

Research Topics & Ideas: Communication

About this document

This PDF contains 51 **communication research topics** for dissertations and theses, organized into 10 areas of communication, from communication disorders and assistive communication to science, risk and climate communication. Each topic is written as a researchable question and linked to a completed dissertation (2022–2026, 30 universities), so you can see how it was studied in practice. Use it to shortlist communication dissertation topics and thesis ideas, then narrow one down to your own population, setting and timeframe.

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Communication disorders and assistive communication

1. How should assistive communication work for a child who lives in two languages?

See it in a real dissertation: [AAC and Multilingualism in Children with Complex Communication Needs](#) · Anne Aubrey V. Dulay · San Jose State University · 2022

2. What does shared reading look like for a child who uses a communication device?

See it in a real dissertation: [Shared Book Reading Experiences for Young Children Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Systems](#) · Braelyn Wence · Illinois State University · 2022

3. What do teachers believe about AAC, and does it match the evidence?

See it in a real dissertation: [Teacher Views of Augmentative and Alternative Communication With Nonverbal Students With Severe Intellectual Disabilities: A Generic Qualitative Study](#) · LeLita K. Thomas · Nova Southeastern University · 2025

4. How do AAC users tell a story, and what does the device take from it?

See it in a real dissertation: [Investigating Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Users' Narratives: Analyzed Using the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives \(MAIN\)](#) · Olivia J Pride · University of New Hampshire at Manchester · 2026

5. Can functional communication training prevent a behavioral crisis?

See it in a real dissertation: [Preventing Behavioral Crisis in Special Education: Supporting Teacher-Implemented Functional Communication Training](#) · Bruna F. Gonçalves · University of Virginia · 2026

6. Does teaching signs give a non-vocal child a usable way to ask?

See it in a real dissertation: [Evaluation of Functional Communication Training with Sign Mands for Non-Vocal Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) · Hayley Margaret McManus · University of South Florida · 2025

Digital media and social platforms

7. Does an emoji reduce ambiguity in a message, or add to it?

See it in a real dissertation: [Emoji use in online communication with emerging adults: The impact on ambiguity, affect, and social connection](#) · Madelyne Losby · Iowa State University · 2022

8. Do fact-checkers restore trust, or only add another voice to the noise?

See it in a real dissertation: [From Viral Rumors to Fact-Checked Information: the Influence of Social Media Platforms and Fact-Checking Organizations on Public Trust during the Covid-19 Crisis](#) · Chinyere Linda Agbasiere · Illinois State University · 2024

9. How do you keep signed communication usable on poor internet access?

See it in a real dissertation: [Enabling ASL Digital Communication Under Poor Internet Access](#) · Swann Thantsin · Brooklyn College · 2026

10. Does the app decide how social media leaves you feeling, or the reason you opened it?

See it in a real dissertation: [Understanding Digital Well-being in Social Media Use: App-Specific Use, Goal Pursuit, and Platform Designs](#) · Yuning Liu · Harvard University · 2026

11. Does steady exposure to false content actually shift trust in institutions?

See it in a real dissertation: [Misinformation, Disinformation, and the Erosion of Institutional Trust: The Role of Social Media in Democracy](#) · Andrés Felipe Murillo · Chapman University · 2025

Health communication**12. Why does medication teaching fail at the bedside?**

See it in a real dissertation: [Actions to Improve In-Patient Communication on Medication Teaching](#) · Tracy Wei · University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences · 2024

13. How much does communication build trust in the information itself?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Relationship Between Patient-Provider Communication and Provider Trust for Cancer-Related Information](#) · Kamesha Turner Roberts · Walden University · 2025

14. Does teaching nurses how to raise postpartum depression change how confident they feel?

See it in a real dissertation: [Increasing Nursing Education on Effective Therapeutic Communication for Postpartum Depression: A Quality Improvement Project](#) · Kayley Jade Couture · University of New Hampshire · 2026

15. How should a clinician raise a vaccine that parents are not expecting?

See it in a real dissertation: [Recommending HPV Vaccination for Children Ages 9-10 Years: Communication Roles and Training](#) · Benjamin Zvi Kahn · University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University · 2026

16. How do you talk to a parent about an eating disorder their culture does not name?

See it in a real dissertation: [Breaking generational stigma: a parent-centered campaign on Eating Disorders in East Asian households](#) · Heng Shi · University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill · 2026

Instructional and educational communication**17. Is instructional clarity a property of the teacher or of the exchange?**

See it in a real dissertation: [Instructional Clarity Examined as a Transactional Communication Process](#) · Dakota Horn · Illinois State University · 2022

18. How do a student's emotions shape what a lecture communicates?

See it in a real dissertation: [A Test of the Control Value Theory of Achievement Emotions in an Instructional Communication Context](#) · Katherine E. Armstrong · West Virginia University · 2023

19. Is a prompt a channel of communication, and what does that change?

See it in a real dissertation: [Analysing student engagement with large language models in higher education: prompts as channels of communication with AI](#) · Eric Xu · University of Oxford · 2024

20. How well does higher education communicate what work will actually ask?

See it in a real dissertation: [Adapting to change: how is higher education preparing students to be workforce-ready?](#) · Sarah Bollinger · Northeastern University · 2024

21. What happens when a university statement meets the campus it addresses?

See it in a real dissertation: [Institutional Rhetoric and Campus Reactions: A Multi-Method Case Study Exploring University Communication and Social Responsibility In a Racial Crisis](#) · Rockia Harris · Louisiana State University · 2023

Intercultural and international communication

22. Can intercultural competence be taught alongside a language?

See it in a real dissertation: [Intercultural Competence in the ESL Classroom: Challenges and Successes](#) · Breno Santos Rodrigues Pereira · West Virginia University · 2023

23. What can ancient diplomacy teach about miscommunication between states?

See it in a real dissertation: [Intercultural Communication and Miscommunication: Egyptian Diplomacy in the New Kingdom Period](#) · Ziting Wang · University of Chicago · 2023

24. Does cultural intelligence actually help resolve a conflict?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Atlas of Intercultural Communication: Navigating Conflict Resolution with Cultural Intelligence](#) · Luz Marina Erturk · Nova Southeastern University · 2025

25. How should a clinician discuss serious illness across a cultural gap?

See it in a real dissertation: [Cross-Cultural Serious Illness Communication Among Asian Patients and Families](#) · Cloris Huan · University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill · 2024

26. Can a conversational agent hold a conversation in a language it barely knows?

See it in a real dissertation: [Enhancing Cross-Cultural Communication in Low-Resource Language Conversational Agents](#) · Hardi Trivedi · San Jose State University · 2024

Interpersonal and relational communication

27. What makes someone stay silent about politics with people close to them?

See it in a real dissertation: [Silence or Self-Disclosure? Examining the Psychological and Relational Factors Shaping Political Communication Between Gen Z and Their Families](#) · Bradford E Netherton · Chapman University · 2026

28. Does the medium change the outcome of a negotiation?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Impact of Communication Medium on Negotiation during Conflict](#) · Leigh H. Grant · University of Chicago · 2023

29. Can in-service training change how adults in a school talk to each other?

See it in a real dissertation: [Improving interpersonal communication in urban schools through in-service training](#) · Junious Benjamin Mathis · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2022

30. Why does speech become patronizing when disability is present?

See it in a real dissertation: [Patronizing Speech in Interability Communication toward People with Cognitive Disabilities](#) · Vann Morris · Georgia State University · 2022

31. What does art-informed teaching do for communication that instruction does not?

See it in a real dissertation: [Relational Art-Informed Learning in English for Global Communication Education: A Japanese Higher Education Context](#) · Miyoko Takatama · Lancaster University · 2025

Organizational and workplace communication

32. Can internal communication create shared meaning, or only shared wording?

See it in a real dissertation: [We Are on the Same Page: How to Leverage Strategic Internal Communication to Create Shared Meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility Between Corporations and Employees](#) · Yangzhi Jiang · Louisiana State University · 2022

33. Which leadership communication strategies actually move engagement?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Relationship Between Leadership Communication Strategies and Employee Productivity, Motivation, and Engagement](#) · Christopher Tucker · Walden University · 2026

34. How would you measure whether a team communicates well?

See it in a real dissertation: [Quantitative Methods for Analyzing Team Communication Patterns](#) · Dominique Engome Tchupo · University of Rhode Island · 2022

35. What makes a corporate responsibility partnership believable?

See it in a real dissertation: [UPS and Zoo Atlanta: A Case Study on Corporate Social Responsibility](#) · Karen Saghini · Georgia State University · 2022

36. How does workplace conflict differ across cultural groups in one organization?

See it in a real dissertation: [Conflict and Communication in the Workplace: Analysis of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Organizational Members](#) · Yoan M. Lorenzo · Nova Southeastern University · 2025

Political and public communication

37. What is diplomatic language doing when it appears to say nothing?

See it in a real dissertation: [Unpacking Diplospeak: Diplomatic Rhetoric and Communication in International Relations](#) · Jenna Gibson · University of Chicago · 2025

38. How does a built place make a rhetorical argument?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Rhetorical Dimensions of Place-making: Texts, Structures, and Movement in Atlantic Station](#) · Brook Alys Irving · Georgia State University · 2022

39. Whose standards are embedded in how writing gets assessed?

See it in a real dissertation: [Decolonizing Assessment: Witnessing, Disrupting, and Reimagining Assessment in Rhetoric, Composition, and Technical Communication](#) · Lisa Dooley · Illinois State University · 2023

40. How far does one platform reshape a country's political conversation?

See it in a real dissertation: [The role of Twitter in shaping political communication: a case study of Pakistan](#) · Naheed Akhtar · University of the West of Scotland · 2026

41. What does a candidate gain by campaigning behind a mask?

See it in a real dissertation: ["THE New Force": The Rhetoric behind Nana Kwame Bediako's Masked Campaign](#) · Emmanuella Gyamfi · Illinois State University · 2025

Public relations and crisis communication

42. What belongs in a crisis communication plan, and who is it really written for?

See it in a real dissertation: [When It Hits the Fan: A Public Relations' Practitioners' Guide to Crisis Communication](#) · Joshua L. Smith · Georgia State University · 2022

43. How does an employer brand read to the people it is trying to recruit?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Campus EVP: A Multi-Case Content Analysis of Employer Branding Communication in U.S. Higher Education](#) · Latoya A Clarke · Baruch College · 2025

44. Can a charity's social account build relationships, or only broadcast?

See it in a real dissertation: [An Exploration of The Use of Social Media \(Websites/ Twitter\) As A Public Relations Communication Technique by Saudi Charities for Relationship Building](#) · Alhanouf Al-Jaafar · Swansea University · 2023

45. How do leaders communicate through a crisis that is about them?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Experiences of Women College Presidents While Leading Through an Institutional Crisis: The Perceived Successes and Failures of Crisis Communication Strategies](#) · Madison Marie Speck · West Virginia University · 2024

46. What happens to a humanitarian crisis when the media stops covering it?

See it in a real dissertation: [Echoes in the Silence: How Media and Communication Failures Affect Yemen's Conflict and Humanitarian Crisis](#) · Rulla AL-ERYANI · Brunel University of London · 2026

Science, risk and climate communication

47. How do you communicate a risk that science has not finished measuring?

See it in a real dissertation: [Contaminants of Emerging Concern: Fate, Bioaccumulation, and Risk Communication](#) · Asta Habtemichael · University of Rhode Island · 2025

48. Who is trusted to carry a risk message inside a community?

See it in a real dissertation: [Community-Based Risk Communication during the Covid-19 Pandemic: a Biwoc Framework](#) · Raven Preston · Illinois State University · 2023

49. What can a botanic garden teach that a science paper cannot?

See it in a real dissertation: [Connecting people with plants: Exploring the role of science communication within botanic gardens](#) · Andreia Jorge · University of the West of England · 2024

50. Does risk communication actually change what people do before a storm?

See it in a real dissertation: [Weathering the Risks: How Risk Communication Shapes Preparedness for Natural Hazards & Extreme Weather in Southeast Louisiana](#) · T Olaf Johnson · Louisiana State University · 2025

51. How does risk assessment read to the rural community it describes?

See it in a real dissertation: [The Rhetorical Art of Risk Assessment: Lessons from Risk Management in Rural and Tribal Communities](#) · John L. Velat · Michigan Technological University · 2023

How to turn a topic into your research question

A topic is a starting point, not something you can research yet. These four steps take you from a topic on this list to a focused question you can actually answer.

- 1. Shortlist three, not one.** Pick three topics from this list that genuinely interest you and fit the access you have to people and data.

Recommended reading: [How to find and choose a dissertation topic](#)

- 2. Read the dissertation behind each one.** Its literature review and its "recommendations for future research" section show you what is already known and what is still open.

Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)

- 3. Narrow it to your setting.** Name one population, one setting and one thing you will measure or explore. That turns a broad topic into a question you can finish.

Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)

- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.

Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Work through these once and you will have a focused question rather than a broad topic, which is what the rest of your proposal is built on.