

## The phenomenon of "digital" death: formation and genesis of the attitude to death in social networks of students

**Vera B. Nikishina**<sup>a1</sup>, Psychology and Social Faculty, Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University, Moscow, Russia. <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2421-3652>

**Marina V. Sokolskaya**<sup>b</sup>, Department of Social Work, Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University, Moscow, Russia. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5693-2021>

**Oksana A. Musatova**<sup>c, d</sup>, Department of Social Work, Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University, Moscow, Russia. <http://orcid.org/ORCID 000-001-8893-4059>

**Irina M. Loskutova**<sup>e</sup>, Department of Theoretical and Special Sociology, Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), Moscow, Russia. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4939-6045>

**Irina V. Zapesotskaya**<sup>f</sup>, Department of Health Psychology and Neuropsychology, Kursk State Medical University, Kursk, Russia. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3535-5779>

**Oksana Y. Bogomolova**<sup>g</sup>, Department of Psychology, Far Eastern State University of Railway Engineering, Khabarovsk, Russia. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9929-3143>

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### Abstract:

In this paper, we study the phenomenon of "digital" death, its genesis and the attitudes towards death in the context of social networks of students. As a result of the investigation we have discovered different forms of "digital death and the ways students react to it in social networks. We further investigate the origins of different user attitudes towards "digital death" and the impact of manipulative relation to death in social networks on the social reality. Some students stage their own death on social networks by posting images on their homepage, which has the intentions (i) to attract public attention, (ii) to express their auto aggression (iii) to make fun of death and (iv) to reduce their own anxiety of death by "sharing" the fear with other students. Our analysis shows that the main purpose of staging one's death on social networks is to reduce the fear of death by creating plans, playing.

**Keywords:** Students, cyberspace, social networks, death, "digital" death, attitude to the death in the social networks.

\* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Marina V. Sokolskaya, Department of Social Work, Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University. 117997, st. Ostrovityanova, 1, Moscow, Russia.

E-mail address: [mvsokolskaya@mail.ru](mailto:mvsokolskaya@mail.ru)

## Introduction

Nowadays it is a common knowledge that digital technologies have influence on all fields of human activities. 27% Russians at the age of 13-24 y.o. spend more than 5 hours in the social networks per day, and a quarter of them check updates every 30 minutes (according to the investigation of Mail.ru Group (The social networks in Russia, 2020)). Social networks serve as the factors of forming a modern person's outlook and culture. Such existential phenomenon as a death also integrates into cyberspace and changes its characteristics in the reality which is unmediated by technologies. The problem concerning the way how representations about physical and social death are changing at digital time, is important in connection with new characteristics and the signs of their integration.

In humanitarian knowledge the phenomenon of death has been studied differentially and for long time (Arnold, 2017; Cavuoti & Smith, 2014; Glozman, 2018).

In history of the humanity the attitude to the death has evolved, but unconditional element as a fear has stayed the same. The fear of death has very important meaning in a person's internal experience. Earlier a human being tried to immortalize himself in the world of alive students in order to obtain welfare after his death (Varako & Dobrushina, 2018). In the Egyptian tombs the walls were decorated with the images of the deceased person, in order to praise his mortal life and imagine it hypertrophically ideal. The ancient Egyptians believed that the things that were painted on the walls of the tomb would happen with the deceased person after his death. Such beliefs were shared by many other nationalities not only Egyptians. The humanity has adopted and implemented into real life its attitudes to physical and social death both stable and contradictory relations (Collings, 2018).

The social death is the process and the result of elimination and self-elimination of the subject out of a social life. The key features of the social death are as follows: loss of freedom as the condition for self-realization, destruction of social identity, leading to the impossibility of self-determination; rejection of common rules and values by a subject; conscious denial of cooperation under the conditions of a social life (Gihareva, 2018; Baulina et al., 2019).

Analyzing the modern ways of maintaining its social identity by giving messages in the social networks, it is possible to draw an obvious parallel with ancient Egyptian funeral culture. Almost each person tries to leave its cultural-informative trace, create his ideal image and live as possible as longer, even though only as an account in the social network which arouses an immortal feeling (Blinnikova, Rabeson & Izmalkova, 2019). The account in which the personal photos and videos are carefully selected gives the illusion of an ideal life not only to the followers but the author as well.

The digital life is implemented in the main fields of a person's life: a physical life, a social life, a spiritual life. It is a natural fact that in the place where there is a life, a death also takes place.

The death as existential phenomenon appears first in the physical death. Its main difference from other types of death is that it has certain features and special burial culture as well as doesn't have the possibility for revival. Other types of death don't have these characteristics (table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparative analysis of the main types of a life / death.

Categories	Physical life/death	Social life/death	Spiritual life/death	Digital life/death
The form of life	Physical body	The results of activities	Immortal soul	information
The main indicia of death	Stopping life activity of a body, its decomposition	The absence of activity, no demand in the results of the activity	immortal	The absence of information, no demand in such information

The presence of funeral culture	Yes	No	No	No
The possibility for revival	No	Yes	immortal	Yes

The social life may continue even after the physical death of a student. The social life continues through masterpieces of art and literature, heroic actions and etc. Before expansion of digital technologies, firstly, a social life was not expressed with video resources, secondly, these resources were absolutely not available and, finally, integration into duration of volitional effort was necessary in order to continue one's social life (for example, through the masterpiece of art).

For the digital life which may continue after a physical death, the technical mean (a gadget) and access to the Internet are enough. Any published message may be in the social networks for entirely long time. The activity of the account may be sustained due to other followers, who leave likes, reposts and comments there. Even after physical death of the owner, he can obtain friends in his account.

Besides, any person in cyberspace is represented not personally but through his account. The person is not the same as his account, he can have ten different accounts, and each of them may reflect either the part of individuality, or fictional individuality. It means that the account leaves some information, but not a subject. The opportunity to create new accounts causes the illusion the possibility to update a real life by nullifying it. In the account the social identity technologized (changes, differentiates, multiplies and etc.).

The mechanism of preserving its digital trace as the attempt to reach immortality, in most cases is as unconscious as transformation of the attitude to death under the influence of social networks. It should be noticed that digital immortality is more available than social, because it requires less efforts and concerns more students, who are capable to sustain a digital life of a person even after his or her death.

Social networks reflect all culture of humanity which exists in the unmediated reality, including funeral. It seems that the maxim of La Rochefoucaud "A man should watch closely neither into sun, nor death" is been transforming into its contrary (in relation to death). The subject of death is widely discussed in the social networks. It can be found through the jokes about death, frightening stories as well as grief over deceased students. In the social networks there is even a phenomenon of digital cemeteries and funerals. A thousands of accounts which belong to the students died yet continue to exist in the social networks. The accounts of the deceased students often are combined in whole thematic groups, for example, "Died pages on Vkontakte (the popular Russian social website).

In the social websites there are also many groups dedicated to the culture of death and the process of dying in all its forms. Having a free access, everybody can learn how a deceased person looks like, how the body of a corpse is prepared for funeral or what happens after death. The main purpose of such information is to ease tension and anxiety over one's death, but at the same time it may make the traumatic impact.

The following unique function of the social networks in relation to the culture of death is accompaniment. It may have positive and negative influence on personality. The social networks gives the opportunity to accomplish students who are going to die, including both seriously ill students and students preparing to commit suicide. There is the opportunity not only to find out the information about death, but also get support during the process of preparation for physical death.

Expansion of manipulative techniques in cyberspace is, inter alia, in relation to the attitude to death. It is typical both to "groups of death", spreading a suicide game, the result of which becomes suicide, and the internet trolls practicing cyberbullying (which means harassment in the social

networks based on psychological violence and blackmail) (Mursalieva, 2016). Cyberbullying has become the reason for many suicides. The trolls practicing cyberbullying follow a victim in the social networks, spread the notorious information about his or her, as well as threaten to publish compromising materials concerning such victim. In such cases digital and social life are combined and a victim loses their borders and it seems for he or she that such harassment leads to his or her digital and social deaths, so he or she decides to initiate also a physical death. The physical death in such case is less frightening in comparison with digital and social ones (Efimova et.al., 2019; Kalinina, 2019; Oshchepkov & Efimova, 2019; Salakhova et.al., 2018).

Nowadays the attitude to a physical death is changing under the influence of the social websites.

Firstly, the rituals and attitudes to a physical death are changing. The examples may include the selfie photos with deceased students (not only with relatives), the photos of corpses, the selfies in the cemeteries, staging one's own death, rehearsal of one's own funerals, the selfies with some death attributes and etc. It makes stronger the thesis that there is nothing scary in death, and it may not only frighten, but also attract followers.

Secondly, the contrary occurs: the more time a man spends in the cyber space, the less importance the objective reality has for him/her as well as withdrawal of it; only new transaction with new status seems to be important.

Thirdly, the digital death is becoming more frightening than real.

Fourthly, new digital rituals of death lead to transformation of moral attitudes and orientations towards a real physical death.

The information about death is presented (published) in different forms: through texts, videos, photos, audio records and etc. (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The forms of providing the information about death in social networks

Form	Content
Text	To describe death, slang words and medical terms are used as well as the words used by the investigative authorities to report different types of death. Hashtags are also widely used, including "victim hashtags", which serve as appeal for the death of an author or invitation him or her in a suicide game.
Videos	Videos with shocking content, in which there is natural or unnatural death, tortures, autopsies in the morgue and etc.
Photos	The photos with the symbols and attributes of death (for example, a photo made in a coffin), the photos made in cemeteries, the photos with corpses, including those shot during the process of their dying.

In text publications concerning death the transformation to more fully description process of death is noticed.

At present time the videos with shocking content, in which there is natural or unnatural death, tortures, autopsies in the morgue and etc. are freely available. But in 2015 such types of videos were contained in only closed certain thematic groups, nowadays they are published both in personal accounts (without identifying the source of such videos) and the groups connected with death or similar subjects to which everybody can have a free access.

It is worth mentioning that about 5% users publish videos or make online broadcast dedicated to their connection with the culture of death in the social networks. The content of such videos also include participation in the funeral process, one's own or other suicide, the place of murdering and etc. Recently such videos were not available for most students. The video containing the murder scene

were associated with terrorism and criminal news, but nowadays they are just one of the episodes of our life.

The subject of death is becoming more and more acceptable in photos. It is a common knowledge that earlier there was the culture to make photos of deceased students, however many students had horror of it. Nowadays photos of deceased students are freely published (including the photos of deceased students at the moment of their death, in morgues, in coffins and etc.). Such photos are becoming normal and, as a result, the fear of watching the process of death is decreasing.

It is also should be pointed out that reduction of fear related to death has its negative consequences. One of obvious social negative consequences is that cynicism spreads, as well as lives of other students are demonstratively devalued. Especially, such devaluation is illustrated through school shooting when murders shoot students not caring who they are, because for them they are just the part of a crowd, not individuals.

Thus, transformation of the attitude to death generally causes the necessity of the investigation on the attitude to death in social networks. The suicide behavior is directly connected with the subject of death because it is one of the main topics reflecting the subject of death in social networks and serves as the result of replicating and spreading the acceptability of such subject.

At present suicide behavior is spreading in the modified form through social media. Suicide behavior in social media is transformed into cultural phenomenon as subculture, in which the certain linguistic and behavioral patterns of suicide behavior are necessary to be used, even if there is no intention to kill itself.

Suicide behavior in the social networks as subculture includes the following roles: «curators», students committing a suicide (or «victims»), «rescuers». Curators accompany victims, they create groups and select the content for them. «Victims» consume the content, indicate interest in suicide and look for attention to themselves. «Rescuers» - try to prevent the victims from the attempts to commit a suicide and provide psychological assistance. In fact in most cases no one of the subjects has a direct motive that corresponds with its role, their purposes and motives are indirect - to get attention and popularity (Gihareva, 2018).

Suicide behavior in the social networks may be detected due to the following symptoms: thoughts for the absence of worth living, rejection of a life; undifferentiated thoughts; suicide thoughts and fantasies (better to die, better to fall ill); conscious desire to die; demonstrative behavior (publication of the photos and videos containing the episodes of death, suicide, infliction of physical harm); publication of the information about suicides; strong negative emotions (specifically, hurt feelings and anger); depression symptoms; creating the plan of suicide actions; saying goodbye to one's relatives, giving instructions in case of one's own death and funeral; making a will.

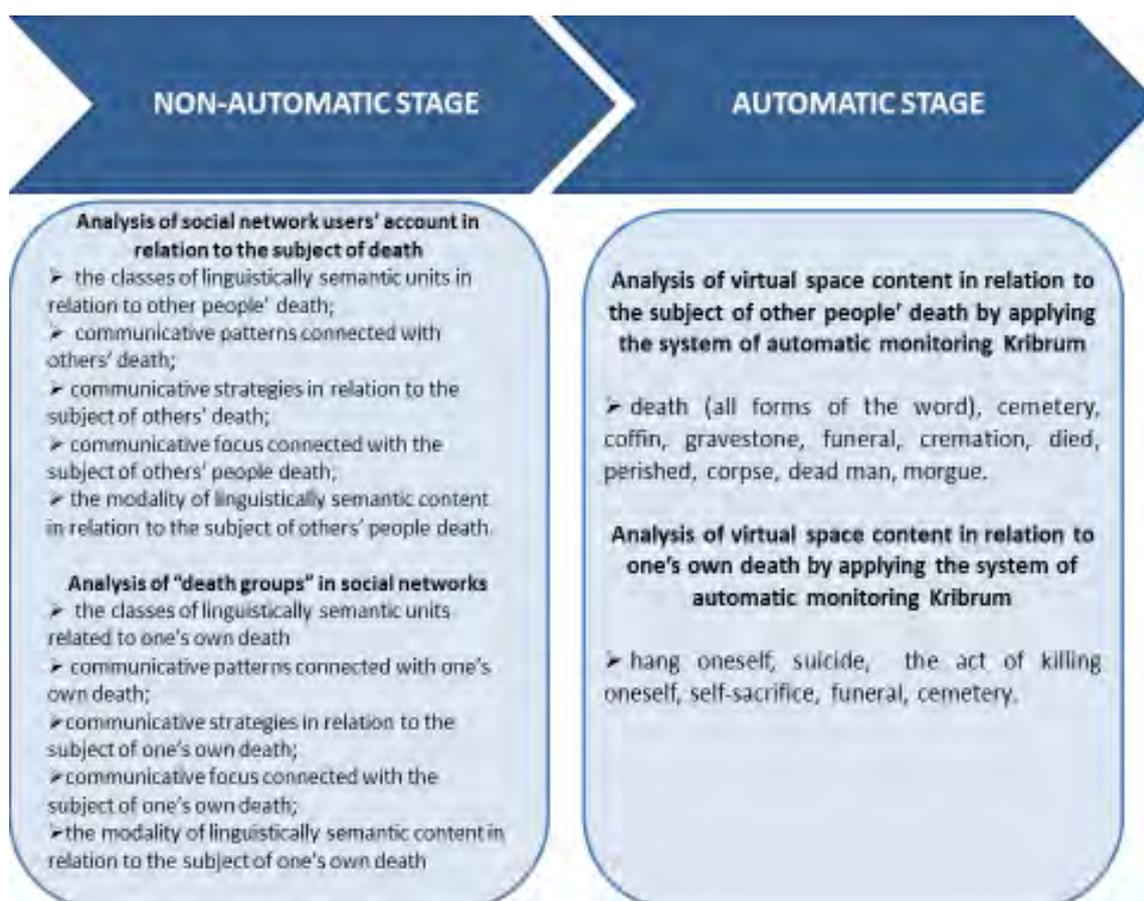
Codifying and generalizing the factors of connection between the subject of death and suicide risk, the following may be presented – the subject of death should be socially acceptable (supported by the cyber-society); emotionally attractive (it means that there are some certain facts and cases); spreading.

The purpose for this investigation is to learn the phenomenon of a “digital” death and the attitudes to this in the social networks.

## **Materials and methods**

The investigation was made from January 2016 to March 2018, based on the amount of accounts in such social networks as Vkontakte, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Ask.fm, Answers.mail, videohosting Youtube, Russian blogs and forums.

It was divided into two stages: non-automatic and automatic (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The design of the investigation of the attitude to death in the social networks

At *the non-automatic stage* of the investigation 1200 account were investigated that participated in some different groups (40 "groups of death"; 32 groups dedicated to funeral culture and deceased students; 6 groups dedicated to the process of dying and preparation of corpses for burial (morgue, decomposition of animal bodies)), as well as 200 followers of the groups listed above. The next accounts were under research: 400 accounts participated in "the groups of death"; 400 accounts where depression symptoms were showed; 150 followers of the groups dedicated to death culture; 50 followers, dedicated to the process of death.

The analysis of the accounts was carried out with the following methods: the analysis of freely available information sources (The method of functional pragmatics as the type of content analysis; critical discourse analysis); the analysis of statistic information; the methods of mathematics statistics (diagrams of share distribution, partial analysis, frequency analysis, angular transformation Fisher's- $\phi$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

The procedure of implementing the method of functional pragmatics as the type of content-analysis included the assessment of speech unit of the investigated accounts in depending on the classes (senseless phrases, incorrect spelling, obscene lexicon, interjections, slang-abbreviations, formed slang), as well as communicative patterns that reflect a set of communication rules and traditions related to certain group of students. The method of critical discourse analysis was used for the purpose of identifying dominate modality of messages in the investigated accounts (semantic category which expresses the attitude of a speaker to the content of its phrases, goal set of speech, the connection of the speech with the reality (Nikishina, Petrash & Zapesockaya, 2017).

The obtained information served as a basis of the design for a linguistic model aimed for automatic monitoring of the social networks.

At the automatic stage of the investigation the system of automatic monitoring "Kribrum (2020)" was used. It selected the accounts, having signs of interest in the death of other students or one's own death, among all of the accounts in Russian social networks based on linguistic highlights (which were formed due to the results obtained at the non-automatic stage of the investigation).

The criteria for selecting the subjects of the investigation were: the Russian language as the way of communication, active position in the social networks, interest in death.

## Results

In Vkontakte which is the most popular social network in Russia 11 000 groups dedicated to death have been detected. There are also more than 1 000 group dedicated to the subject of cemeteries as well as more than 4 000 groups dedicated to murders. More than 5 000 000 million followers directly or indirectly take part in such groups related to the subject of death.

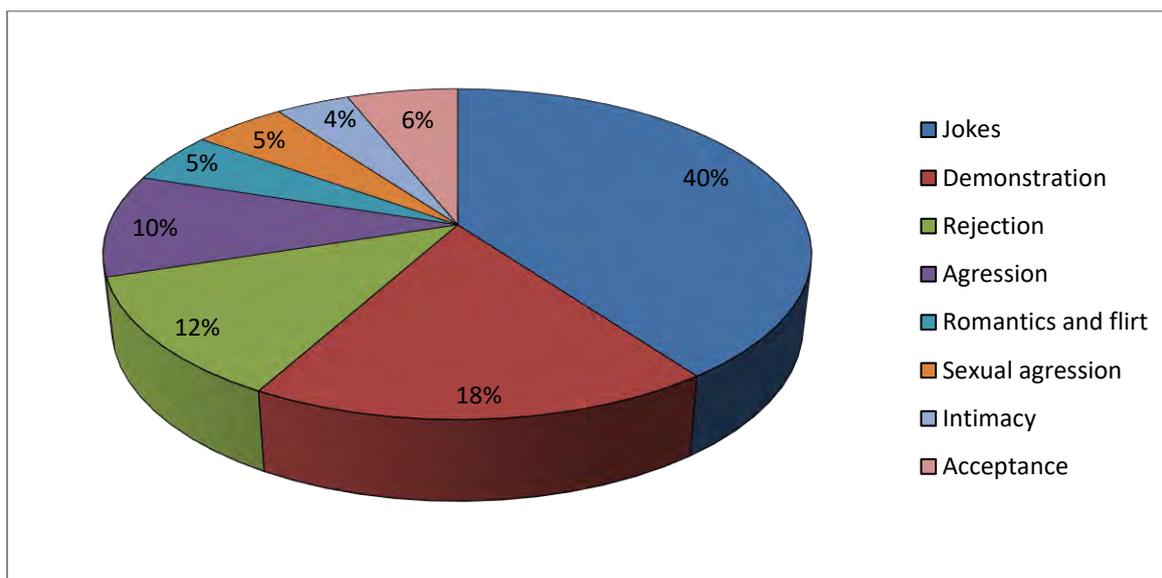
The general tendency of the obtained results is that the interest of social media users in death has increased by 3,5 times during the period from January 2016 to February 2018. Such growth may be explained in connection with spreading of the subjects and actions related to death. The stable level of interest in death with statistically unreliable decreases in summer months and new-year holidays is also pointed out.

According to the results obtained at *non-automatic stage of the investigation* the main topics representing the subject of death in the social networks are as follows: fatal diseases and injuries, suicide behavior, aesthetics and symbolism of death; news report about death; memories about deceased students; thoughts about death (including one's own death).

With applying the method of critical discourse analysis, it was found out that modality of messages about death of other students is prevalently negative (more than 72, 2%). However, the growth in a number of jokes about death not only as an abstract phenomenon but connected with real students should be taken into account. The modality of messages about one's own death is featured by predominance of a negative tendency (52, 6%).

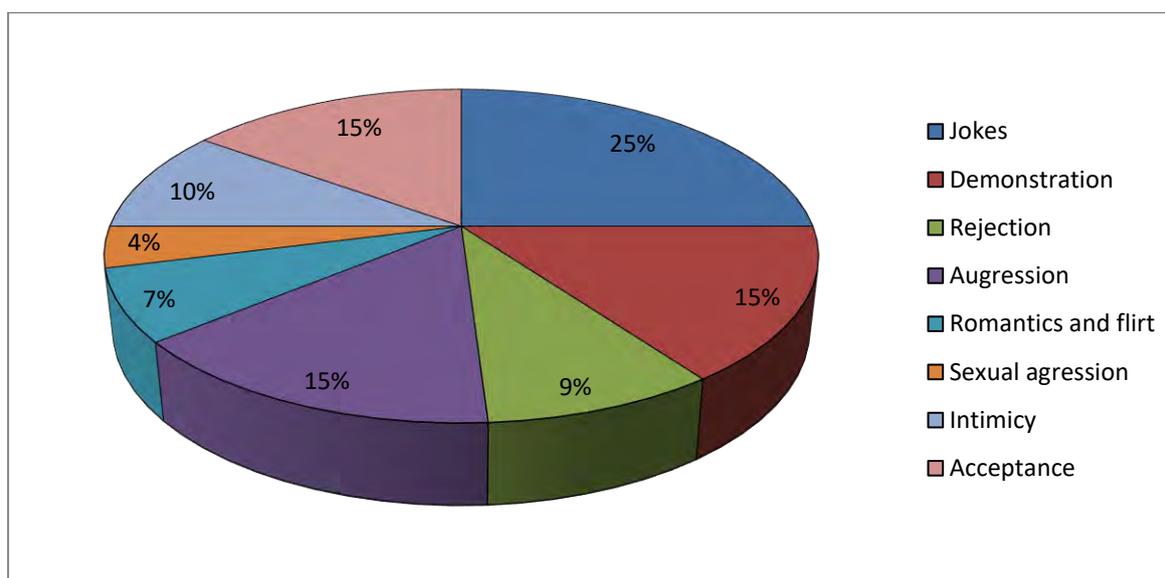
Designing a linguistically semantic model for automatic monitoring of the social networks in relation to both the subject of other students' death and one's own death, the analysis of speech (communicative) patterns (determined as a set of communication rules and traditions applicable to a certain group of students; general importance for applying this linguistic element) was also conducted with the method of functional pragmatics. (Nikishina, Petrash & Zapesockaya, 2017).

The results have showed that in most cases the patterns related to the subject of other students' death express humorous meaning (40%), a way of demonstrating and rejecting (30%), aggression (10%), romantics and flirtation (5%), sexual aggression (5%), other aspects (intimacy and acceptance – 10%) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The chart of share distribution of communicative patterns related to other students' death in social networks (%)

In relation to one's own death constructive communicative patterns insignificantly prevail: jokes – 25%, acceptance – 15%, intimacy – 10%, romantics and flirtation – 5 %; destructive communicative patterns aggregately constitute 45% (aggression – 15%, demonstration – 15%, rejection – 9%, sexual aggression – 7%) (Figure 3).

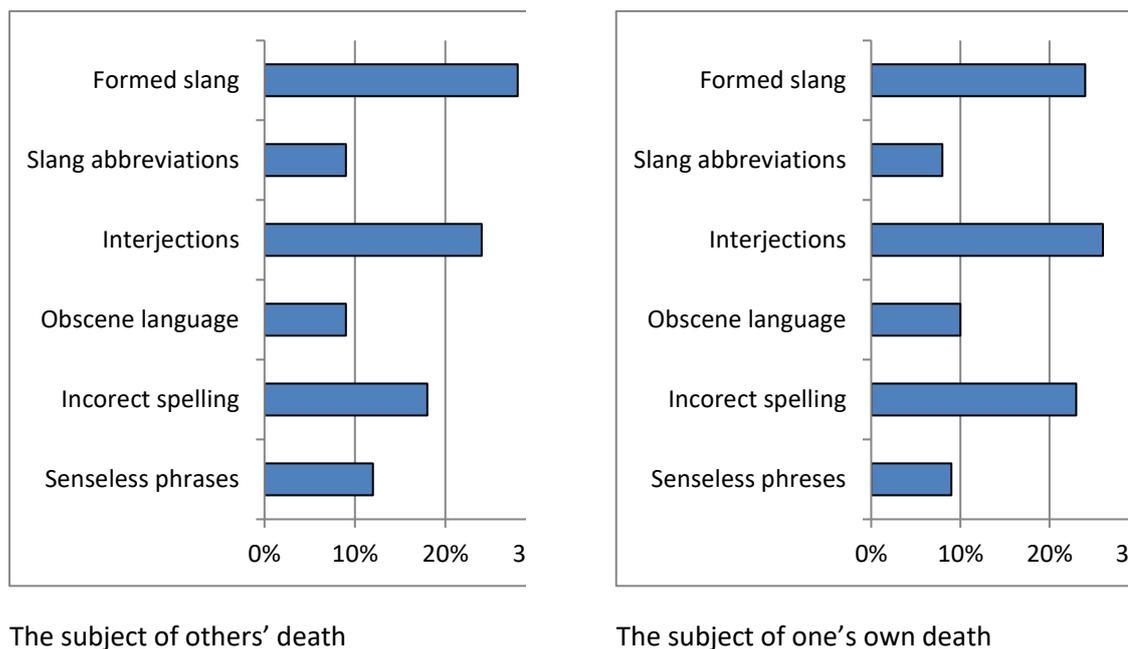


**Figure 3.** The chart of share distribution of communicative patterns related to one's own death in the social networks (%)

The obtained results show that the attitudes of the users to their own death in the social networks (both real and virtual) are more neutral than in relations of the subjects in the reality unmediated by technologies.

Grouping speech units of the investigated accounts together depending on the classes, it was conclusively established that in relation to the subject of others' death, the most high-frequent classes of speech units are interjections and formed slang, which aggregately constitute 52% of all communication units of the investigated accounts in the social networks. The maximum occurrence

frequency of the subject of death is revealed through interjections, formed slang as well as incorrect spelling (aggregate proportion of speech units regarding to such classes makes up 57%) (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The distribution of occurrence frequency of the classes of speech units of the accounts investigated in relation to the subject of others' death and one's own death

Analyzing accounts in the social networks in relation to the subject of others' death, the reactions of communicative concentration on oneself (introversion) ("I") and on others ("Others") significantly prevail; in relation to the subject of one's own death communicative reactions directed to oneself ("I"), others ("Others"), as well as to group ("Group") also prevail. In relation to the subject of death (either others' death or one's own death) the prevailing communicative concentration is on oneself and on others in the social networks, that serves as a prove for concernment and involvement of the account owners in "groups of death", as well as acceptance of death attributes.

It was conclusively established that communicative strategies in relation to the subject of death (either others' death or one's own death) in the social networks have such characteristics as predominance of communicative strategies "Sympathy" and "Conflict". In accounts, including in group of death, the communicative strategy "Retreat" is also revealed.

Investigating linguistically semantic element content of the accounts, connected with the subject of death, it was found out that the important feature of using death attributes in the social media in comparison with the objective reality is the change of usage purpose of death attributes. In the objective reality they are spread among "gothic" and "emo" subcultures, used for magic purposes as well as widely represented in rock and pop culture. A cemetery, for example, as the place for keeping corpses is used for different information structures in the social networks (the cemetery of memes, the cemetery of stupid pick ups, the cemetery of stupid news and etc.). The frequent analysis of photos and videos of a cemetery – as a place for meeting (social acceptability) (the frequency of such meetings in the accounts constitute 28%); and as emotionally attractive place (fear is combined with interest, demonstration, eccentricity), 27 % investigated accounts contain the image of a cemetery.

Funerals as a part of entertainment ("the group for those who will be late even at its own funeral"; "you can have fun at my funeral not in the nearest future" and etc.) It is also characteristic for the attributes: a coffin, a cross, a gravestone and etc. The photos made in a coffin, near the grave

or in a cemetery, the photo image in the style of a dead person – all these are becoming more and more acceptable in social media. And all of these concern a physical death.

It was reliably established that at present time the aggregate number of followers of such groups constitute 1109 accounts (not taking connecting subjects into account).

“The groups of death” always have a certain algorithm of actions in order to start a suicide game. “The groups of death” also have a set of the following relevant features:

- first, they are closely connected with internet stalking; it indicates that administrators and curators may use methods of revealing the information about their followers (for example, for purposes of blackmail);

- second, they are connected with pseudo-mystical cults of the social websites, that have destructive impact;

- third, the groups of death closely connect to the groups dedicated to school shooting, abuse, satanism;

- fourth, all groups of death that are active at present have direct and indirect connections with each other;

- fifth, they use a set of hashtags: “peaceful home”, “a blue whale”, “wake me up at 4.20”, “the owl is not sleeping”, “the owl never sleeps”, “a red owl”, “waiting you for 12 days”, “let’s fly together”, “#1:36”, #deletedsky\_1281, #dk\_1281, #h13, #h33, #heleim13, #ins1ight3, #istok, #l13, #number998”, #number999, #t98, #u19, #u29, #our\_time\_is\_running\_out\_it\_is\_near\_yet, #true\_is\_near and etc.;

- sixth, there are some certain rules of admission and membership in the groups of death;

- seventh, communications in the groups of death have their symbolic indication of actions and their slang;

- It is a worth mentioning that the existing groups are mutating, and some ones are still under the process of development. It means that such groups can introduce new hashtags, symbols and rules, as well as determine their purposes as not only just a suicide, but more socially dangerous actions. It has a quit high possibility, taking into account that the groups of death closely connect with school shooting, pseudo-mystical cults, internet stalking abuse, satanism; The fact that many participants of the groups of death also have participated in other groups dedicated to school shooting, serial killers, aue, nazism and Satanism causes concern.

The results of the investigation have showed that a number of the accounts involved in the groups of death account for 1% of the aggregate indicator of suicide behavior in the social networks. Among the accounts involved in the groups of death only 3% show suicide behavior. 22 % accounts are identified as having the potential risk of committing a suicide. The signs of pre-suicidal behavior are noticed in relation to 74% accounts.

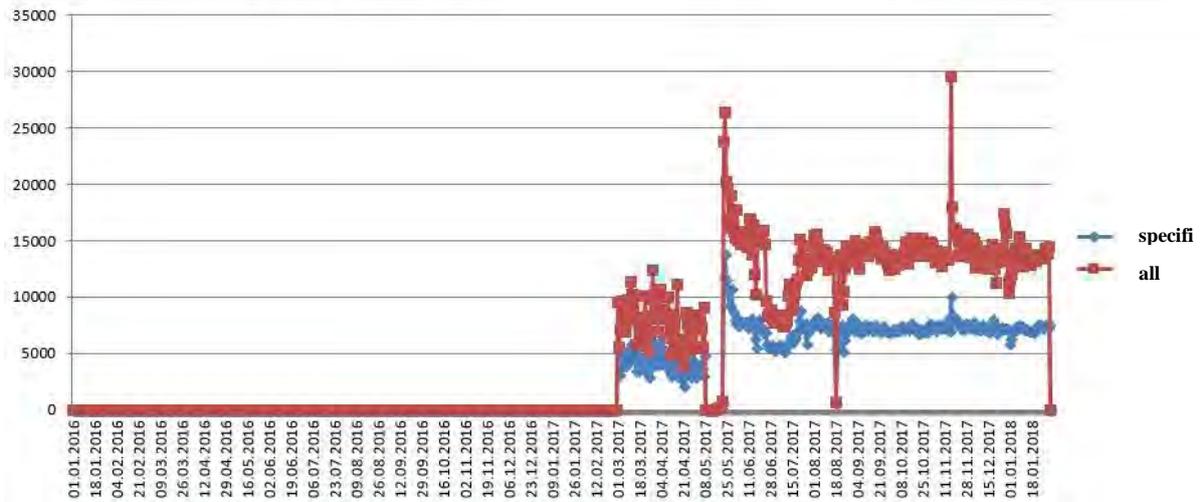
Such attitude to the death attributes serves as the result of reduction fear connected death in the social networks. The users of the social networks divide the death depending on a real and virtual world in which the death in a real world is a final inevitable event (over which no one has control), but the death in a virtual world is considered as a not final and evitable event (which can be under control). In the social networks students feel safer and, as a result, they bravely express their attitudes to death as a phenomenon and certain students’ death, show their emotions, find support by discussing their thoughts with others and sharing emotional state with their followers.

At *the automatic stage of the investigation*, after analyzing the information in social media with the automatic system of monitoring the social networks Kribrum (2020) on a basis of the key

words, a set of trigger words we have collected the data on the features of spreading suicide behavior in the social networks. The following key words were highlighted: death (all forms of this word), a cemetery, a coffin, a gravestone, funeral, cremation, died, passed, a corpse, a dead man, a morgue, hang oneself, the act of killing oneself, suicide, leave out of one's life and etc.

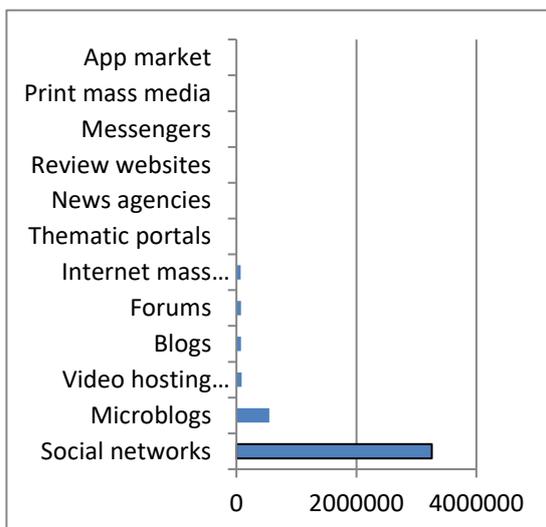
During the period from January 2016 to March 2018 4009233 messages related to the subject of one's own death (suicide behavior) were published by 2529284 authors (without taking connecting subjects into account). The highest points of spreading the subject of suicide took place in February 2017, May 2017, November 2017 and January 2018. (Figure 5).

Messages: specific (1841135), all (4009233)

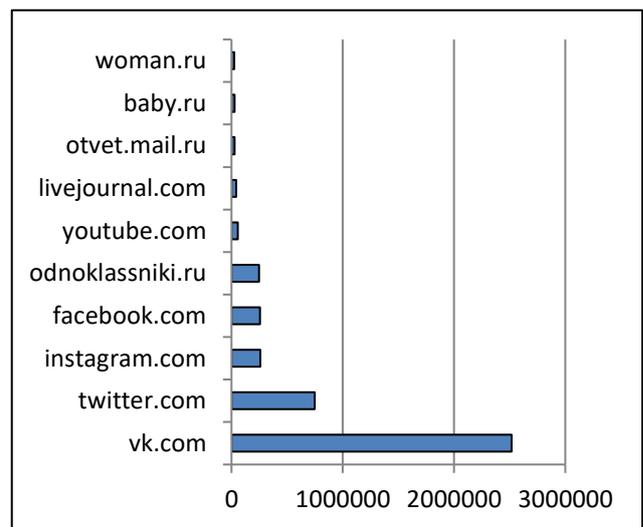


**Figure 5.** The dynamics of spreading the subject of suicide behavior in the social networks during the period from January 2016 to February 2018 (in Russia)

The social networks and microblogs are main platforms for spreading the topic. The subject of one's own death is spread mainly through the following social networks: Vkontakte, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Odnoklassniki (Figure 6).



**The platforms for spreading**



**The social networks**

**Figure 6.** The indicators of spreading the subject of one's own death ("suicide behavior") in the social networks during the period from January 2016 to February 2018 (in Russia)

The development of the problem concerning one's own death on the Internet has made the impact on the focus of attention to the problem of spreading suicide behavior in the social networks.

There are a quite much number of particular private groups that are connected not only in relation to the subject of suicide, but also the subjects of murders, necrophilia, satanism, perversion and etc. These groups cannot be found in the list of groups or by querying with the key words. To get access to such groups, certain efforts must be made and the relevant interest must be expressed or the personal invitation from other followers of such groups may be received. It causes the issues of selectness and exclusivity. The number of such groups varies from 1 thousand students to 1,5 million ones. The content of these groups may do a psychological damage, exacerbate mental disorders or cause behavior disorder.

The analysis has showed that one's own death is less frightening than the death of its relatives. At that, both real and virtual death is taken into account. A close friend's account removal causes the feelings of sadness and melancholy. According to the results of the investigation, 95, 3% of the subjects have bad feelings (sadness, sorrow, a sense of loneliness, bereavement and etc.) about close friends' virtual death in the social networks. The duration of such negative emotions lasted on the average for 2-10 days. 26, 5% of the subjects felt negative emotions due to the death of the students with whom a person had rarely kept in touch. Such bad feelings were experienced on the average for 1-3 days.

With regard to removal of one's own account, such action was considered as virtual death by 30% of the subjects; as a way of having a break from the social networks by 40%; as a personal punishment given to one's virtual friends by 10%; 20% of the subjects had their own reason for this (the desire to avoid communication with a certain person; the desire to attract attention on himself; the desire to have a fresh start in one's life and etc.). According to the investigation, 70% of the subjects deleting their accounts also had additional accounts in the same or other social networks (among 70% of the subjects deleting their accounts 20% had additional accounts in the same social network; 60% had additional accounts in other social networks (not taking into account the case in which a person has an account both in the same and other social networks)).

### **Discussion and conclusions**

The results of the investigation have shown that the main topics representing the subject of death (both own and others') in the social networks are fatal diseases, injuries, masochistic behavior, the symbolism of death. In this case negative modality of account content prevails. In most accounts that were examined and contained the subject of others' or one's own death the patterns having humorous meaning indicate that the attitudes to death (both real and virtual) are calmer in the social networks (less emotional).

On a basis of linguistically semantic analysis of social network users made in relation to the subject of death, the linguistic model has been formed and included the following topics: death (all forms of this word), a cemetery, a coffin, a gravestone, funeral, cremation, died, passed, a corpse, a dead man, morgue, hang oneself, suicide, shooting and etc. As a result of the investigation it has been found out that the main platforms for spreading the subject of death (both own and others') are social networks (Vkontakte, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Odnoklassniki) and microblogs. Moreover, one's own death (both real and virtual including one's account removal) is becoming less frightening for the users than death of their relatives.

With the relation to death as ordinary entertainment content in cyberspace, a common attitude to death is also changing. The death attributes are becoming pop-attributes, funeral ceremonies – games (that students play for fun), dead students seem not to be scary anymore, compassion for deceased's relatives is also decreasing.

Nowadays death and death ceremonies have been socially devalued due to their constant presence in a virtual life of an ordinary man. Earlier the episodes of death didn't so often flash in a human life, it was always something shocking and alarming. In the social networks the subject of death presents every day and every hour, so it is becoming not so alarming. Emotional associative array of concerns about this subject is also transformed from fear, despondency into interest and fun.

The users are able to die and revive again, learning more about their future funerals while staying alive. For example, "Phillip Fox", the administrator of the group spreading the culture of death and suicide pretended to commit a suicide, after which he were observing the reactions of his friends and followers during a few days. Notoriously known Misha Pelevin who did mass shooting at school, had published a suicide note and photos of his fake death half a year before the accident happened.

Thus, we can come to the conclusion that faking a suicide in the social networks by the users involves: the demonstrative intention to attract attention; attempts to physically express autoaggression; simulation of one's own death; emotional fun. The main purpose for pretending one's own death is to partially reduce fear and anxiety over it, as well as to reach the new level of relations with it which includes creating plans, playing and etc.

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