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COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMINOLOGY IN DIGITAL MEDIA DISCOURSE: A MEDIA-LINGUISTIC AND LINGUOPRAGMATIC STUDY

Ismoilova Dilnura Dilshod qizi
Iqtisodiyot va pedagogika nodavlat ta'lim muassasasi stajyor o'qituvchisi
Dilnurismoiovagmail.com

Abstract: The rapid development of computer technologies and the Internet has resulted in substantial changes in contemporary language and communication. Computer and Internet terminology, which was initially associated mainly with professional and technical discourse, has increasingly penetrated mass media, social networking sites, online journalism, advertising, blogs, and everyday digital communication. This study examines the linguistic and linguopragmatic characteristics of computer and Internet terminology in contemporary digital media discourse. The research focuses on the structural, semantic, functional, and pragmatic properties of technological terms such as algorithm, browser, website, platform, hyperlink, hashtag, livestream, influencer, upload, download, cloud, cybersecurity, phishing, and chatbot. The study applies descriptive, structural-semantic, contextual, discourse-analytical, and linguopragmatic methods. The analysis demonstrates that computer and Internet terminology in digital media performs not only a nominative function but also informative, evaluative, persuasive, attention-attracting, interpersonal, and identity-forming functions. Particular attention is paid to semantic extension, metaphorization, borrowing, abbreviation, clipping, and compounding as productive mechanisms in the development of digital terminology. The findings indicate that specialized technological terms frequently undergo semantic and pragmatic transformation when they move from professional discourse into digital media. Consequently, computer and Internet terminology should be regarded not merely as a specialized lexical subsystem but as a dynamic linguistic resource reflecting technological, social, and communicative changes in contemporary society.

Keywords: computer terminology, Internet terminology, digital media discourse, digital discourse, media linguistics, linguopragmatics, technological vocabulary.

Introduction

The development of computer technologies and the Internet has fundamentally transformed contemporary communication. Digital platforms have created new environments in which information is produced, distributed, interpreted, and discussed. Online newspapers, social networking services, blogs, video-sharing platforms, podcasts, messaging applications, and other digital environments have become important spaces of public and interpersonal communication.

This technological transformation has inevitably influenced language. One of the most visible linguistic consequences is the rapid development and dissemination of computer and Internet terminology. Terms that were once limited to computer science, programming, and information technology have entered general vocabulary and are now regularly used by journalists, advertisers, teachers, students, bloggers, influencers, and ordinary Internet users.

The relationship between language and the Internet has been extensively discussed in linguistic research. Crystal emphasizes the importance of the Internet as a linguistic environment, while research on computer-mediated communication demonstrates that online communication has developed distinctive linguistic and discourse practices. Squires, for example, shows that expressions associated with Internet language have become socially

recognizable and are discussed not only in academic discourse but also in mass media and online communities.

The contemporary digital environment, however, is considerably broader than the early forms of computer-mediated communication. Digital communication now involves smartphones, social networking platforms, multimedia content, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, streaming technologies, and interactive interfaces. Consequently, computer and Internet terminology has also expanded both quantitatively and functionally.

Terms such as website, browser, hyperlink, platform, hashtag, upload, download, livestream, follower, influencer, algorithm, and chatbot have become familiar to a broad audience. Some of these terms preserve their specialized meanings, whereas others have acquired new meanings through frequent use in digital media.

For example, the word follow traditionally denotes moving behind someone or something. In social-media discourse, however, it commonly refers to subscribing to another user's content. Similarly, viral, which historically has a biological association with viruses, has developed a digital meaning referring to information or content that spreads rapidly online.

This demonstrates that technological terminology is not static. It develops together with technological innovations and changes in communicative practices.

Digital media discourse is also characterized by contextual complexity. The interpretation of an online expression may depend on the platform, participants, communicative purpose, visual environment, hyperlinks, hashtags, comments, and other contextual factors. Research in online pragmatics particularly emphasizes the importance of digital context and the way interfaces influence the interpretation of online communication.

Therefore, computer and Internet terminology should be studied not only as a collection of technical names but also as an important component of digital discourse.

The **aim** of this study is to investigate the structural-semantic, functional, and linguopragmatic characteristics of computer and Internet terminology in digital media discourse.

The research objectives are:

1. to identify the main semantic groups of computer and Internet terminology;
2. to analyse the structural and word-formation characteristics of technological terms;
3. to examine semantic changes in computer and Internet terminology;
4. to determine the major communicative and pragmatic functions of technological terms;
5. to demonstrate how technological terminology contributes to the construction of contemporary digital media discourse.

Methodology

The research employs an interdisciplinary methodology combining terminology studies, media linguistics, digital discourse analysis, and linguopragmatics.

The study focuses on computer and Internet terms functioning in digital media discourse, including online news, social-media publications, blogs, digital advertising, websites, and other forms of Internet-mediated communication.

Several complementary research methods were applied.

Descriptive Method

The descriptive method was used to identify and characterize computer and Internet terminology according to its lexical meaning, grammatical form, and contextual use.

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Structural-Semantic Method

The structural-semantic method was applied to classify technological terms according to their structure and semantic fields.

The analysis includes:

- simple terms;
- derived terms;
- compounds;
- abbreviations;
- clippings;
- multiword terms;
- borrowed terms;
- metaphorical expressions.

Contextual Method

The contextual method was used to investigate the meaning of terms in different digital-media contexts.

For example:

The company developed a new **platform** for online education.

Here, platform denotes a technological environment.

However:

The platform has become a powerful source of political information.

In this context, platform has a broader social and communicative meaning.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was applied to determine how computer and Internet terminology operates within online media genres.

Particular attention was paid to:

- online news headlines;
- social-media posts;
- advertisements;
- blogs;
- technology journalism;
- user-generated content.

Linguopragmatic Analysis

The linguopragmatic method was used to examine the communicative intentions and pragmatic effects associated with technological terminology.

The following functions were analysed:

- nominative;
- informative;
- evaluative;
- persuasive;
- attention-attracting;
- warning;
- interpersonal;
- identity-forming.

Such an approach corresponds to current research in digital pragmatics, where interpretation is understood as being influenced by online context, interactional possibilities, and platform-specific features.

Results And Discussion

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Semantic Classification of Computer and Internet Terminology

The analysis demonstrates that computer and Internet terminology covers a broad range of semantic fields.

Semantic group	Examples
Computer hardware	computer, processor, keyboard, monitor, mouse
Software	application, browser, operating system, program
Internet infrastructure	server, website, domain, hyperlink
Social media	hashtag, follower, post, comment, like, share
Digital content	livestream, podcast, meme, reel, video
Cybersecurity	malware, phishing, firewall, encryption
Digital services	cloud computing, streaming, online banking
Artificial intelligence	chatbot, machine learning, neural network
Digital marketing	influencer, engagement, clickbait, SEO
Online behaviour	trolling, blocking, following, unfollowing

This classification demonstrates that digital terminology is not limited to technical objects. It increasingly includes terms describing human behaviour, social interaction, digital content, and communicative practices.

Structural Features of Computer and Internet Terms

One of the important findings concerns the productivity of different word-formation processes.

Compounding

Compounding is particularly productive in technological terminology:

- website
- webpage
- smartphone
- cybersecurity
- search engine
- cloud computing
- data mining
- social media

The productivity of compounds can be explained by the need to name newly emerging technological concepts efficiently.

Abbreviation

Digital communication frequently employs abbreviations:

- AI – Artificial Intelligence;
- IT – Information Technology;
- URL – Uniform Resource Locator;
- DM – Direct Message;
- VPN – Virtual Private Network;
- SEO – Search Engine Optimization;
- FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions.

Abbreviations are particularly appropriate for digital communication because they reduce linguistic length and facilitate rapid interaction.

Clipping

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Clipped forms are also common:

- app ← application;
- admin ← administrator;
- tech ← technology;
- info ← information.

Such forms illustrate the tendency toward linguistic economy in digital environments.

Borrowing

A large number of computer and Internet terms have international circulation, especially those originating in English:

Internet, browser, blog, podcast, platform, hashtag, chatbot, influencer.

Their international use reflects the global nature of digital technologies.

Semantic Development Of Computer And Internet Terminology

The research demonstrates that semantic transformation is one of the most important characteristics of technological terminology in digital media.

Table 2. Semantic development

Term	Original/general meaning	Digital meaning
follow	move behind someone	subscribe to a user's content
friend	person with whom one has a relationship	social-media connection
post	place/position	publish online content
stream	flow	transmit digital content
cloud	atmospheric phenomenon	Internet-based storage
viral	related to a virus	rapidly spreading online
wall	physical structure	social-media profile space
troll	mythical creature	person deliberately provoking users
footprint	mark left by a foot	traces of online activity
platform	raised surface/base	digital service or environment

These examples demonstrate that technological discourse often develops through **semantic extension, specialization, metaphorization, and recontextualization**.

The term cloud is particularly interesting. In general English it denotes a visible atmospheric phenomenon. In computer terminology, cloud refers to remote Internet-based computing and storage. Its technological meaning is therefore metaphorically constructed.

Similarly, digital footprint represents an extension of the physical concept of a footprint to describe traces created by online activities.

Computer And Internet Terminology As A Media-Linguistic Phenomenon

Computer and Internet terminology plays an increasingly important role in digital media discourse.

The first significant characteristic is **terminological popularization**. Specialized vocabulary has become accessible to non-specialist users.

For example:

Download the application and create your profile.

Words such as download, application, and profile are now widely understood outside professional IT discourse.

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The second characteristic is **contextual flexibility**. A technological term may change its pragmatic value depending on the genre and communicative situation.

Compare:

The algorithm analyzes user behaviour.

and:

The algorithm decides what you see.

The first sentence presents a relatively neutral technological description. The second constructs the algorithm as an active decision-maker. This represents a form of anthropomorphic conceptualization.

The third characteristic is **media-driven lexical diffusion**. Digital media helps new technological vocabulary spread rapidly among large groups of users.

Thus, digital media functions not only as a communication environment but also as a mechanism for the dissemination and normalization of terminology.

Linguopragmatic Functions Of Computer And Internet Terminology

Nominative Function

The primary function of terminology is to name technological objects, processes, and phenomena.

For example:

The browser stores information about the user's preferences.

The term browser provides a precise name for a software application.

Informative Function

Technological terms transmit specialized information:

The company introduced a new cybersecurity system.

The term cybersecurity allows the speaker to communicate a specific technological concept efficiently.

Evaluative Function

Computer terminology may acquire evaluative meaning through its context:

This platform is user-friendly and highly efficient.

The terms platform and efficient combine technical reference with positive evaluation.

Negative evaluation is also possible:

The application is outdated and insecure.

Persuasive Function

Digital terminology is particularly productive in advertising:

Discover the power of next-generation AI.

The expression next-generation AI does more than identify a technology. It creates an association with innovation and superiority.

Consequently, terminology becomes a persuasive linguistic resource.

Attention-Attracting Function

Technological terms frequently occur in online headlines:

AI Revolution: How Algorithms Are Changing Our Lives

Terms such as AI, algorithms, and revolution make the headline topical and attractive.

Similarly:

New Cybersecurity Threat Targets Smartphone Users

The terms cybersecurity and threat create a sense of urgency.

Warning Function

Cybersecurity terminology frequently functions as a warning mechanism:

Beware of phishing emails.

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Words such as phishing, malware, cyberattack, hacking, and data breach can signal potential danger and influence users' behaviour.

Identity-Forming Function

Technological terminology also participates in the construction of digital identities.

Examples include:

- content creator;
- influencer;
- streamer;
- blogger;
- gamer;
- developer.

These terms identify not only activities but also social and professional roles in digital communities.

Metaphorization And Terminological Transformation

Metaphorization represents an important mechanism of digital terminology development.

Examples include:

- digital footprint;
- cloud computing;
- firewall;
- web;
- computer virus;
- troll;
- surf the Internet;
- go viral.

These expressions demonstrate that technological concepts are frequently explained through familiar physical, biological, or social experiences.

For example, a **firewall** is not literally a wall made of fire. The metaphor conceptualizes a protective technological mechanism through the familiar image of a physical barrier.

The expression **surf the Internet** conceptualizes Internet navigation as movement across water.

The expression **go viral** conceptualizes the rapid distribution of digital information through the biological process of viral transmission.

Metaphorical terminology therefore performs both a nominative and cognitive function.

Digital Media And The Popularization Of Technological Terms

Digital media plays an important role in transforming specialized terms into common vocabulary.

A term may initially appear in professional communication:

The algorithm processes large amounts of data.

It can subsequently appear in popular journalism:

How does the algorithm choose what you see?

Finally, it can enter everyday communication:

The algorithm doesn't like my videos.

The final example demonstrates a significant pragmatic transformation. The user does not necessarily refer to a specific technical algorithm. Rather, the algorithm functions as a simplified representation of a complex technological system.

This illustrates the process through which terminology becomes culturally recognizable and pragmatically productive.

Research on Internet language similarly demonstrates that public discourse can construct shared understandings of Internet-specific linguistic practices and terminology.

Computer And Internet Terminology In Digital Media Headlines

Online headlines provide particularly useful evidence of the pragmatic use of technological terminology.

Consider the following patterns:

Pattern 1: Technology + change

AI Is Changing the Future of Education

Pattern 2: Technology + threat

New Cybersecurity Threat Puts Users at Risk

Pattern 3: Technology + popularity

Why This App Has Gone Viral

Pattern 4: Technology + curiosity

What Does the Algorithm Know About You?

Pattern 5: Technology + innovation

The Next Generation of AI Has Arrived

These examples demonstrate that computer and Internet terminology is frequently combined with emotionally and pragmatically loaded vocabulary.

Therefore, digital media does not simply report technological developments; it linguistically frames them.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that computer and Internet terminology represents a highly dynamic lexical domain.

First, technological terminology has undergone **generalization**. Terms once restricted to computer specialists are now widely used by the general public.

Second, technological terminology demonstrates **semantic flexibility**. Existing words acquire new digital meanings, while specialized terms may develop metaphorical and pragmatic meanings.

Third, digital media promotes **terminological productivity**. New technological concepts require new names, while existing terms are frequently combined, shortened, borrowed, or semantically modified.

Fourth, computer and Internet terminology performs multiple **pragmatic functions**. In digital media it may inform, persuade, evaluate, warn, attract attention, create interpersonal relationships, and construct identities.

Fifth, the study confirms the importance of **context**. The same term can have different interpretations depending on whether it occurs in a technical article, online news report, advertisement, social-media post, or interpersonal message.

This is consistent with contemporary approaches to digital pragmatics, which emphasize that online meaning is shaped by the interaction between linguistic content, context, interface, and user activity.

The results also support the view that digital communication should not be treated simply as traditional written language transferred to the Internet. It constitutes a technologically mediated communicative environment with its own linguistic, pragmatic, and interactional conditions.

Thus, computer and Internet terminology should be studied as a dynamic interface between **technology, language, media, and society**.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that computer and Internet terminology constitutes an increasingly important component of contemporary digital media discourse. Its development is directly related to technological innovation, globalization, digitalization, and changes in communication practices.

The analysis shows that technological terminology is characterized by structural productivity, semantic development, contextual flexibility, and pragmatic multifunctionality. Compounding, abbreviation, clipping, borrowing, semantic extension, and metaphorization are among the major mechanisms contributing to the formation and transformation of computer and Internet terminology.

The study also demonstrates that technological terms perform functions extending beyond simple naming. In digital media discourse, they can provide information, express evaluation, persuade audiences, attract attention, issue warnings, organize interaction, and construct professional or social identities.

Terms such as algorithm, platform, cloud, viral, follow, post, stream, and friend clearly illustrate the process of semantic transformation resulting from technological and communicative change.

Consequently, computer and Internet terminology should be understood as a dynamic lexical system rather than a fixed collection of technical terms. Its development reflects contemporary technological progress as well as broader changes in social behaviour, media practices, and communication.

The study provides a basis for further comparative research into computer and Internet terminology in English and Uzbek digital media discourse. Particular attention may be given to borrowing, transliteration, calquing, semantic adaptation, terminology standardization, and the pragmatic functioning of English-origin technological terms in Uzbek online communication.

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