

## DIGITAL DISCOURSE SOCIAL MEDIA HASHTAGS, WEBSITES, CLICKBAIT AND MEMES

**Umida Mahmudova Ural kizi**

Associate Professor Department of English Translation Theory  
Tashkent state university of world languages  
Email: [umidamahmudova1010@gmail.com](mailto:umidamahmudova1010@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Within the discourse of digital technologies, forms such as hashtags, websites, clickbait, and memes occupy a central place. Certain types of digital discourse — for example, discourse expressed through comics, memes, or GIFs — may remain unchanged. In other words, a discourse created by an author and transmitted to a reader or viewer can be considered immutable if the hypertextual format does not allow users to modify its content. However, in both cases, the discourse is ergodic, as it requires participants to engage with the discourse and interact with it. In other words, participants must invest effort to interpret the discourse, draw conclusions, and potentially develop its meaning, even if the original content itself remains unchanged.

Even in the case of news texts, although the discourse remains immutable, ergodic participation is still ensured, since readers may leave comments, exchange opinions, and engage in discussion related to the news content. In contrast, a discourse may be both ergodic and mutable, meaning that participants not only engage with the discourse through effort and navigation, but also actively modify its content. This is evident, for example, in Wikipedia articles.

Mutable and ergodic communication processes are especially characteristic of video games and social networks, as in both cases participants are required to construct their own discourses and modify existing content.

In short, the dimensions of immutability/mutability and ergodicity are crucial for understanding digital technology discourse, as they determine how participants make choices and engage within digital environments.

### Analysis of IT Park Uzbekistan Telegram Channel

An analysis of news published on the official IT Park Uzbekistan Telegram channel shows that news with an official-administrative character tends to demonstrate a low degree of mutability but a high degree of ergodicity. For example, the news item published on March 28, 2025, titled “*IT Visa: Expanding Opportunities for Global Tech Talent in Uzbekistan*” retains its original content (immutability). However, users engage in ergodic interaction by accessing the material through various sources, quoting it, and discussing it on social media platforms.

The English-language version of the same news item (“*IT Visa: Expanding Opportunities for Global Tech Talent in Uzbekistan*”) further demonstrates that this is not a direct transcription or translation, but rather a re-created discourse tailored to a specific target audience. This is evident in the use of emotional markers, pragmatic strategies, and structural adaptations aligned with audience expectations.

Similarly, the news discourse on the website of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) remains immutable yet ergodic. For instance, the news item titled “*CPNI Certification File Deadline Approaching*” (FCC.gov/news, March 26, 2025) represents official written discourse whose content does not change, but ergodic interactivity is ensured through hyperlinks, references to related sources, and the opportunity to leave comments.

In contrast, discussions on the IT Park Uzbekistan Telegram channel exhibit both ergodic and mutable characteristics. An analysis of posts related to “*IT Park Ventures*” and “*IT Bilim*”

communities indicates that user comments and questions significantly expand and transform the initial discourse after publication, clearly demonstrating its mutability.

#### Hashtags as a Semiotic Resource

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, a hashtag is defined as “a word or phrase preceded by the symbol #, used on social media and apps to identify messages on a specific topic.” However, the hashtag is not a newly emerged concept. In different languages, it has historically been referred to by various names and was primarily associated with visual recognition. For example, in German it is known as *Rautezeichen* (diamond or hash sign). In the United Kingdom, it was once called the *hash sign*, while in the United States it was commonly referred to as the *pound sign*. Regardless of its name, it originally functioned merely as a symbol on telephone or computer keyboards, with limited visibility until automated phone systems began prompting users to press it for specific actions. Without Twitter, hashtags would likely not have achieved their current prominence and would have remained merely another keyboard symbol. Today, social media platforms are virtually unimaginable without hashtags. To use a hashtag, one simply writes a word or phrase without spaces and precedes it with the “#” symbol. Hashtags can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a social media post, and capitalization may vary (e.g., #byseva, #BookLover, #GetReadyToIELTS, #cookingclub).

Currently, media discourse increasingly favors lowercase hashtags. Once a hashtag is added, the post becomes part of a stream of content related to the same topic. For example, on Instagram, the hashtag #CookingClub returns thousands of posts and related tags such as #learningtocook, #cookingfortwo, #onlinecooking, #recipessharing, #cookingforfun, #betterthantakeout, and others. Hashtags function as semiotic resources that allow microbloggers to embed metadata into their social media posts. Metadata refers to information added to content to facilitate searchability and comprehension. In this sense, hashtag-generated metadata resembles user-created descriptive annotations, enhancing the relevance and visibility of content. Although metadata is typically hidden from users in information systems, hashtags are explicitly visible and form an integral part of discourse. Hashtags serve multiple communicative functions simultaneously: they mark experiential themes, facilitate interpersonal interaction, and organize media texts. These functions align with the principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which conceptualizes language as a resource for meaning-making with three primary functions: experiential, interpersonal, and textual. From this perspective, hashtags perform the same fundamental linguistic functions as language itself, contributing to the dissemination of information and the organization of discourse. The textual meaning of hashtags influences how discourse evolves and spreads on social media, while interpersonal meaning emerges through user engagement such as clicking, commenting, liking, and sharing.

A linguistic analysis of hashtags used on the IT Park Uzbekistan Telegram channel reveals the following categories:

- Conceptual-thematic hashtags, which represent specific fields or ideas (e.g., #ArtificialIntelligence for AI-related posts, #Mirziyoyev for presidential content, #visit for delegation-related news).
- Categorical-taxonomic hashtags, used to classify content (e.g., #Kazakhstan for international cooperation, #hackathon for event-related content, #events for meetings and announcements).
- Pragmatic hashtags, which signal communicative intent (e.g., #importantnews, #survey, #attention).

In contrast, hashtags on the FCC website primarily serve technical and regulatory purposes, such as #FCCGov, #OpenMtgFCC, #RuralBroadband, #ConsumerAlert, and #EmergencyPreparedness. Morphological and syntactic analysis of IT Park hashtags shows the use of compounding, transliteration across Latin and Cyrillic scripts, and hybridization combining Uzbek and English

lexical elements. Semantically, hashtags on the IT Park Telegram channel perform a paradigmatic networking function, linking related content into thematic fields and enabling users to navigate discourse more effectively. According to the TechTerms online dictionary, a hyperlink is defined as “a word, phrase, or image that can be clicked to move to a new document or a different section within the same document.” Hyperlinks function both as informational units and technological tools, enabling users to access additional content efficiently.

Traditionally displayed in blue and underlined, hyperlinks facilitate browsing and information discovery within the World Wide Web. By clicking or tapping a hyperlink, users are instantly redirected to new content, allowing for contextualization, personalization, and participatory meaning-making through the addition of user-generated links, questions, and responses.

### Used Literature.

1. Aarseth, E. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
2. Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (n.d.). *Hashtag*.
4. TechTerms. (n.d.). *Hyperlink*.
5. FCC.gov. (2025). *CPNI Certification File Deadline Approaching*.
6. IT Park Uzbekistan. (2025). Official Telegram Channel Publications.