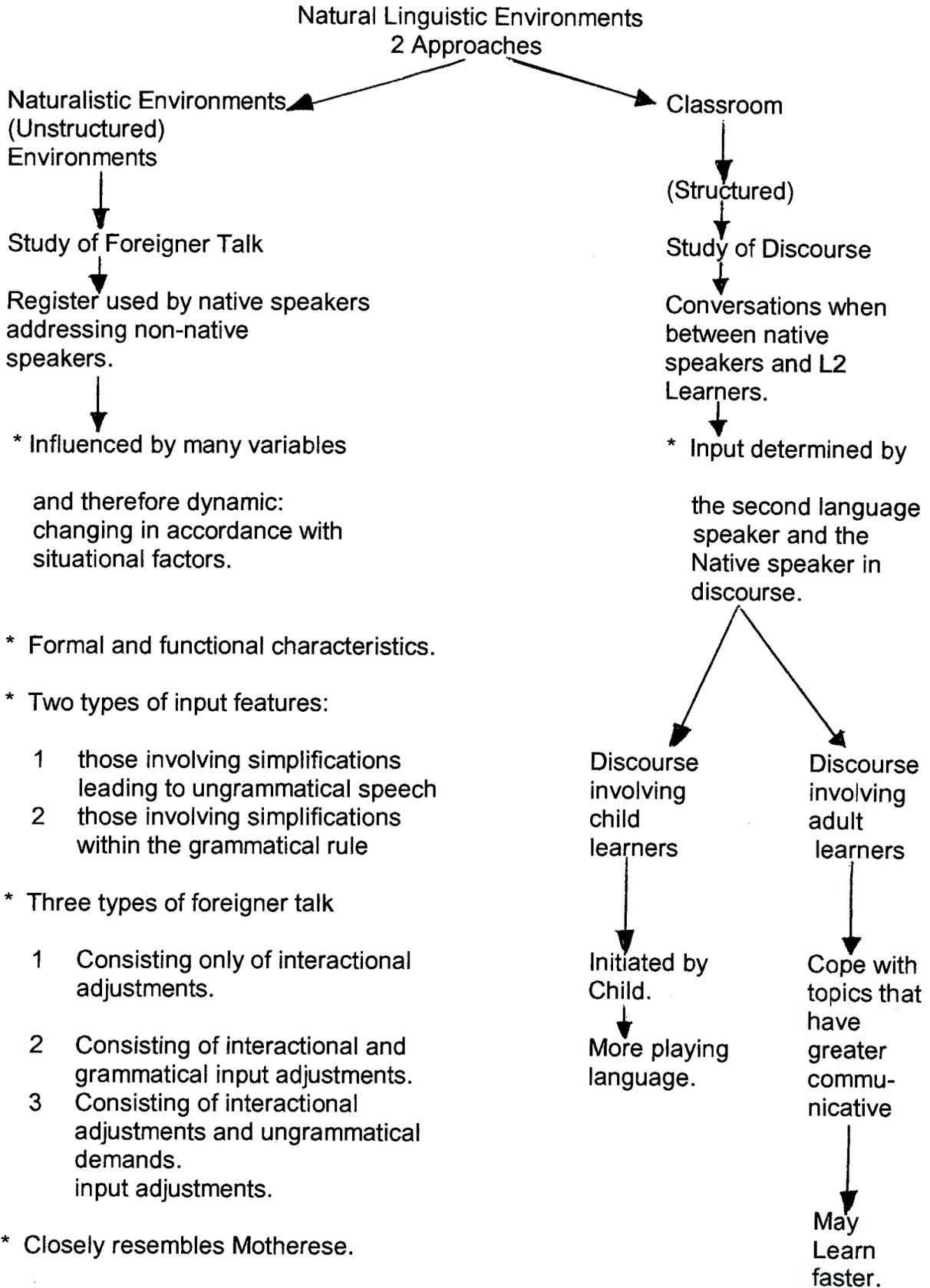
the classroom is pedagogically useful because it represents a necessary and productive stage in the transfer of classroom learning to the outside world.

Furthermore, Allwright (1984: 156) argues that "the process of communication is, in an important sense, a learning process. We learn by communicating, especially in language learning, where it is by using the means of communication, in solving communication problems, that we not merely practise communicating but also extend our command of the means of communication, the language itself".

3.3 Naturalistic and Classroom Environments

Table 2 summarizes the difference between classroom and naturalistic environments.

Table 2: Naturalistic and Classroom Environments



3.4 Conclusion

It is evident that the various theorists hold somewhat divergent views as to the role of input and interaction in SLA. Thus, there seems to be no clear evidence to support the idea that the extent to which learners participate in the classroom affects their rate of development. Rather, it seems to be what the learner is able to do with the language, the quality of his participation, which has a bearing on his rate of development.

The next chapter focuses on the relevance of quantity of participation versus quality of participation as variables which affect second language acquisition.

CHAPTER 4: INTERACTION IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: QUANTITY VS QUALITY

4.1 Introduction

Numerous researchers (Dreyer, 1991; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Cook, 1991) have pointed out that the majority of second language pupils find it difficult to use the target language in every day communication.

Furthermore, the inability of many of these learners to produce appropriate contributions to a discussion may be regarded as a direct result of the nature of the classroom discourse, where it is usually the teacher who takes the initiative in a discourse, thereby restricting the pupils to a merely responding role. This does not result in an "acquisition-rich" classroom environment. In fact, Allwright and Bailey (1991:139) point out that "teachers do between half and three quarters of the talking done in classrooms."

This chapter focuses on teacher and pupil talk in the classroom environment and explores the conventional roles as the underlying cause of the problems pupils face in terms of Second Language Acquisition. Participation in classroom discourse is examined in terms of quantity and quality respectively.

4.2 Learner and Teacher Roles

House (1986:53) comments on learner and teacher roles as follows: "... the teacher's greater linguistic expertise as well as the educational mandate imposed on him results in an asymmetrical role relationship which causes course participants to adopt relatively passive communicative roles". Thus, in institutionalized classroom discourse the linguistic and social dominance of the teacher makes for an unnaturally one-sided communication structure. In short, teachers control who can talk about what, to whom and for how long.

The fact that this type of behaviour has become firmly entrenched over many years of foreign language instruction in schools makes it all the more problematic to overcome. Due to the fact that learners are usually restricted to a responding role, it is not surprising to find that their opportunities for participating productively in the classroom are limited and constrained.

4.3 Teacher Talk

Ellis (1986:145) reports that extensive research has been done on the type of language that teachers use in the classroom. He describes teacher talk as the special language teachers use when addressing L2 learners in the classroom. Teacher talk contains systematic simplifications of the formal properties of the teacher's language.

The following adjustments are generally found:

- * Formal adjustments occur at all language levels.
- * Ungrammatical speech modifications do not occur.
- * Interactional adjustments do occur.

Teacher talk is also characterized by functional adjustments similar to those used in the training strategies when addressing children, e.g. repetition, prompting and prodding, modelling and expansions.

Evidently then, teacher talk involves similar adjustments to those found in foreigner talk. Ellis (1986) hypothesizes that these adjustments facilitate SLD (Second Language Development) in the classroom in much the same way as foreigner-talk adjustments are hypothesized to facilitate SLD in naturalistic settings.

Consequently, from the point of view of teacher talk, the linguistic environment provided in the classroom does not differ significantly from that found on the outside.

According to Krashen's Monitor Model, the input, as provided by the teacher, should be:

- * comprehensible.
- * above the level of present competence (I+1).
- * interesting.

- * of low anxiety context.
- * of sufficient quantity.

Interestingly though, Allwright and Bailey (1991: 139) observe that teacher talk is usually restricted to:

- * structuring
- * soliciting
- * reacting.

Allwright and Bailey (1991: 141) note that teachers tend to talk too much, “leaving the learners little opportunity to practise genuine communicative uses of language in a full range of functional moves or to negotiate for meaning” . Cook (1991) supports this statement with the following statistic: 77% of the classroom time in bilingual classrooms is taken up by teacher talk.

4.4 Pupil Talk

Ellis (1986: 280) states that the learner’s language consists of formulaic speech and creative speech.

4.4.1 Formulaic Speech

Ellis (1986: 167) defines formulaic speech as consisting of “expressions which are learned as unanalysable wholes and employed on particular occasions...” It can be observed in the speech of native speakers and learners. It is also frequently found in the speech of child and adult learners of naturalistic SLA.

Krashen and Scarcella (1978) refer to routines and patterns. Routines are described as whole utterances learnt as memorized chunks while patterns are described as utterances that are only partially unanalyzed and have one or more open slots, e.g.

May I have _____?

Ellis (1984) also considers formulaic speech as consisting of entire scripts, such as greeting sequences, which the learner can memorize because they are more or less fixed and predictable. Each formula is closely tied to a particular communicative goal.

Formulaic speech is an important factor in SLA, but according to Ellis (1986) it is probably only a major factor in early SLA. The strategies of pattern memorization, pattern imitation and pattern analysis, rather controversially, are viewed as minor learning strategies in comparison with those contributing directly to a creative rule system.

4.4.2 Creative Speech

Creative speech is the product of internalization of L2 rules. These are 'creative' in the Chomskyan sense in that they permit the L2 learner to produce entirely novel sentences. This is because L2 rules constitute the learner's interlanguage system and permit the learner to vary his performance according to both the linguistic and situational context.

4.5 Participation

Ellis (1994:128) poses the following questions: What is participation? How do learners make use of the practice opportunities afforded them by language classrooms? Ellis then continues by providing a schematic summary of some factors in observable participation in classrooms (cf. Figure 2).

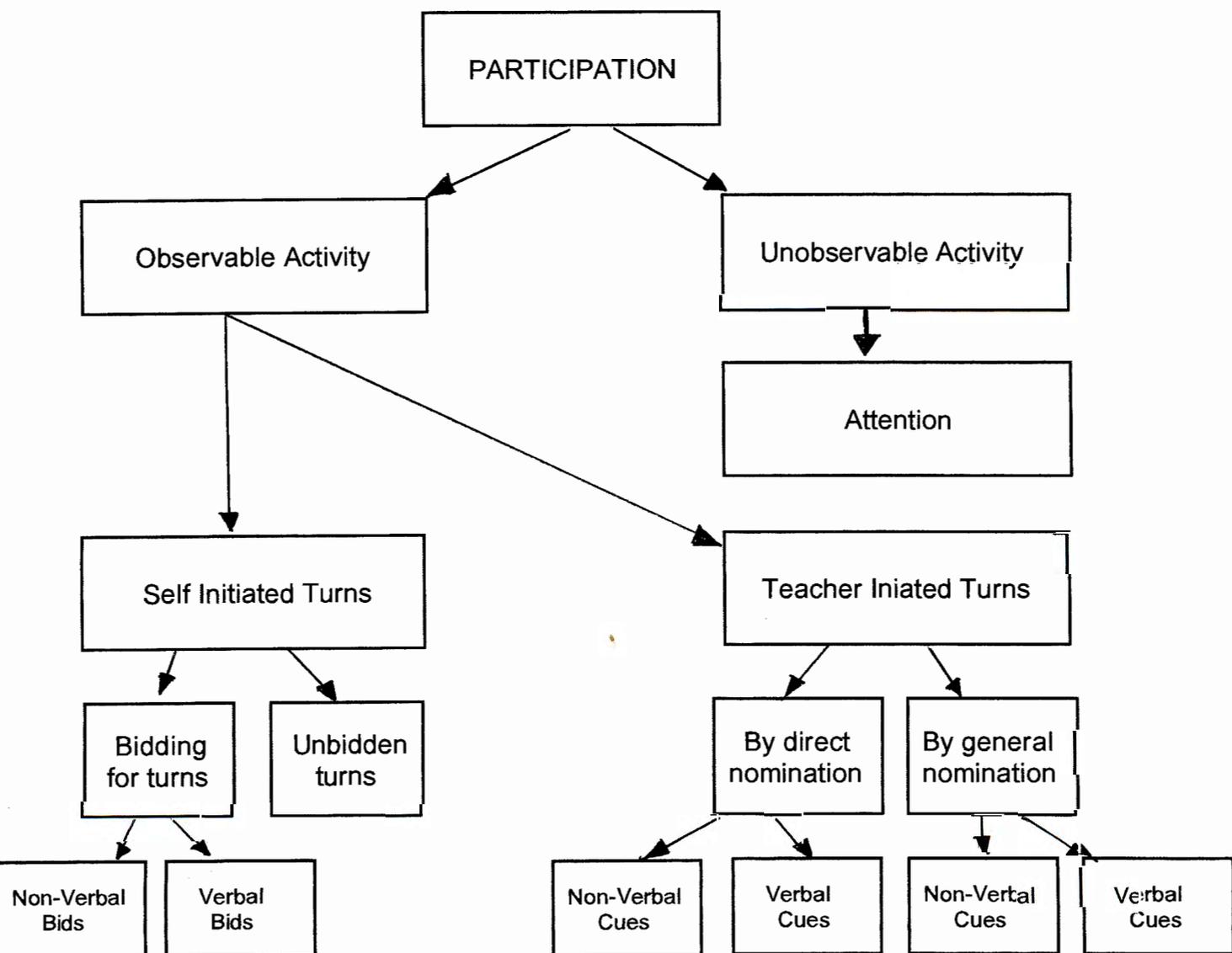
It is important to bear in mind that not all forms of participation are observable. In this regard, Ellis (1994:129) points out that "participation, or more specifically engagement' with the language learning task at hand, may in some instances be largely an internal, mental phenomenon."

4.5.1 Quantity of Participation

Ellis (1994) points out that no clear evidence exists that the extent to which learners participate in the classroom affects their rate of development. Studies which focus

on the quantity of pupil participation as a variable which affects L2 development have produced mixed results. Studies by Seliger (1977) and Naiman et al. (1978) report positive correlations between various measures of pupil participation and proficiency, while others (Day, 1984; Allwright, 1980) found no positive correlations.

Figure 2: Observable Factors in Classroom Participation



(Ellis, 1994: 128 -129)

Wells (1979) found that the amount of adult speech addressed to the L1 learner aided rapid learning. This would seem likely for Second Language Development. It is, however, not merely a question of the amount of speech made available to the learner, but of the amount that is converted into what Ellis (1986) refers to as 'intake'. In the classroom a lot of the language addressed to the class may not be 'comprehensible' and/or may not be attended to. Wells' research has shown that the quantity of speech in itself is insufficient for rapid development. The question, therefore, seems to be not so much how often pupils participate, but how they participate, i.e. the quality of their participation.

4.5.2 Quality of Participation

The L1 learner needs to communicate in order to understand his environment. This is not the case with the L2 learner. In naturalistic SLD the learner is likely to need to interact socially, but in classroom SLD this need for social interaction is greatly reduced. According to Ellis (1986), a third need may exist when the target language serves as the medium as well as the target of instruction, namely, the need to communicate for transactional purposes.

Unless the learner is free to express his own meanings and ideas, there exists no need to communicate. A corollary of this requirement is that the meanings communicated by the learner are not yet known by the other interlocutors. As Ellis (1986: 129) points out, "if the learner is asked merely to supply responses to fit the teachers pre-determined template of the communicative task there will not be the

opportunity for him to use his resources in a flexible manner. This flexibility may be crucial for shaping the interlanguage system.”

Quality here refers to the nature of pupil participation in terms of its level of development, i.e. are responses merely automatic reactions triggered by teacher questions or are the pupils generating new ideas and questions on their own initiative?

One of the key factors which seems to determine the quality of pupils participation in classroom settings is the degree of control pupils have over the discourse (Cathcart, 1986; House, 1986). Cathcart (1986) discovered that where the learner had control over the discourse, the talk was characterized by a wide variety of communicative acts and syntactic structures. On the other hand, in situations which were controlled by the teacher, pupils seemed to produce single word utterances, short phrases and formulaic chunks.

Other researchers, notably House (1986), found that the quality of learner participation was influenced by the type of activity or tasks they were involved in. House tried to relate learners' performance in everyday situations (enacted in role plays) to their performance in classroom discussions. She found that the role-play discussions were much more natural than the traditional teacher directed discussions of advanced German learners of L2 English.

Current research thus seems to indicate that in cases where participation is strictly controlled there may be few opportunities for learners to practise communicative strategies. According to Ellis (1994: 594), this could be one of the reasons why many foreign language learners reliant on the classroom fail to develop much strategic competence.

Another important aspect is that at the root of the asymmetrical role relationship is the fact that the practised teacher often finds it difficult to tolerate a silence and rushes to fill it with easing fluency, while students, much less ready with the tongue, need time to formulate, to stumble and hesitate.

4.6 Affective Atmosphere

Another factor which notably influences learner participation in classrooms is the predominant affective atmosphere of the classroom. Krashen recognized this factor when he formulated the affective filter hypothesis. According to Krashen (1982:46), "the filter is that part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call 'affect': the learner's motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states." The filter is described as having four functions, namely:

- i. It determines which language models the learner will select.
- ii. It determines which part of the language will be attended to first.
- iii. It determines when the language acquisition efforts should cease.

iv. It determines how fast a learner can acquire a language.

He argued that comprehensible input was a necessary but not sufficient condition for second language acquisition. According to his Affective Filter Hypothesis, comprehensible input may not be utilized by second language learners if there is a "mental block" that prevents them from truly benefitting from it (Krashen, 1985).

According to this hypothesis, the affective filter acts as a barrier to acquisition. If the filter is "down" the input reaches the language acquisition device and becomes acquired competence. If the affective filter is "up" the input is blocked and does not reach the language acquisition device. Krashen (1985) maintained that acquirers need to be open (receptive) to the input. The filter is down when the learner is not anxious and is intent on becoming a speaker of the target language. The filter is up when a learner is anxious, uncertain and unmotivated. If pupils feel threatened or uncomfortable they will not feel free to participate.

Hence the attitude of the teacher can have a marked influence on pupil participation. A pupil who is afraid of how the teacher will react to his contributions to the discussion will not be prepared to take risks and therefore, will not participate readily.

Therefore, it stands to reason that the affective atmosphere will have a direct influence on the quality of participation; in the sense that a pupil will not be eager to

assume his role in a discussion if the classroom atmosphere is negative and debilitating.

In this regard, the following questions need to be addressed:

- * Does the affective atmosphere facilitate or inhibit pupil participation?
- * How do pupils perceive their teachers?

4.7 Conclusion

Current research evidence seems to suggest that the quality of pupil participation in conjunction with the affective atmosphere of the classroom has had a direct influence in SLA. Therefore, in order to determine what characteristics (types) of pupil talk (pupil participation) are present, from which the quality of participation can be determined, and in an attempt to answer the above questions, this study focuses on the spoken discourse in ESL classrooms.

CHAPTER 5: METHOD OF RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The methodology employed in this study is discussed under five main headings: design, subjects, instrumentation, data collection procedure and analysis. The aim of this chapter is therefore to discuss:

- * the design used in this study,
- * the characteristics of the subjects,
- * the instruments used in this study,
- * how the data were collected, and
- * how the data were analyzed.

5.2 Review of the Literature

From review of the literature it is evident that the majority of second language pupils have major problems using the target language for general communication.

Research on the quantity of pupil participation cannot account for improvements in communicative proficiency. Therefore, the problem seems to be not how often pupils participate but the nature of their participation and whether or not the affective atmosphere inhibits or facilitates interaction.

5.3 Empirical Investigation

5.3.1 Design

This is a descriptive study. The purpose is not to generalize beyond the confines of the study (cf. Ary et al., 1990).

5.3.2 Subjects

The accessible study population comprises 142 standard nine pupils (higher and standard grade) in a secondary school in Mpumalanga. In order to prevent disruption in the teaching system, five intact classes were used in this study. The subjects were all more or less 17 years of age. Both male (N=81) and female (N=61) subjects were used in this study.

5.3.3 Instrumentation

Ten ESL lessons of five different classes in an Afrikaans Medium High School were observed and analyzed in terms of Park's Verbal Interaction Analysis Instrument (VIA) (an instrument which describes classroom interaction) and Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form (an instrument which evaluates the classroom atmosphere).

5.3.3.1 Park's VIA-Instrument

This instrument was designed to observe and describe the nature of verbal interaction patterns in a classroom situation. For this purpose, Park (1991:92) identifies 18 verbal behaviour categories. Eleven of these are used to describe teacher talk and seven are used for pupil talk. A category system is used whereby each category constitutes a collection of related, perceivable behaviour variations of a subdimension (eg. all forms of questioning of a specific lesson dimension). The categories are as follows:

TEACHER DISCOURSE

All teacher talk is marked off under teacher discourse in categories 1 to 11 (c1-c11).

i. Teacher Response

The instrument distinguishes between three types of teacher response to pupil questions:

C1: Terminal Response (TERM.)

A terminal response ends a question-answer episode. The answer the pupil seeks is given and the teacher continues the lesson without referring to the pupil's question.

C2: Continual Response (CON.)

A continual response continues the interaction elicited by the pupil question. The teacher adapts the course of the lesson by posing a counter-question (which in this case is not classified into categories 10 or 11 but into category 2) or by asking a pupil to formulate the question more precisely, by readdressing the question to the group or by using the pupil's question as a problem to be solved during the rest of the lesson.

C3: Criticizing Response (CRIT.)

This response to a pupil's question is aimed more at the pupil than at the question, since the pupil is criticized or admonished for asking the question. The teacher therefore indicates that the question will not be answered. This may be because the teacher thinks that the questions are of low quality or because the teacher is not flexible enough to deal with the pupil's problem during the lesson.

ii. Teacher Reaction

Teacher reactions are voluntary and so are not solicited by the pupil questions, for instance:

C4: Accepting Reaction (ACCEPT.)

An accepting reaction merely acknowledges verbal participation of a pupil. This may be done by acknowledging a pupil comment or reaction as correct or relevant or by praising a pupil for giving a correct answer and thereafter continuing the lesson.

C5: Integrating Reaction (INTEGR.)

A pupil's verbal response or reaction is integrated into the lesson and used while the explanation of content is continued.

C6: Rejecting Reaction (REJECT.)

Here the teacher disregards or rejects a pupil's contributions or responses.

iii. Teacher Structuring

Teacher structuring is associated with one-way verbal communication. Three types are distinguished:

C7: Informal Structuring (INFORM.)

Informal structuring indicates teacher discourse that is not directly concerned with the presentation or clarification of lesson content. References to events the pupils may have experienced (eg. a sports event in which they participated) in order to create a positive climate and gain rapport with the pupils, are classified as informal structuring.

C8: Imparting (IMPART.)

Lesson content that is presented by means of one-way communication is regarded as imparting of content.

C9: Instructing (INSTRUCT.)

Any task given to pupils, whether it has anything to do with the clarification of content or not, is classified in this category. Examples of tasks are: doing certain exercises, opening a book at a particular page, closing the door or forming groups for groupwork.

iv. Teacher Questioning

C10: Questions to an Individual Pupil (PUPIL.)

All questions directed at a particular pupil are placed in this category. Park (1991) does identify a few exceptions, namely:

- * questions asked during the course of the lesson in order to raise a problem (category 8). Questions asked in favour of contextualizing content or pupil orientation is not aimed at eliciting an immediate pupil response.
- * questions asked to maintain a discussion as an integrating reaction (category 5) to a pupil's response or questions asked as a continual response to a pupil's question (category 2).
- * questions used to encourage or praise, eg.: "have you ever seen such a neat book?" (category 9).
- * questions used to reprimand or criticize, eg.: "Haven't you learnt to think yet?" (category 6).
- * requests such as "Won't you please write your answer on the board?" (category 9).

C11: Question to the group (GROUP.)

This category is reserved for questions where the teacher does not nominate a specific pupil to answer the question. The exceptions mentioned above are also valid here.

PUPIL DISCOURSE

Pupil verbal activities are marked off in categories 12 to 18 (C12- C18)

i. Pupil Response

Pupil responses are solicited by teacher or pupil questions. Any answer pupils give to a question asked either by the teacher or another pupil must therefore be regarded as a pupil response.

C12: Correct Response (CORRECT.)

If a pupil answers a question correctly, the response is marked off in this category.

C13: Incomplete Response (INCOM.)

Incomplete or partly correct pupil answers fall into this category.

C14: Wrong Response (WRONG.)

This category is reserved for marking off incorrect pupil answers. If a pupil remains silent after a teacher question, this should not be seen as an incorrect answer since the instrument records only verbal actions. If a pupil states that he / she cannot answer the question, the response can be marked off in this category.

ii. Pupil Reaction

Pupil reactions are voluntary unsolicited verbal contributions.

C15: Reaction to a teacher contribution (T/CONTR.)

This category is used if a pupil contributes verbally or comments on verbal or non-verbal teacher behaviour.

C15: Reaction to another pupil contribution (P/CONTR.)

This category is used if a pupil verbally contributes or comments on a fellow pupil's verbal or non-verbal action.

iii. Pupil Questions

Pupil questions which openly address the teacher or fellow pupils fall into this category.

C17: Pupil Question: Primary Information (PRIM./I)

Pupil questions requesting primary information are the questions pupils ask to gain more information directly related to the lesson content being discussed. They are mostly concerned with clarifying the subject matter at hand.

C18: Pupil Question: Secondary Information (SEC./I)

Secondary information questions are those the pupil asks to gain information which has no direct bearing on the content being discussed. These questions mostly lead to enrichment since related themes or fields are introduced by the answers.

5.3.3.2 Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form

Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form was designed to evaluate classroom atmosphere. According to Tuckman (1972), a positive classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning. Classroom atmosphere refers to the attitudes of the teacher towards the pupils and vice versa. These attitudes are also determined by the nature of the interaction that occurs between pupils and the teacher. The

instrument focuses on four essential dimensions of classroom climate namely, creativity, dynamism, organizational demeanor as well as warmth and acceptance (cf. Appendix B).

Tuckman advises that the form be completed after observing at least one lesson. He provides a student edition, for completion by the students and a different form for the researcher. In each case the position of the observed person is to be indicated on a scale from 1 to 7 for each of thirty contrasting adjectives eg. Organized - Disorganized. These scores are then used to compute a score for each of the four mentioned dimensions. The way in which this computation is made is discussed under section 5.3.5.

5.3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Ten ESL lessons of five different Std 9 classes were observed by attending the classes and recording the events on an audio cassette. During the lesson the researcher completed Park's VIA-instrument: the coding of events takes place in isochronic units. The researcher marks off each of the verbal actions as they occur, in the relevant category.

In view of the fact that transition units are used as units of observation, the researcher marks the transition of one category to the next, irrespective of how long the various actions take. The categories are marked horizontally as long as there is progress to categories on the right of the instrument. In order to describe the

tempo of the interaction a time line can be drawn on the right hand side of the chart in the "Remarks" column. This can be done by jotting the time down every five minutes.

After observing two lessons, the researcher required the pupils of each of the five standard 9 classes to complete the student's edition of the Tuckman Teacher Feedback Form. The researcher also completed the Tuckman Teacher Feedback Form after each lesson.

5.3.5 Analysis

After observing the various classes, the collected data were summarized by means of a computer spreadsheet (Lotus 5 for Windows). The original data recorded by the researcher on Park's VIA Instrument as well as the data recorded by pupils on Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form were used to compile relative frequency distribution tables, compute averages (Mean) and to construct Relative Frequency Histograms (using Harvard Graphics ver 3.0).

More specifically, Tuckman's dimension scores for each teacher were calculated as follows:

1. Each pupil rated the teacher on a scale of 1 to 7 for each of thirty contrasting adjectives. Pupil scores were then combined to establish an average score for each adjective.

2. The individual pupil scores were also used to calculate five dimension scores per pupil for each teacher. Thereafter, the various pupil determined dimension scores were combined to arrive at an average dimension score for each teacher.

3. Histograms were drawn, using the average figures for each teacher, to obtain a visual representation of the distribution of dimension scores.

Dimension scores were calculated according to the following formulas provided by Tuckman. A **bold** number in brackets indicates the number of the adjective that is taken into account for that particular dimension while a number outside the brackets is a weighted numerical value, eg. the second number to be found in brackets for the 'Creativity' formula below is a 7. This corresponds to the contrasting adjectives 'Old fashioned - Modern' on Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form and so the pupil's score for this adjective (1 to 7) would be entered here. The formula's are as follows:

Organized Demeanor:

$$\text{Item: } ((\mathbf{1+14+30}) - (\mathbf{2+4+16+25})+25) + 42 = ?$$

$$((_+_+_) - (_+_+_)+25)+42 = ?$$

Dynamism:

$$\text{Item: } ((\mathbf{20+24}) - (\mathbf{3+11+22}) +19) + 30 = ?$$

$$((_+_) - (_+_+)) + 19) + 30 = ?$$

Flexibility:

Item: $((15+23) - (10+21)+12) + 24 = ?$

$$((_+_) - (_+_+) + 12) + 24 = ?$$

Warmth and Acceptance:

Item: $((13+19+27+28) - (8+12+18) + 17) + 42 = ?$

$$((_+_+ _+) - (_+_+)) + 17) + 42 = ?$$

Creativity:

Item: $((5+7+17) - (6+9+26) + 18) + 36 = ?$

$$((_+_+) - (_+_+) + 18) + 36 = ?$$

It is thus evident that only certain adjectives are considered for each dimension.

The higher the score, the better the teacher has mastered the specific lesson dimension according to the evaluation of the pupils and the researcher.

When considering Park's VIA Instrument, all occurrences of a particular teacher or pupil action were totalled per teacher, per class. These figures were then converted

to relative figures (%) in order to provide a meaningful comparison between teachers and classes. Once again, histograms were drawn to provide a visual representation of the data collected.

5.4 Conclusion

Computer analysis of the raw data ensured the accuracy of computed dimension scores, means, et cetera. Furthermore, the use of the mean as a statistic to describe the data was chosen after careful consideration. According to Howell (1989), the fact that the mean is influenced by extreme values and the fact that it may not actually occur in the data scores may lead some people to believe that it should be discarded. However, the following advantages of the mean significantly outweigh any disadvantages:

1. It can be manipulated algebraically.
2. Probably the most important advantage of the mean, is that it can be historically proven that the sample mean is a much better predictor of the population mean than either the Mode or the Median.

The following chapter contains the computed results of the research as well as a detailed discussion of the analyzed data.

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the analyzed data and attempts to answer the following questions posed in Chapter 1:

1. Does the quality of pupil participation have a bearing on L2 development? If so, what characteristics of pupil participation can be observed in ESL classrooms today?
2. What is the degree of control (i.e. initiation, types of responses, etc.) pupils have over the discourse?
3. Does the affective atmosphere facilitate or inhibit pupil participation?

In order to ensure a logical order of discussion the data are discussed under the following headings:

1. Park's Verbal Interaction Analysis:
 - * Teacher Response
 - * Teacher Reaction
 - * Teacher Structuring
 - * Pupil Response

- * Teacher vs Pupil Discourse

2. Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form: Affective Atmosphere

- * Organized Demeanor
- * Dynamism
- * Flexibility
- * Warmth and Acceptance
- * Creativity

6.2 Park's Verbal Interaction Analysis Instrument

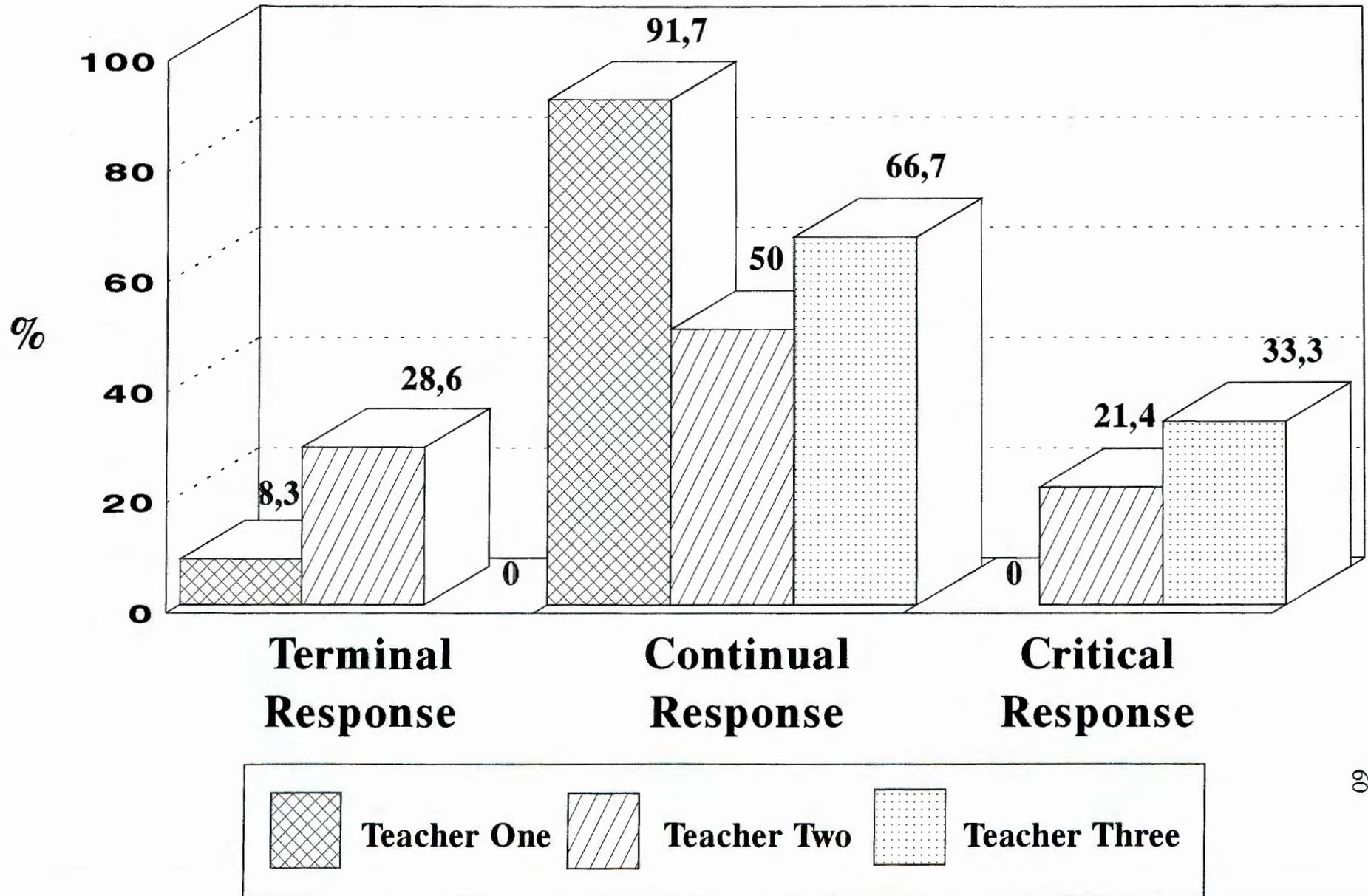
6.2.1 Teacher Discourse

6.2.1.1 Teacher Response

Park (1991) distinguishes between three types of teacher response, namely: terminal, continual and criticizing responses. The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 3) indicates that continual responses are provided by all three teachers between 50 and 91.70% of the time. Terminal responses are given between 8.3 and 28.6% of the time, whereas criticizing responses are given between 0 and 33.3% of the time. The fact that continual responses are prevalent is a positive factor. Frequent continual responses is conducive to stimulating creative thought in pupils. Terminal responses and criticizing responses, on the other hand discourage pupils from participating freely.

Figure 3

Relative Distribution of the Teacher's Type of Response



6.2.1.2 Teacher Reaction

Teacher reactions are voluntary and not solicited by pupil questions. Park (1991) identifies three categories, namely: accepting, integrating and rejecting reaction. The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 4) reflects that accepting reactions dominate (between 51% and 73.7%). Rejecting reactions are present between 11.8 and 21% of the time.

Integrating reactions vary from teacher one to teacher three. Teacher two used integrating reactions 37% of the time, while the other two teachers integrated pupil comments between 8.7% and 5.3% of the time only. The fact that teachers tend to merely acknowledge pupil contributions instead of integrating them into the lesson is significant. Integrating reaction is conducive to pupil participation as the pupil feels that his comment was worthwhile and would therefore feel confident to participate again. Perhaps the fact that the teachers tend to accept or acknowledge pupil contributions only, instead of integrating them, is due to a lack of flexibility.

6.2.1.3 Teacher Structuring

Teacher structuring is associated with one-way verbal communication. For this purpose Park distinguishes three types, namely: informal structuring, imparting and instructing (task-giving). The relative distribution table (cf. Figure 5) indicates that Imparting (category 8) (cf. Appendix A) dominates teacher structuring, but only slightly.

Figure 4

Relative Distribution of the Teacher's Type of Reaction

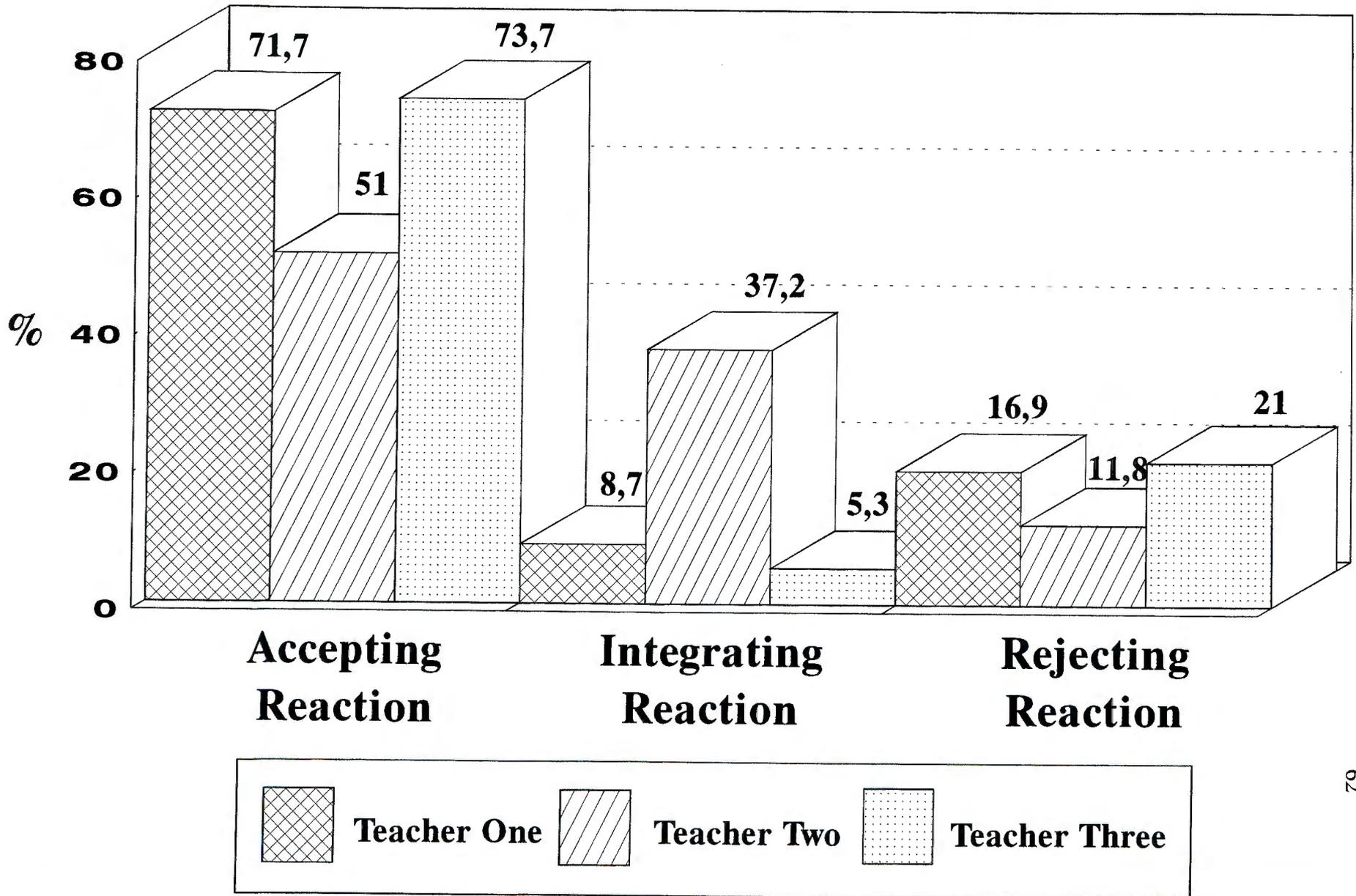
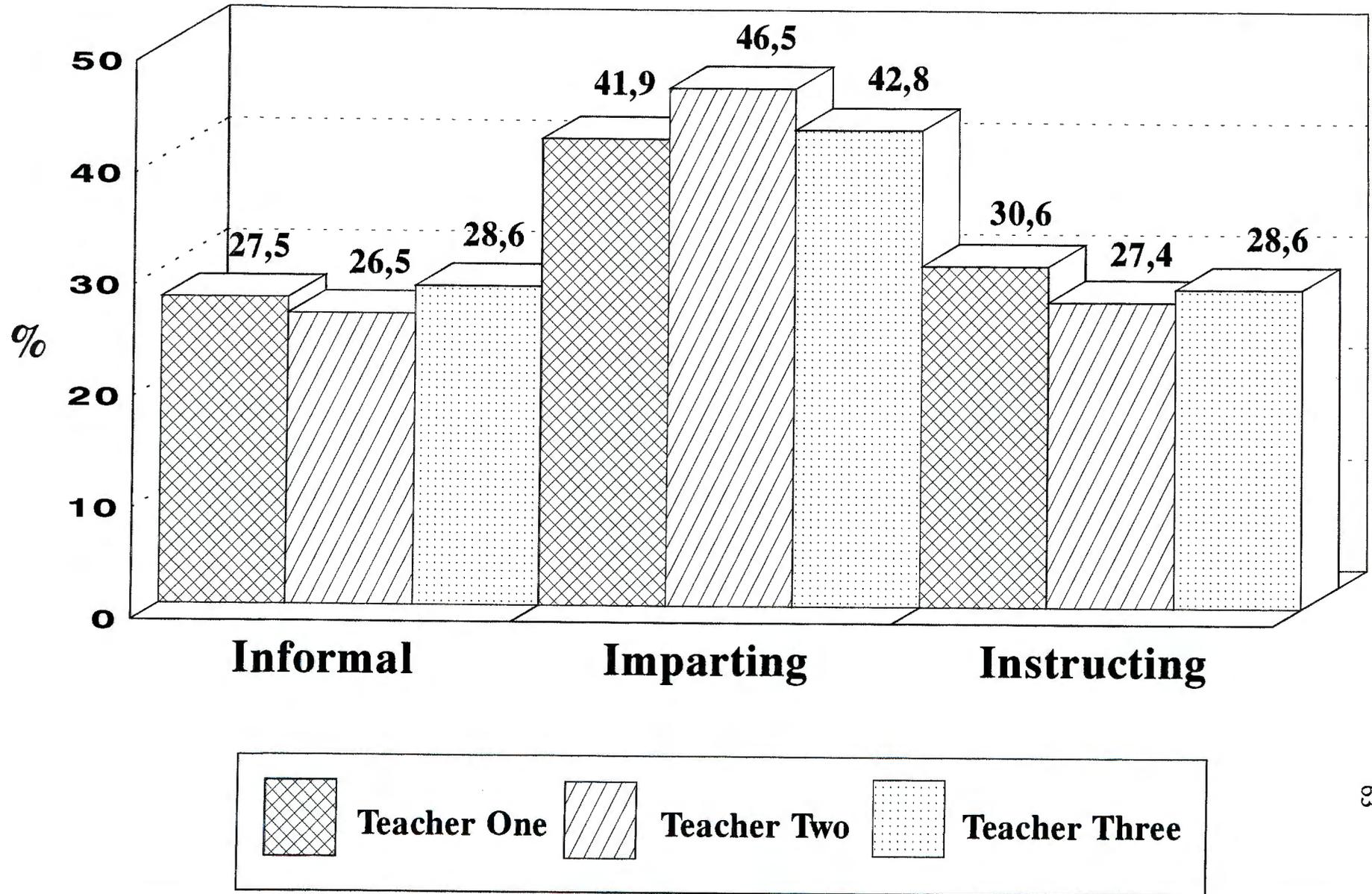


Figure 5

Relative Distribution of Teacher Structuring



When teachers impart, it shows that the teacher leads the exposition of content in a lecture style. A more indirect, flexible and creative approach would be to unfold the lesson content by using leading questions rather than by giving a lecture.

In this regard, the comparison between teacher structuring and teacher questioning et al. (cf. Figure 8) is interesting. Teacher structuring (40 - 60%) is much more dominant than teacher questioning (20 - 25%). This may indicate a lack of flexibility and creativity.

6.2.1.4 Teacher Questioning

There are two relevant categories of teacher questions, namely: questions to individual pupils and questions to the group. The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 6) indicates that the majority of questions asked by teachers are put to the group. This is not necessarily a negative factor because if questions are directed to individuals only, many pupils may sit back and wait to be called upon. Similarly, questions directed only to the group will prevent pupils, who lack the confidence to contribute spontaneously, from participating.

6.2.2 Pupil Discourse

The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 7) indicates that the overwhelming majority of pupil contributions to the interaction is restricted to responses solicited by teacher or pupil questions (80.2 - 100%) whereas, pupil reactions (voluntary

Figure 6

Relative Distribution of the Teacher's Questions

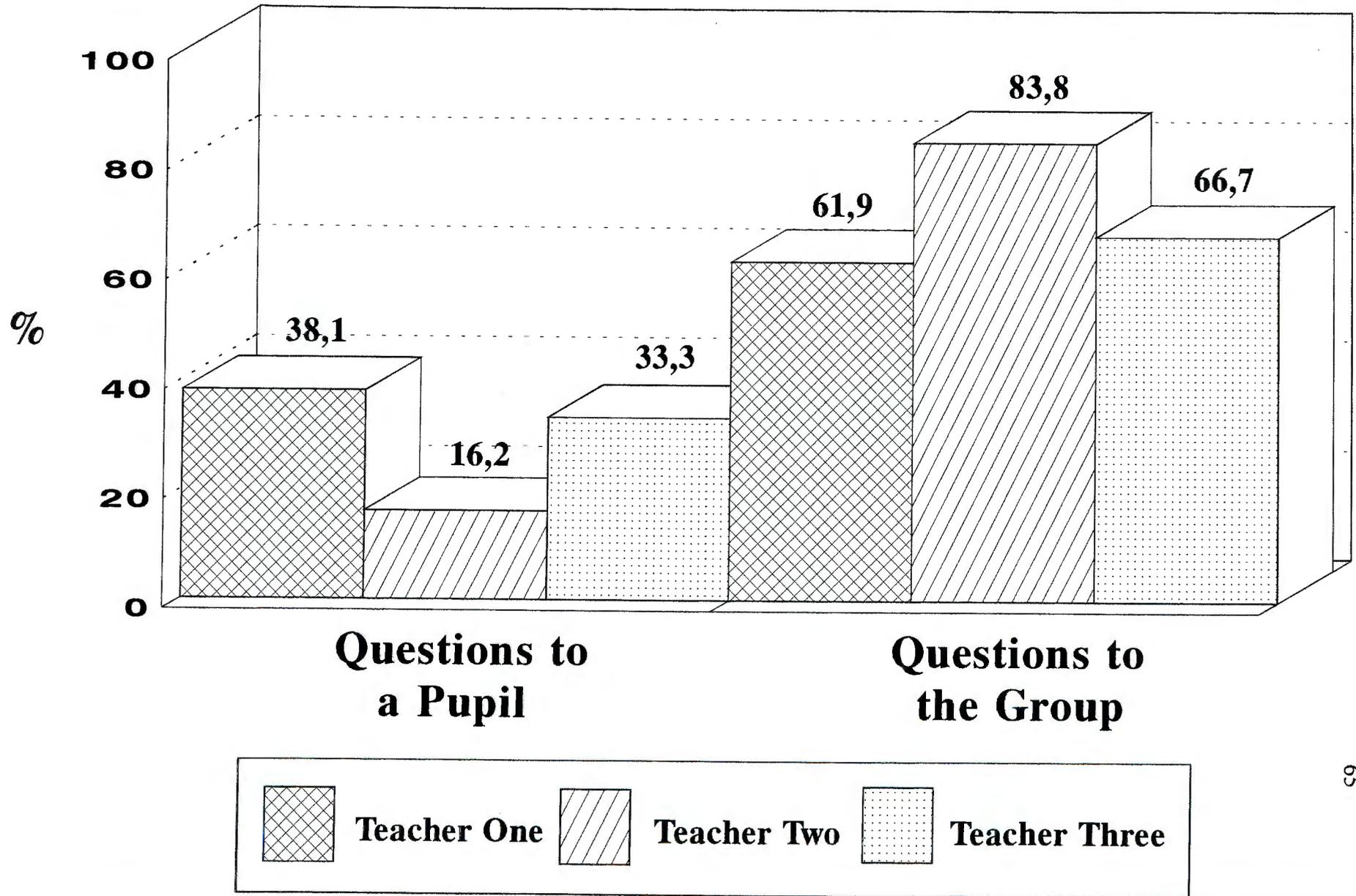


Figure 7

Relative Distribution of the Pupil's Discourse

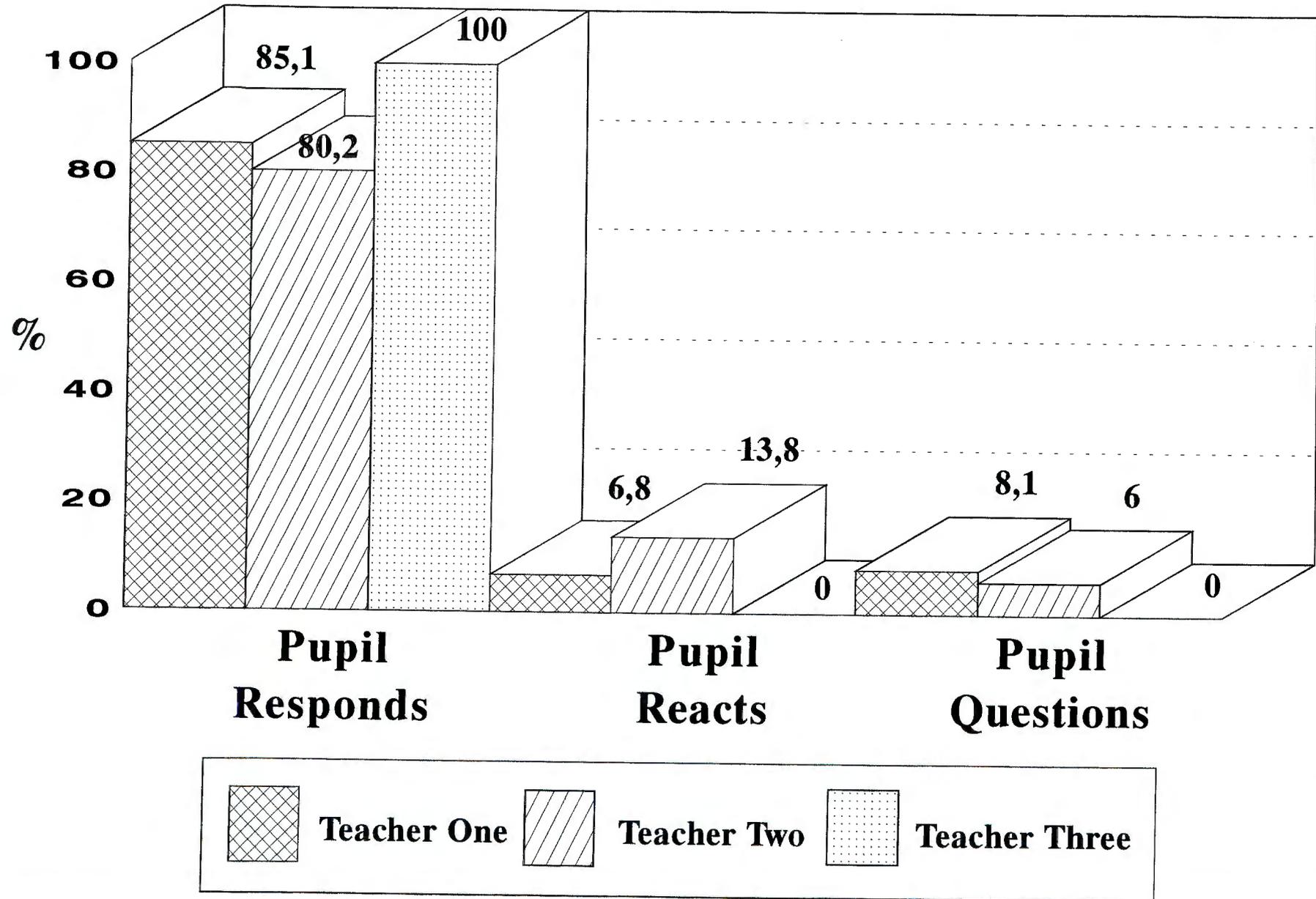
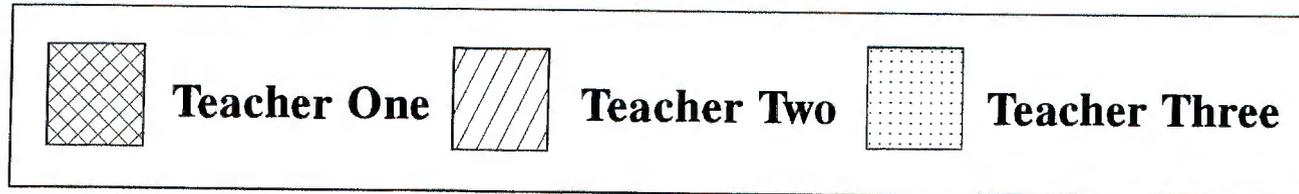
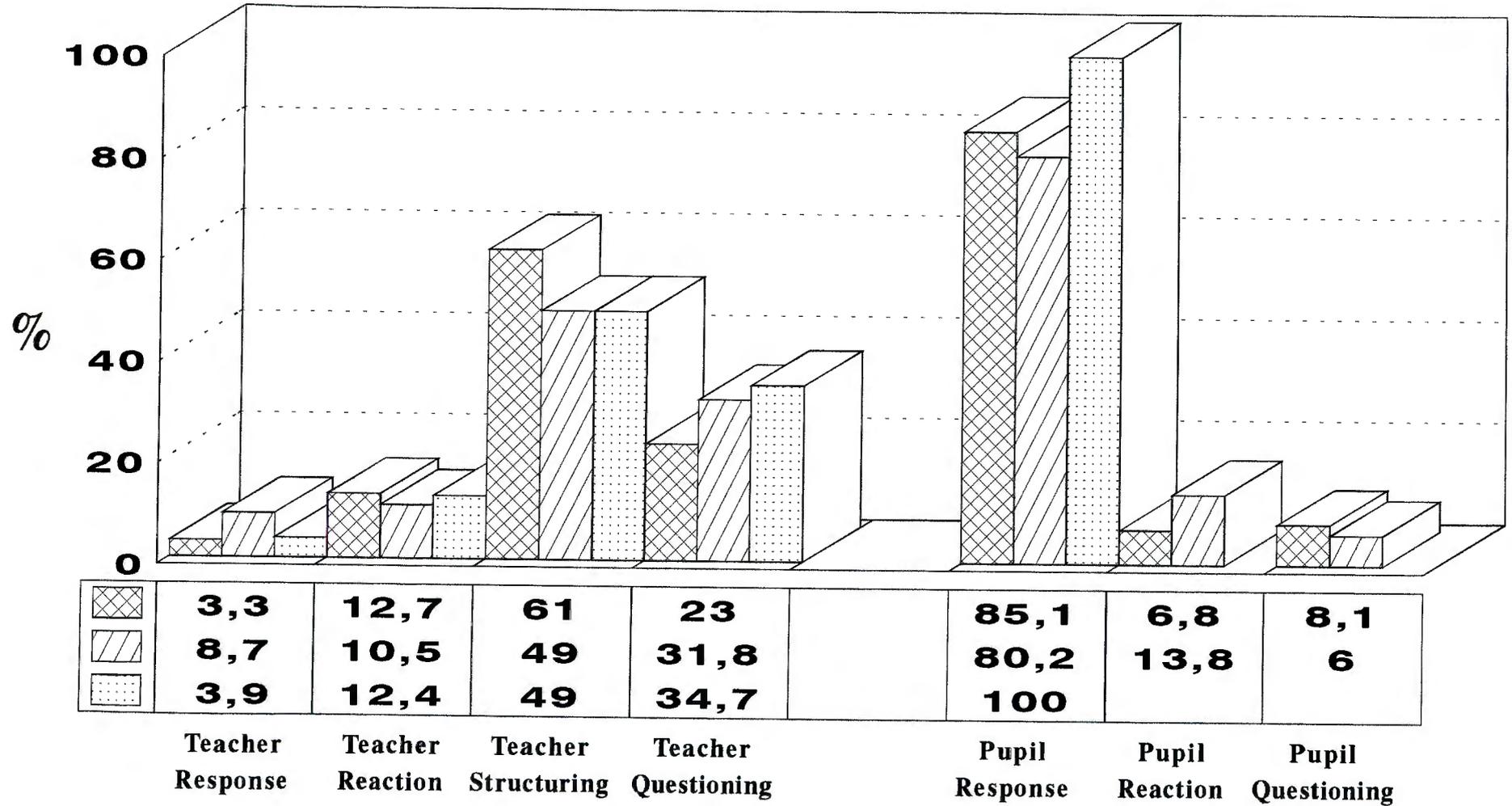


Figure 8

Teacher Discourse vs Pupil Discourse



contributions) are fairly low (between 0 and 13.8%). Pupil questions score even lower (between 0 and 8.10%). This indicates that the verbal interaction in the classroom does not facilitate language acquisition because pupils are restricted to a responding role only. They rarely initiate a discussion or volunteer information by themselves. This does not allow them to practise vital communication skills.

6.2.2.1 Pupil Response

Park identifies three types of responses to teacher questions, namely: correct, incorrect and incomplete responses.

6.2.2.2 Pupil Reaction

Pupil reactions are voluntary unsolicited verbal contributions. There are two types, namely: reaction to a teacher contribution and reaction to another pupil contribution (categories 17 and 18, cf. Appendix A).

6.3 Tuckman's Teacher Feedback Form: Affective Atmosphere

This instrument gives insight into the current affective atmosphere in the observed classrooms. As discussed in Chapter 4, this has a direct bearing on pupil participation and hence, acquisition.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the nature of the affective atmosphere more closely in terms of the five dimensions identified by Tuckman.

6.3.1 Organized Demeanor

Organized demeanor comprises the following adjectives, namely: organized - disorganized, confused - orderly, unplanned - efficient, clear - unclear, confident - uncertain, in control - on the run, aware - forgetful.

The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 9) indicates that the average score pupils rated teachers on lies between 16 and 25. Teacher two got the highest ratings, 30% of the pupils rated teacher two between 21 and 25. It seems that the teachers observed are perceived as being fairly organized and efficient. The histogram indicates that organized demeanor does not seem to be a problem which influences pupil participation.

6.3.2 Dynamism

This dimension comprises the following adjectives: withdrawn - outgoing, quiet - bubbly, aggressive - soft-spoken, lively - lifeless, outspoken - shy.

The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 10) indicates an alarmingly low score for all three teachers observed. The average score for all three teachers lies between 6 and 15, which is fairly low by comparison to the scores allocated for

Figure 9

Tuckman's Organized Demeanor Dimension

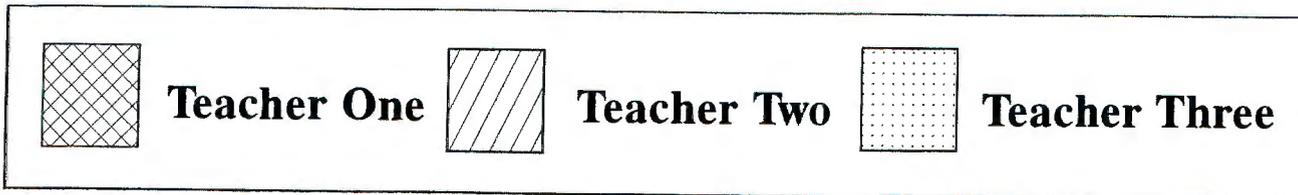
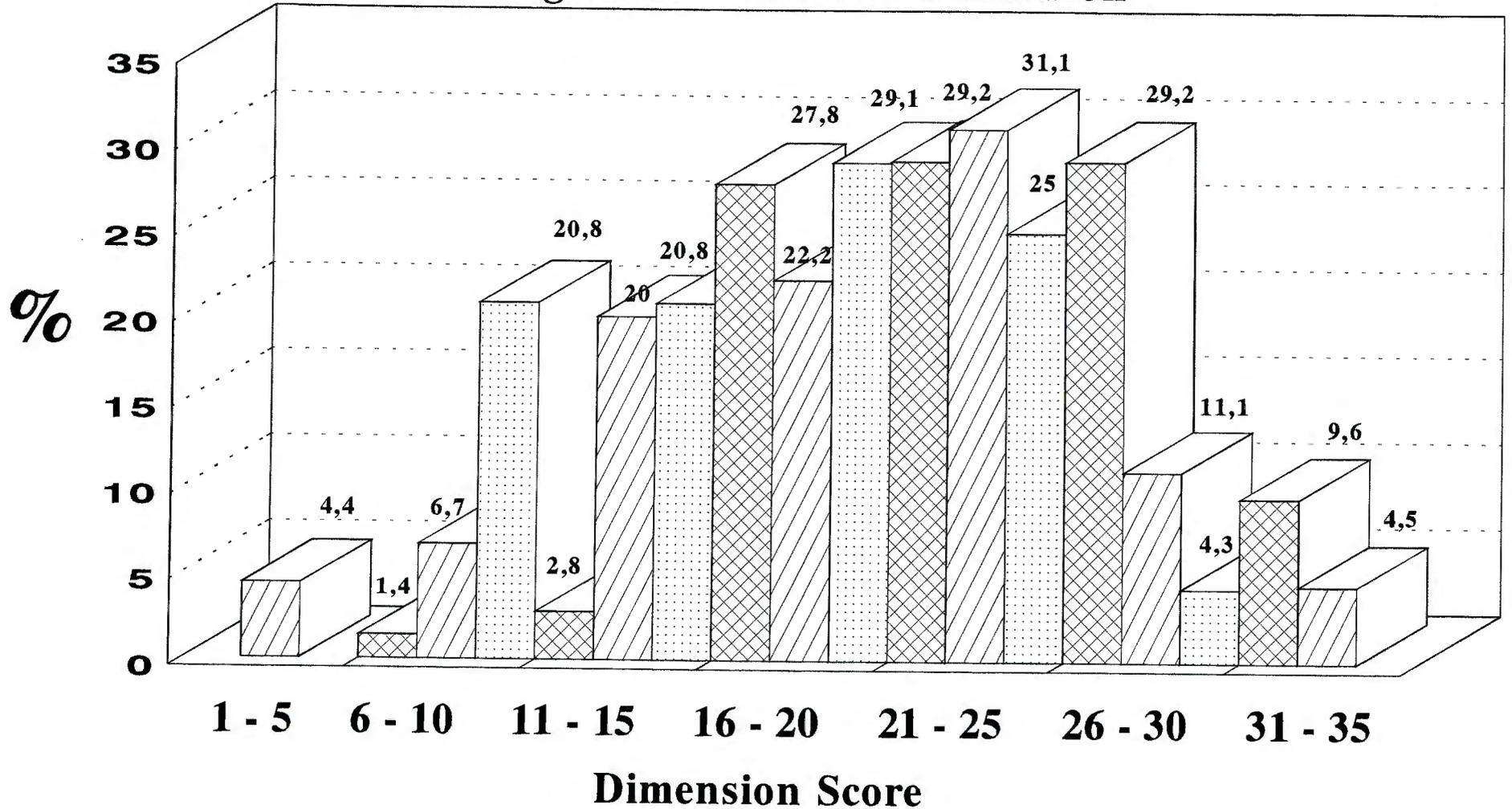
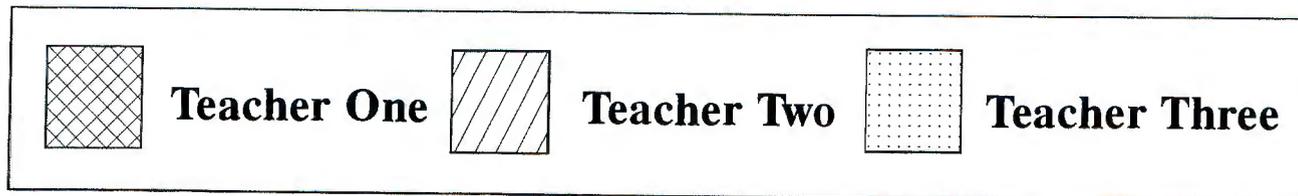
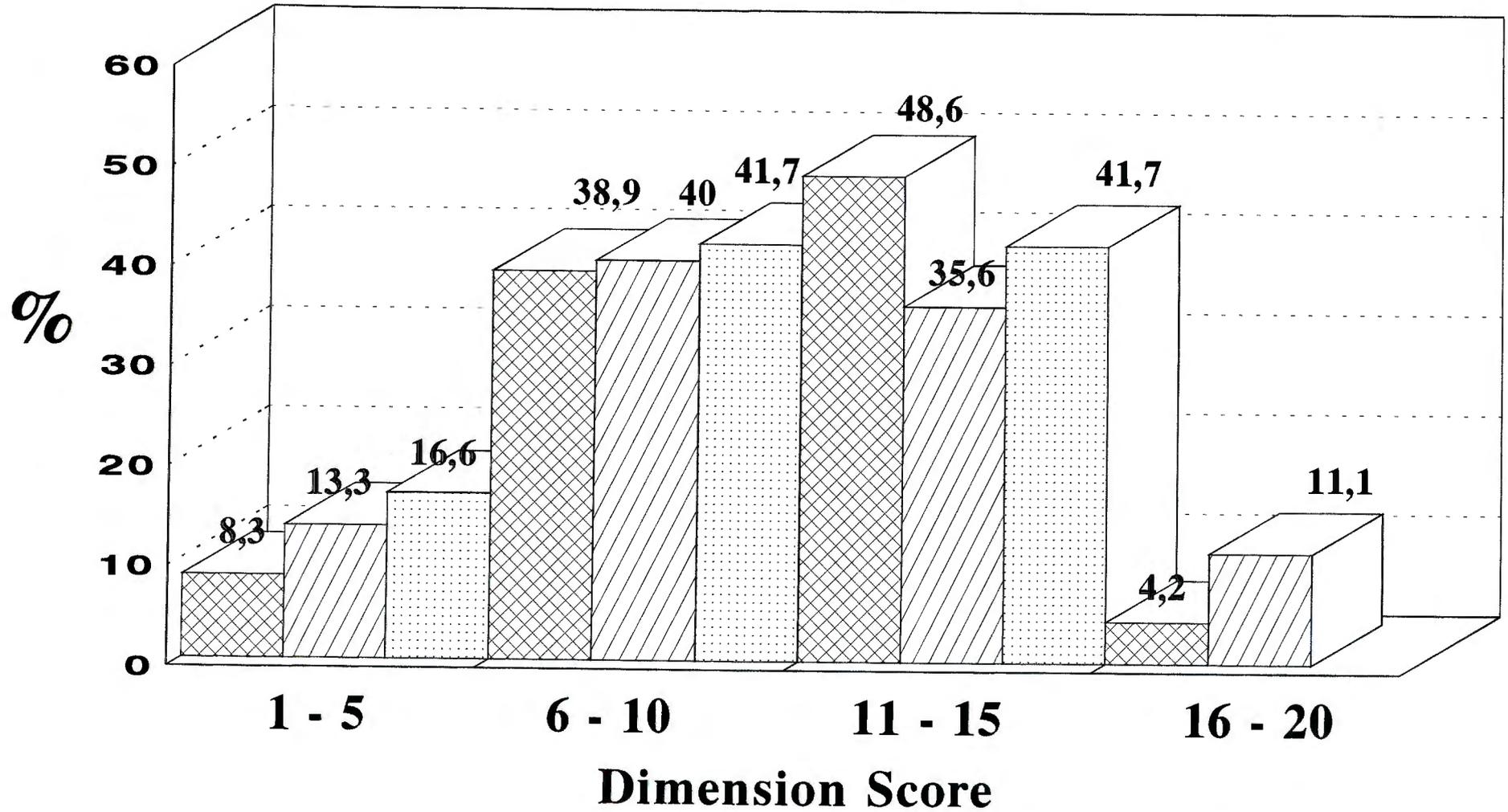


Figure 10

Tuckman's Dynamism Dimension



organized demeanor. This could possibly be a factor influencing pupil participation. Is it not perhaps possible that pupils feel bored in the classroom due to a lack of dynamism on the part of the teacher? A teacher who is enthusiastic inspires pupils to participate and dare.

6.3.3 Flexibility

Tuckman associates the following adjectives with this dimension, namely: strict - lenient, unchangeable - flexible, sensitive - rough, easy-going - demanding.

The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 11) indicates that all three teachers have fairly low scores for this dimension. This, along with the low scores in dynamism could have a debilitating effect on pupil participation. This is supported by the results found in Park's VIA Instrument. It is evident from the results that teachers tend to accept pupil contributions but seem to be hesitant about integrating them into the lesson. This may be a direct result of a lack of flexibility.

6.3.4 Warmth and Acceptance

The following adjectives define warmth and acceptance: snobby - modest, rude - polite, impatient - patient, uncaring - caring, likeable - "stuck up", accepts people - critical, warm - cold.

The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 12) indicates a fairly positive state of affairs in terms of warmth and acceptance. Between 15 and 33% of the pupils rate

Figure 11

Tuckman's Flexibility Dimension

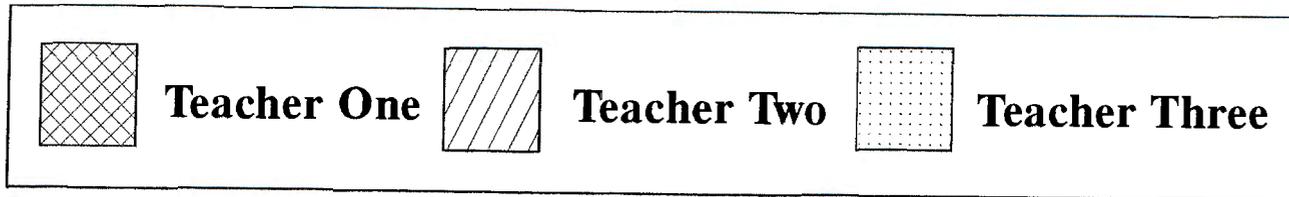
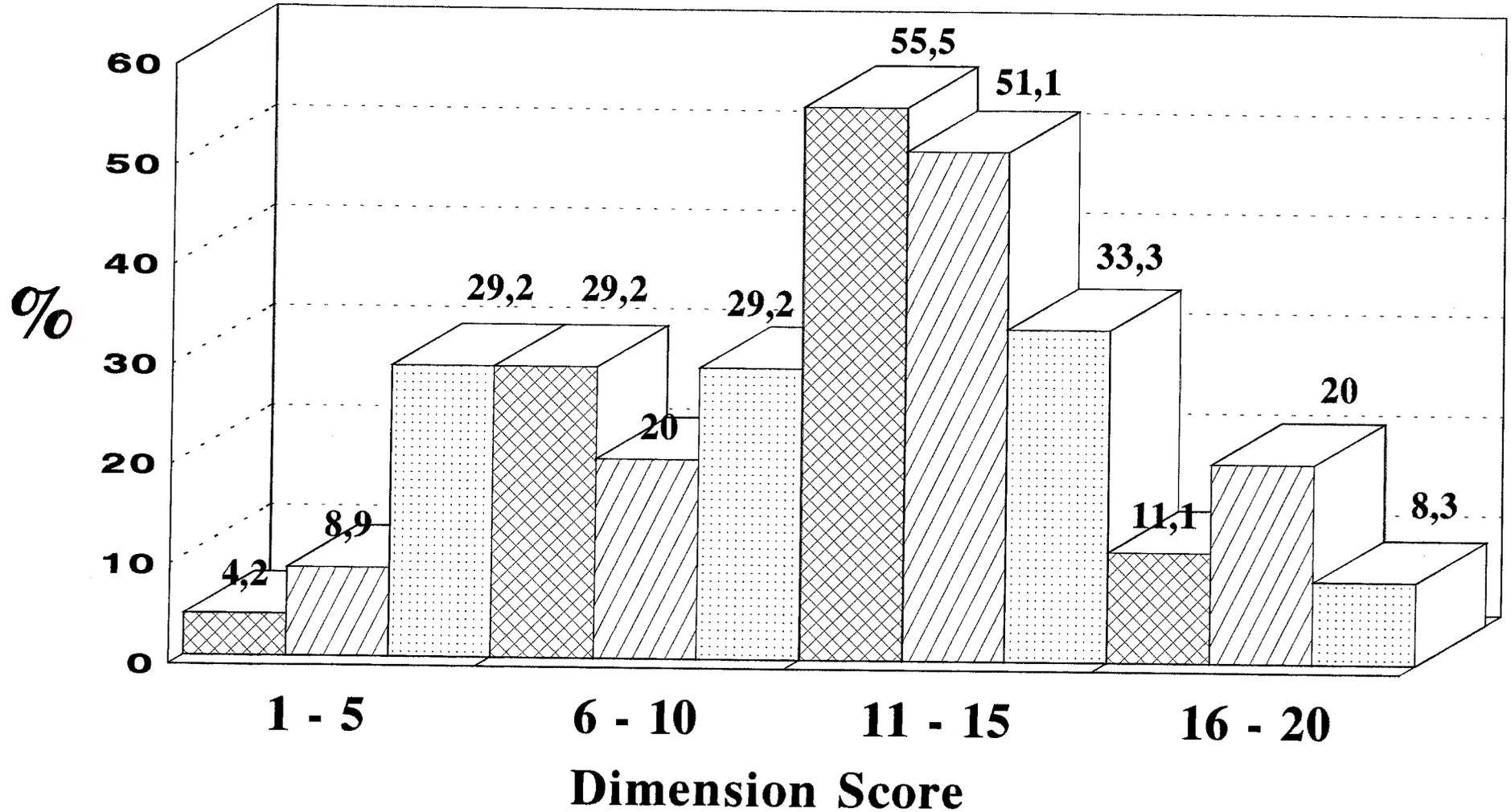


Figure 12

Tuckman's Warmth and Acceptance Dimension

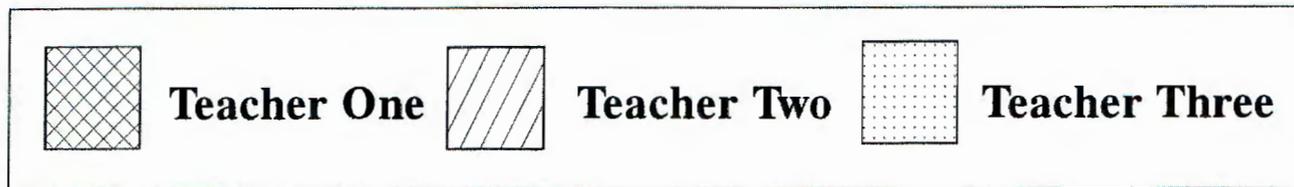
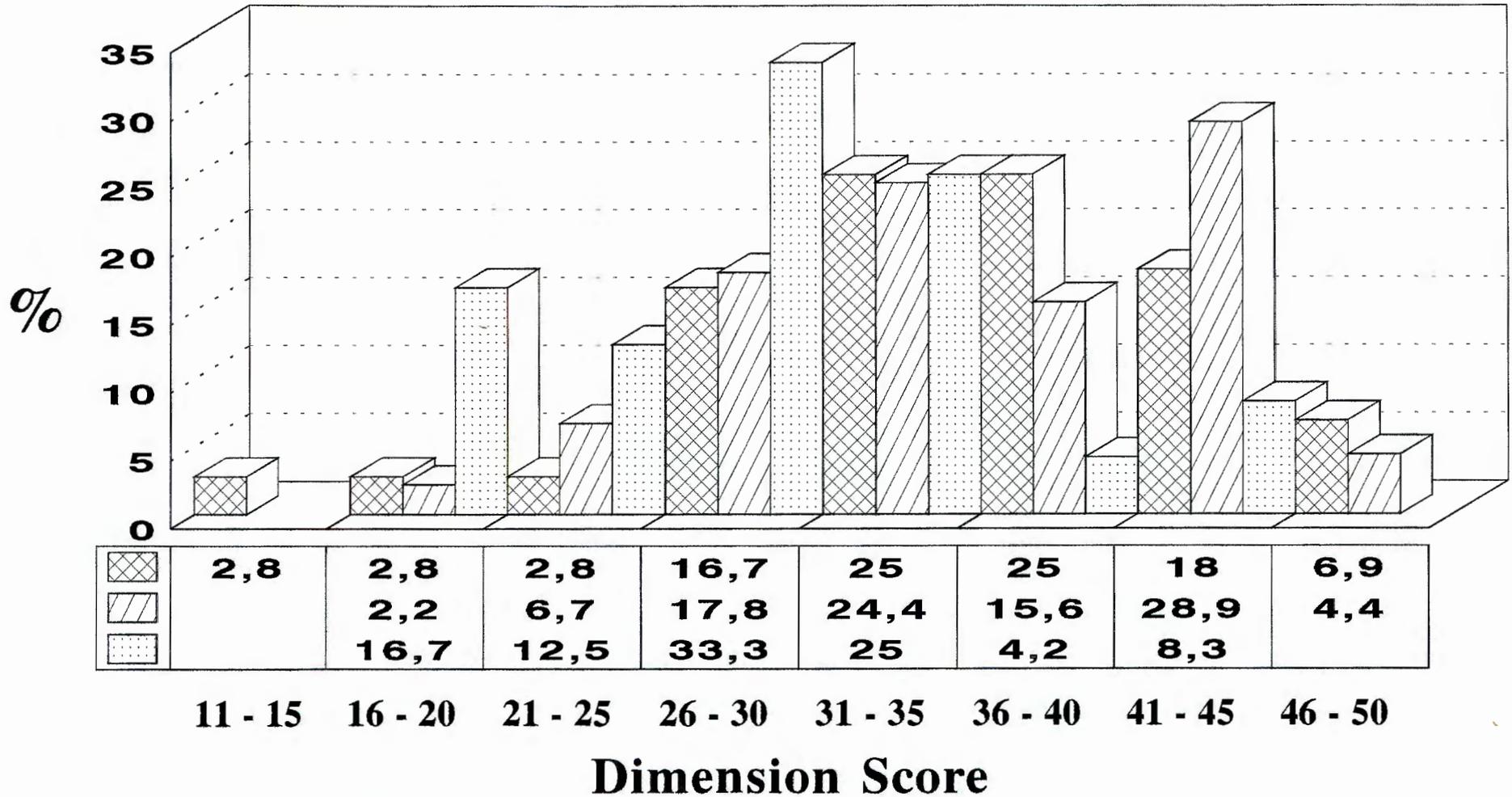
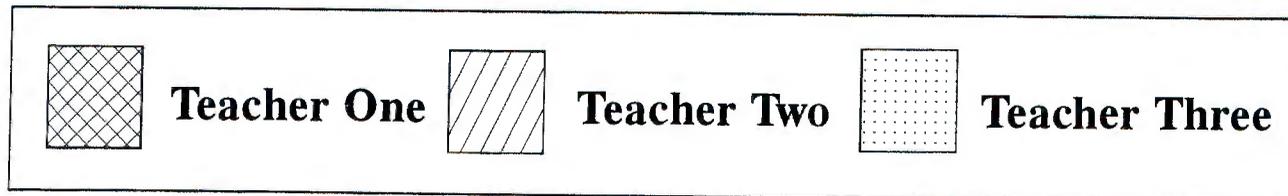
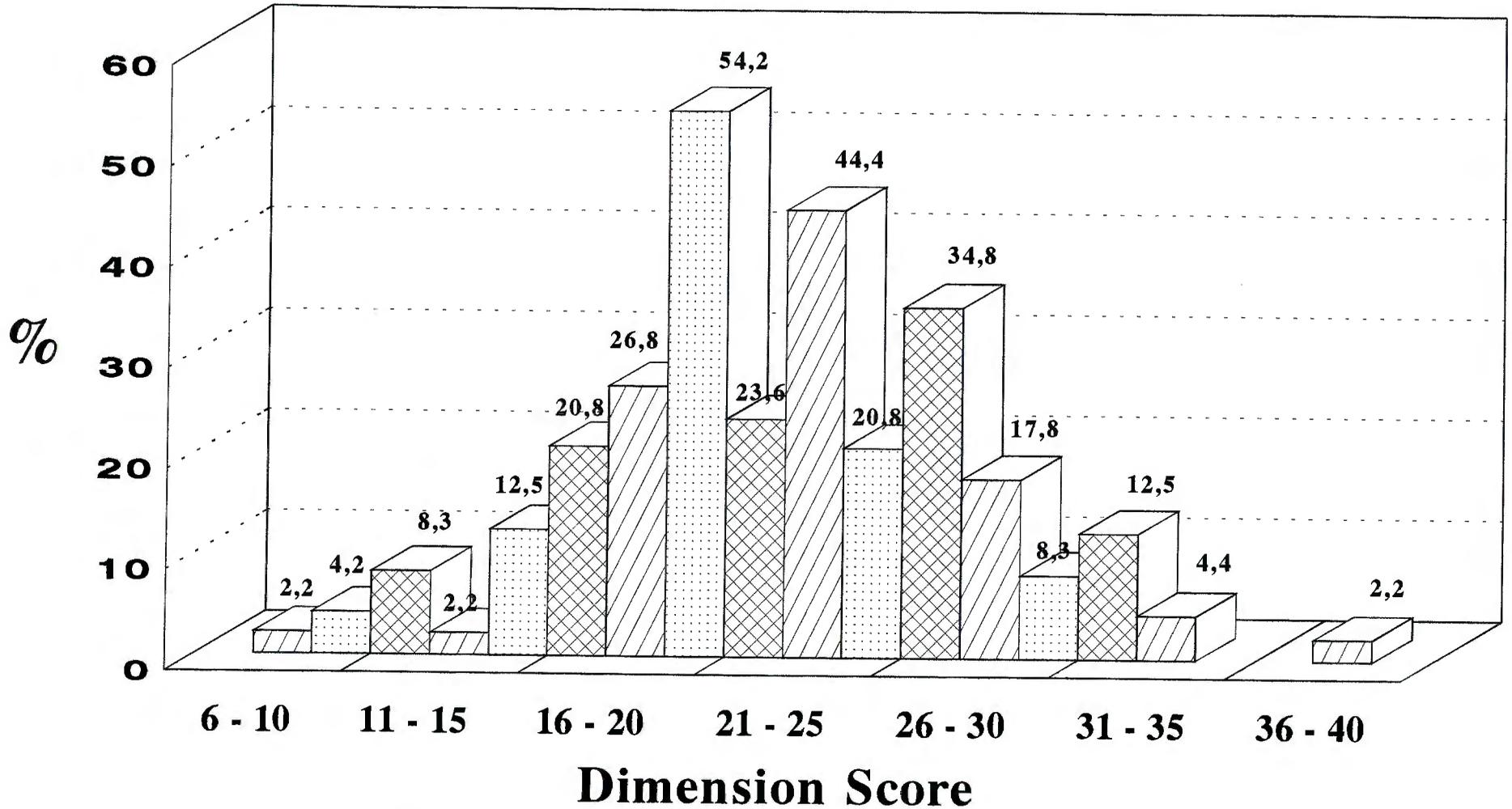


Figure 13

Tuckman's Creativity Dimension



the three teachers between 26 and 40. This is a positive factor which indicates that pupils seem to feel comfortable and accepted in the classes. The teachers are perceived as accepting, likeable and caring. Feeling accepted and comfortable is conducive to pupil participation but, unfortunately it is not the only factor which influences interaction. Pupils need to have more control over the lesson. They need to have the opportunity to stumble and grapple with the language on their own.

6.3.5 Creativity

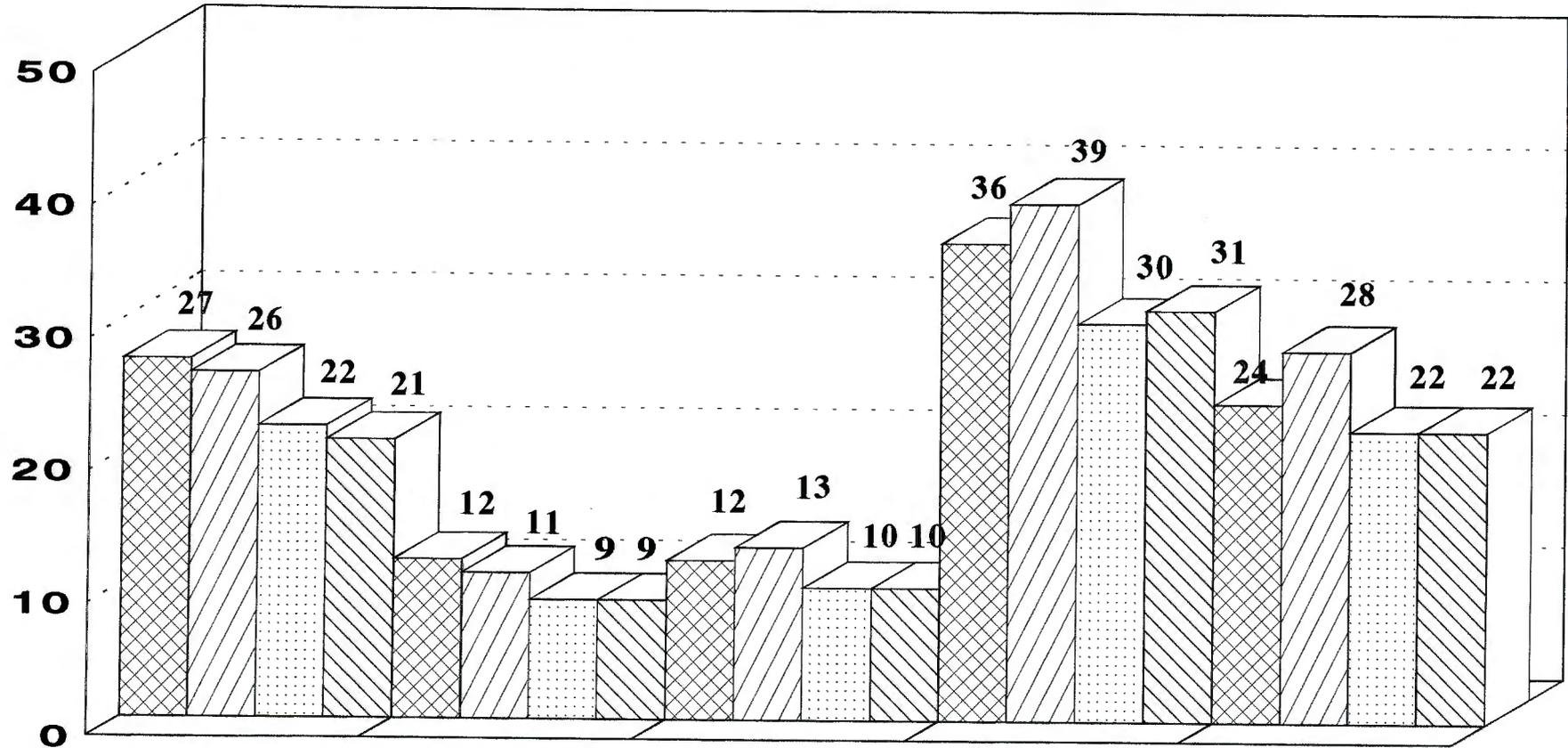
Creativity is defined in the following terms: commonplace - clever, old fashioned - modern, traditional - original, creative - ordinary, exciting - boring, "new ideas" - same old thing.

Creativity can be an enormously motivating factor in a classroom. A pupil who finds the lesson interesting and challenging will participate more readily than a pupil who is bored to tears. The relative distribution histogram (cf. Figure 13) showed that between 18 and 50% of the pupils rated the three teachers between 16 and 30. This is once again a comparatively low score.

Figure's 14 to 16 give a comparison of the various dimensions for each of the three teachers observed and Figure 17 provides a comparison between them. It was immediately apparent when examining these that all three teachers performed well with regards to warmth and acceptance and rather poorly with regards to dynamism and flexibility.

Figure 14

Teacher One



Organized Demeanor

Dynamism

Flexibility

Warmth and Acceptance

Creativity

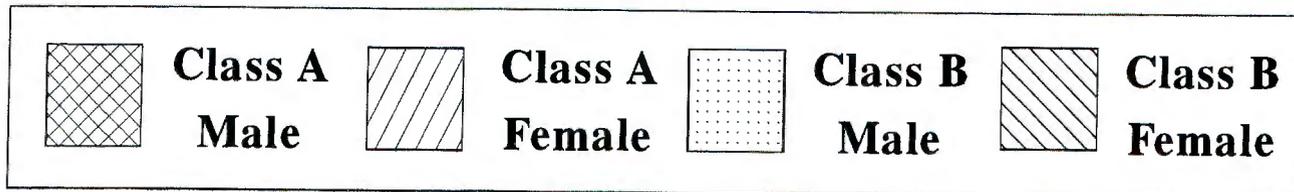


Figure 15

Teacher Two

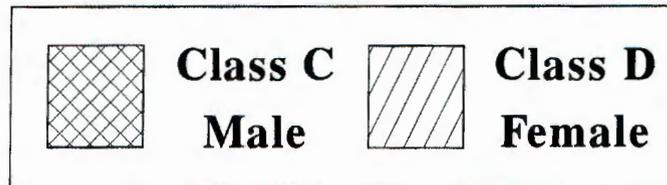
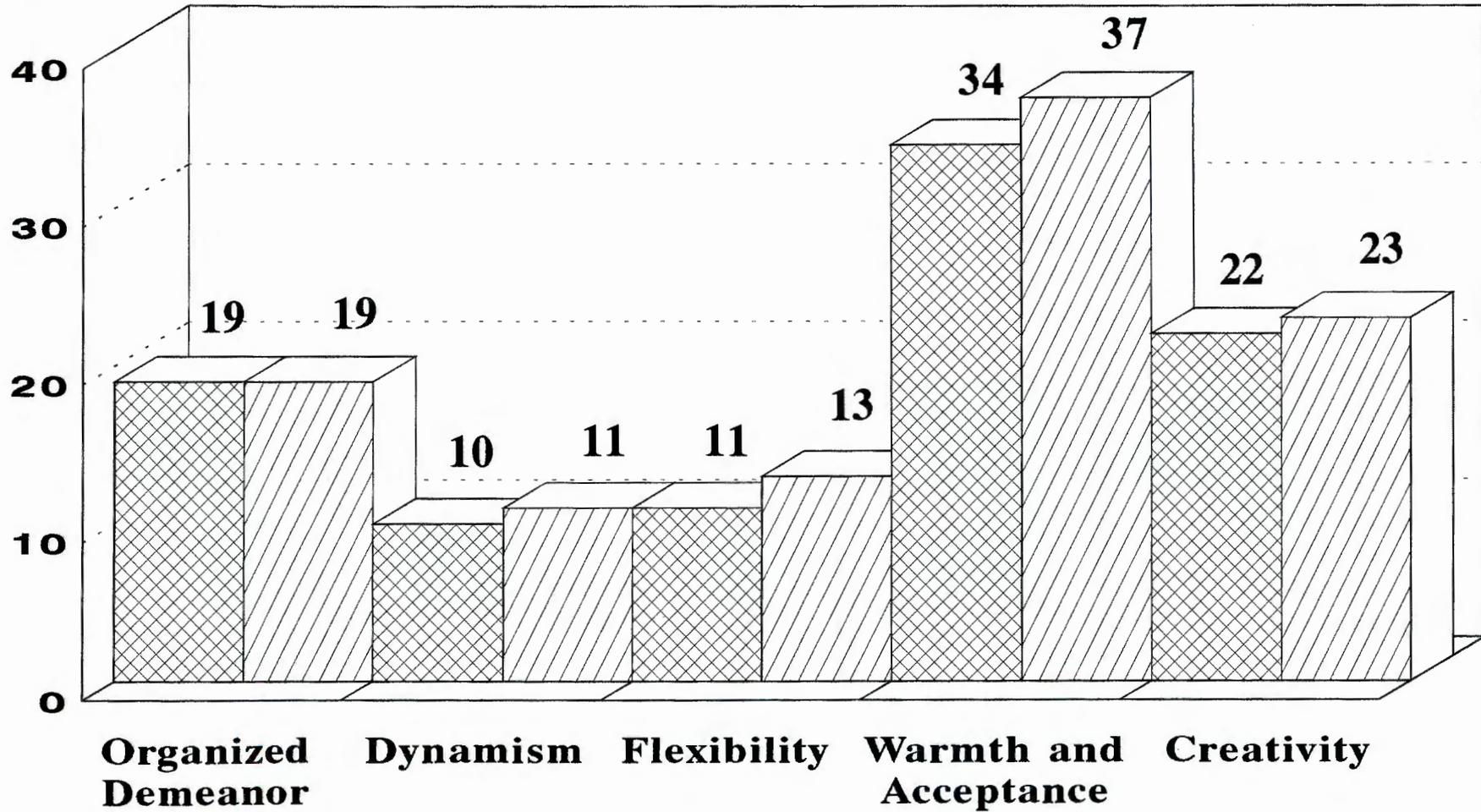


Figure 16

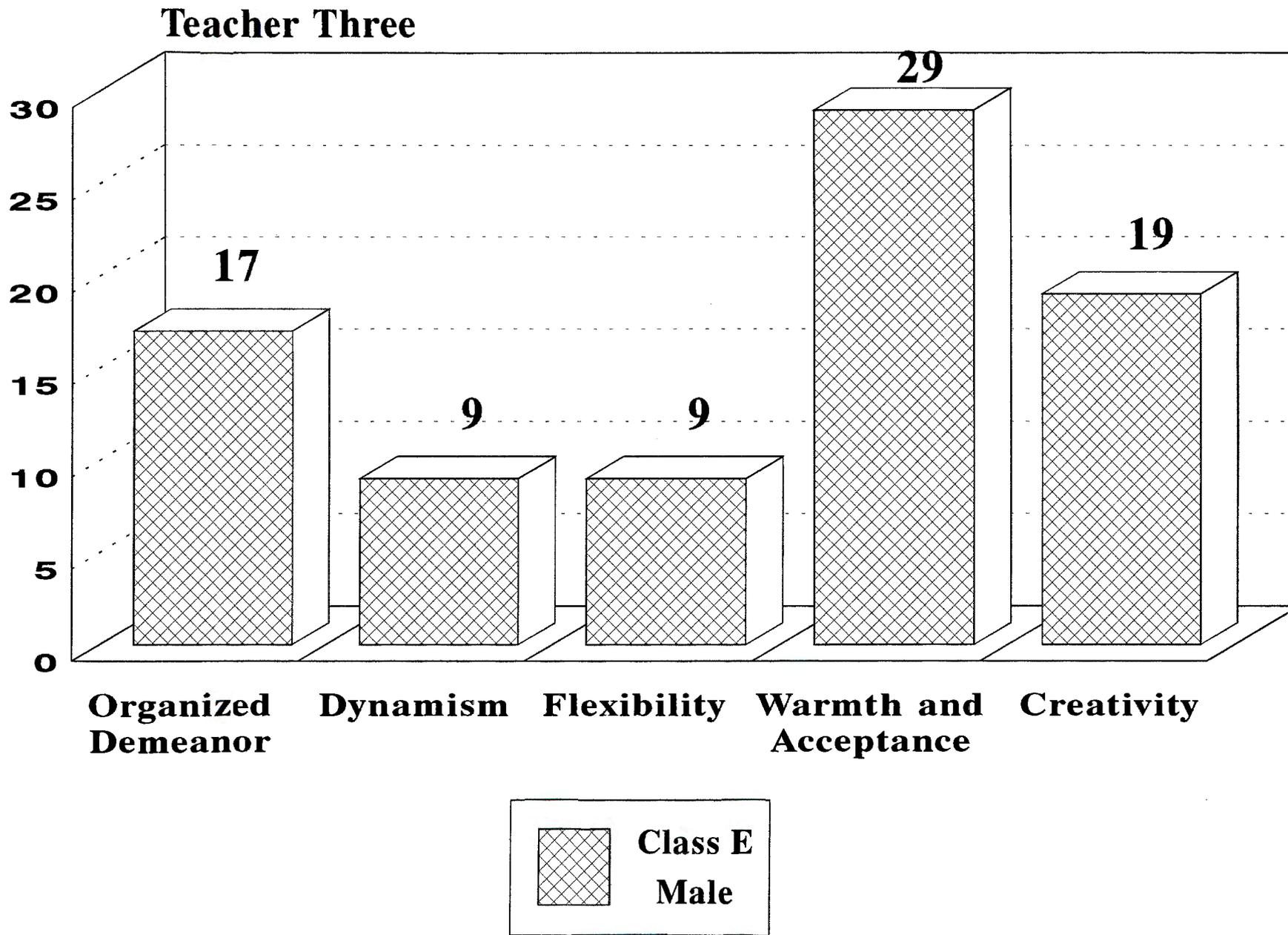
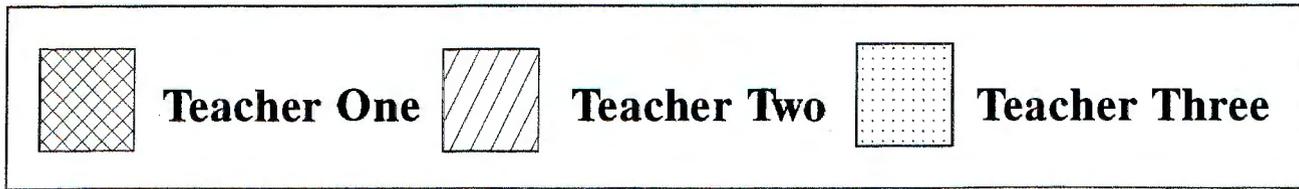
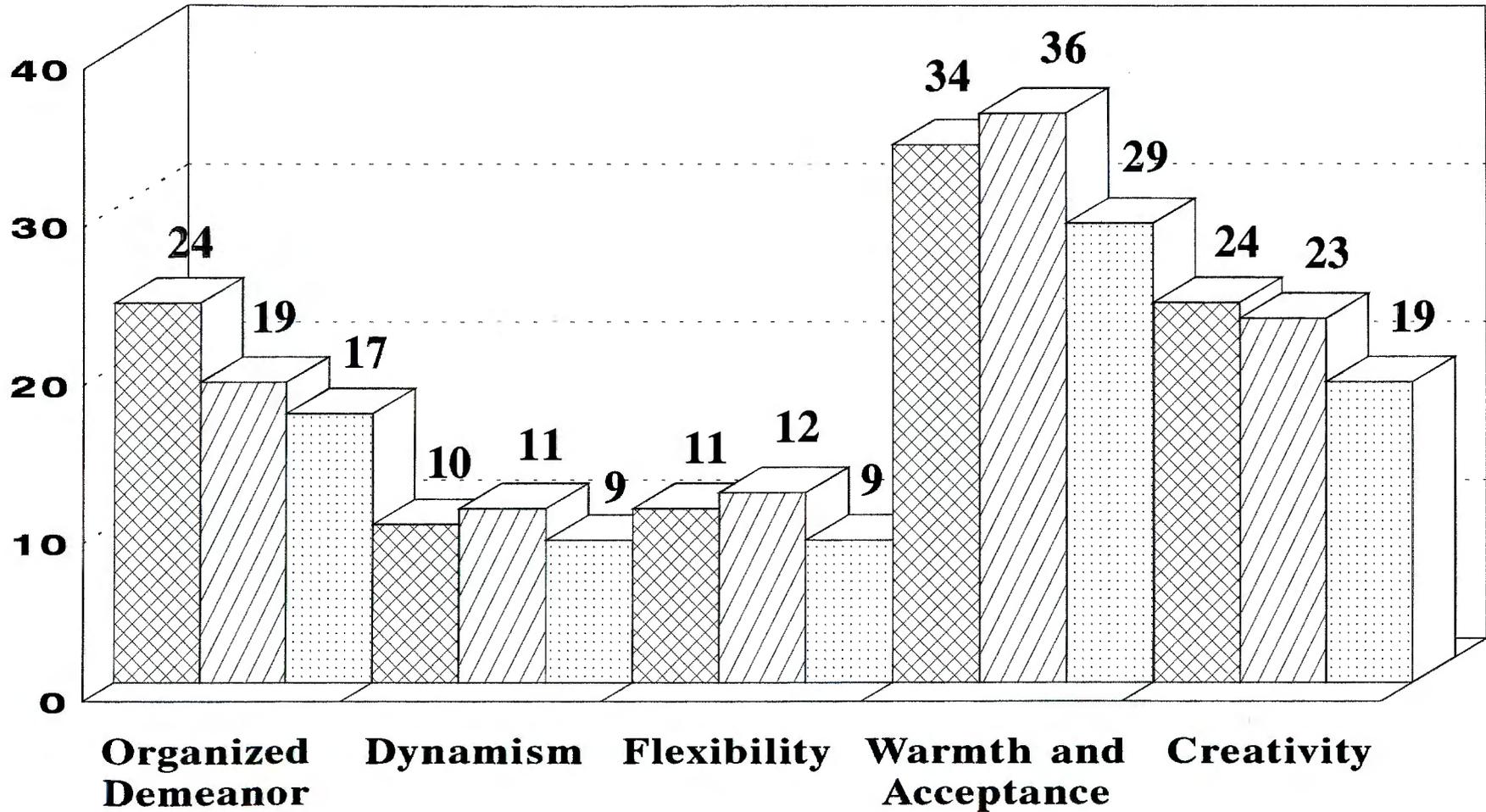


Figure 17

Comparative Scores between Teachers



6.4 Conclusion

From the discussion of these results it is evident that these pupils are not exposed to “acquisition-rich” classroom settings. This is due to the fact that the majority of the verbal interaction is dominated by the teacher who imparts information as if it were a lecture. This indicates a lack of creativity in the exposition of lesson content. Pupils could be involved to a greater extent in the verbal interaction.

Of far greater concern than the quantity of pupil contributions, is the fact that the quality of pupil contributions is relatively poor. Pupil discourse is limited to responses elicited by teacher questions. This is not conducive to language acquisition as the pupil never really gets to use the language as a means of communication. The fact that pupils don't participate voluntarily may perhaps be attributed to the fact that teachers are inflexible in their lessons and are not dynamic in the presentation of their lessons. The general feeling is that pupils feel accepted but they are also isolated by the teacher's own lack of creativity, flexibility and dynamism.

None of the lessons observed by the researcher produced samples of pupils initiating discussions or volunteering information, much less asking questions. This is a matter of great concern, as the current approach to language teaching in secondary schools, the Communicative Approach, is not being practised at all. The interaction in the lessons were definitely not communicative, but samples of predominantly one-way communication.