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Peer-assessment and Renzulli's Scales for Identifying Gifted EFL Learners Among Students of Education

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Abstract. In the past few decades, giftedness has become an increasingly popular subject in the field of educational psychology. Due to its versatile and elusive nature, giftedness remains a theoretical construct that is continuously built upon. The current paper addressed the issue of the underrepresentation of the role of peers in the process of the identification of giftedness, as a source scarcely explored in literature, and often regarded as subordinate to other methods of identifying giftedness. The aim of this research is to examine the correlation between students' assessments of their peers' giftedness and their professor's assessment in this domain. The sample was comprised of 120 first-year university students aged between 19.5 and 20.5 years, all enrolled at the Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia. The study also surveyed the teacher's perception of students' giftedness. Data on students' giftedness in learning English, specifically focusing on learning, creativity, and motivation, were collected using the adapted Renzulli scale for rating the behavioral characteristics of gifted learners. The results revealed no statistically significant correlation between the students' and the teacher's assessments of giftedness in the area of learning and creativity. However, a statistically significant correlation was found in only one category – motivation for learning English as a foreign language. These findings pointed to the particularity of peer-input, as well as teacher-input, which we attributed to the different ways they interpret and understand the concepts related to giftedness, and to their contextually distinctive relationships with students.

Keywords: giftedness, peer-assessment, teacher-assessment, above average ability, motivation, creativity

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Выявление одаренности студентов-педагогов в области иностранного языка: результаты взаимооценки и шкалы Рензулли

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Аннотация. В последние несколько десятилетий одаренность становится все более популярным предметом в области педагогической психологии. Из-за своей многогранной и неуловимой природы одаренность остается теоретической конструкцией. При этом роли сверстников в процессе выявления одаренности студентов в научных исследованиях отводится второстепенное место по сравнению с другими методами. В связи с этим целью данного исследования является изучение корреляции между оценками студентов одаренности своих сверстников и оценками их преподавателя в этой области. Выборка состояла из 120 студентов первого курса университета в возрасте от 19,5 до 20,5 лет, обучающихся на педагогическом факультете в Ягодине, Сербия. В ходе

исследования также изучалось восприятие преподавателями одаренности студентов. Данные об одаренности студентов в изучении английского языка, с особым упором на обучение, креативность и мотивацию, были собраны с использованием адаптированной шкалы Рензулли для оценки поведенческих характеристик одаренных учащихся. Результаты не выявили статистически значимой корреляции между оценками одаренности учащихся и учителей в области обучения и творчества. Однако статистически значимая корреляция была обнаружена в одной категории – мотивации к изучению английского языка как иностранного. Эти результаты указывают на особенности взаимодействия сверстников, а также преподавателей, которые мы связываем с различными способами интерпретации и понимания концепций, связанных с одаренностью, и с их контекстуально отличающимися отношениями с учащимися.

Ключевые слова: одаренность, оценка сверстников, оценка преподавателя, способности выше среднего, мотивация, креативность

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Introduction

More often than not, giftedness is overlooked, neglected, and ultimately unrecognized. Failure to recognize giftedness is often a consequence of the employment of narrow criteria and limited resources. Although nominations from various sources are generally considered in the process of identifying giftedness, it is usually educators' and experts' judgement that greater emphasis is placed upon.

This paper investigates the underexplored role of peer evaluations in identifying giftedness, a method often considered secondary to traditional approaches in the literature. The purpose of this study is to analyze the correlation between students' assessments of their peers' giftedness and their professor's evaluations in this area. Additionally, it examines the teacher's perception of students' giftedness. The primary hypothesis is that peer and teacher assessments of three distinct aspects of giftedness will correlate, as the students participating in this study are future educators trained in assessment, evaluation, and reflection on abilities and skill.

Whereas the credibility of professionals and teachers is indisputable, several studies illustrate that peer-input is as valuable and necessary [Milic & Simeunovic, 2020; Bevan-Brown, 2009; Bukowski et al., 2012; Topping, 2009]. The particularity of peer input (and thereby its value) is reflected in the amount of time students tend to spend with each other, during which they are acquainted with the more spontaneous and unrestrained sides of their peers. This paper explores the role of peer assessment in identifying giftedness, and its correlation with teacher assessment, as a means conventionally used in the identification process.

A reference to the literature, i.e., a brief review of the research literature on the topic with citations, is provided within the introduction in the following section and offers an overview of studies in this field.

Identification of giftedness holds fundamental significance in the study and the practice of gifted education. Despite its growing popularity among educational psychologists, giftedness remains an impenetrable notion, dividing experts in the ways they define it. Defining what being gifted means depends on the context within which it is being sought, considering how "the recognition of individuals who are seen as meriting that term depends on comparisons" [Freeman, 2005, p. 80].

A substantial share of theory relates to the notion that "students with high IQ scores are gifted and those without are not" [Worrell & Erwin, 2011, p. 335]. IQ tests are frequently used as a measure to determine giftedness among school-age children, and research on giftedness is "overwhelmingly" done on those who are recognized as gifted based on their outstanding performances on these tests [Weiner, 2003, p. 487]. According to Sternberg and Kaufman [2018],

the most dominant parameter used to distinguish giftedness amongst children in the United States is precisely an IQ test. Most contemporary educational psychologists, however, take it to be true that "a single test score should never be used alone in making a diagnostic or classificatory decision" [Pfeiffer, 2002, p. 43]. "We do not believe that it is this kind of performance (on IQ tests) that makes the gifted, gifted," argues Sternberg [1983, p 56]. Moreover, the author contends that narrowing the number of abilities that are tested in the identification process results in the waste and the neglect of some of the most "precious talent" [Sternberg, 1995, p 255]. Likewise, Renzulli and Reis [2014, p. 29] maintain that the solitary use of IQ tests is limiting, and suggest the consideration of multiple parameters.

McCoach and Siegle [2003, p. 144] point out that despite the general opinion about gifted students not being susceptible to academic failure, their underachievement is, in fact, a major concern of their educators and their parents. According to Maksić [1998, p. 39], gifted students are not only those who exhibit high abilities, study a lot and get the best grades in school, but also those who experience academic difficulties and have trouble adapting to their school environment. Johnsen [2018] suggests that gifted students with lower income backgrounds are more susceptible to becoming academic underachievers because these families are not always able to afford their children's education, private classes, the necessary materials, etc. The assessment of the gifted, thus, aims to reveal the potential and the exceptional abilities of these learners, which "may be hidden by poverty, diversity, disability, prejudice, or lack of opportunity to be displayed" [Silverman, 2018, p. 204].

In other words, the definition of giftedness is, by no means, simple – some of the presented theory goes on to show that intelligence test scores and academic achievement are neither sole nor necessary indicators of one's gift and talent. This prompts the question: if not academic success and IQ scores, what are some of the shared characteristics among gifted learners, then?

Renzulli's three-ring conception of giftedness

In their attempt to pinpoint the crucial parameters of giftedness, Renzulli and Reis [2014, pp. 28–31] stress the following traits: *above-average ability*, *task commitment* and *creativity*. Renzulli and Reis [2014, p. 77] describe the itemized qualities as "three interlocking clusters of characteristics", and in the study of gifted education, this model is recognized as *Renzulli's three-ring conception of giftedness* (Fig. 1).

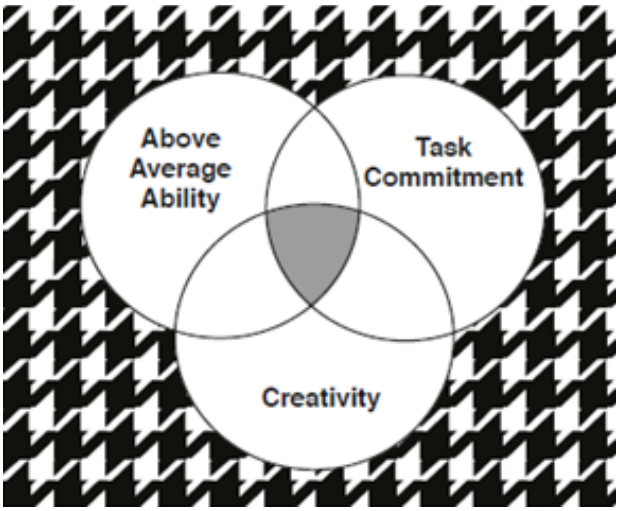

Fig. 1. Graphic Representation of the Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness [Renzulli et al., 2010, p. 78]
Рис. 1. Графическое представление трехкомпонентной концепции одаренности [Renzulli et al., 2010, с. 78]

The talent areas encompassed by above-average ability refer both to *general ability* (abstract thinking, verbal and numerical reasoning, memory, adaptation to novel situations, fast retrival of information, etc.), and *specific ability*, that is the ability to combine one's general abilities and to apply those to one or more specialized areas of knowledge or performance [Renzulli & Reis, 2014, pp. 77–79]. The above-average ability cluster is described as "a constant in [the] identification system," or "a starting point for the identification process," whilst the other two clusters are the developmental aims of the gifted program [Renzulli & Reis, 2014, p. 80]. Despite their categorization as the "developmental goals," task commitment and creativity are, at the same time, aspects which are incorporated into Renzulli's *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students* [Renzulli et al., 2010]. Task commitment refers to these learners' enthusiasm and investment in a particular area of study, their diligence, and their perseverance. It also reflects the students' ability to set high standards for their work, whilst "maintaining an openness to self and external criticism" [Renzulli & Reis, 2014, p. 79; Renzulli, 1990, pp. 10-11]. Finally, creativity denotes one's "fluency, flexibility, and [their] originality of thought" [Renzulli, 1990, p. 11]. It also refers to these learners' inquisitiveness, their sensitivity to details, as well as their boldness and adventurousness in thought and action (ibid.).

The role of peer-assessment

Bevan-Brown [2009, p. 13] argues that the effectiveness of the peer-assessment method in the identification of giftedness has been criticized by studies lacking empirical substantiation, whereas it has been supported by studies which are research-based.

Schroth and Helfer [2008] surveyed 411 public school educators in relation to the effectiveness of different methods of identifying giftedness among school-aged children. The majority of the study's respondents reported feeling that peer-assessment and parent-assessment were "ineffective" or "very ineffective," whereas more than 80 percent of them felt that teacher-assessment was "effective" or "very effective" [Schroth & Helfer, 2008, p. 163]. Even though this study's findings indicate that educators are largely skeptical towards using peer-assessment as a method for identifying giftedness, another, more recent study found that teacher-assessment actually corresponds with peer-assessment more than with any other group of assessors (i.e. parent-assessment, self-assessment) [Milic & Simeunovic, 2020].

Banbury and Wellington [1989, p. 162] call attention to the fact that peer-interaction is "less inhibited" than students' interactions with adults. For this reason, the students' input is so valuable – their relationship with their peers largely differs from the relationships parents or teachers have with children. Adults perform authoritative roles in children's lives to a considerable extent, which is why their presence can easily affect the behavior of students. Certain traits and habits that gifted learners exhibit can often go unnoticed by parents and teachers, but still end up being recognized by peers. For instance, due to a student's timidity and their consequential reluctance to cooperate in class, a teacher might get the impression that the student is less successful in a specific area. The other classmates, however, might notice this student's potential during their out-of-class interactions.

The research conducted by Ćirković-Miladinović [2019, p. 91] confirms that peer collaboration in class is extremely important and crucial for the success of university students [future class teachers and preschool teachers] in foreign language learning. Specifically, the main challenges identified by students in the mentioned research (ibid.) upon entering university include: fear of making mistakes and fear of being wrong in front of the teacher and peers during oral presentations, socio-affective traits such as shyness, conformist behavior, confusion, and slowness, as well as the inability to influence their own motivation and change the mindset that prevented them from testing their abilities and realizing their potential. Instead of being deterred by peer comments, students struggled to recognize how successful they could be. In line with the previously said, the students in this study also expressed difficulties in evaluating their peers. However, encouraging the use of affective learning strategies and various positive emotional

factors, such as self-confidence, empathy, and motivation, can greatly facilitate and enhance peer collaboration and the process of learning a foreign language at the university level, and consequently improve the assessment of others in terms of how talented they are in a particular area [Ćirković-Miladinović, 2024].

According to Renzulli and associates [2010], a key principle in designing programs for gifted and talented students is that the methods used to identify them should be closely aligned with the specific educational experiences they will participate in. Therefore, those responsible for administering assessments should choose only the tools that are directly relevant to the program goals. Therefore, for this research we have chosen to examine learning, creativity and motivation of future preschool teachers as relevant scales for language learning and giftedness. In the following chapter, the results of the research will be presented.

The absence of a universal definition for gifted students has led schools to adopt various identification methods, resulting in diverse teaching techniques, materials, approaches, strategies, and other services for these students. The National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC, 2010] sparked renewed debate in gifted education by focusing on promoting potential and anticipated excellence rather than solely on intelligence, which has highlighted differing perspectives within the field [Zeske, 2015]. In Serbian classrooms, teachers often claim that they lack both the time and resources to address the needs of gifted students. When asked how they typically handle gifted learners in a language or other subject area, teachers frequently mention that they have these students tutor their peers. This is primarily because teachers have minimal or no training in gifted education. In addition, teachers in Serbia face a range of obstacles and difficulties when working with gifted students. According to a study by Maksić [1997], the most common factors that make it challenging for teachers to work with these students are: varying abilities among students in the classroom [even among the gifted], inadequate material conditions [such as lack of internet, smart boards, laboratories, etc.], insufficient recognition of the additional effort made by teachers working with gifted students, unpreparedness to work with gifted students, and a lack of training.

This research aims to explore the correlation between peer-assessment, as a system for discovering giftedness in the areas of Learning, Motivation and Creativity, and the professor's assessment of the same areas using Renzulli and associates' [2010] scales for *Rating the behavioral characteristics of superior students*. We hypothesized that teacher-input and peer-input concerning the three different aspects of giftedness would correlate due to the fact that the examined students were future teachers, trained to assess, evaluate and reflect on one's skills and capabilities.

The research process started with the authors' discussion about *giftedness* in EFL, and the different meanings people ascribe to the concept, all of which eventually lead to the development of the topic of this research. The authors then researched and analyzed the existing literature revolving around the topics of giftedness identification, personality traits and characteristics associated with giftedness, as well as the reliability of different methods of identification. The background research helped specify the area which the authors wanted to explore further. The following stage was concerned with planning the research; that entailed determining the instrument, the sample size, and ways to warrant that the research design was ethical. Having adapted the instrument, the authors moved on to the next step which involved collecting data. In the beginning of this stage, the authors asked for the participants' consent and explained what the main ideas, the pedagogical significance and the purpose of the current research were, thereby ensuring that their participation was well-informed. Moreover, it was explained to the participants that they were entitled to change their minds about participating in the research at any point in the process, and for whatever reason. Finally, it was explained that their personal information would not be disclosed to the public, and that their identities would remain anonymous. By completing the above-mentioned steps, it was ensured that the research adhered to the ethical principles, according to which *the participants' informed consent is obtained*, *their identities are protected*, and *they are told their rights* [Ševkušić, 2011]. In the final stages of the research, the authors analyzed the data and drew conclusions from the results.

Methods of research

The research was conducted during the 2023/2024 academic year and included a sample of 120 female university students (future preschool teachers) at the Faculty of Education in Jagodina. All students [N = 120] attended lessons of English for Specific purposes as one of the obligatory academic subjects for the first-year students.

Based on this aim, three research tasks were defined:

1. Does the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness coincide with their assessment by other students, according to the Learning parameter?
2. Does the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness coincide with that by other students, according to the *Creativity* parameter?
3. Does the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness coincide with their assessment by other students, in terms of *Motivation?*

The instruments used were three scales for *Rating the behavioral characteristics of superior students* by Renzulli [Renzulli et al., 2010, pp. 35-37]. The reason why we decided to use these scales is that according to Al-Momani and Al-Oweidi [2020], Renzulli and associates' [2010] scales demonstrate a good internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.99. For the purposes of this research, we used scales[1] focused on the areas of learning, motivation, and creativity in foreign language learning. Students were asked to complete rating scales in each category using five-point Likert-type items that reflected their perceptions of their peers' performances in the areas of learning, creativity, and motivation. Their teacher was also asked to do the same, rating selected students' performances based on her perception of what she considers a characteristic of someone who is gifted in English as a foeign language. It was explained to both the teacher and the students that the ratings for each item should reflect the frequency with which they observed each characteristic.

Specifically, the students were divided into groups of five, resulting in a total of 24 groups and 120 students overall. Each group was tasked with agreeing on which of their peers they considered to be gifted in the areas of learning, motivation, and creativity in foreign language learning. As a group, they had to choose one peer and to rate his/her characteristics in Renzulli's questionnaire [Renzulli et al., 2010].

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS for Windows, version 23.0. P-values lower than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The normality of data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. For the quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistics methods were employed while Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between the teacher's and students' perception of the examined characteristics.

Results and discussion

Firstly, we calculated each student's total score for each of the three subscales used – Learning, Creativity, and Motivation. The same method was applied to both the students' assessments and the assessments made by their teacher. The students' assessments were obtained as follows: for each potentially gifted participant, the arithmetic mean of all assessments for that participant was calculated. For example, if five students rated a participant as gifted, then the arithmetic mean of all their ratings was determined for each individual item. Descriptive statistics [arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item and the total subscale score for both the students' assessments and the teacher's assessments] are presented in Table 1.

[1] Renzulli's scales are originally six-point Likert-type; however, for the purposes of this research, we adapted them into five-point scales. These scales were better suited to the students' age and their understanding of the situation they needed to evaluate.

Table 1
Таблица 1

Descriptive statistics
Описательная статистика

Groups of characteristics	Teacher's evaluation		Students' evaluation	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
L1	3.92	.900	4.0742	.88904
L2	4.08	1.084	4.2983	.70346
L3	4.08	.793	3.9333	.76184
L4	4.17	.718	3.8775	.56156
L5	4.08	.515	3.9442	.71169
L6	4.00	.853	4.2708	.63246
L7	4.08	.900	4.3575	.63077
L8	4.33	.985	4.0933	.77500
L9	4.75	.452	4.1517	.71639
LSUM	**37.5000**	**4.92674**	**37.0008**	**2.80519**
C1	4.08	.669	4.1817	.68327
C2	4.33	.778	4.6992	.50401
C3	4.08	.793	4.0083	.54830
C4	3.83	1.030	3.6175	.85889
C5	3.92	.996	3.5692	.80518
C6	3.92	.996	4.1992	.91673
C7	4.00	.739	3.7542	.59123
C8	3.92	.900	3.7008	.83319
C9	2.83	1.193	4.2417	1.32346
CSUM	**34.9167**	**4.25245**	**35.9717**	**3.95658**
M1	4.00	.603	3.4242	.77173
M2	4.08	.669	3.8058	1.13444
M3	4.33	.651	4.1692	.67793
M4	4.33	1.155	4.292	.8649
M5	3.92	.996	3.7125	.74533
M6	3.83	.937	3.7350	1.03303
M7	4.00	.853	3.9750	.53770
M8	4.33	.778	4.2767	.83953
M9	4.58	.515	3.9783	.79041
MSUM	**37.4167**	**4.12219**	**35.3683**	**5.24138**

The correlation between the students' and the teacher's assessments was evaluated using Spearman's correlation coefficient. Initially, certain assumptions were checked, and since the data were collected using Likert scales, we ran Spearman's correlation. The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that all variables (total subscale scores) have a normal distribution. Since our variables meet the normality distribution, we inspected the scatterplots to check for monotonicity (Fig. 2, 3 and 4).

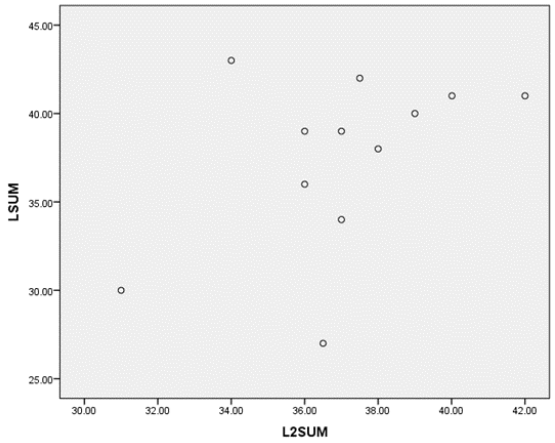

Fig. 1. Learning
Рис. 1. Обучение

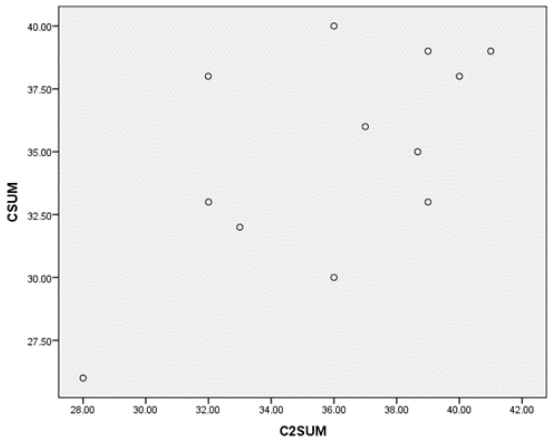

Fig. 2. Creativity
Рис. 2. Креативность

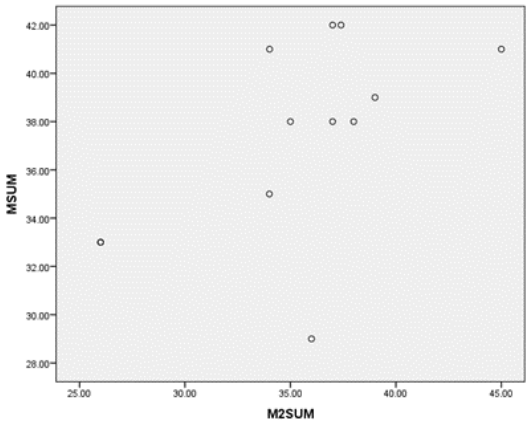

Fig. 3. Motivation
Рис. 3. Мотивация

Given that the data were obtained using Likert scales, which does not meet one of the conditions for applying Pearson's correlation (variables were measured at the interval or ratio level), Spearman's correlation coefficient was applied.

The first research task was to determine whether the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness coincides with their assessment by other students, according to the *Learning* parameter.

It can be assumed that this category was the easiest to evaluate and that the teacher's perception and the students' evaluations of their peers' giftedness in the area of Learning will be very similar, given that students' grades are publicly discussed and explained with arguments by the teacher during lessons. Since r_s [10] = 0.380, p = 0.223. and p (in the Sig. (2-tailed) column) is not less than 0.05, this means that there is no statistically significant correlation between the students' and the teacher's assessments with regard to learning. This was a surprise because it was not expected that students' and teacher's evaluation would differ so much in this category since

the examined students are future teachers and they are trained how to assess, evaluate and reflect on one's knowledge [Stojanovic et al., 2021]. This can also be explained by the fact that students come from different towns, different high schools, have different learning backgrounds, individual learning problems or achievements etc. [Cirkovic-Miladinovic et al., 2021]. Being in the same group, giving an opinion about their peers, confirmed that peer response can create a rich source of information about FL learning and enhance intercultural communication and give students a sense of group cohesion [Hansen and Liu, 2005]. In this sense, students learned to give arguments for their choice of a peer colleague and evaluation of his/her giftedness. Accordingly, they rated each characteristic in the questionnaire. Table 2. shows correlations between students' and teacher's assessment regarding the giftedness of the surveyed students in learning English according to the Learning parameter.

The second research task was to determine whether the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness aligns with their assessment by other students. The data is given in Table 3.

Table 2
Таблица 2

Correlations – Learning parameter
Корреляции – параметр обучения

Correlation			LSUM	L2SUM
Spearman's rho	LSUM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.380
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.	.223
		N	12	12
	L2SUM	Correlation Coefficient	.380	1.000
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.223	.
		N	12	12

Table 3
Таблица 3

Correlations – Creativity parameter
Корреляции – параметр креативности

Correlation			CSUM	C2SUM
Spearman's rho	CSUM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.511
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.	.089
		N	12	12
	C2SUM	Correlation Coefficient	.511	1.000
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.089	.
		N	12	12

A Spearman's correlation was conducted to evaluate the relationship and overlapping of students' and teacher's evaluation regarding the surveyed students' giftedness in learning English according to the Creativity parameter. The relationship between students' evaluation of the giftedness of a chosen person in the class and the teacher's evaluation of the same person was not significant, $r_s[10] = 0.511$, $p = 0.089$. In educational and other learning settings, creativity is

frequently associated with a learner's capacity to solve problems and tackle tasks and projects with flexibility, originality, and innovation. It encompasses various aspects, including the creation of products, the expression of creative characteristics, and involvement in creative thinking, behavior, and achievements [Kaufman, Plucker, & Baer, 2008]. There are many definitions of creativity, especially in the context of language learning. Since the student participants had different ideas of what creativity is, and the teacher had her own understanding, this may explain the difference between the students' and teacher's results obtained in this part of the research. After all, creativity as a concept is very wide and there are many connotations of it [Cropley, 2020]. In educational contexts, creativity is recognized as a unique approach to learning that encompasses both "creative" teaching and "creative" learning strategies [Cropley, 2020, p. 6]. These strategies not only enhance the learning process but also stem from effective teaching and learning practices [Cirkovic-Miladinovic, 2018]. There is considerable evidence that creativity, along with creatively driven teaching and learning, is highly effective and closely linked to motivation, making it a potent tool in the classroom.

The third research task was to determine whether the teacher's assessment of the surveyed students' giftedness coincides with their assessment by other students in terms of the Motivation parameter. A significant amount of research has explored the motivational traits of both children and adults identified as gifted. Several theories and definitions of giftedness even consider motivation as a key characteristic. For example, Renzulli [1986] included task commitment, alongside creativity and above-average ability, in his three-ring model of giftedness. Additionally, there is an expanding body of research focused on the educational and environmental aspects, particularly the role of achievement motivation, as a critical outcome of programs designed for gifted students [Clinkenbeard, 1996]. Both perspectives are crucial for understanding the motivation of gifted individuals. With this in mind, both environmental factors and achievement motivation were recognized by the surveyed students and their teacher, indicating that the research participants shared a similar perspective on what defines a gifted student in their classroom in terms of motivation.

After reviewing the opinions of all the students who participated in the research and their teacher, we obtained statistically significant results only in the area of motivation. A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between the teacher's and students' perceptions of giftedness in terms of motivation. Specifically, the data, r_s [10] = 0.591, p = 0.043, indicate a statistically significant correlation between the students' and their teacher's assessments regarding the area of motivation (p = 0.043 is less than 0.05, thus this result is considered statistically significant). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Таблица 4

Correlations – Motivation parameter
Корреляции – Параметр мотивации

Correlation			MSUM	M2SUM
Spearman's rho	MSUM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.591*
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.	.043
		N	12	12
	M2SUM	Correlation Coefficient	.591*	1.000
		Sig. [2-tailed]	.043	.
		N	12	12
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level [2-tailed].				

Further, to determine the strength of the relationship, we examine the r_s coefficient obtained and use the criteria provided by Cohen [1988]: 1) a small correlation is when *r* is between 0.10 and 0.29; 2) a medium correlation is when *r* is between 0.30 and 0.49; and 3) a strong correlation is when *r* is between 0.50 and 1.0. Since this research showed that $r_s = 0.591$, this indicates a large correlation. Additionally, because the sign of this coefficient is positive, the relationship is also positive. This means that the assessments made by students and their teacher regarding motivation align. Both students and the teacher rated the same selected students as gifted in the area of motivation for learning English as a foreign language, by recognizing characteristics which point to the enthusiasm, zeal, sustained interest, intense involvement, and persistence of those seen as potentially gifted. We ascribed the teacher's and the students' shared views on motivation (as an aspect of giftedness) to their similar understanding of what motivation effectively represents. On the one hand, learning and creativity are more complex, elusive categories that can assume many forms and thereby vary from one person to another, while, on the other hand, motivation appears to be more easily graspable and more evident.

After evaluating the three categories of gifted students – learning, creativity, and motivation - we can conclude that only in terms of motivation do the views of the examined students and their teacher align. This means they agree on which students are gifted in the foreign language classroom and who is highly motivated to learn and advance.

Conclusion

The results showed no statistically significant correlation between the students' and the teacher's assessments in the area of giftedness related to learning. This finding was unexpected, as learning outcomes can be measured by grades and the teacher's evaluations and comments in class, which typically make it clear to students who the 'top' performers are. However, the learning process itself is more complex and might not be easily perceived by peers or even the teacher. In line with this, the research also indicated that the correlation between students' assessments of a peer's giftedness and the teacher's evaluation of the same individual was not significant in terms of creativity. Given that creativity is a broad concept with many definitions and interpretations, it was not anticipated that students' and the teacher's views would align in this category. The fact that correlation between the teacher's and the students' assessment of giftedness in the two areas was not statistically significant in this research could be attributed to the contextual differences in the students' and the teacher's perspective. Whereas a teacher perceives students within the hierarchical context of the teacher-student interaction and from the perspective of an authoritative figure, students observe one another within a more spontaneous, and less inhibited context.

Statistically significant alignment was found in only one category. After analyzing the opinions of all the students who had participated in the research, along with their teacher, we obtained statistically significant results solely in the area of motivation. We presumed that motivation was seen as a trait that was more easily observable and was, hence, more consistently defined by the groups. Both the students and the teacher identified the same individuals as gifted in the area of motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

Overall, the students' responses indicated that their views were consistent with those of their teacher in terms of recognizing strong motivation as a significant characteristic of gifted students. On the other hand, the way of learning, the learning strategies, styles and creativity were categories that demanded deeper understanding and research for both the teachers and the students. Therefore, their ideas of giftedness in these areas were different and did not match. The findings of this study suggest that the concept of giftedness at the university level still holds considerable potential and warrants further research not only in the areas of learning, creativity, and motivation but also across other educational domains.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge that any scientific research employing quantitative methodology has inherent limitations due to the imperfect methods used to assess relevant

phenomena. This raises the question of whether utilizing different tools might offer an alternative perspective of the students giftedness in the examined domains. One potential limitation of this study is the reliance on peer evaluations, which may be influenced by positive or negative biases, and therefore might not provide a fully accurate picture of the phenomenon under study. However, considering that this issue has been underexplored in our context, this study seems to be a valuable step in the right direction.

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