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## Miscellaneous

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## The multifaceted landscape of educommunication: a scoping review

### Abstract

Educommunication integrates communication and education into a unified approach to learning and knowledge dissemination. Representing a paradigmatic shift, educommunication has profound consequences for both fields. However, there is no clear definition of the concept, implying a necessity to synthesize existing knowledge about what educommunication means in different research contexts. This scoping review investigated how the concept educommunication was explicitly defined in contemporary international research literature. Five databases were searched to identify articles published between 2018–2023. Following a thorough selection and data extraction process, 90 full text articles were analyzed. Explicit definitions were identified in 50 of them. A thematic analysis confirmed the multifaceted nature of educommunication, implying that the concept has multiple meanings and interpretations. At the overarching level, educommunication is viewed as a new transdisciplinary field, a tool for societal transformation, and a set of pedagogical actions. The most frequent subtheme was the notion that educommunication entails a new epistemology, and therefore represents a paradigmatic shift. The second most frequent subtheme highlighted educommunication as a tool for political change, including matters of democracy, human rights, and citizenship. Since this review has a limited historical scope, future research could include tracking the concept educommunication from its origins in the 1970s to the present, to identify how it evolved over time and space.

### Keywords

Communication, education, educommunication, media literacy, scoping review.

## 1. Introduction

Studies in the field of educommunication address various perspectives on the interface between education and communication worldwide. Considering it an emerging field (Sartori et al., 2023) and given that there is no consensus on the use and appropriation of the concept of educommunication (Albardía, 2023), this scoping literature review foremost investigates how the concept itself is defined by researchers from different scholarly contexts.

The concept of educommunication is considered to represent a paradigm shift in the fields of education and communication (Soares, 2000, 2014; Viana & de Melo, 2013) since it challenges traditional boundaries between education and communication by integrating them into a unified approach to learning and knowledge dissemination. Within the literature (Albardía, 2023; Jackiw & Haracemiv, 2021; Sartori et al., 2023; Soares, 2018) there is evidence that the educommunication paradigm departed mainly from two distinguished branches: (1) The Anglo-Saxon tradition, known as *media literacy* or *media education*, based on the use of communication devices and media in the educational environment. This would be the field closest to *education with the media*, aiming to bring communication closer to the classroom with a more instrumental approach (Carias-Pérez et al., 2021). (2) The Latin American tradition, whose frequent protagonist is the political and ideological struggle in the defense of the right to freedom of expression and communication. It usually approaches the media from political, historical, social, communicative, and cultural dimensions. This field is also known as *communication education*, aiming to transform the educational community into an open, dialogic and participatory communication ecosystem (Sartori et al., 2023). However, studies examining media literacy across Anglo-Saxon, European, and Latin American contexts reveal a more nuanced picture than a simple instrumental-versus-critical divide. Anglo-Saxon authors such as Buckingham (2020) and Hobbs (2011) advocate digital literacy frameworks that extend beyond basic competences to incorporate critical thinking and social dimensions. European perspectives (e.g., Cappello, 2017; Marta-Lazo & Pérez, 2012) emphasize critical, creative, and responsible digital citizenship, while Latin American research (Mateus et al., 2020; Mateus et al., 2022) documents aspirations toward critical media education alongside challenges in policy implementation and infrastructure.

Although education and communication have been in dialogue historically, the educommunication praxis emerged in the popular movements of Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, based on the practical experience of popular educator-communicators such as Freire, Kaplún, and Martín-Barbero. The neologism educommunication was coined by the Argentine educator, radio host, and writer Kaplún in his book *A la educación por la comunicación*, first published in 1992 (Kaplún, 1992/2001). Towards the end of the 1990s, the Communication and Education Center at the University of São Paulo (NCE-USP), Brazil, further developed this emerging field with theoretical and applied research and the creation of undergraduate and graduate courses in the area.

Based on Freirean pedagogy, Kaplún wanted to refer to a new field of social intervention. Before Kaplún, Freire had worked on educommunication without referring to the term explicitly. Since 1946, Freire worked with popular groups, teaching literacy to workers, with dialogue at the center of the group's literacy and learning processes (Albardía, 2023). He stated that education is communication, that "it is dialogue, inasmuch as it is not transference of knowledge, but an encounter of interlocutors who seek the meanings of meanings" (Freire, 1982, p. 46, our translation). In his book *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Freire (2000) proposed that education, in its broadest sense, becomes a communicative praxis.

The University of São Paulo is still a center for the Latin American branch of the educommunication field. Among their recent developments is the notion of educommunication as “Amor e Luta” (“Love and Fight” or “Love and Struggle”), which is a result of discussions during an undergraduate course (da Silva, 2018; Teófilo, 2022). “Amor” has roots in Freire’s work, in which he states that love is about dialogue as a “transformative encounter, because dialogue/love transforms and humanizes the world. Therefore, for a process to be dialogical, it has to be loving. In other words, dialogue is love.” (da Silva, 2018, p. 111, our translation). “Amor e Luta”, in turn, refers to educommunication being about both love/dialogue and about “the search for the transformation of society into a fairer space, with more equity, respect for diversity, quality education, a guarantee of the right to communication and critical reflection” (da Silva, 2018, p. 110, our translation).

In a nutshell, this scoping literature review illuminates the multifaceted landscape of educommunication, an evolving field at the nexus of education and communication. It departs from the premise that the world is highly permeated by multiple media platforms, diverse media formats and languages, as well as an array of communication devices. In this context, it becomes imperative for education to critically assess and rethink its pedagogical approaches. This reassessment is crucial to ensure that the omnipresence of media in our daily lives is not disregarded in educational settings. However, a pedagogical approach that acknowledges the ubiquity of media must also transcend its instrumental dimension, thereby enabling a mode of communication that cultivates dialogue, participation, autonomy, and authorship on the part of all subjects, from teachers to students, and from managers to other members of the school community (Sartori et al., 2023).

Originating from practical experiences within Latin American popular movements and inspired by luminaries such as Paulo Freire and Mario Kaplún, educommunication embodies a transformative praxis rooted in dialogue and participatory engagement. This inquiry underscores the imperative for education to adapt to the omnipresence of media in contemporary society, emphasizing the need for pedagogical approaches that transcend mere instrumentality and foster dialogue, autonomy, and authorship among all stakeholders.

### 1.1. *Aim and research question*

The necessity to synthesize existing knowledge about what educommunication means in different research contexts underpins the rationale for this scoping literature review. The aim is to scrutinize how educommunication is explicitly defined in contemporary international research literature. Consequently, the overarching research question that guides the review is: *How is educommunication explicitly defined in international research published between 2018-2023 and what patterns can be identified among the definitions?*

## 2. Method

To answer the research question, and thereby fulfil the aim of this study, a scoping review was conducted. Although scoping reviews represent a relatively recent methodological tool for literature exploration, their employment is increasingly prevalent across domains such as education and communication. While a universally precise definition of a scoping review remains elusive, it typically encompasses various elements including literature mapping, conceptual delineation, or policy assessment, for instance (Munn et al., 2018). Notably, scoping reviews diverge from systematic reviews by virtue of their broader focus, serving as valuable instruments in fields characterized by a scarcity of methodologically rigorous evidence, thereby encompassing a wide array of study designs (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Functioning as an efficient mechanism for researchers, a scoping review facilitates the expedient identification

and mapping of fundamental concepts within a given research domain. The seminal work on scoping reviews by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) identifies four primary motivations that drive researchers to undertake such endeavors: (1) to assess the extent and nature of existing research activities, (2) to ascertain the necessity for a systematic review, (3) to synthesize and disseminate research findings, and (4) to pinpoint potential research lacunae within the current scholarly landscape. Munn et al. (2018) add that scoping reviews can have the purpose (5) to clarify key concepts/definitions in the literature. This article adopts a methodological approach to scoping reviews, aiming to clarify definitions and critically engage with research findings.

### **2.1. Database search**

Five databases (Communication Source, ERIC, PsycInfo, Scopus, Web of Science) were searched. Together, they were expected to encompass most research fields in which articles on educommunication may have been published. Initial pilot searches revealed that Communication Source was more accurate than the other databases in identifying articles from Latin America. Although English, Spanish and Portuguese were acknowledged as predominant languages within publications in the field of educommunication due to its origins in Latin America, no language filter was applied in the search process, which means that articles in other languages would have been included had they existed. The authors of this review have proficiency in these languages. The search string included both hyphenated and non-hyphenated versions of “educommunication” to ensure comprehensive coverage. Thus, to cover all three languages as well as both hyphenated and non-hyphenated spellings, the search strings used in all five databases were: “(Educommunication OR Edu-communication) OR (Educomunicación OR Edu-comunicación) OR (Educomunicação OR Edu-comunicação)”.

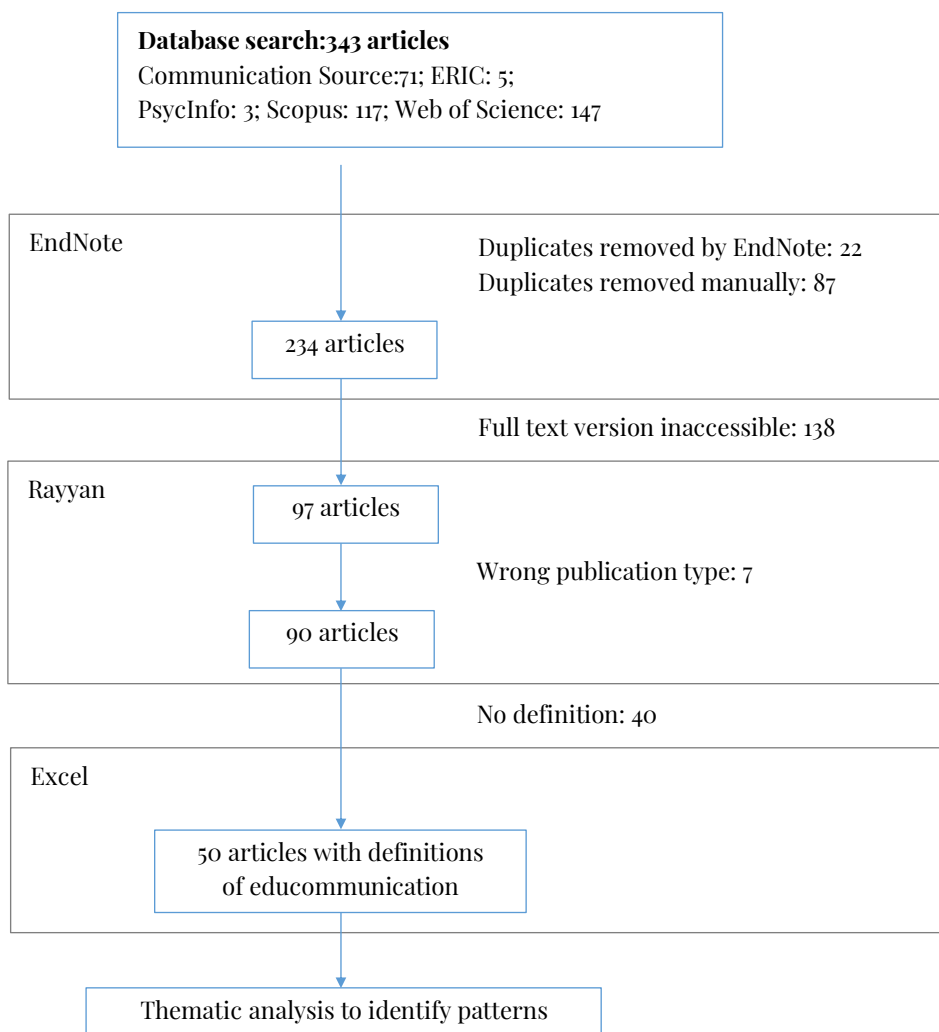
Besides being identified by the search string, the articles should be peer reviewed. To reflect the most recent research on the topic, articles published between 2018 and 2023 were selected. Articles were excluded if they were book reviews, conference papers or editorials. In addition, only articles accessible as full text through the Jönköping University Library were included.

### **2.2. Selection process**

The search resulted in 343 entries (see Figure 1), which were all imported to the software EndNote for duplicate scanning. Although EndNote identified and removed 22 entries, it could not identify duplicates when there was a confusion about authors surnames. Articles whose authors have more than one surname, which is common in Spanish and Portuguese, were in some cases listed by one or the other of the names and EndNote did not necessarily identify them as duplicates. There were also inconsistencies with the hyphenation of two-part surnames. In this review, for authors with hyphenated surnames in the full text version of the article, we maintained the hyphen both in the reference list and in the in-text citations. For authors with two surnames without any hyphen, we refer to their articles by the second surname.

Due to the difficulties of automatically identifying duplicates, manual scanning was performed to remove another 87 duplicates. The next step in the process was to collect full text files for the remaining entries. EndNote was used to download open access articles as well as non-open access publications that our university library had access to through different agreements. A total of 138 inaccessible articles were excluded. Subsequently, the software Rayyan was utilized for a title and abstract screening, excluding articles of inappropriate publication types. Ultimately, 90 articles remained for full-text analysis.

**Figure 1.** Flowchart of the selection process



Source: Own elaboration

### 2.3. Analysis

First, a data extraction protocol was created using Microsoft Excel, comprising article details (such as publication year and country) and educommunication definitions were identified. Definitions in Portuguese or Spanish were translated into English. Overall, definitions were identified in 50 of the 90 articles. Those 50 articles are presented in Table 1.

A thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was then performed to identify patterns, i.e. themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), within the different definitions that were found. The second author created preliminary codes while reading the articles in English. The first author coded all definitions inductively and then compared them to the second author's preliminary codes. All three authors discussed the codes and then the third author blindly coded the definitions deductively based on the preliminary codes from the first author's analysis. The first author compared the codes from the two rounds, to achieve inter-coder reliability. When differences were identified, they were discussed among all three authors until consensus was reached.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the selected articles

Article ID number	Authors and publication year	English title (as provided by the respective authors)	Language	Country
01	Albardía, Onaindia & Fernández (2023)	Educommunication in the era of hyperconnectivity: Liberating education to promote critical citizenship	Spanish	Spain
02	Almeida, Mendes & Araujo (2021)	Emergency remote teaching: the experiences of a public school and a private school in Campina Grande/pb	Portuguese	Brazil
03	Andrade-Martinez (2020)	Educommunication of Don Bosco and the formation of university as good citizens	Spanish	Ecuador
04	Barón & Bello (2022)	Edutuberos: how to take advantage of the coding elements of youtube messages to generate educational videos aimed at children between 7 and 9 years old	Spanish	Colombia
05	Berlanga-Fernández, Gozalvez-Pérez, Arellano & Aguaded-Gómez (2018)	Ten years of smartphones. A semiotic-communicational analysis of the social impact of mobile telephony	Spanish	Spain
06	Bermejo, del Campo & Matilla (2021)	Educommunication, ICTs and prison. Testimonies of persons deprived of freedom regarding digital exclusion	Spanish	Spain
07	Bertone (2023)	The intersections between the concepts of multiliteracies and educommunication embraced by the language	Portuguese	Brazil
08	Borja, Gracia-Ruiz & Aguaded (2020)	Media Literacy in public, private and academic Colombian documentation in its understanding of the social issue	Spanish	Colombia
09	Cabrera (2019)	Voices and dramatization of claiming: an experience in a rural community in Ecuador	Spanish	Ecuador
10	Carretero (2019)	The construction of the collective memory of the armed conflict in Colombia based on college video-making (2005-2014)	Spanish	Spain
11	Chagna & Rodríguez (2023)	The worldview and interculturality in the training of entrepreneurs: a model of participatory edu-communication in Ecuador.	English	Ecuador
12	Chiappe, Amado & Leguizamón (2020)	Educommunication in digital environments: an interaction's perspective inside and beyond the classroom.	English	Colombia
13	Citelli (2018)	Communication and education: the movements of the pendulum	Portuguese	Brazil
14	Coslado & de Zárate (2020)	Activist lives. Participation in community-based media as sources of learning	Spanish	Spain
15	Cruzz (2019)	Emerging methodologies in catholic communication official documents of the Italian, Brazilian and Caribbean Episcopal Conferences	Portuguese	Brazil
16	Cuervo, Lizarazo-Castellanos & Cáceres-Manrique (2022)	Validation of an educational video to strengthen humanized childbirth practices among healthcare workers	Spanish	Colombia
17	de Oliveira, Lansky, dos Santos, Pena, Karmaluk & Friche (2020)	Senses of Birth: An interactive and provocative exhibition to change the culture about childbirth in Brazil	Portuguese	Brazil

Article ID number	Authors and publication year	English title (as provided by the respective authors)	Language	Country
18	del Río, García-Ruíz & Rodríguez (2018)	Edu-communication as a challenge for inclusive education	Spanish	Spain
19	do Nascimento & Oliveira (2021)	Geographic window, a holistic educommunicative experience in geography teaching	Portuguese	Brazil
20	dos Santos (2022)	Social medias and the spread of hoaxes: perception of secondary students	Spanish	Spain
21	dos Santos & Bueno (2022)	“A Chinese life” in classroom: Contemporary China in comics	Portuguese	Brazil
22	Elgueta, Gómez & Perez (2021)	Fundación radio escuela para el desarrollo rural (FREDER): a case of educommunicative de-westernization in Mapuche-williche territory	Spanish	Chile
23	Feltrero, Hernando & Acosta-Sznajderman (2023)	Educommunication against fake news: an experience in SMOOC for the development of critical media literacy	Spanish	Spain
24	Fernández, Aceituno-Aceituno, Escobedo & Fernández (2022)	Radio in school as a resource for the development of media competence	Spanish	Spain
25	Gomes-Gonçalves, Jiménez-Marín, Pulido-Polo (2022)	Public relations and fake news in the corporate communication. A literature review	Spanish	Portugal and Spain
26	Grande-López (2022)	Analysis of film content as a social x-ray for correct negative stereotypes and racial prejudices	Spanish	Spain
27	Inocêncio, Martins & Mesquida (2020)	The printed newspaper, the critical reading and the releasing practice of Paulo Freire	Portuguese	Brazil
28	Jackiw & Haracemiv (2021)	Educommunication and media literacy: Freirean dialogues in Latin America	Portuguese	Brazil
29	Ladaga (2021)	Through the screens: interaction for learning in virtual environments	Spanish	Argentina
30	Lotero-Echerverri, Romero-Rodríguez & Pérez-Rodríguez (2019)	Research trends in specialist publications from the field of educommunication and media literacy in Latin America	Spanish	Latin America
31	Luiz & Sato (2022)	Educommunication and climatic emergency: Quilombo Mata Cavalo echoes tradition and resistance	Portuguese	Brazil
32	Martínez (2023)	Digital transformation with SMOOC: a proposal based on educommunication	Spanish	Spain
33	Micheli (2023)	Teachers as transformative intellectuals at the service of media literacy. A theoretical approach to their main roles and tasks	Spanish	Spain
34	Montoya, de Souza & García (2023)	Communication and Living Well: Educommunication in Collectives from the Peripheries of Colombia and Brazil	Portuguese	Colombia
35	Morales-Corral & Teso-Alonso (2022)	Educommunicating climate change, analysis in the media and from the perspective of environmental education	Spanish	Spain
36	Moreira (2020)	Educommunication and the backlands in the 21st century	Portuguese	Brazil

Article ID number	Authors and publication year	English title (as provided by the respective authors)	Language	Country
37	Moser, Pedroso, Kataoka, & Tolares-Campos (2021)	The climate emergency in science teaching: the necessary knowledge for a pedagogical work proposal through scientific educommunication	Portuguese	Brazil
38	Muñoz-Borja, Sarria, García-Ruiz & Aguaded (2021)	Inclusive educommunication and disability in Andean Region: qualitative review of advances and achievements	Spanish	Colombia
39	Narváez-Montoya (2019)	Educational Communication, Educommunication, and Media Education: A Research and Educational Proposal from a Culturalist Approach	Spanish	Colombia
40	Passos & Prandini (2020)	Educommunication and equity at Teach for Racial and Gender Equality Award	Portuguese	Brazil
41	Pereira, Pereira & Ghisleni (2021)	The aid of educommunicative tools in the teaching of Libras to listeners	Portuguese	Brazil
42	Pérez-Femanía & Iglesias-García (2022)	Lights and Shadows of Media Literacy in the Spanish Education System. A way to reach the objectives proposed by Europe	Spanish	Spain
43	Pérez, Moya & González-Martín (2022)	Critical thinking on social networks. A theoretical proposal for civic education in digital environments	Spanish	Spain
44	Quezada-Tello, Cappelo, Longhi-Heredia & Hernando-Gómez (2022)	Museums and the Pandemic: Strategies for the Educommunication of Heritage	Spanish	Ecuador
45	Rodrigo-Cano, Picó & Dimuro (2019)	The Sustainable Development Goals as frame for the action and social and environmental intervention	Spanish	Spain
46	Rojas-Estrada, García-Ruiz & Aguaded (2023)	Media Competence in the Curriculum from Latin American Countries: A Systematic Review.	English	Spain
47	Rueda & Rueda (2020)	Participatory audiovisuals: a convergence between communication and environment	Spanish	Colombia
48	Sartori, Garcez & Vieira (2023)	Educommunication and Communicative Ecosystem: a Systematic Review	Portuguese	Brazil
49	Tárcia, Alzamora, Cunha & Gambarato (2023)	Transmedia educommunication method for social sustainability in low-income communities	English	Brazil
50	Wu, Wu & Chang (2020)	Teachable Moments in News Media—An Analysis of Audience Awareness, Enjoyment, Interest, Opinion Formation, and Understanding (AEIOU) toward Science	English	Taiwan

Source: Own elaboration

### 3. Results

The thematic analysis identified three themes and five subthemes, as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Themes and subthemes

<b>Theme Educommunication as...</b>	<b>Subthemes Educommunication as...</b>
a new transdisciplinary field	a plain combination of education and communication a combination of fields that entails a new epistemology
as societal transformation	a tool to achieve political change a tool to achieve educational change an agent in itself
a set of pedagogical actions	–

Source: Own elaboration

The most frequent subthemes identified were educommunication as a combination of fields entailing a new epistemology, and educommunication as a tool to achieve political change. For details, see Table 3. In some cases, educommunication was defined by using synonyms (see Table 4), and those are presented after the identified themes and subthemes.

**Table 3.** Distribution of themes across articles

<b>Article ID number</b>	<b>new transdisciplinary field</b>		<b>societal transformation</b>			<b>set of pedagogical actions</b>
	<b>plain combination of fields</b>	<b>new epistemology</b>	<b>tool for political change</b>	<b>tool for educational change</b>	<b>agent in itself</b>	
01		X	X	X		
02	X			X		
03			X			X
04	X					
05				X		
06			X	X		
07	X					X
08			X			
09	X					
10	X			X		X
11		X				
12		X				
13		X				
14		X				
15		X			X	X
16	X			X		
17		X				
18					X	
19			X	X		
20*						

Article ID number	new transdisciplinary field		societal transformation			set of pedagogical actions
	plain combination of fields	new epistemology	tool for political change	tool for educational change	agent in itself	
21		X				
22	X	X				
23				X		
24	X					
25						X
26			X			
27		X				X
28	X	X	X			X
29		X				X
30	X		X			
31						X
32		X	X	X		X
33	X					
34	X	X				
35	X	X	X	X		
36		X	X			X
37			X	X		
38		X	X		X	
39		X	X			X
40		X		X		X
41			X	X		X
42	X	X		X		
43			X			X
44	X		X			X
45			X			
46	X					
47		X	X			
48		X		X		
49		X	X	X		X
50	X					
Number of articles	17	23	20	16	3	17

\*Article number 20 contains no other definition than a synonym, and therefore the row is empty.

Source: Own elaboration

### 3.1. *Educommunication as a new transdisciplinary field*

Within this most frequent theme (identified in 40 of the 50 articles), educommunication was defined as a new transdisciplinary field, encompassing two subthemes: educommunication as a plain combination of education and communication (17 articles), and educommunication as a combination of fields that entails a new epistemology (23 articles).

When educommunication was defined as *a plain combination of fields*, the definitions were often very short. For instance, educommunication was defined as a “relationship between communication and education” (Cuervo et al., 2022, p. 3, our translation), as the “interrelation between communication and education” (Fernández et al., 2022, p. 180, our translation) and in an article about science educommunication, as “merging the terminologies and methodologies from both the science education and science communication fields” (Wu et al., 2020, p. 2). This kind of definition was found in 17 articles, and in 6 of them (Barón & Bello, 2022; Cabrera, 2019; Fernández et al., 2022; Micheli, 2023; Rojas-Estrada et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2020) those short statements of a plain combination of fields were the only definitions mentioned.

However, in a large proportion of the selected articles, the combination of fields was argued to entail a more profound change: a new epistemology. When combining education and communication into educommunication, the former fields are not just merged. Instead, some core aspects of the respective disciplines need to be reconsidered:

By merging two long-established areas of knowledge, education and communication, into a single term and placing them under a broad analytical divide, with theoretical, methodological and research traditions, the idea of the recurrence between socially and academically relevant instances remains: it is no longer possible to talk about education ignoring communication phenomena, in the same way that responsible communication cannot neglect the permanent educational challenges, whether they are positioned at formal, non-formal or informal levels. (Citelli, 2018, p. 3, our translation)

Communication and education were thus viewed as inseparable and since people use various tools to communicate, educommunication is also inseparable from matters of technology, whether analogue or digital, as emphasized by Tárca et al. (2023). Although the use of communication technology is central, technology is seen as subordinate to human interaction and learning processes:

[Educommunication] is the result of relating education to communication. Educommunication is an area of knowledge where the pedagogical component prevails over the media or technological instrument: the student discovers, elaborates, dialogues, questions and seeks answers with the aim of reaching the knowledge. (Pérez-Femenía & Iglesias-García, 2022, p. 2, our translation)

Since educommunication entails a new epistemology, the development towards it can be viewed as a paradigmatic shift. The word “paradigm” was explicitly used to describe educommunication in 6 articles (Inocêncio et al., 2020; Montoya et al., 2023; Passos & Prandini, 2020; Rueda & Rueda, 2020; Sartori et al., 2023; Tárca et al., 2023). Sartori et al. (2023) assert that educommunication is the paradigm towards which we are progressing, while Montoya et al. (2023) stress that this is an emerging paradigm within the realm of education for communication, which accentuates the agency of involved stakeholders and is grounded in the dialectical principles inherent to communication education. Moreover, Inocêncio et al. (2020) warn that the educommunication paradigm transcends mere didactics, resisting reduction to the simplistic application of information and technologies in pedagogy. Tárca et al. (2023, p. 2) see educommunication as “an alternative paradigm for reconfiguring power asymmetries, access to communication, and quality education in marginalized communities”. This introduces the next theme concerning the societal dimensions of educommunication, which suggests that educommunication implies a new epistemology. This was the most prevalent theme, appearing in 23 articles (see Table 3).

### 3.2. Educommunication as societal transformation

Within the educommunication as societal transformation theme, three subthemes were identified: educommunication as a tool to achieve political change (20 articles), as a tool to achieve educational change (16 articles), and as an agent that in itself promotes change (3 articles).

Educommunication has its roots in Brazil and other Latin American countries, where it has been closely associated with democratic movements. In this context, the first subtheme views educommunication as *a tool for achieving political change*, emphasizing human rights and citizenship. The human rights perspective—explicitly emphasized by do Nascimento and Oliveira (2021), Moreira (2020), Moser et al. (2021) and Pereira et al. (2021)—encompasses the freedom of expression as well as the right to education and communication, encouraging the inclusion of marginalized communities that have been systematically discriminated or excluded from the movement towards democracy and sustainability. Moser et al. (2021) list central aspects of socio-environmental educommunication and include aspects such as “democratization of and accessibility to socio-environmental information; the right to communication, non-discrimination; and respect for individuality and diversity” (p. 160, our translation). Accordingly, do Nascimento and Oliveira (2021) argue that educommunication “expands the possibilities of democratizing knowledge by using social networks, managing to reach sections of the population that are often excluded by the formal education system” (p. 12, our translation).

The citizenship aspect incorporates the idea that a socially sustainable and democratic society requires educated citizens with both knowledge and tools to critically assess power structures. Therefore, educommunication involves having “one eye on the development of fundamental rights of people and the advancement of a democratic citizenship and, in this sense, a media citizenship” (Pérez et al., 2022, p. 48, our translation). Consolidating critical reflection and dialogue as pedagogical practices, Albardía (2023) ponder that one of the great potentials of educommunication is the critical formation of citizenship based on the observation and analysis of media reality. Furthermore, Jackiw and Haracemiv (2021) argue that educommunication, as a theoretical-practical framework, is the most efficient and democratic model of communication for forming citizenship, as it is a communication practice characterized by a two-way summary process.

Within the second subtheme, educommunication is considered *a tool to achieve educational change*, i.e. for developing new ways to organize educational systems. In this context, educommunication is defined as “a pertinent strategy to offer a critical reading of the media and technologies, as well as the possibility of media production through the management of communication in educational spaces” (Moser et al., 2021, p. 160, our translation) and as “a tool that enables educational communication experiences, unlike the traditional pattern that is easily found in society's educational spaces and processes” (Pereira et al., 2021, p. 4, our translation).

Similarly, Jackiw and Haracemiv (2021) highlight that what the educative perspective proposes is the recognition of the media and communication presence in the processes of sociability, the construction of subjectivity, and the cognitive experience of subjects. Considering this presence, there is the need and possibilities of configuring the school as a dialogical space that is equally sensitive and open to mediated interactions and exchanges.

In a few cases (Cruzz, 2019; del Rio et al., 2018; Muñoz-Borja et al., 2021), educommunication is described as an agent that drives development in its own capacity, which is the third subtheme here. Rather than being merely a tool used by people to achieve change, educommunication can be *an agent of change in itself*. This third subtheme is most clearly

expressed by the understanding that educommunication is “an agent of effective integration in the Information and Knowledge Society for groups that may be at risk of social exclusion” (del Rio et al., 2018, p. 70, our translation).

### **3.3. *Educommunication as a set of pedagogical actions***

Educommunication is also defined as a set of pedagogical actions, i.e. as something that people do in pedagogical settings. Those actions take place in (formal or informal) educational settings, where they refer to the “integration of teaching about and with communication media into the school system” (Andrade-Martinez, 2020, p. 8, our translation). Worth noting here is that the pedagogical stance of educommunication concerns both “teaching *about* and *with* communication media” (Andrade-Martínez, 2020, p. 8, our translation and emphasis). In this sense, educommunication is

a branch of knowledge that proposes using media content and dialogue in the classroom for educational purposes, as well as making the media a pedagogical space (Albardía, Onaindia & Fernández, 2023, p. 182, our translation).

One recurrent definition, concerning pedagogical practices, has its origin in the work of Ismar de Oliveira Soares. Several articles—most explicitly Inocêncio et al. (2020), Passos and Prandini (2020) and Pereira et al. (2021)—refer to his work, in which he states that educommunication is

a set of actions inherent in the planning, implementation and evaluation of processes, programs and products aimed at creating and strengthening communicative ecosystems in face-to-face or virtual educational spaces, such as schools, cultural centers, educational TV and radio stations, centers that produce analogue and digital educational materials, distance education coordination centers and others (Soares [2002], summarized by Passos & Prandini, 2020, p. 135, our translation).

Focusing on the combination of various forms of media, Tárchia et al. (2023) proposes a transmedia educommunication method that highlights the importance of developing educommunicative methodologies that offer learners the opportunity to contribute to their own learning process based on the reality of each community, with their respective cultures and levels of accessibility to different on- and offline technologies.

### **3.4. *Additional finding: Synonyms***

In addition to the themes and subthemes, this review has identified 19 correlated concepts or synonyms commonly used to characterize the notion of educommunication. The most frequently used synonyms were “media literacy”, mentioned as a synonym to educommunication in 5 articles, followed by “media education”, mentioned in 4 articles, and then by “communication education”, “education for communication” and “educational communication”, each mentioned in three articles. It is noticeable that 4 of the 5 articles that use the term media literacy are from Europe. For instance, the Spanish studies from dos Santos (2022, p. 9, our translation) refers to “media literacy or educommunication” and Fernández et al. (2022, p. 180, our translation) consider educommunication as “one more way to conceptualize media literacy” and that media literacy, in turn, is known as “communication education, media didactics, educational communication or communication pedagogy.” The Brazilian study from Citelli (2018, p.2), mentions the Anglo-Saxon tradition of using the term media literacy, while in Latin American terms such as education for the media, pedagogy of communication, and educommunication itself are more common. A list of how the synonyms were distributed across the articles is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Synonyms and their distribution across articles

<b>Concept used as a synonym to educommunication</b>	<b>Number of occurrences</b>	<b>Article(s)</b>
media literacy	5	03, 10, 20, 24, 32
media education	4	13, 28, 30, 32
communication education	3	24, 32, 34
education for communication	3	30, 32, 34
educational communication	3	24, 28, 43
education for the media	2	13, 28
pedagogy of the image	2	30, 32
education in media	1	03
audiovisual popular liberal education	1	32
communication pedagogy	1	24
critical reception of the media	1	32
didactics of audiovisual media	1	32
education for reception	1	30
education for television	1	32
education/communication	1	10
information literacy	1	32
media didactics	1	24
pedagogy for the media	1	30
pedagogy of communication	1	32

Source: Own elaboration

#### **4. Discussion**

The findings confirm the multifaceted nature of educommunication, implying that the concept has multiple meanings and interpretations. Depending on the context, educommunication can emphasize different aspects such as the use of media and technology in education (Andrade-Martinez, 2020; Carretero, 2019; Citelli, 2018), communication strategies within educational settings (Almeida et al., 2021; Pereira et al., 2021), the role of communication in teaching for political change (do Nascimento & Oliveira, 2021; Moreira, 2020; Pereira et al., 2021) and more. This multiplicity of meanings makes the concept polysemic, which entails a need for careful consideration of context and perspective when discussing or implementing educommunication practices. In this sense, the scoping review has facilitated the identification of three broad dimensions in which educommunication is inserted: (1) an epistemological dimension, where a combination of fields leads to new philosophical concerns related to nature, scope, and limits of knowledge, (2) a socio-political dimension, which emphasizes the role of educommunication as a tool to promote socio-political development, and (3) a socio-technical dimension, dealing with the pedagogical potential of teaching about and with media and communication. Collectively, these dimensions provide an overview of how the concept of educommunication is perceived and utilized in both academic and practical settings.

Considering the review findings, it is noticeable that the overall theme “educommunication as societal transformation” is connected to the Latin America viewpoint of educommunication, including “Amor e Luta” (da Silva, 2018; Teófilo, 2022), as a means to achieve socio-political change. The theme “educommunication as a set of pedagogical actions” closely refers to what the literature identifies as the socio-technical approach commonly related to the Anglo-Saxon framework, which emphasizes teaching about and with media. More importantly, the epistemological dimension evidenced by the “educommunication as a new transdisciplinary field” goes beyond these distinctions between the Latin American and Anglo-Saxon branches, demonstrating a more nuanced convergence of instrumental and critical approaches, rather than maintaining traditional regional distinctions. This theme is the most frequently identified in the scoping review. The proposition that educommunication encompasses a novel epistemological framework posits a significant alteration in the methodologies through which knowledge is obtained, generated, and comprehended within the spheres of communication and education. This emergent epistemological paradigm challenges conventional methods of knowledge formation, advocating for collaborative methodologies, participatory approaches, and critical interaction with media and communication technologies, combining both the societal transformation aim with a set of pedagogical actions connected to media and communication. Thus, the conceptualization of educommunication as a new paradigm is strengthened through this review findings.

Importantly, the review highlights a notable lack of consistent vocabulary across different contexts. We could here consider adding one more dimension, the semantic facet, which refers to the terminological scope used to characterize educommunication via synonyms, which are commonly mentioned without providing explicit clarifications. As a result, educommunication is often intertwined with other concepts, such as “media literacy” and “media education”. There is a risk of reducing the complexity of educommunication by merely encompassing one of the mentioned dimensions, when solely defining it as, for instance, media literacy.

In this scoping review, we have demonstrated that educommunication is a broad concept, encompassing multiple dimensions. When educommunication is defined using synonyms, there is a risk that these dimensions become more scattered than intertwined. We therefore argue that synonyms should be used with great sensitivity, considering the different educommunication traditions. It is relevant to take into consideration the limitations and scope of this review that involve 50 selected articles: 31 from Latin American, 18 from Europe, and 1 from Asia. Moreover, despite the polysemic and multifaceted nature of the educommunication concept, many articles are not defining the term at all (40 articles out of 90, see Figure 1). Other articles make assumptions about what educommunication means, using just a synonym. This lack of definitions may cause the reader of such articles to be left without knowledge about what the authors mean by educommunication.

## **5. Conclusion**

The scoping review has elucidated how contemporary research defines educommunication in various ways. Out of the 90 identified articles, 50 contained explicit definitions. At the overarching level, educommunication is viewed as a new transdisciplinary field, as a tool for societal transformation, and as a set of pedagogical actions. The most frequent subtheme found was the notion that educommunication entails a new epistemology. This profound combination of education and communication therefore represents a paradigmatic shift. The second most frequent subtheme highlighted educommunication as a tool for political change with its implementation being viewed as a matter of democracy, human rights, and citizenship.

These findings are relevant to the education and communication communities, as well as for policy makers. Despite any socio-political, socio-technical, cultural, and historical discrepancies

between different regions of the world such as Europe and Latin America, the notion of educommunication seems more relevant than ever. In the face of worldwide threats towards democracy—including technological disruptions and widespread misinformation—educommunication is relevant in addressing these contemporary challenges by fostering critical thinking, media literacy, and civic engagement skills and agency among individuals.

This review has limitations. The authors considered the most prominent international databases that the Jönköping University Library had access to, and then only included articles that could be accessed in full text. Both these decisions could involve the exclusion of significant publications. For instance, regional databases such as Redalyc or Latindex could be incorporated in future research to amplify the results. Although common practice in academia, it may still act as a limitation the fact that the scoping review solely draws from peer-reviewed literature, which, while offering theoretical depth and scholarly perspectives, may not fully capture how educommunication is applied in practice. As this review does not systematically include sources such as conference proceedings or institutional reports, it remains an open question whether significant contributions exist in these formats. Likewise, grey literature, policy documents, and grassroots initiatives could provide additional insights into how educommunication is implemented outside the scholarly discourse. Future research could explore these sources to assess their role in shaping the concept and its applications. The constrained period ranging from 2018 to 2023 implicates that publications from the beginning of the educommunication development are excluded. This represents a limitation given that many of the current papers only implicitly refer to the concept, as if its meaning would be already well known. However, tracking the development of the concept from its origins and following it along the past decades would be of great interest to identify how educommunication evolved over time and space, which was not the intended scope of this review. Lastly, the literature suggests that educommunication is not simply divided into instrumental and critical traditions but rather exists along a spectrum of approaches—a multifaceted landscape—shaped by regional policies, historical legacies, and institutional priorities. A more systematic comparative analysis could provide deeper insights into how these variations influence the field's development globally, thus enriching and amplifying the view of the educommunication landscape further.

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