Cognitive Representation of Gifted Primary Schoolchildren's Identity

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Abstract: Intellectual giftedness is a factor that manifests itself not only in a child's ability to solve complex problems, but also in the nature of his/her attitude towards himself/herself and the world. The aim of our study was to identify the specific features of self-presentation of 7-8 year old gifted children. The aim of the study was to find meaningful differences in self-descriptions of gifted children. The children's narratives on the topic "I am a person" were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The theme of the story sets the framework for the expression of social and personal identity of the author and allows him or her to emphasize those areas of life which are relevant to him or her at the time of the story-writing. 58 first-grade children took part in the study. The experimental group consisted of 24 children with a GAI (general ability index) score above 130 (WISC). As expected, a distinctive feature of the narrative identity of intellectually gifted children is the similarity of their cognitive representation to that of older children. They find a broader range of distinguishing characteristics and are more likely to use generalized concepts rather than concrete ones. Gifted children are statistically more likely to use basic human characteristics in their stories, to use concepts to express their thoughts, to find distinctive features, to mention the meaning of life, and to emphasize their own opinions. Gifted children are more likely to show signs of overcoming childhood egocentrism and identifying with the global 'human' in their stories. Gifted children make demands of themselves as adults, so they are characterized by fluctuating self-esteem. On the one hand, they emphasize their personal and universal capabilities. On the other hand, they often point out their deficiencies, comparing themselves to "ideal" adults. Intellectual giftedness has been found to be a significant factor influencing self-perception and the formation of a child's social identity. The findings are important for understanding the natural development of gifted children.

Keywords: Gifted Child, Social Identity, Narrative Identity, Individualist / Collectivist Orientation, Cognitive Complexity, Content Analysis

1. Introduction

In modern psychology much attention is paid to giftedness. Traditionally, the structure and components of abilities, along with cognitive motivation, psychological and pedagogical conditions for the development of giftedness, metacognitive abilities of gifted people are studied. Another aspect of the research is to identify personal characteristics of gifted children, their inherent social and emotional problems. Alongside the methodological approach of differential psychology, reflecting an "external" view of human behavior, the paradigm of self-identity psychology seems to be important, which "tries to look" from the inside "and addresses the culturally mediated life experience of the individual" [3]. This study examines the identity of intellectually gifted children by means of the narrative stories analysis, which allows us to better understand the nature of self-awareness of a gifted child.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Identity of an Intellectually Gifted Child

The qualitative uniqueness of giftedness and personality traits of a gifted child is a scientific fact confirmed by many authors, such as N. S. Leytes [21], V. S. Yurkevich [37], A. I. Savenkov, S. I. Karpova [30], E. I. Shcheblanova [32], S. L. Artemenkov, D. B. Bogoyavlenskaya, E. S. Joukova [2], S.

Daniels, M. M. Piechowski [11], M. U. Gross, S. R. Smith [15] A. M. Housand, B. C. Housand, J. S. Renzulli [19] and others.

Characteristics inherent in gifted children include an "operational conception of giftedness" [6], the capacity for "autonomous self-education", independence (no tendency to act and think according to the requirements of the majority), perfectionism, and the search for new problem situations. Personality characteristics specific to the gifted include the person's self-concept, individual and social identity reflected in the self-concept [8].

There is little empirical research on the unique personality characteristics of a gifted child and how they compare to other groups of children [10, 13, 14, 33].

L. Zuo and B. Cramond [38] made an attempt to determine the level of identity development inherent to gifted children. They used the identity levels proposed by J. E. Marcia [23]. Those levels represent four statuses of identity development based on developing the child's ability to pursue a specific goal: 1) identity achievement (search conducted, commitment), the most mature developmental configuration; 2) moratorium (search conducted, non-acceptance of obligations); 3) identity diffusion (search not conducted, non-acceptance of obligations); 4) identity foreclosure (search not conducted, acceptance of obligations).

Based on numerous interviews with gifted children, L. Zuo and B. Crumond [38] obtained data that allowed them to conclude that gifted students achieve the status of "achieved identity" more often than students who are not gifted.

A. Courtinat-Camps [10] and his co-authors analyzed the self-descriptions of more than two hundred gifted French pupils aged 9 to 15. They argue that there is heterogeneity in the gifted population with respect to their self-perception. M. U. M. Gross [14] studied the process of a gifted child's identity development in poems and diaries written by highly gifted young people. She argues that in the gifted, the awareness of one's own exclusiveness rarely leads to feelings of superiority or vanity. The process of developing a gifted child's identity often involves provocations aimed at masking their own giftedness and developing alternative identities to make the child appear socially acceptable in the eyes of others. Gifted students often blame themselves for being different [14].

L. Silverman, a respected researcher of giftedness and talented children, writes that this mismatch may be the reason why gifted children fall into social exclusion [33]. A. J. Frank end M. T. McBee [13] stress that some gifted children have to choose between the need to meet their social needs and the need for intellectual development.

2.2. Narrative Identity

Among the relatively new and promising approaches to the study of identity is the analysis of I-narratives (stories told in the first person). A narrative is a story that is the result of the organization of a person's subjective experience, one's own and unique way of self-identification and self-presentation. J. Bruner [7] notes that the purpose of a narrative is to show a person's subjective world and her/his own identity in it.

Narrative stories include autobiographical memories, literary autobiographies, and patients' stories that describe their illness [1]. A classic method of obtaining narratives is the "life story interview" developed by D. P. McAdams [24], which includes questions about the culminating (happiest or hardest) life events. The study of autobiographical narrative allows us to address the system of individual values and significant events in a person's life [34].

Narrative-existential analysis makes it possible to study how a person's world is structured and to identify the most significant forms of self-identity [29].

In recent years, narrative has been seen not only as an author's text used to interpret motives and human behavior, but also as an element of the narrator's self-awareness, which shows life in its integrity. The narrative is a "personal myth" through which a person organizes his or her identity. The narrative story is constructed by the self-centre, which accumulates personal experience and creates a continuity, a coherence of the self over time [3].

When a person is telling stories, writes Yu. B. Turusheva [35], he/she configures "I-who-I-could-be"; and, since a person can tell different stories, different versions can be designed. Narrative identity is related to the context of interaction, the intentions that guided the individual when presenting the image of his/her future self [18].

V. V. Nurkova considers the role of narrative identity in personality development, which is defined as the ability to realise an individual project in spite of situational determination [27]. V. V. Nurkova considers autobiographical narrative as one of the components of a person's actual performance, and as conscious means of changing and stabilizing personality traits. Analysis of autobiographical narrative allows to identify an ideal "project" of personality, which the subject seeks to realize through his life.

The verbal content of I-narratives in a particular sphere of life (the set of characters, their motives, the nature of intrigue, the features of the beginning and end of the story) can be quite stable and typical for an individual. In a well-known experiment [31], preschoolers were asked to refrain from eating marshmallows for 20 minutes in order to receive an extra piece of candy in return. Six hundred children took part in the experiment, and only 30% of them did not eat the marshmallows. Four decades later, the health of these participants was much better than that of those who ate the candy. The researchers [31] explain this phenomenon by saying that after the age of 30, a person's health begins to depend more and more on their behavior and willpower, which can help a person abstain from overeating, drugs and alcohol in times of stress and anxiety. Another longitudinal study carried out over 18 years showed that the age of 7-8 years is a sensitive period for the formation of social identity. Once formed, the identity appears to be stable and persists for decades to come [16].

3. Methodology

3.1. Goals of Research and Hypothesis

The aim of the study is to contribute to the expansion of

research on the narrative identity of intellectually gifted children aged 7-8. The research is based on the hypothesis that the narrative identity of intellectually gifted children aged 7-8 is highly developed and its features are similar to the narratives of older (typically-developing) children.

The hypothesis about possible differences in essay length was based on an idea of L. S. Vygotsky [34]. An analysis of children's speech and stories allowed him to conclude that the increase in the length of the text is due to two factors: 1) age (from birth to adolescence); 2) the theme of the story (it relates to the author). Thus, we made the assumption that gifted students will write longer essays than their typically developing classmates due to their advanced intellectual development.

3.2. Method

In our study, we used the method of writing an essay on the topic "I am a Human being" as a tool to identify a person's narrative identity. This tool combines two methods: the Kuhn-McPartland Twenty Statements Test (TST) - the most common method for identifying identity - and a narrative way of telling about oneself. In their study M. Kuhn and T. McPartland note a high level of similarity in the context between the answers to the question "Who am I?" and the essay "I" [8]. We consider the narrative method to be preferable, as it gives the narrator more freedom: he/she can choose the length and style of the text, use different ways of speaking, such as comparison, evaluation, opinion, etc.

This theme, "I am a Human being", allowed us to attribute the resulting discourses to the narrative. The theme of "I" allows us to actualize the subjective attitude to the object in question ("Human"). The subjectivity of the narrator is reflected in the categories he uses in the text, in the perceptual selectivity of essential human traits, and in the features of the connections and logical chains between the objects described. The theme of the story "I am a Human being" includes two concepts: the individualized "I" and the generic "Human being", which allows the author to identify his own position on this continuum. The narrator sees something of himself as a Human being, and includes in the narrative that part of the ideas that he considers important to the reader. The narrative "I am a Human being" allows the researcher to identify in each narrative the specific relationship between the individualist and collectivist orientation of the individual [25]. In the narrative, a person's concrete experience combines facts, objective information and fiction. It necessarily contains normative notions of what can be considered correct, valuable, meaningful [35].

3.3. Participants

The sample included 58 children aged from 7 to 8 years old. 28 of them were boys and 30 were girls. At the preliminary stage 364 first-graders from five different schools were surveyed.

The experimental group "Gifted Children" included 24 children with GAI (General Ability Index) above 130 points

(WISC method), which was 6.6% of the number of children examined. The control group "Typically developing children" included 34 children from the same classes (5-6 pupils were randomly selected from each class). Test gender differences were ot analyzed due to the exploratory nature of the study and sample size.

3.4. Instruments

To identify intellectual giftedness and create experimental groups we used the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) (WISC) for ages 6.5 to 16.5 (adapted by A. Y. Panasiuk). Narrative identity analysis was conducted on the basis of the students' "I am a Human being" essays. The children wrote the essays in class at school.

Criteria for the analysis of the essay were its a) quantitative indicators, b) the content of categories, c) individualist / collectivist orientation.

Quantitative indicators: the number of words used, the number of content units (categories), the number of significant words assigned to a particular category.

Categories are structural units of narrative identity analysis. To classify the responses M. Kuhn [20] developed five groups of analytical categories: 1) Consensual responses; 2) Ideological beliefs; 3) Aspirations; (4) Preferences; (5) Self evaluation.

The other categories for the analysis of the text were chosen on the basis of empirical material and similar studies of M. Kuhn [20], L. Vygotsky [36], P. Blonsky [5], R. Burns, U. Livsley, D. Broumley, A. Jersild [8], A. A. Gudzovskaya [17], and others. A total of 10 categories were included in the analysis, each of which was used in the text by more than 10% of students. These categories include: Actions, Skills, Preferences, Social Identity (Consensual responses), Evaluation, Characteristics, a Notion, Family, Differences and Ideological beliefs. Examples of categories from children's essays and their descriptions are presented in the results section of this study.

The individualist / collectivist orientation criterion for the analysis of the text was introduced as a result of identifying the different positions of the narrator. Two main positions and two additional ones have been identified. This made it possible to divide the categories in the text into two groups characterizing the collectivist. into two groups characterizing the collectivist (social) and individualist orientation of the individual [9].

The orientation of the text was defined as 'individualist' if the story was about a person's 'self'. The title "I am a Human being" in this case did not induce the author to refer himself to the general human community, the author did not present him/hersel in the story as part of it. Thus, we have given such texts a conventional title - "I".

The orientation of the text was defined as "collectivist" if the child wrote about himself or herself as a human being, using universal human characteristics for self-description. In the story, the author identified himself or herself as part of the collective entity "Humanity". The conventional name for such texts is "I am Human".

The next two types of texts were identified as complementary. Children did not write these texts about themselves, but about a human being. There was no mention of the self in these stories. Children tried to explain what it means to be human. The conventional name for these texts is "A Human being". Essays of this type are informative in nature.

The fourth type of text is an eclectic version of a story with an individualistic orientation and an impersonal text about humankind. It can be seen as a transitional stage to the identity of "I am Human", to the realization of oneself as part of the collective subject "Humanity". The tentative title is "Me and Humanity".

The experimental group "Gifted Children" included 24 children with GAI (General Ability Index) above 130 points (WISC method), which was 6.6% of the number of children examined. The control group "Typically developing children" included 34 children from the same classes (5-6 pupils were randomly selected from each class). Test gender differences were ot analyzed due to the exploratory nature of the study and sample size.

To ensure a uniform procedure for content analysis, three independent psychologists – experts had coded the texts. Data were analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2010 and SPSS.20.

We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the influence of the factor of giftedness on the quantitative indicators of the narratives.

3.5. Data Collection

Before the activities started, the parents of the participants read and signed a consent form and were informed that participation was voluntarily. They were also informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers and that there was no need to put their names on the questionnaires. The tests were administered in group classes. The data collection took place over the period from February to March 2020.

4. Results

4.1. Comparative Analysis of Quantitative Indicators of the Narrative

7-8 year old children used from 8 to 132 words for self-description. The most typical length of the text was 13-65 words (70.7 % of all the texts). Each essay contained from 2 to 10 different categories, from 3 to 50 categorized words.

The intellectually gifted children (experimental group) and children from the control group have significant differences in the quantitative characteristics of the narrative identity reflected in the text of the essay. On average, gifted children used more than 30 words for self-description compared to children in the control group.

The gifted children used from 3 to 10 categories for self-identification, children from the control group used from 2 to 9 categories.

The quantitative data are summarized in Table 1; it also shows the mean value of quantitative indicators reflecting the length of the essay. We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the influence of the factor of giftedness on the quantitative indicators of the narratives. The significance of the observed differences is presented in the right-hand column.

Table 1. *Comparison of quantitative characteristics of the mean values of gifted and typically developing children's essays.*

Variable	Gifted Children	Typically developing Children	F p	p
Number of words	50.75	21.14	6.95	0.01
Number of categories	6.13	4.35	2.12	0.05
Number of categorized words	16.75	10.70	7.64	0.00

The number of categories a child uses in a narrative test can be seen as an indicator of cognitive complexity [39]. J. Biery [4] defined cognitive complexity as the tendency to interpret social behavior in different dimensions. Cognitive complexity/simplicity is a stable style of perception characteristic of an individual, reflecting differentiation and understanding of the relevant domain. The narrative identity of intellectually gifted children is characterized by cognitive complexity.

In addition, quantitative indicators of the text are similar to the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) creativity test indicators and can be considered as signs of the author's creativity. The number of words in the story and the number of category words are similar to the indicator of "fluency" and "thoroughness of work" accordingly; the number of categories is similar to the indicator of "flexibility". Thus, gifted children's narrative identity reflects higher level of their creativity.

The analysis of narrative texts' quantitative indicators suggests that the surveyed children have specific features of identity. The narrative identity of gifted children is significantly more complex and differentiated. It reflects a higher cognitive complexity and a higher level of creativity of their authors.

4.2. Intellectually Gifted and Typically Developing Children's Preference for Categories

The most characteristic category in the children's narratives of both groups was the "Action" category (62.5 and 61.8% of children in the experimental and control groups). The category of "Action" is rarely found in the sample of adults, it is not in the list of analytical categories of M. Kuhn [19]. This category accounted for 22.0% of all registered category words. Examples of actions that children wrote in the text "I am Human": *"I jump", "run", "stand", "stamp my feet", "go to the country", "come to school", "do my homework (at an excellent mark)", "write down the date", "listen to the teacher", "draw", "walk", "I obey my mother".*

To analyze the content of the categories, we compared the number of people (%) in the experimental and the control groups who used a particular category.

The list of categories and the relative frequency of their usage in different groups are shown in Figure 1.

Data in Figure 1 show that the experimental and the

control groups do not differ much in the number of people using the following categories: *actions, skills, preferences, social identity, evaluation.*

The identification of self with what I "do" is a distinctive feature of 7-8 year old children that has been noted by researchers of children's self-concept [5], [8]. If the child could write his or her own conception of man, his or her treatise would be entitled "Homo sollicitans" (the acting man).

Some children, more often the gifted ones, turn to more generalized words: *"I hear", "move", "breathe", "eat", "smile", "speak as a human", "I walk", "I decide", "I have fun", "I think"*. Specific descriptions that children from the control group used in the text are typical: *"I come home", "I ride the sleds", "I do the sums".*
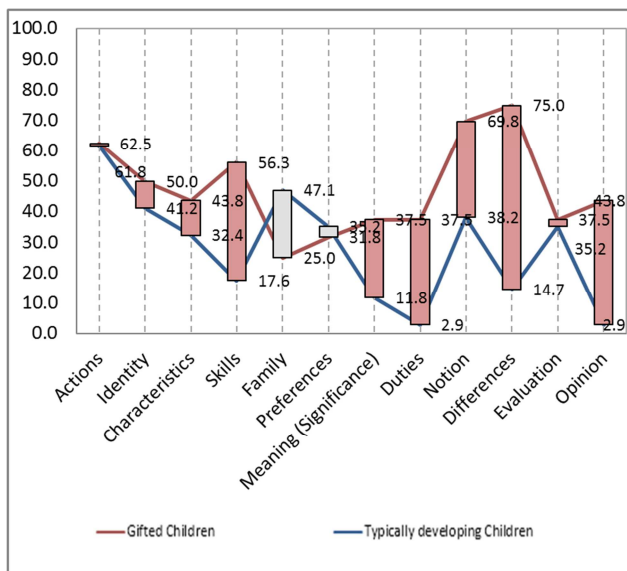

Figure 1. *The frequency of the use of categories by gifted and typically developing children (% of the number of children surveyed in the group).*

The category "Skills" is close to the «action» category. It includes the indications of a person's ability to perform different actions. In total, children listed more than 60 different skills, both their own and those of a person in general*: "I can do something for myself", "I can fantasize, live by the commandments", "go for bread on my own, swim, make twine, play chess, rise up on a rocket, be friends with somebody"*. Often children mention learning skills: *writing, doing homework, learning by heart,* etc.

Half of the gifted children used "The Skills" category in their narrative as a necessary element of their own identity. The proportion of typically developing children who listed skills was 17.6%.

Every third child in both groups used the category "Preferences" (the respondent's interests and aversions [20]. It included wishes, dreams, mentioning of objects, phenomena, activities that a child liked or disliked: *"I love to dance", "I like to pick mushrooms", "I want to have a house", "I want to dress up", "I dream about a kitten", "I want everyone to be friends with me", "I want to become a princess", "I love my birthday", "I like to lie in bed early in the morning and think".*

The category "Social Identity" (consensual responses) is indicated by statuses in social categories and social groups [20]. The frequency of using this category in narrative texts is 50.0 and 41.2% in the experimental and the control groups respectively. At the same time, a qualitative analysis of the content of the category suggests that children from the control group most often indicate the number of their school and the class in which they study. Gifted children rarely name these data. Their texts more often refer to broader groups: *"I am a person who likes to play ball", "I am part of my planet", "future mother", "I am a person who studies at school".*

The categories "Evaluation" and "Self-evaluation" refer to evaluative statements (evaluation of mental and physical abilities and behavior, one's own and others'). Although there are no quantitative differences between groups in the frequency of use of this category, substantial differences in content are very noticeable. Most statements in this category relate to learning activities: "*I learn well", "I read well".* Gifted children are characterized by the use of broader statements: "*being human is good, I like it", "I am a real person", "I have a great imagination", "I am more literate, stronger than a cat (this is to make you laugh)"* (A. G. - referring to the reader in the text).

In the stories of the gifted, self-esteem clearly fluctuates and they often emphasize their own shortcomings: *"I'm not good at everything", "For example, I have friends and I like them a lot, but I don't hold back when I fail", "My mum likes when I clean things myself, she doesn't like me when I don't clean", "I might not be a big person yet, but I will strive to become one".*

4.3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

One null hypothesis was developed for each of the 10 coding categories, each stating that there would be no significant difference between of responses for a given category given by gifted and typically developing children. The statistical method for assessing significance was the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

The use of the following five categories (Characteristics, Notion, Family, Differences, Ideological beliefs) in narratives has statistically significant differences.

Figure 1 shows that the number of children using the category "Characteristics" in both groups does not differ much: 43.8 and 32.4% of gifted and typically developing children, respectively. The category "Characteristics" includes essential features, attributes and characteristics of a person: *"a person has a life", "a person grows old", "a person has a soul", "a person has conscience", "I grow", "a person develops", "a person has a sense of fear", "a person has his own opinion", "now I am small, I will become an adult"*, etc.

Gifted children use the essential characteristics of a person more often than the children of the control group (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows the categories that revealed significant differences in the frequency of usage in the experimental and the control groups (the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)). The data on the level of observed significance are shown in the right column.

Table 2. Mean values of the use of different categories in the narrative identity of gifted and typically developing children.

Response Category	Gifted Children n=24	Typically developing Children n=34	F p	p
Characteristics	1.23	0.76	2.2	0.05
Notion	1.76	0.59	3.4	0.01
Family	0.25	2.10	2.8	0.01
Differences	2.88	0.38	16.3	0.00
Ideological beliefs	1.50	0.26	10.8	0.002

The category "Notion" includes the attribution of a person to a generic class, for example: "man is the creation of the wildlife", "man is created by God", "man is a living being", "born a man", etc.

Experts categorized the characteristics that distinguish humans from animals, plants, and robots and so on as "Differences". Examples of children's statements are: "I do not drink from a puddle as a spider", "a person does not run as fast as a cheetah", "I'm not stuffed with straw, like a scarecrow".

Almost three quarters of gifted children referred to these categories in their stories, listing their differences. Gifted children seem to perceive the external world as an open world in which they can compare themselves with its phenomena. In the control group, these categories were less popular.

The category "Family " includes references to the family, its members, characteristics of the family: "strict mother", "beloved grandmother", "father's name", "my mother buys delicious things", "we clean with my sister", "I live with my sister", "we are a friendly family", "my mother loves me", "my father will buy a parrot", "I want everyone in the family to be healthy", "I will become a mother".

The diagram in Figure 1 and Table 2 show that the category "Family" is more popular in the control group. Overall, 25.0% of people in the experimental group and 47.1% in the control group mentioned family in the essay.

R. Burns, W. Livesley and D. Brumley presented the results of a study of self-concept in children aged 7 to 14 [8]. The children's self-concept statements, entitled "I", showed that at age 7, family and relatives were the most prominent features of self-concept. The proportion of these words decreases as they get older, giving way to generalized characteristics, personal qualities, goals, etc.

The category "Ideological beliefs", according to M. Kuhn [20], includes religious and philosophical orientations, etc. Among 7-8 years old children, this category is represented by references to meaning of life, one's responsibilities, stressing the existence of one's own opinion. Here are the examples of meaning of life: "I was created to help (all) people", "I live to please my mother with grades", "Man lives so that the earth was not empty, and there were not only dinosaurs", "I live for my world", "I live to be loved by other people". As for duties and normative requirements: "a person must be kind, sincere, educated, hardworking", "I should obey my teacher, my mother", "one should be able to take responsibility for his actions", "a person should be a poet or an artist", "one should get married", "a person should make his dream come true".

We believe that the use of "Opinion" category, i.e. speech units that point out the author's position ("I think", "I believe", "it seems to me"), proves that there is an idea of subjectivity of self-perception in narrative identity; it means that someone else may have a different opinion.

4.4. Collectivist / Individualist Orientation of Gifted Children

An analysis of the data on the choice of the collectivist / individualist position in the narrative is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentages of children with individualist and collectivist orientation in the experimental and the control groups.

Individualist / collectivist orientation	Gifted Children	Typically developing Children
I	12.5	70.6
I am Human	25.0	11.8
A Human being	50.0	8.8
Me and the Humanity	12.5	8.8
Total:	100.0	100.0

The data in Table 3 reflect the fact that typically developing children in the vast majority of narrative stories showed an individualistic orientation (70.6%). Half of the gifted children excluded themselves from the "I am a Human being" story and focused the narrative on reflections about human beings in general. This type of storytelling is characteristic of older children (ages 10-12). Among gifted children aged 7-8, one in four perceived themselves in the story "I am a Human being" and identified themselves as part of the group theme "we are humans". In our opinion, the story "I am Human" indicates the decentration, overcoming of children's egocentrism, social self-determination in the form of identification with the human community that has taken place. The "I am Human" identification is mastered by the time of early adolescence. According to our data [16], about half of Russian adults hold to this position, which reflects a collectivist orientation.

5. Discussion

The narrative identities of gifted children aged 7-8 and their typically developing classmates are similar in one respect: both emphasize their own actions, skills and interests. This fact is consistent with E. Erikson's theory of psychosocial personality development [12]. Developmental stage: "Industry versus inferiority". The main problem that children of this age are trying to solve is: "Will I be able to become skilled and proficient enough to survive and adapt to the world around me?"

A qualitative specific feature of the narrative identity of gifted children is their ability to generalize when describing their own skills, interests, actions and identity. Such generalizations in discourse are characteristic of children who are 2-3 years older.

The narrative identity of intellectually gifted children is more detailed, differentiated, individualized, with a larger number of self-perceptual criteria. R. Burns [8], P. P. Blonsky [5] link the increase in essay length and the number of categories used to the age and level of psychological development of the author. Gifted children are also ahead of their classmates in developing their own self-perceptions.

Gifted children's distinctive social identity is manifested in their narrative identity, which is characterized by broader collective plots; children describe themselves as themselves as '*a living being, a representative of humanity, a friend of God*'

The subjective self-concept of gifted children can be characterized as "supra-situational", as they anticipate a certain own mission, which is reflected in the categories of meaning and obligation. The results of the study are consistent with D. Lovecky [22], A. Ozbey, H. Saricam [28] about the higher level of development of human values in gifted students compared to their typically developing peers.

Intellectually gifted children, while emphasizing their uniqueness and differences, want to become a part of the "big world"; and though they may feel small, they still want to have their own place in the world of people. Perhaps, this desire determines another characteristic feature of the narrative identity of gifted children - doubts about their self-esteem. Self-esteem is always the result of comparison. According to most studies, gifted children have a higher degree of self-confidence than typically developing children. At the same time, there are studies demonstrating a lack of differences between gifted and typically developing peers [32]. The results of an empirical study by E. I. Shcheblanova [32] showed the influence of intellectual giftedness on the higher indicators of the academic self-concept and the absence of such influence on the indicators of the general self-concept.

Intellectually gifted children compare themselves with their classmates and 'see' that they have a higher level of development. Being aware of their belonging to the human world (humanity), gifted children compare themselves with adults, and with some "ideal adults" at that, so they make demands of themselves as adults. This evaluation, based on comparisons with unattainable ideals, often provokes perfectionism.

The narrative story of half of the gifted children is impersonal (essay "A Human being"). According to our research [16], this type of narrative is more typical in early adolescence. Thus, it is also an indication of the advanced development of gifted children. For another possible interpretation of narratives we used the rules of text analysis technique (TM) developed by M. Novikova-Grund [26]. The absence of the pronoun "I" in the author's stories is one of the signs of an unfavorable emotional state, which can be related to dissatisfaction with oneself, a certain discrepancy within the self-concept or between the self-image and immediate experience, between the ideal and the real self.

From this point of view, typically developing children show self-satisfaction, no doubts about their own abilities and qualities, no contradictions between their ideal and real selves. The narrative identity of typically developing children often involves familial ties and relationships, while gifted children seem open to the outside world and ready to become part of it.

6. Conclusion

Intellectually gifted children, along with their exceptional abilities, have identity characteristics that distinguish them from typically developing children. In the narrative story 'I am a Human being', the cognitive representation of the identity of gifted children provides some explanation for these differences. Because of the high level of intellectual development of gifted children, their cognitive representations are more detailed, with a variety of categories used, and are similar in structure to the identity representations of older children and adults.

The large number of words and categories in their narratives indicates the intellectually gifted children's inherent cognitive style of "cognitive complexity", i.e., the differentiated perception and the tendency to interpret social behavior in a multidimensional manner. They can find many dimensions in comparing themselves to other people, to living beings.

The overcoming of egocentrism in most gifted children aged 7-8 allows them to move from the stage of being a "person who acts" to the stage of being a "person who knows how" in representation.

A gifted child begins to experience a shared " human" identity much earlier than his typically developing peers, and perceive himself not only as a separate self, but also as a member of humankind. It is such identity that allows the child to notice the essential characteristics of the individual as a biological and social being, and to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, duties and norms of behavior.

Developed conceptual thinking allows the intellectually gifted children to create an image of an 'ideal' person, that is, a human being in general (what a person should be), at an early age. Their analytical abilities help them to compare themselves with the created image. This comparison leads to fluctuations in self-esteem, which are more characteristic of adolescents: on the one hand, identification of themselves as " a human being" and, on the other hand, awareness of their own imperfections, lack of certain skills and abilities.

Being intellectually gifted is a significant factor influencing the self-perception, self-esteem and cognitive representation of a 7-8 year old child's personality. The findings are important for understanding the natural development of intellectually gifted children.

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