Practice of Compliance of Punctuation Rules in Internet Communication

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Abstract

Interpersonal connections in Internet communication presuppose an increase in the level of freedom and realization of written communication, which affects the requirements for all styles of the Ukrainian literary language. Conversational and formal business styles have gained a special influence in the Internet environment, which requires compliance of certain rules and it is a sign of a conscious attitude to the language system.

Based on the method of experiment and observation on the basis of Google Forms, a survey of 247 respondents (first- and second-year students of the Lviv Polytechnic National University (hereinafter LPNU)) aged 17 to 20 years was conducted. The study examines how students of humanities and technical specialties adhere to punctuation in online communication. It has been proven that formal business and conversational styles in the Internet environment have undergone transformations, punctuation in online communication has also changed in use and in some speech situations ceased to comply of the language laws, which encourages communicators aged 17-18 to consider punctuation at all is not mandatory for informal communication and partially mandatory in formal business online communication.

The results of the study confirmed that the hypothesis of the need for punctuation marks in formal business communication and the hypothesis of numerous deviations from the norms of punctuation in informal, are characteristic of online communication of students. The hypothesis of punctuation literacy among students is not confirmed by the research materials.

Keywords

Internet communication, computer-mediated communication, computational linguistics, linguistic norm, punctuation marks, experiment method, official business style, conversational style.

1. Introduction

Interpersonal and social connections on the Internet involve an increase in the level of freedom in the implementation of written communication, which affects the requirements for all styles of Ukrainian literary language. Particularly influential in the Internet environment is the conversational and formal business styles, the use of which involves compliance of certain rules. If in the colloquial style the non-codification of lexical elements is permissible, then in the formal-business style it is obligatory, and in the case of punctuation codification, its variance is impossible in any style. The stability of the punctuation language system is enshrined in the language code – spelling, compliance of which is a sign of a conscious attitude to the language system, but today, Internet communicators consciously or intentionally ignore these rules, which significantly affects language specificity and indicates low educational or cultural level of communicators. Since punctuation is part of the graphical system of language, it uses symbols (signs) for written articulation, which help to understand the meaning of what is written. Punctuation is a tool that divides written speech into parts that cannot be done either

morphologically or by word order, so they serve as a basis for structuring speech, make the text clear, emotionally saturate what is said and reproduce intonation rhythms, as scientists say in different countries [1; 2; 3; 4]. It is worth recalling that the famous quote "It is impossible to kill, pardon" and "Kill, it is impossible to pardon" becomes the basis for deciding the fate of man and is not a fact of compliance with punctuation, but motivated by a change in the legal field of conduct.

As official business style genres such as resumes, various types of questionnaires, etc. have become more active in official business broadcasting on the Internet, they are the ones most affected by spoken language, so the traditional defining features of each genre are sufficiently leveled. Other genres are much less affected, in particular, official documents of higher authorities and management are almost unchanged (except that the text may additionally use tools for ease of use, such as regulations; often such a tool is hypertext). Thus, the official business style in the Ukrainian language of the Internet at the level of certain genres is undergoing changes related to the possibilities of technical conditions of communication and the influence of spoken language [5, p. 133].

It is worth noting that online communication causes the absence of numerous barriers, as many psycho-emotional factors, such as speech defects, anonymity, physical absence of a particular person, outside influences, appearance are no longer considered as a problem. As a result, a person loses vigilance to the very fact of writing, so we have not only spelling mistakes, but also numerous typos and non-use of punctuation marks, which can sometimes be simply replaced by a smiley face (for example, instead of a dot).

Punctuation correctness of speech always determines the accent features of expression, is a sign of compliance with the norms of a particular style and reproduces the uniqueness of a particular national language. Therefore, the problem of compliance with the rules of punctuation in online communication, made on the basis of Google Forms through a questionnaire, is a valuable material for linguistics, as it shows the linguistic specifics of a particular historical period.

The urgency of the research is due to the need to improve punctuation literacy as a basis of linguistic and cultural heritage of the people. The novelty of the work is that for the first time a new source base has been developed, which allows to consider student discourse at the level of synchrony and to clarify the expediency or inexpediency of punctuation requirements in Internet communication in terms of formal business and conversational styles.

The scientific significance of the work was determined by the subject of research, as the difference in compliance with punctuation standards by students of humanities and technical specialties was compared; the interaction of formal and informal styles is shown on the example of respondents, textual material directly from the student environment is involved, the necessity to create a system of punctuation check in network communication is proved.

It is important to support professional philological thought to the problem of widespread free-thinking about punctuation in the student environment. The question of the correctness of the Ukrainian language (including punctuation) has been raised by Ukrainian linguists since 1892, when the philologist-naturalist I. Verkhratskyi emphasized that "dilettantism gives nothing." Thus, the submitted study, conducted in 2021, once again confirms the need for clear rules, not language arbitrariness.

The subject of our study is punctuation rules in online communication, among which we distinguish between informal online communication and formal business (formal) communication. This type of distribution of the research base is motivated by different attitudes of respondents to the letter, which will be discussed below. In addition, in the official business style, when filling out questionnaires, resumes and other documents, punctuation marks become a requirement not only for correct speech, but also a prerequisite for the presentation of the idea.

The aim of our study is to establish compliance of punctuation rules in written online communication depending on the type of communication (business or informal), to find out the frequency of punctuation errors, types of most common punctuation errors, to suggest solutions to punctuation problems.

Active introduction of technical means affects the transformation of forms of communication, diversification of opportunities for the use of verbal and nonverbal means of communication, leads to the following hypotheses:

1. Modern communicative Internet environment is a new kind of business communication, and the observance of punctuation rules helps to logically and syntactically divide statements into separate semantic elements, which allows to achieve the goal of communication.

2. Deviations from the punctuation norms of modern literary language is the main feature of informal communication of students in the Internet environment.

3. Punctuation marks divide written speech (perform a grammatical function) – fix the end of a sentence, parts of a complex sentence, reflect the boundary between direct and indirect speech, complicate the structure of sentences – these are mandatory punctuation rules regulated by Ukrainian spelling, they are always followed by all online communication; punctuation marks that help the author to more accurately or figuratively depict objects or phenomena of the objective world, which contributes to more effective achievement of the purpose of communication (such punctuation marks are often copyrighted, and their use is often not strictly adhered to punctuation rules), never used on the Internet.

The material of the research is questionnaires of students of Lviv Polytechnic, in which they indicate their attitude to the rules of punctuation.

2. Research methods

Material and research methods. We agree with the opinion of M. Vakulenko, who notes that "The means of research (cognition) is the analytical method, and the material for the study provides statistical, which determines the material linguistic facts that actually exist" [6].

During the study:

- At the first stage, a system of test questions that cover various punctuation rules was developed by the method of semantic analysis, as well as provide an opportunity to identify compliance with such rules.

- At the second stage, 247 respondents (first- and second-year students of Lviv Polytechnic National University (hereinafter LPNU)) aged 17 to 20 were interviewed and observed on the basis of Google Forms. Students study in the humanities (journalism, applied linguistics, law, psychology, social communication) and technical (computer science, software, systems analysis, food technology, biotechnology, applied mathematics) specialties. Methods of experiment and observation can detect violations or the presence of punctuation in the student environment.

- At the third stage we use a qualitative (or statistical) method, which is to determine the presence of a linguistic fact that involves the accumulation of a certain number of such facts. Using the statistical method, the punctuation practice of LPNU students (humanities and non-humanities) in Internet communication was investigated. In the process of analyzing the survey data, general response statistics were taken into account, as well as response statistics on a specific question.

- At the fourth stage we use an analytical method that helps to outline the process of formation or the presence of certain phenomena or trends. We use an analytical method to analyze the use of punctuation in formal and informal communication of students in the Internet environment, to determine the reasons for compliance / non-compliance with punctuation, justification of specific punctuation in certain situations in formal and informal Internet communication. At this stage, we also used a specific sociological method, which allows to distinguish the sociolinguistic characteristics of the purpose of online communication, i.e., formal-business and informal industries [7; 2].

- At the fifth stage, the observed results were outlined using a descriptive method and methods of generalization and induction.
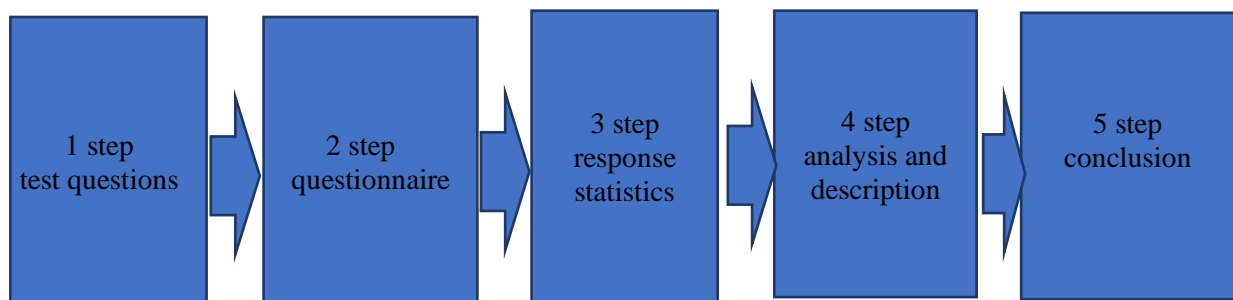

Figure 1: Structural and logical scheme covering the main stages (steps) of the study

The study has practical value – the results of the study can be used for improvement of punctuation systems in online applications for the Internet communication

3. Related research

Undoubtedly, exemplary written speech as a kind of literary language involves strict adherence to punctuation rules, i.e., the correct use of punctuation, which to achieve the goal of communication helps to logically and syntactically divide the utterance into individual semantic elements, correlated with individual words and phrases and goals. Research by both Ukrainian and foreign scientists is valuable for regulating regulations. Peculiarities of Ukrainian punctuation are clearly revealed in Z. Terlak's "Punctuation Dictionary-Handbook", which presented for those who want to improve their written speech, the normative use of punctuation marks on Ukrainian language material [8].

Noteworthy is the work of British scientist J. Kirkman, who in his study "Punctuation Matters: Advice on Punctuation for Scientific and Technical Writing" rightly notes that "Punctuation Matters gives straight answers to the queries raised most frequently by practitioners in computing, engineering, medicine and science as they grapple with day-to-day tasks in writing and editing" [9]. In this work, many years of experience during courses on writing and editing texts, the scientist presents recommendations for the normative use of punctuation in scientific and technical texts.

Research on the use of English allowed Jim McKinley, Heath Rose in his article to provide general recommendations for unclear standards, ethical considerations for publication in English, which is valuable for scholars to comply with language norms, including punctuation [10].

Note that in modern linguists the topic of communication in the online format is a priority. Researchers point out that the functioning of the Internet in all spheres of human life affects the communicative features of society, leads to the development of new forms of communication, and changing the format and mode of communication transforms linguistic units, causes certain features in styles and genres. S. Chemerkin emphasizes that certain graphic signs are used uncodified in Internet communication. The author points out that dots as a means of creating non-verbal text are mostly used to denote reflection, uncertainty, surprise, and there are a number of graphic signs, the use of which in Internet communication is limited, especially quotation marks, semicolons. Their absence is natural for this type of communication: the first is a clear visual attribute of citation or metaphor, which is not typical for spoken language, and the second sign is a means to dissect complex syntactic constructions, which are absent in spoken language [5, p. 129].

In the new conditions of communication, the text is perceived differently, the assessments of the creation of the verbal text change. Social platforms have become "a tool through which a large number of users of the global network gets additional opportunities to communicate and disseminate information" [11, p. 62]. Scholars emphasize that they trace a different attitude to the requirements of a certain level of literacy, observe a general tendency to reduce the level of compliance with the norms of the Ukrainian literary language at all language levels [12; 13; 14; 15].

I. Kovalchuk also drew attention to the fact that most users simply try to avoid punctuation marks, so as not to spend a lot of time choosing the right ones, although the content of what is written depends on the placement of punctuation marks [16, p. 48].

M. Kronhauz argues that the Internet today is a mass communication, which has never been in the history of mankind. At the present stage, the main thing is that communication takes place, and we regulate the language as we see fit, that is, for the sake of simplicity of communication, we can and should violate the norm. Nowadays, spontaneous spoken language is recorded in writing on the Internet, and written speech has always been the prerogative of the educated part of the population, so all mistakes in oral speech "flowed" into the Internet. This may explain the fact that the average level of literacy of speakers has decreased, although the average level of written literacy of speakers in the country has increased [17]. It is observed that most researchers also believe that in informal communication in the field of Internet technology, some relaxation of punctuation rules is acceptable [18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23].

G. Kliarska emphasizes that often users who write in accordance with the norms of the Ukrainian literary language, on the Internet enjoy informality, lack of rules, from which the rules of punctuation suffer [24, p. 51].

It is important to study punctuation in online communication in other languages. In particular, in Italian punctuation marks are assigned a communicative meaning, thus interpreting its interactive punctuation mark [25]. Other studies allow punctuation to be used similarly to syntactic criteria [2]. Research is important when commas create text units that allow them to be used rationally and consistently [1].

Some studies have shown the reaction of students who create syntactic and structural texts in which there are non-traditional punctuation marks, which leads not only to non-traditional punctuation marks, but also affects the syntactic structure of the created text. It is proved that non-traditional punctuation marks in syntactic and structural texts affect students' self-affirmation. F. Busch's article "The interaction principle in digital punctuation" analyzes the principle of punctuation interaction using frequency and in-depth sequential analysis based on SMS messages of German adolescents [2]. Punctuation has been proven to be a graphical means of communicative and social contextualization in digital interactions. Sociolingual analysis of punctuation marks among German students was carried out in the article "Digital punctuation as an interactional resource: the message-final period among German adolescents" [7].

It is interesting to study punctuation in English for non-English users. It is proved that it is a tool for the transfer of text structures and the formation of the tone of conversation [26]. Lisa Hilte's work proves that Flemish high school students do not worry about the high level of use of the standard language in the official context [27]. Another experimental study showed that punctuation can convey the social and pragmatic information that exists during face-to-face conversations [28]. The punctuation system as a whole is also considered by Kazakh linguists [3].

3.1.   Results of the research

Given the multifaceted nature of the issues related to the study of Internet communication, in our opinion, the use of (compliance) with punctuation rules in Internet communication remains insufficiently studied. It is worth emphasizing that all types of norms are typical for Internet communication. If we take into account the lexical norm, it has undergone the greatest changes during impersonal communication, as englizm, "surzhyk", slang, and invectives have become popular on the Internet. As for the orthographic norm, its violation is caused only by the actual linguistic facts. Violation of punctuation, which is the subject of the description, changes the understanding of the text and leads to a lack of structuring and forms a communicative barrier, changes the verbal assessment of the text.

3.1.1. Experimental results of the discussion

The study was conducted on the basis of Google Forms through a questionnaire survey of 247 respondents – students of NULP (first- and second-year students), of 17 – under 20 years. The questionnaire included 21 questions, among which the dominant for us is written formal, informal communication and punctuation motivation of respondents related to Internet communication. To motivate the relevance of the work, we have identified the following blocks: 1) the importance of punctuation marks that show the boundaries of thought, and 2) the use of punctuation marks (dots, commas, colons, dashes) in accordance with the rules of punctuation.

Among the respondents, 47.5% are students of humanities (journalists, applied philologists, lawyers, psychologists, museologists) and 52.5% – technical specialties (biotechnologists, applied mathematicians, artificial intelligence system engineers, software engineers, systems analysis engineers, food technology engineers, etc.). For most students (241 people) Ukrainian is their mother tongue, for six people their mother tongue is Russian. However, five students studied in a Russian school, one in a Polish school, four students studied in both Russian and Ukrainian, and 231 in Ukrainian. In everyday speech (in the family, with friends) 13 students speak Russian, one student speaks the local dialect, nine – "surzhyk", one student speaks Ukrainian with parents and Russian with

friends, eight students speak both Russian and Ukrainian, 215 students speak only in Ukrainian. Given that the respondents are students of NULP, and under the conditions of admission they passed the exam in the Ukrainian language (where a significant percentage of tasks require knowledge of punctuation), as well as the statistics, it can be argued that respondents studied the Ukrainian language, it is actively used, in particular, are acquainted with the rules of punctuation.

Regarding punctuation rules, extralingual and intralinguistic factors are important. Among the extralingual factors, non-compliance of punctuation can be explained by the speed of writing, lack of eye contact, which makes shyness impossible. Among the intralinguistic factors, non-observance of punctuation is possible due to the low level of knowledge of the language, lack of automaticity for typical situations.

It is noteworthy that communicating informally, we see from the study, students do not attach importance to punctuation. This is primarily explained by the fact that respondents are switching to a conversational style, which is characterized by free use of literary language, especially punctuation, because they consider themselves authors of posts, and the use of author's punctuation is not provided by strict punctuation rules. Thus, the transformation of punctuation marks, on the one hand, diversifies the text. On the other hand, it forms Internet slang, which destroys the specifics of the language, its identity and individuality, changes the most primitive structure of the text, which is conveyed by paragraphs and punctuation. Thus, the telegraph style is formed, which is simplified, does not promote mental activity, thus simplifies the mechanisms of language thinking and eventually leads to partial or complete degradation. The lack of standards in online communication destroys the state-building, voluntaristic, cultural and aesthetic functions of language, and in the first place puts the function of self-affirming, unfortunately, sometimes not in the best case; the macroimage of language is also disturbed, because the ideal image of reality will never correspond to verbal expression without all the punctuation marks [2; 27].

It is worth recalling that non-compliance of punctuation does not create inconvenience for the younger generation, but, on the contrary, increases self-esteem, removes complexity, because they interpret any type of error as copyright marks or ridicule of what is written. Instead, the attitude of the com for most respondents is a waste of time. We believe that creating an online communication style for which each participant in a polylogue (or dialogue) is responsible requires the use of punctuation rules.

In modern literary language there is a codified system of punctuation, which perform various functions in written texts [8, p. 3]. To analyze compliance with punctuation in online communication, we asked a number of questions to students. The obtained statistical results show (see Table 1, Figure 2) that the punctuation marks that fix the end of the sentence (dot, exclamation mark, question mark) are always used consistently in business online communication by 90.3% of respondents, and in informal communication this percentage is much lower – 24.3. It is worth noting that 5.7% of respondents in business communication do not always use punctuation, which syntactically articulate written speech, and in informal communication this figure reaches 55.1%. It is interesting to note that among the respondents there are students who only occasionally use punctuation marks at the end of the sentence (in formal communication – 3.6%, and in informal – respectively 14.6%). Unexpected are the results, which show that 0.4% in formal and 6% in informal online communication never put punctuation marks at the end of a sentence.

Table 1
Do you use punctuation marks that fix the end of a sentence?

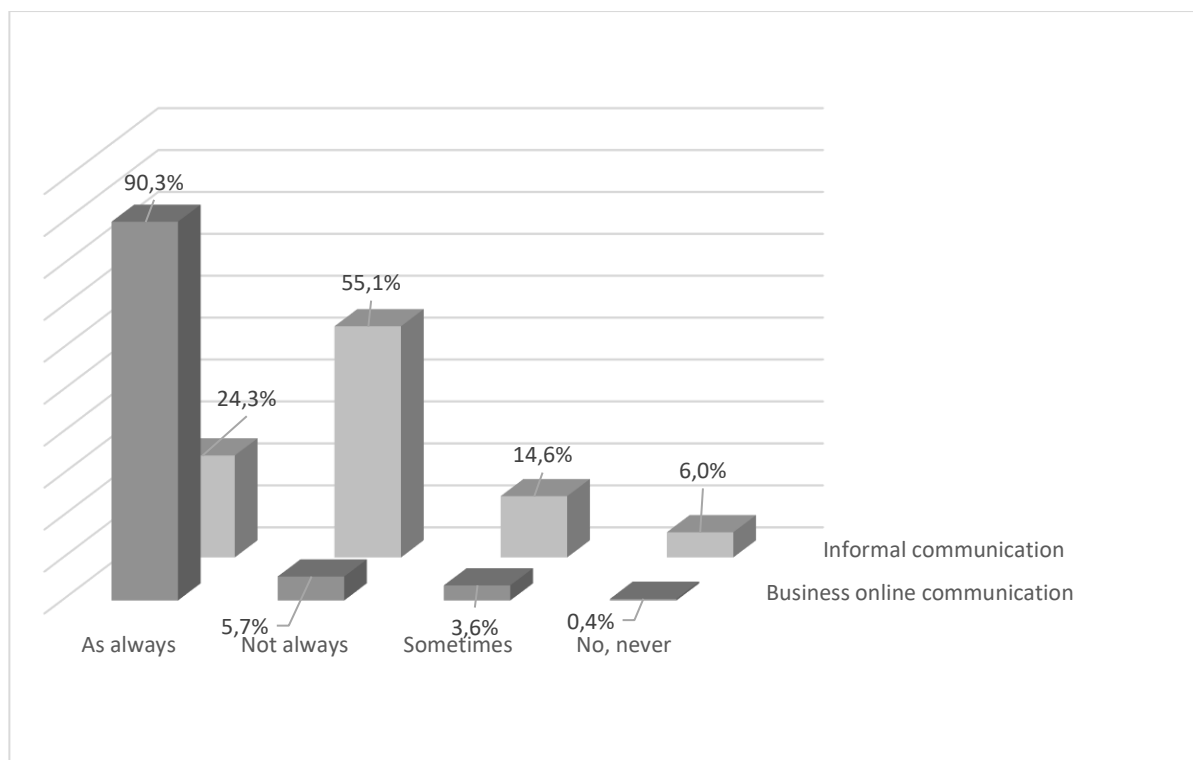|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	90,3%	24,3%
Not always	5,7%	55,1%
Sometimes	3,6%	14,6%

Figure 2: Do you use punctuation marks that fix the end of a sentence?

Among the punctuation rules there are the use of punctuation in complex sentences (reflecting the boundary between parts of compound, unconnected sentences; between the main and subjunctive part of complex sentences), the dismemberment of complex syntactic constructions, which are not in colloquial language. Respondents, as a rule, in business online communication (see Table 2, Figure 3) always follow punctuation marks in complex sentences (84.6%), not always – 9.7%, sometimes – 5.3%, and never put punctuation marks in official business texts. – 0.4%. In informal Internet communication (see Table 2, Figure 3) we see that 21.7% of communicators always consciously relate to the language norm on the Internet, not always – 41.7%, sometimes – 14.6%, and 22% of students never follow these punctuation norms.

Table 2
Do you use punctuation marks that reflect the boundary between the main and subordinate clauses in a compound sentence?

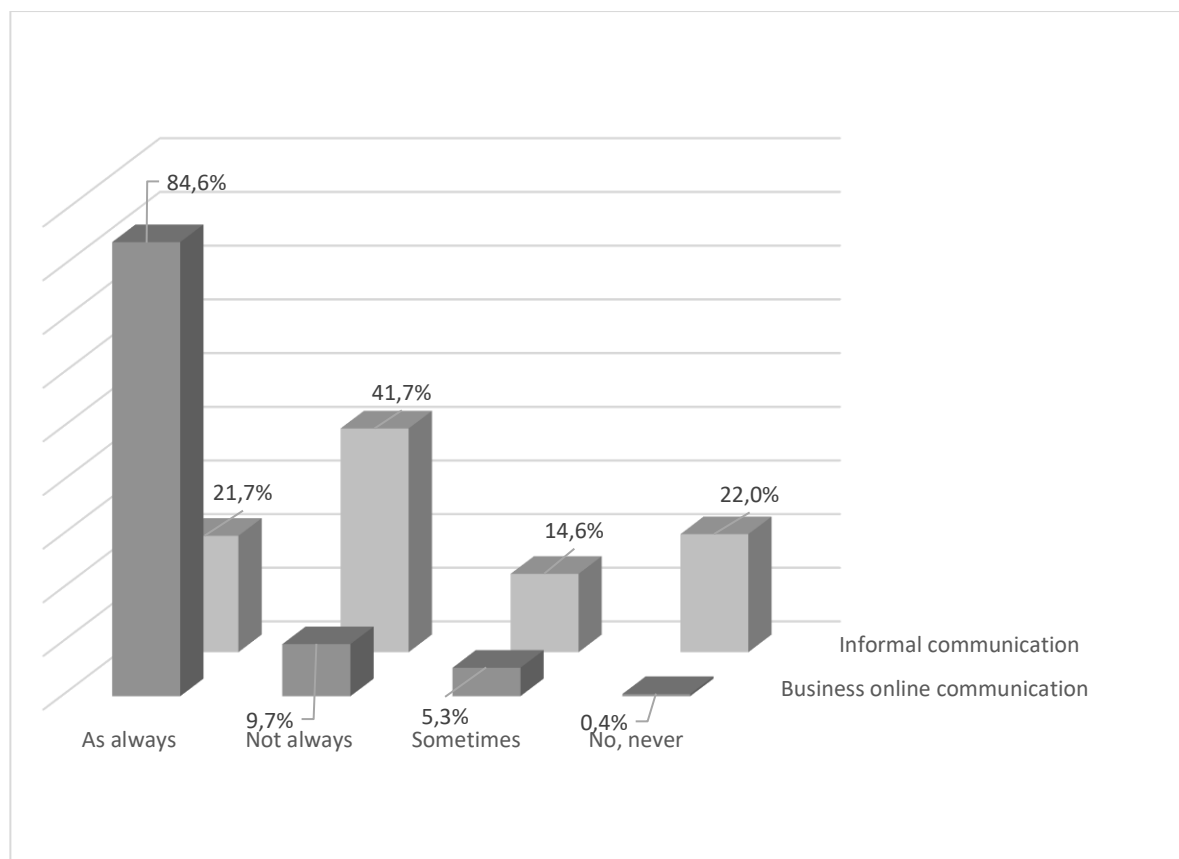|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	84,6%	21,7%
Not always	9,7%	41,7%
Sometimes	5,3%	14,6%
No, never	0,4%	22%

Figure 3: Do you use punctuation marks that reflect the boundary between the main and subordinate clauses in a compound sentence?

Internet communication is characterized by the transformation of oral conversational style into writing, which has acquired new features – the mass use of graphic signs, single or collective use of which emotionally colors the text. To analyze the practice of punctuation, we ask students the following question: do you take into account the components that complicate the structure of the sentence, and separate them. According to the situation (business / informal online communication) the answers were as follows (see Table 3, Figure 4): in business online communication 76.1% of respondents always follow the rules of punctuation, not always – 15.4%, sometimes – 7.3%, never – 1.2 %. In informal communication, 25.9% of students always place punctuation marks with separate members of a sentence, not always – 47.8%, sometimes – 17%, never – 9.3% (see Table 3, Figure 4).

Table 3
Do you take into account the components that complicate the structure of the sentence, and separate them?

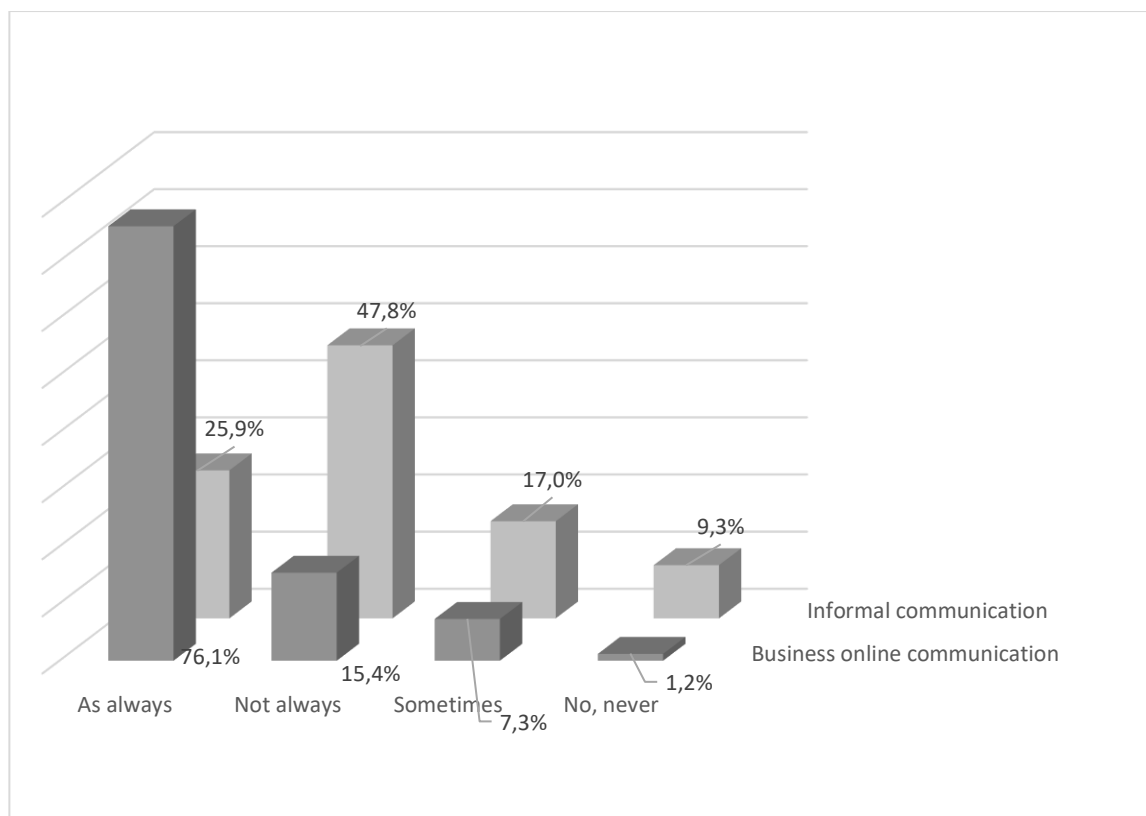|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	76,1%	25,9%
Not always	15,4%	47,8%
Sometimes	7,3%	17%
No, never	1,2%	9,3%

Figure 4: Do you take into account the components that complicate the structure of the sentence, and separate them?

In the survey questionnaire, we asked whether students follow the rules of direct speech transmission in Internet communication. Direct speech makes it possible to reproduce all the features of oral speech, preserving not only the meaning of the utterance, but its lexical, grammatical and stylistic features, is an attribute of citation. It is worth noting that for the design of direct speech we use a colon, quotation marks, commas and dashes, a period, depending on the position of the author's words and the actual direct language, the rules of use of these punctuation change, which requires appropriate knowledge, attention, time to switch characters on the keyboard. Regarding these punctuation rules, we obtained the following results (see Table 4, Figure 5): in business online communication, 82.2% always follow the rules of foreign language transmission, not always – 13.4%, sometimes – 4%, and never – 0.4%. In informal communication, only 27.9% of respondents always transmit someone else's speech according to the spelling rules, not always – 43.3%, sometimes – 20.7%, never – 8.1%. It is interesting, respondents who indicated that they do not use punctuation marks (quotation marks, commas, dashes, etc.) at all, because citations are not typical for formal business online communication or informal online communication.

Table 4
Do you follow the rules of direct speech transmission?

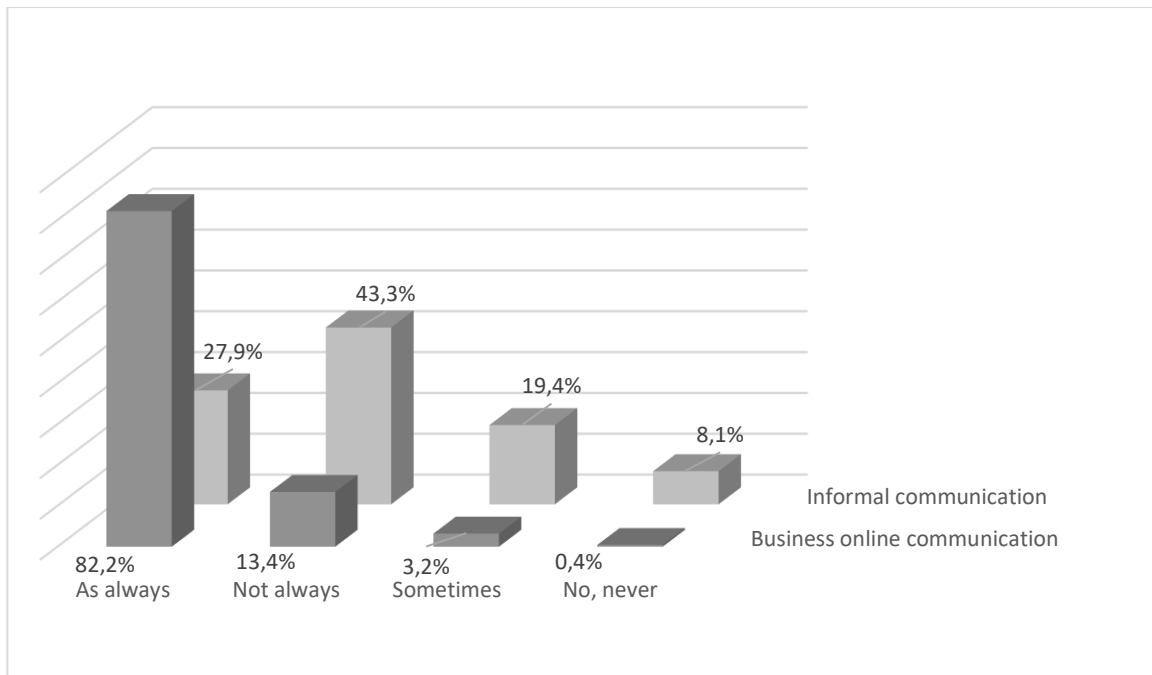|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	82,2%	27,9%
Not always	13,4%	43,3%
Sometimes	4%	20,7%
No, never	0,4%	8,1%

Figure 5: Do you follow the rules of direct speech transmission?

Speech culture is the mastery of the norms of literary language, the ability to use its means of expression in various conditions of communication, including Internet communication, in accordance with the purpose and content of expression. Observance of the rules of use of all punctuation marks testifies to the culture of written speech. In the study, we analyzed how students use commas, dashes, colons, parentheses (…), […], quotation marks, semicolons for their intended purpose. Analyzing the results of the survey, we see that students actively use punctuation in online business communication, for example (see Table 5): dashes according to the rules are always put 77.3% not always – 16.6%, sometimes – 5.3%, never – 0.8 %; colon (see Table 6) – always 79.4%, not always – 15.8%, sometimes – 3.6%, never – 1,2%; quotation marks always – 87.4% not always – 8.1%, sometimes – 3.6%, never – 0.8%, parentheses always (see Table 7, Figure 6) – 70.9% not always – 19%, sometimes – 5.3%, never – 4.8%. Regarding the use of commas (between homogeneous members of a sentence; before a, but, but, however; with separate members of a sentence; when addressing), we observe that (see Table 8, Figure 7) 96% always put this punctuation mark in business speech in Internet communication, not always – 3.2%, sometimes 0.8%, never 0%; follow the rules of separation of treatment always follow – 89.5% not always – 8.1%, sometimes – 1.6%, never – 0.8%.

Table 5
Do you put a dash for rules?

	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	77,3%	24,3%
Not always	16,6%	50,6%
Sometimes	5,3%	16,6%
No, never	0,8%	8,5%

Table 6
Do you follow the rules for using a colons?

	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	79,4%	26,3%
Not always	15,8%	50,6%
Sometimes	3,6%	16,2%
No, never	1,2%	6,9%

Table 7
Do you use parentheses (…), […] for their intended purpose?

	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	70,9%	31,6%
Not always	19%	39,7%
Sometimes	5,3%	14,6%
No, never	4,8%	14,1%

Figure 6: Do you use parentheses (…), […] for their intended purpose?

In informal communication, students are more likely to violate punctuation. We observe the following results: dashes according to the rules are always put by 24.3%, not always – 50.6%, sometimes – 16.6%, never – 8.5%; colon – always 26.3%, not always – 50.6%, sometimes – 16.2%, never – 6.9%; quotation marks always – 47.4% not always – 35.6%, sometimes – 6.5%, never – 10.5%, parentheses always – 31.6%, not always – 39.7%, sometimes – 14.6%, never – 14.1% (see Figure 6).

Regarding the use of commas (between homogeneous members of the sentence; before *a*, *but*, *but*, *however* (see Table 8, Figure 7); with separate members of the sentence; when addressing), we observe that 78.5% always put this punctuation mark in informal communication, not always – 14, 2%, sometimes 3.7%, never 3.6%. the rules of separation of treatment are always followed – 62.3% not always – 25.1%, sometimes – 5.7%, never – 6.1%. We observe a fairly high percentage of commas in informal online communication, because it is always separated by 62.3% of students, not always – 25.1%, sometimes – 5.7%, and never – 6.9%.

Table 8
Do you put anyone in front of *what*, *but*, nevertheless?

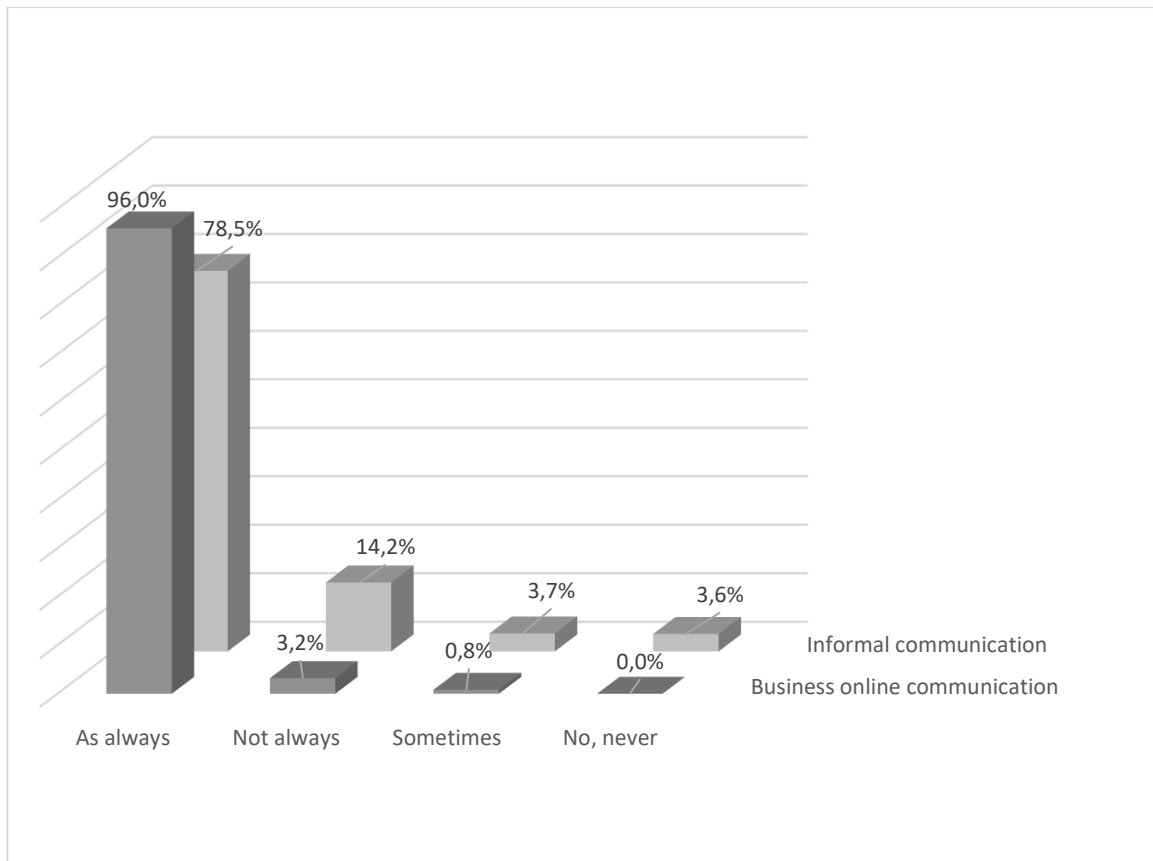|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	96%	78,5%
Not always	3,2%	14,2%
Sometimes	0,8%	3,7%
No, never	0,0%	3,6%

Figure 7: Do you put anyone in front of what, but, nevertheless?

Respondents show low punctuation when it comes to using a semicolon for its intended purpose. This punctuation mark in the rules of online business communication is always put 60.7% not always – 21.9%, sometimes – 15.3%, never – 2.1%, so it is 17% less than a dash, 10,9% than quotation marks, 36% than a comma, even parentheses are 10.2% more often placed by students according to the rules in business Internet communication (see Table 9, Figure 8). In informal communication, 15.8% of students always put a semicolon in accordance with spelling norms, not always – 44.1%, sometimes – 13.8%, and never – 26.3% (see Table 9, Figure 8).

Table 9
Do you use a semicolon for its intended purpose?

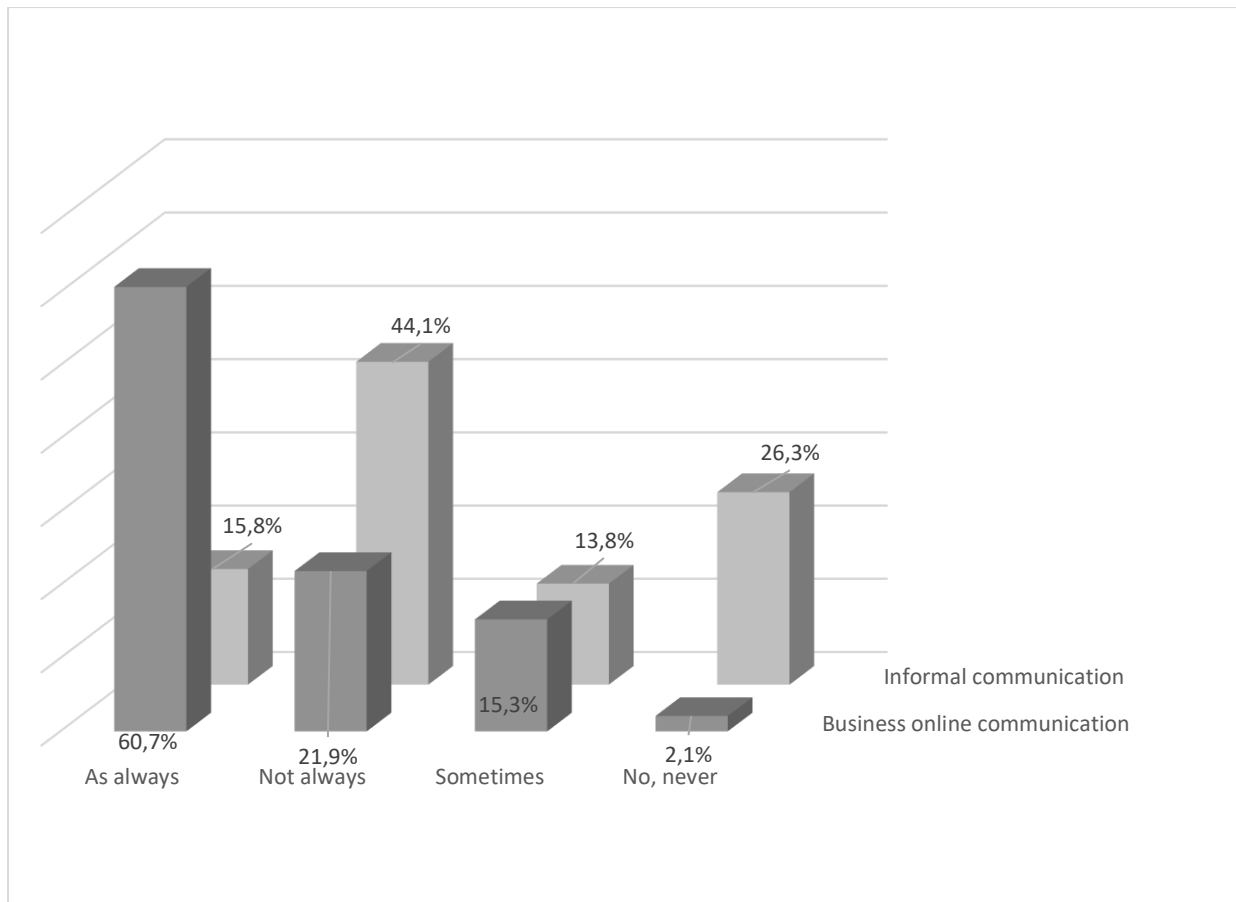|	Business online communication	Informal communication
As always	60,7%	15,8%
Not always	21,9%	44,1%
Sometimes	15,3%	13,8%
No, never	2,1%	26,3%

Figure 8: Do you use a semicolon for its intended purpose?

3.2. Conclusions

The results of the questionnaire prove that the hypothesis about the need for punctuation rules in formal business communication and the hypothesis about the deviation from punctuation rules in informal communication is typical for the student environment. Regarding the third assumption (regarding the grammatical function of punctuation), it turned out that the percentage of people trying to put punctuation marks was unexpectedly low.

The results of the experiment prove that part of the punctuation rules is basic, for example, signs that fix the end of a sentence (dot, exclamation mark, question mark) in business online communication in practice always put 92.3% of students, and 0.4% of respondents never do not use these punctuation marks. We observe that punctuation marks have undergone transformations and ceased to comply with the laws of language. There have been changes in the placement of the dot, because if the three dots in the punctuation rules mean an incomplete sentence, then in online communication they convey thoughts, procrastination and necessarily involve the continuation of the conversation.

Knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of punctuation in online communication allows you to see the state of relevance or inappropriateness in the choice of punctuation.

The lack of punctuation rules young people compensate with imaginary punctuation marks that do not correspond to spelling rules, for example, a parenthesis, which in punctuation rules symbolizes the insertion word, in informal online communication reproduces a smile, a colon – is often a punctuation mark incoherent sentences, and in online communication used simultaneously with the parenthesis and it acquires the meaning of laughter. Unfortunately, users do not perceive language as a means of transmitting experience, as a communicative code of their state, but form their own system of self-affirmation and creativity, which destroys the paradigmatic, lexical and punctuation field of language.

The research shows that online communication creates a kind of system that is incomprehensible primarily to the older generation, as well as those who have not mastered this system. The absence of punctuation marks indicates an informal conversation that cannot be reproduced in a formal business style that uses punctuation marks similarly to written text.

Internet communication solves the problems of society only partially (filling out business documents, informal communication with everyone), but the lack of a culture of punctuation leads to misinterpretation of some opinions.

We believe that putting commas is a kind of etiquette in a virtual environment, compliance of which is mandatory, and a standard that should be reproduced in any area of communication, both formal and informal. Another important reason for punctuation is the need to articulate the text for which communicators are responsible.

The results of the research show that it is necessary to take care of eliminating errors in online communication, because posts, comments are available to everyone and are stored in the online environment for a long time. Mistakes in online communication can cause significant damage to a person's image. The survey made it possible to systematize common errors and can be the basis for creating a mobile application that will prevent them from appearing in formal and informal online communication.

Prospects for research in this area include conducting similar surveys among different age groups (including middle-aged and older respondents), which will allow to compare the results of punctuation. We also consider it is possible to compare the results of surveys of respondents from Lviv Polytechnic National University and other Ukrainian and foreign universities to see the geography of the issue.

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