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## Impact of social contact on language development: An evaluation of children with intellectual disability

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### Abstract

All human being have desire to increase their social circle because Social Contact Activities play very important role in once life. The role of social contact is also influential among children with Intellectual disability in their every aspect of life. The present study was conducted with the aim to evaluate the impact of social contact on language development among children with mild intellectual disability. The sample included eight primary level children with mild intellectual disability, male and female student are taken in equal proportion, who are studying in Sanjeevani Special Education School, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. To evaluate language communication skill, express through words or sing or symbol or by indication, the investigator has selected to use Language Domain from Behaviour Assessment Scale for Indian Children with Mental Retardation (Basic-MR) Part-A developed by Reeta Peshawaria and S. Venkatesan (NIMH). The quasi experimental time series research design has been used and this study did not have control group. Intervention was given for ten sessions, one hour for lunch-time activities and one hour other leisure time activity. Result of the study reveals that the significant impact of the social contact on developing language ability in children with mild intellectual disability.

**Keywords:** Social contact activity, language development, primary level, children with mild intellectual disability

### Introduction

Social contact is a very essential component of human life. All human being have desire to increase their social circle. It influences various aspects of once life. There are several investigations on impact of social contact on average intellect people's attitude toward several issues of life. The results of these studies show different impacts. Some studies expressed more favorably, Jaffe (1966) [5] and some are unfavorable also, Strauch (1970). Social contact can help to develop a sense of community pride and ownership among people of diverse background and point of view by getting to know one another and establish a relationship. It can expand children's horizons and realize that there are different ways of life and people also may increase the number of role models. Social contact provides more pleasant experience and increases the general enjoyment of life in the group by sharing of food, games, festivals and family celebration with relaxed conversation. Furthermore such kind of interaction can develop safety and security feelings as well as liability and responsibility for their close. It also promotes the scope of sharing experiences and ideas and understandings of one another. It provides the opportunities to reduce differences and enhance supportive and cooperative feelings among the group. The child's contact may be useful in helping to understand the links between peer relationships and later adjustment and predict which children will develop problems, Hymel & Franke (1985) [4].

Language pervades social life. It is the principal vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge, and the primary means by which we gain access to the contents of others' minds, Robert M. Krauss and Chi-Yue Chiu (1998) [8]. Through the language one can communicate his/her feelings, thoughts and expression and be able to establish better relation in their surroundings and society at large. Children learn language from the birth such as crying, bubbling etc. If we observe children with intellectual disability, we can find that somewhere they are lacking in language. Sometimes it may be due to speech problem but very often it can be also found that they are socially distracted from the society. Some parents don't want interaction of their special child to others. As a result it may also affect the child language growth.

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### Review of literature

Mead (1934) <sup>[11]</sup> argued that people defined themselves according to how they believed they were perceived by others. To Mead, for example, the ability to self-reflect, to consider the self in relation to others, and to understand the perspectives of others was largely a function of participation in organized, rule-governed activities with peers. He suggested that exchanges among peers, whether experienced in the arena of cooperation or competition, conflict or friendly discussion, allowed the child to gain an understanding of the self as both a subject and an object. Understanding that the self could be an object of others' perspectives gradually evolved into the conceptualization of a "generalized other" or an organized and coordinated perspective of the "social" group. In turn, recognition of the "generalized other" led to the emergence of an organized sense of self. Thus, according to symbolic interactionist theory, exchanges between the individual and the peer group are essential to the formation of a "self-concept" and a concept of the "other", two constructs thought to be mutually interdependent.

Biermank, Arenl Inn *et al* (1984) <sup>[7]</sup> studied the Effects of Social Skills Training and Peer Involvement on the Social Adjustment of Preadolescents. 56 fifth- and sixth-grade children were identified as unaccepted by their peers and deficient in conversational skills. These children were then randomly assigned to 1 of 4 treatment conditions: (1) conversational skills training (individual coaching), (2) peer involvement under super ordinate goals (group experience), (3) conversational skills training combined with peer involvement (group experience with coaching), and (4) a no-treatment control. Differential treatment effects were observed at both a post-treatment and follow-up assessment. As predicted, conversational skills training promoted skill acquisition and increased skillful social interaction. Peer involvement increased peer acceptance and children's self-perceptions of their social efficacy. The results were interpreted in terms of a developmentally based multidimensional model of social competence.

Jeffrey G. Parker and Steven R. Asher (1987) <sup>[6]</sup> examined the oft-made claim that peer-relationship difficulties in childhood predict serious adjustment problems in later life. A framework for conceptualizing and assessing children's peer difficulties and with a discussion of conceptual and methodological issues in longitudinal is risk research. Following this, three indexes of problematic peer relationships (acceptance, aggressiveness, and shyness/withdrawal) are evaluated as predictors of three later outcomes (dropping out of school, criminality, and psychopathology). The relation between peer difficulties and later maladjustment is examined in terms of both the consistency and strength of prediction. A review and analysis of the literature indicates general support for the hypothesis that children with poor peer adjustment are at risk for later life difficulties. Support is clearest for the outcomes of dropping out and criminality. It is also clearest for low acceptance and aggressiveness as predictors, whereas a link between shyness/ withdrawal and later maladjustment has not yet been adequately tested.

Bukowski, Rubin & Parker (2001) <sup>[1]</sup> studied that children engaged in interaction vary their behavior as a function of their short-term and long-term personal goals, their understanding of their partner's thoughts and feelings in the situation, the depth of their repertoire of alternative

responses, and various "ecological" features of the context of the interactions, such as the presence of bystanders, the physical setting, their own and their partner's relative standing in the group, and the operative local customs or "scripts" for responding. It is precisely the demonstration of such range and flexibility in responding to the challenges of interpersonal interaction, when considered at the individual level of analysis that many writers think of as social competence.

Patricia K. Kuhl *et al* (2003) <sup>[9]</sup> investigated that infants acquire language with remarkable speed, although little is known about the mechanisms that underlie the acquisition process. Studies of the phonetic units of language have shown that early in life, infants are capable of discerning differences among the phonetic units of all languages, including native- and foreign-language sounds. Between 6 and 12 months of age, the ability to discriminate foreign-language phonetic units sharply declines. In two studies, we investigate the necessary and sufficient conditions for reversing this decline in foreign-language phonetic perception. In Experiment 1, 9 month old American infants were exposed to native Mandarin Chinese speakers in 12 laboratory sessions. A control group also participated in 12 language sessions but heard only English. Subsequent tests of Mandarin speech perception demonstrated that exposure to Mandarin reversed the decline seen in the English control group. In Experiment 2, infants were exposed to the same foreign-language speakers and materials via audiovisual or audio-only recordings. The results demonstrated that exposure to recorded Mandarin, without interpersonal interaction, had no effect. Between 9 and 10 months of age, infants show phonetic learning from live, but not prerecorded, exposure to a foreign language, suggesting a learning process that does not require long-term listening and is enhanced by social interaction.

Zoltán Dörnyei and Kata Csizér (2005) <sup>[2]</sup> investigated attitude-mediated contact effects on language learners' motivational disposition by addressing the question as to whether increased intercultural contact through tourism will lead to enhanced language attitudes and language learning motivation. The analysis is based on empirical data gathered in a repeated cross-sectional survey of 8,593 13- and 14-year-old Hungarian pupils in a national sample, stratified according to regions and dwelling types whose contact parameters were specified through objective census data and expert panel judgments. The results reveal a curvilinear contact-attitude relationship, with the highest contact group/locality being associated with some of the lowest attitudinal and motivational measures.

Kyalo and Chumba Rose (2011) <sup>[10]</sup> investigated and the findings of the study indicated that interpersonal relationships and the attitude of students towards university environment and academic programme were critical factors influencing social adjustment and academic adjustment of undergraduate students in the university. Both male and female students were exposed to the same environment that influenced their similar social and academic adjustment in the university. First year students have a higher level of academic adjustment compared to other students in the university. Guidance and counseling programme has a critical role to play in assisting students to adjust in the university. The study recommends that there is need for the university to encourage social activities that can facilitate effective interpersonal relationships among students. There

is need for the university to increase the level of publicity of guidance and counseling services programme and its services in the universities so as to assist students un coping and adjusting to university life.

Ty W. Vernon *et al* (2012) [13] explained that the social vulnerabilities associated with young children with autism are recognized as important intervention targets due to their influence on subsequent development. Current research suggests that interventions that combine motivational and social components can create meaningful changes in social functioning. Simultaneously, it is hypothesized that parent delivery of such strategies can invoke increases in these core social behaviors and parent engagement. This study examined the effects of teaching parents to implement a social engagement intervention with their children. The results indicated that the use of this parent-delivered social intervention led to (a) increases in their children’s use of eye contact, directed positive effect, and verbal initiations, (b) increases in parent positive affect and synchronous engagement, and (c) generalized increases in parent and child behaviors.

**Need and significance of the study**

The needs of children with intellectual disability are different from other children with their same age group. In various situation children with intellectual disability are found segregated among their peers or also may have language and communication difficulty. Teaching any concept to them require a unique technique and strategy.

In the present study investigator has used the social contact activities as a strategy to evaluate the language communication skill express through either words or sign or symbol or by indication. Because children with intellectual disability often get less chance to interact with others. It ultimately affects their acquiring skills and effect can be seen on language also. Social contact has a potential to impact the behavior of children, skills, their socialization, personal adjustment abilities and as well as language and communication skills too. Keeping these points of view, investigator selected this strategy to evaluate impact of social contact on language among children with intellectual disability.

**Objectives**

- To evaluate the impact of social contact on language among children with intellectual disability.
- To evaluate the impact of social contact on language among male children with intellectual disability.
- To evaluate the impact of social contact on language among female children with intellectual disability.

**Hypothesis**

- There is no significant impact of social contacts on language among children with intellectual disability.
- There is no significant impact of social contacts on language among male children with intellectual disability.
- There is no significant impact of social contacts on language among female children with intellectual disability.

**Methodology**

The present study employed quasi experimental as time series designs is used. Non-Probability sampling design and

purposive sampling technique has been used to select the sample of 8 students with mild mental retardation between 7-10 years studying in primary level in Sanjeevani Special Education School, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh, India.

**Description of the tool**

- **Case Record Data Sheet:** The investigator prepared a Case Record data sheet for collecting personal information about children and their parent’s age, sex, health, educational qualification and locality.
- **Behavioural Assessment Scales for Indian Children with Mental Retardation Part – A (BASIC- MR) [12]:** is an evaluation tool used to assess the overall performance of children with mental retardation. This scale was developed by Reeta Peshawaria and S. Venkatesan in 1992. This scale has got part A and part B. The reliability of the BASIC MR is found to be 0.835. The concurrent, construct and face validity of the scale are also found to be high. For assessing the functional academic skills of children with cerebral palsy, the researcher selected one domain, namely language from part A of the BASIC-MR. There are 40 items in the domain. Each item is scored on a six-point scale as below:-  
 Score 5: Independent (level one)  
 Score 4: Clueing (level two)  
 Score 3: Verbal prompting (level three)  
 Score 2: Physical prompting (level four)  
 Score 1: Totally dependent (level five)  
 Score 0: Not applicable (level six)

**Social Contact Activity:** In order to select suitable social contact activity, the researcher went through different books and also collected 10 experts opinion in order to organize a summer camp in which involved special educators, parents of the children with intellectual disability and their siblings and selected activities such as musical chairs, spoon race, passing the ball, gardening, and lunch time activities.

**Procedure**

After getting the permission from the authority and consent of the selected sample’s parents for the study, the basic information of each child has been collected by using the case record data sheet. Before the intervention, the pre-test was conducted for base line achievement on language skills by using the selected Language domain of the BASIC MR Part – A. The summer camp was organized and above mentioned social contact activities were conducted as an intervention for ten days. After the 10 sessions the researcher conducted the post-test by using the same tool used for the pre-test to evaluate the effectiveness of social contact on language skills.

**Result and Discussion**

**Table: 1:** Mean values, SD and t-value of pre and post test scores of Social Contact on Language Development

Experimental	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ value
Pretest	8	106.25	1.67	<b>11.84**</b>
Posttest	8	120	2.83	

Maximum score: 200

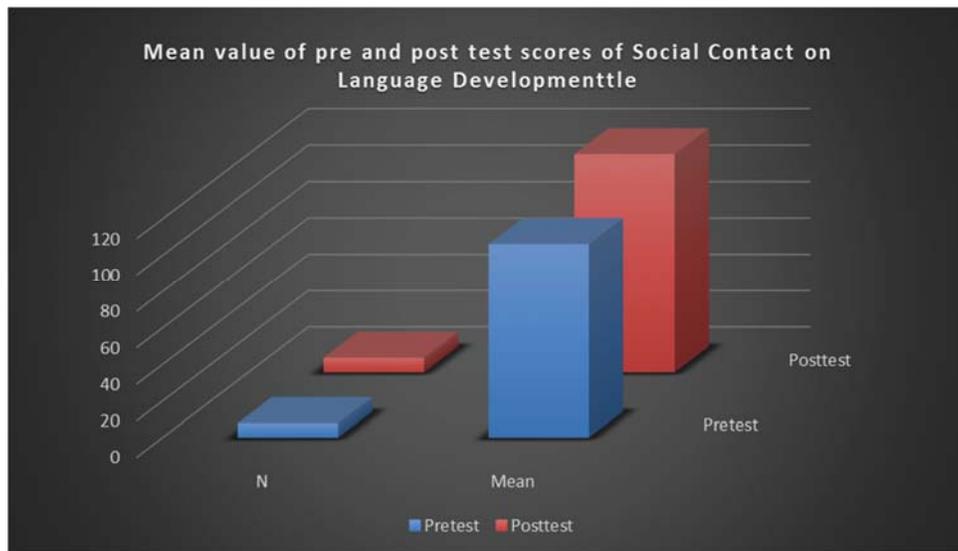


Fig 1

Table 1 shows the pre and post-test Mean values, SDs and t' value of social contact on language (both male and female children with intellectual disability). As the obtained t-value i.e. 11.84 is more than that of the table value, and its p-value is <math><0.00001</math>, it can be inferred that, there is statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between pre-test and post test scores. A close observation of the mean values reveals that there is significant increase in the post test scores of the students than that of pre test scores. Hence it can be concluded that social contact activities have highly

significant effect on language communication skills among children with intellectual disability.

Table 2: Mean values, SD and t-value of pre and post test scores of Social Contact on Language Development among Male children with intellectual disability

Experimental	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Pretest	8	105.5	1.29	11.57**
Posttest	8	118.75	1.89	

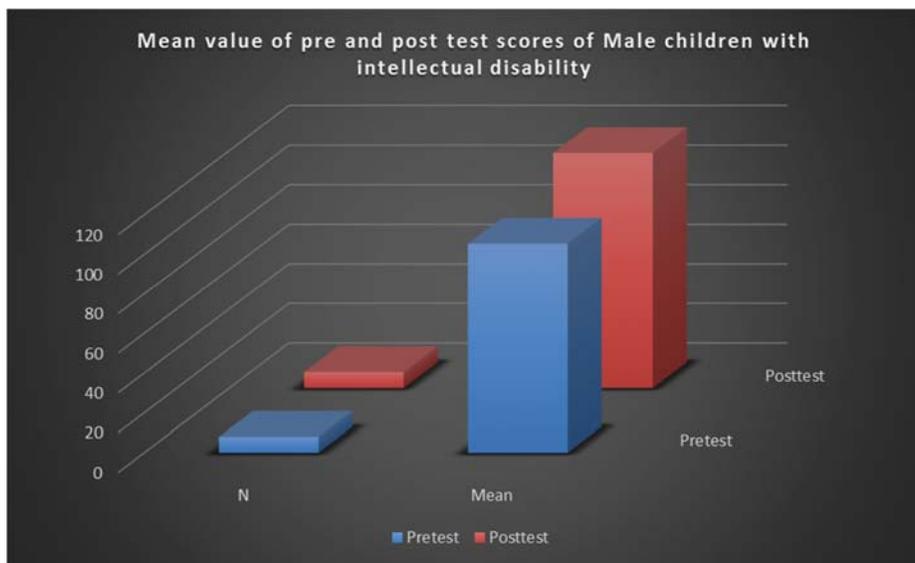


Fig 2

Table 2 shows the difference between pre and post-test Mean scores, SDs and t' value of social contact activities on language among male children with intellectual disability. The pre and post-test means are 105.5 and 118.75, SD is 1.29 and 1.89 respectively. It has been found that the calculated t-value 11.57 is greater than that of the table, so there is statistically significant difference between pre - test and post test scores. Hence it can be concluded that the social contact activities have highly significant effect on

language communication skills of male children with intellectual disability.

Table 3: Mean Values, SD and t-value of pre and post test scores of Social Contact on language among Female children with intellectual disability

Experimental	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Pretest	8	107	1.83	7.55**
Posttest	8	121.25	3.30	

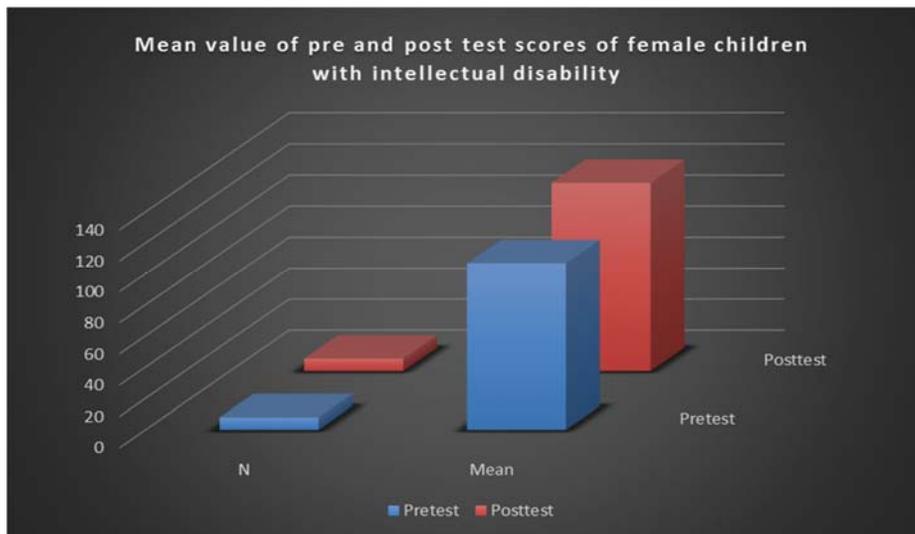


Fig 3

Table 3 shows the pre and post-test Mean scores SD and t' value of ability to follow multi word instructions. The pre and post-test means scores are 107 and 121.25. SD is 1.83 and 3.30 respectively. As the obtained t-value 7.55 is more than that of the table value, it can be inferred that, there is statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between pre-test and post test scores. The result of the analysis shows that social contact activities have significant effect on language communication ability among female children with intellectual disability.

Case wise performance analysis also has been done and the result is given below

Table 4: Obtained scores of each case in pre and post tests and the gained scores

Students	Pre – Test	Post – Test	Gained Scores	Total Scores
1	108	123	15	231
2	107	120	13	227
3	109	125	16	234
4	105	119	14	224
5	106	119	13	225
6	104	116	12	220
7	105	118	13	223
8	106	120	14	226

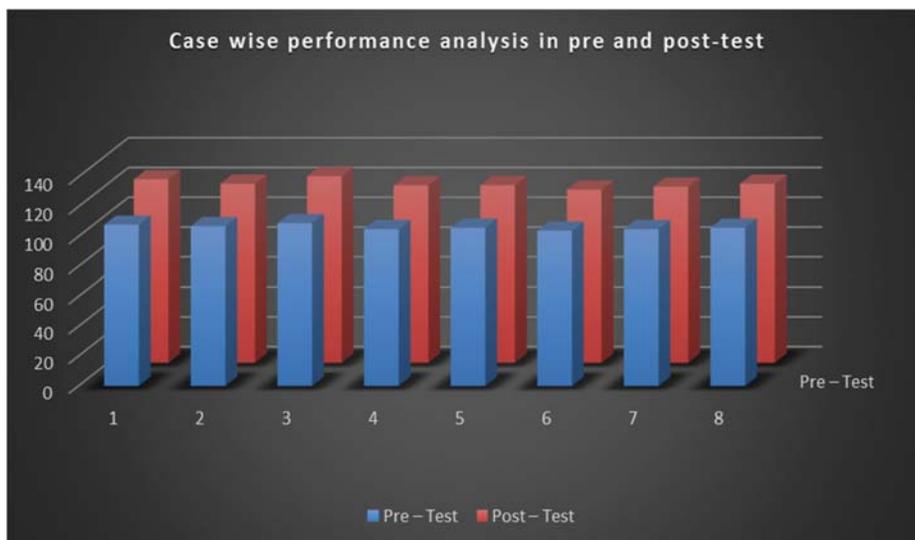


Fig 4

Table 5: Obtained scores of male and female case in pre and post tests and the gained scores

S.N.	Male Students				Female Students			
	Pre – Test	Post – Test	Gained Scores	Total Scores	Pre – Test	Post – Test	Gained Scores	Total Scores
1	107	120	13	227	108	123	15	231
2	105	119	14	224	109	125	16	234
3	104	116	12	220	106	119	13	225
4	106	120	14	226	105	118	13	223

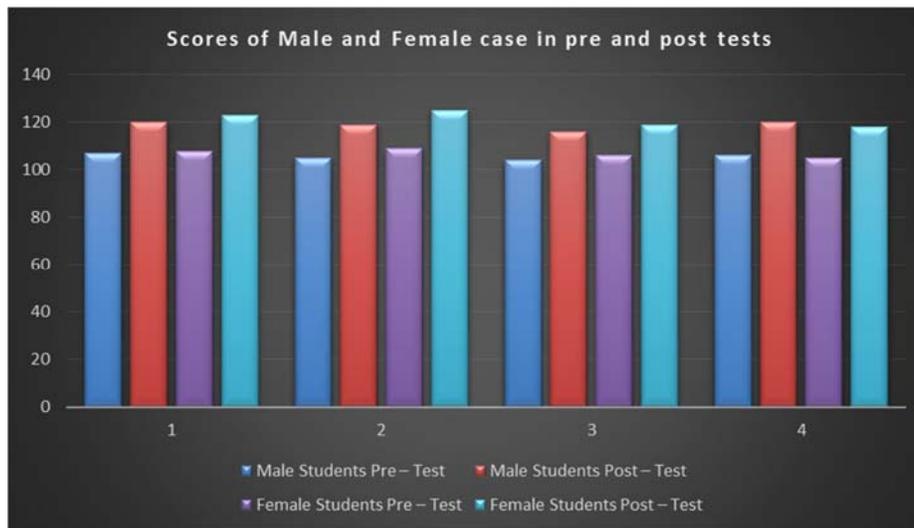


Fig 5

### Findings of the study

It has been found that there is a significant improvement in language communication ability among primary level children with mild intellectual disability through social contact activities. In the pre – test the performance mean and SD is 106.25, 1.67 respectively and the post – test mean and SD scores have been observed as 120 and 2.83. The t-value of the pre and post test scores is 11.84\*\*, which showed highly significant impact.

It is also found that there is a significant improvement in the language communication ability among male children with intellectual disability through social contact activities. The pre and post-test means scores of male children are 105.5 and 118.75. SD is 1.29 and 1.89 respectively. The t-value of the male children's improvement is 11.57\*\* is greater than that of the table value, so there is statistically significant difference between pre - test and post test scores.

The pre and post-test means scores of female children are 107 and 121.25. The SD scores of the female pre and post-test is 1.83 and 3.30 respectively. The t-value is found 7.55\*\*, that is greater than that of the table value, which show the significant difference between pre and post test scores. This indicates the positive impact of social contact on language development.

### Conclusion

This study revealed that there is significant impact of social contact on language development among children with mild intellectual disability both in male and female. By the data analysis, it can be concluded that social contact influence more female children with intellectual disability that that of the male children with intellectual disability. The study confirms that the language communication skills can be taught and improved through the social contact. The analysis of data rejected the null hypothesis and proved that social contact has a significant role in language developing ability among primary level children with intellectual disability.

### Suggestions

The result of the study indicates that the social contact activities are also an effective way of teaching the various concepts and skills as other methods of teaching. As some parents hide their special children from their social world,

which can affect the growth of the child, so the result of the study emphasized the importance of positive social contact in children's life. The result shows the positive effect of social contact on developing language ability. The result of the study supports to the special educators for using the social contact as teaching method to improve language and communication skills, various skills and concepts. It would be helpful for the children with intellectual disability, in which area they are found difficulties. The impacts of social contact activities can be also seen in different groups of children belong to various levels of intelligence, socio economic status and educational background.

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