

# Socio-emotional Labor Black students Experience While Code-switching in Predominately White Spaces



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## OBJECT OF STUDY

Coinciding with the University of California's attempt to achieve diversity and include students who are representative of the state of California, this pilot study explored the experiences of Black undergraduate students who are currently enrolled at a campus within the University of California system in order to inform these efforts.

The objective of this research study was to examine the experiences of Black students as they navigate a historically white institution of higher education located in Southern California. Specifically, this study focused on concepts of dialect shifting and code-switching (i.e., dialect shifting) among Black undergraduate students and their perceptions of how it effects their socio-emotional well-being. This research will inform current and future research as we learn about which particular strategies and coping mechanisms for varying dialects across educational and community settings.



## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do Black undergraduate students perceive their higher education experiences in relation to navigation or resistance regarding Black English dialect and code-switching within historically white spaces?

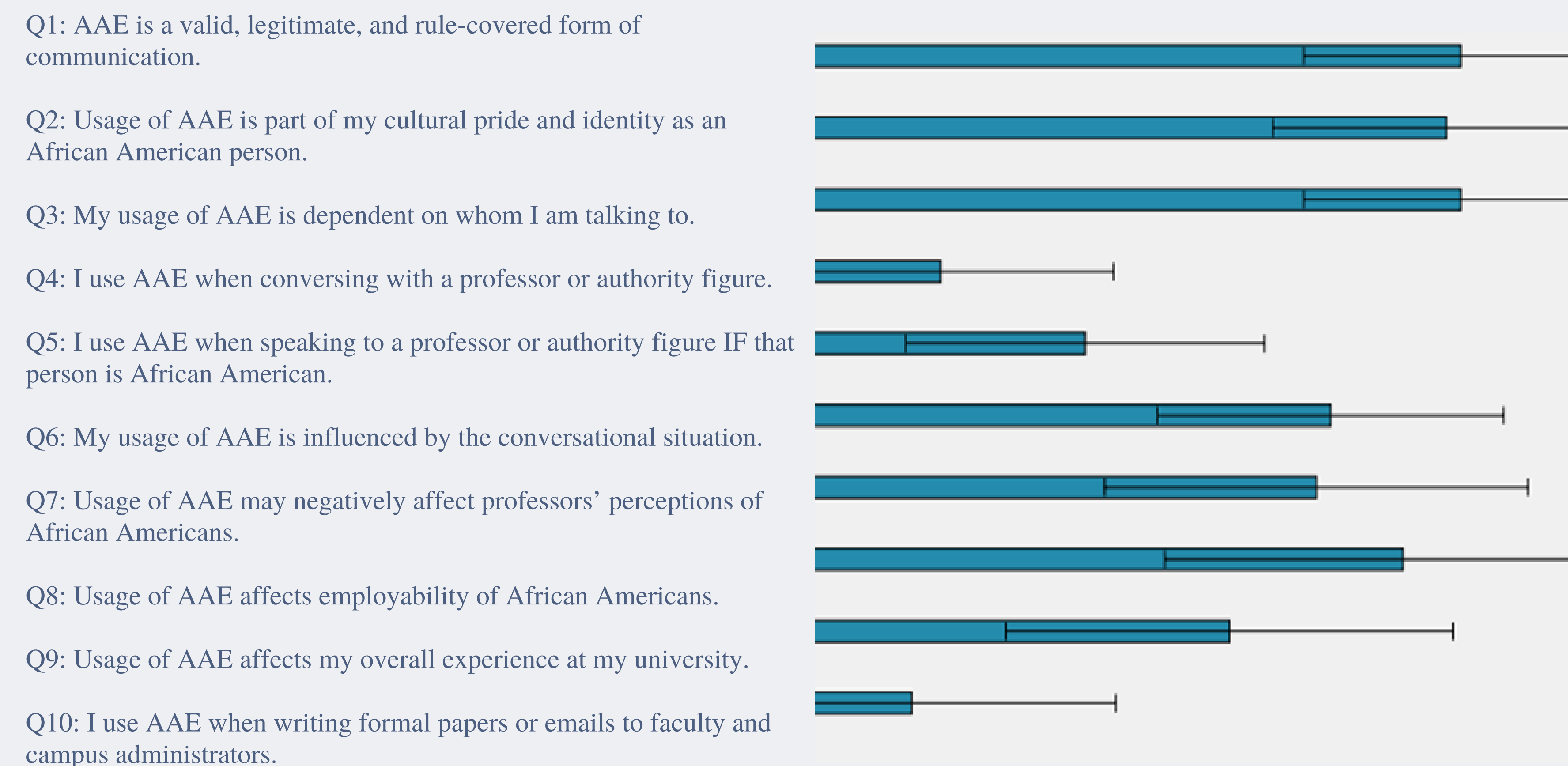
## PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW THEMES

- Experiences of Hyper-visibility amongst peers.
- Constant feeling of isolation in historically white spaces.
- Code-switching as a mechanism of self-defense.
- Hyper-awareness of space they are navigating.
- Embracing one's Blackness and the practice of being unapologetic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- In 2004, Wheeler and Swords developed a research model that shows when classrooms shift from a monodialectal, monocultural models to more multidialectal, multicultural models, Black students experience a transformation of experience that impacts their academic performance, but at the moment, little research as been done to understand its affects on students' socioemotional health.
- Black undergraduate students consistently express how, "residential and campus life lack[s] students, faculty and staff who [are] culturally competent or able to create opportunities for Black students to exist holistically without experiencing racial incidents (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2017).
- When Black students express that they feel adept at code-switching, it is linked with other experiences like improved mental health outcomes and a stronger sense of cultural belonging. With our study, we are hoping to extend this literature by survailling the ways in which Black undergraduate students are conscious of their use of code-switching as survival and the effects of navigating a historically white space.

## PRELIMINARY SURVEY DATA



“There's an extra weight of stress when you notice that people didn't expect you to be here. Like, how many times do I have to prove myself?”

“As far as mental health, I'd be lying if I said it didn't affect me. I don't like walking around being constantly aware of how people perceive me.”

## RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

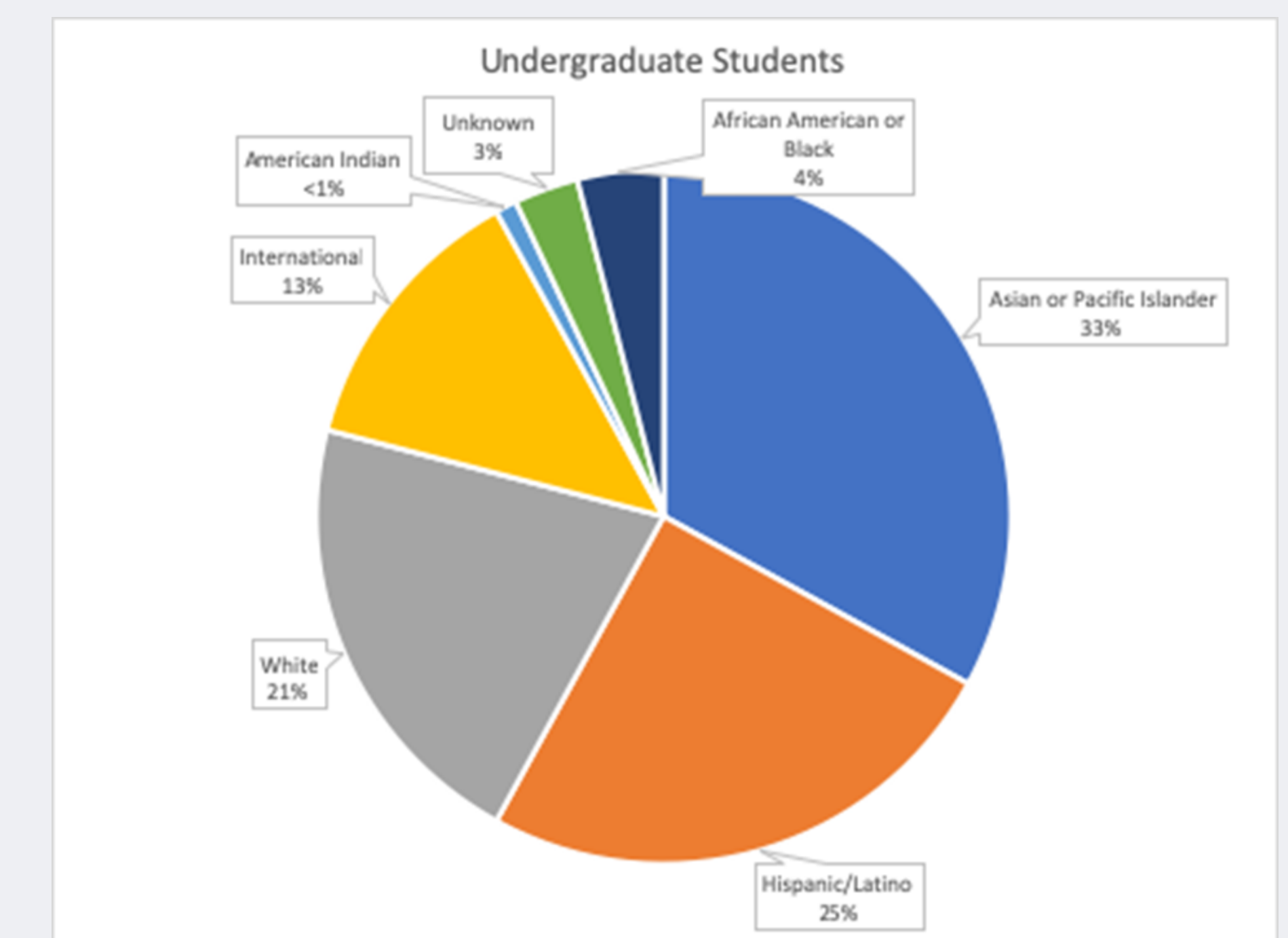


Figure 1.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Recruitment will continue throughout this year and 2021 to interview more Black undergraduate students at UCI.
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses will be conducted among survey and interview data, including comparative analyses among academic majors.
- We hope to expand the study to other universities throughout the state and country, informing university efforts for diversity and inclusion.

## REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Big shoutout to my advisor Dr. Gatlin, the project lead, Breana, and the entire research lab!
- This study was funded by the UC Office of Inclusive Excellence
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