

# Should AI Mimic People?

## Understanding AI-Supported Writing Technology Among Black Users



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Jay Cunningham



Erica Adams



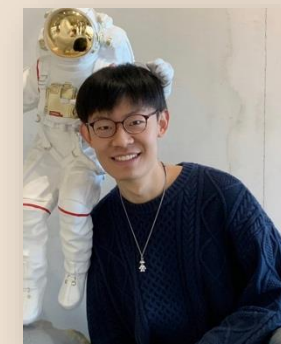
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Daniela Rosner



Access paper here!

<https://tinyurl.com/k29wxr5t>

**W**  
HUMAN CENTERED  
DESIGN & ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Lab in the Wild

**TAT** Lab

Basoah

Mirren

# Basoah

298,377<sup>th</sup>

Most Common  
surname in the World

Approximately 1,276  
people bear this  
surname

① MOST PREVALENT IN:



Ghana

① HIGHEST DENSITY IN:



Ghana

<https://forebears.io/surnames/basoah>

6x

# Mirren

1,710,039<sup>th</sup>

Most Common  
surname in the World

Approximately 114  
people bear this  
surname

① MOST PREVALENT IN:



Scotland

① HIGHEST DENSITY IN:



Scotland

<https://forebears.io/surnames/mirren>

Conducted in  
Microsoft Word

# RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the expectations, apprehensions, and perspectives of Black American users regarding AI-supported writing technology (AISWT)?

Caldwell-Colbert, A. Toy, Jessica Henderson-Daniel, and G. Rita Dudley-Grant, 'The African Diaspora', in John D. Robinson, and Larry C. James (eds), *Diversity in Human Interactions: The Tapestry of America* (New York, 2003; online edn, Oxford Academic, 22 Mar. 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195143904.003.0003>,



# STUDY DESIGN

Participant ID	Pseudonym	Age Range	Gender	Highest level of education obtained
P1	Purple Lizzard	18 - 25 years old	Woman	Bachelor's
P2	N/A	26 - 34 years old	Woman	Bachelor's
P3	N/A	18 - 25 years old	Man	Associate's
P4	N/A	18 - 25 years old	Woman	Bachelor's
P5	N/A	26 - 34 years old	Man	Bachelor's
P6	Black Tiger	26 - 34 years old	Man	Master's
P7	Blue Bird	26 - 34 years old	Woman	Bachelor's
P8	MamaAfrika	26 - 34 years old	Woman	Bachelor's
P9	N/A	18 - 25 years old	Woman	High School Diploma/ GED
P10	N/A	26 - 34 years old	Man	Bachelor's
P11	N/A	18 - 25 years old	Man	High School Diploma/ GED
P12	N/A	35 - 44 years old	Man	Bachelor's
P13	N/A	18 - 25 years old	Woman	Bachelor's

Participants were allowed to self-select their own pseudonym if they so chose to

# STUDY DESIGN

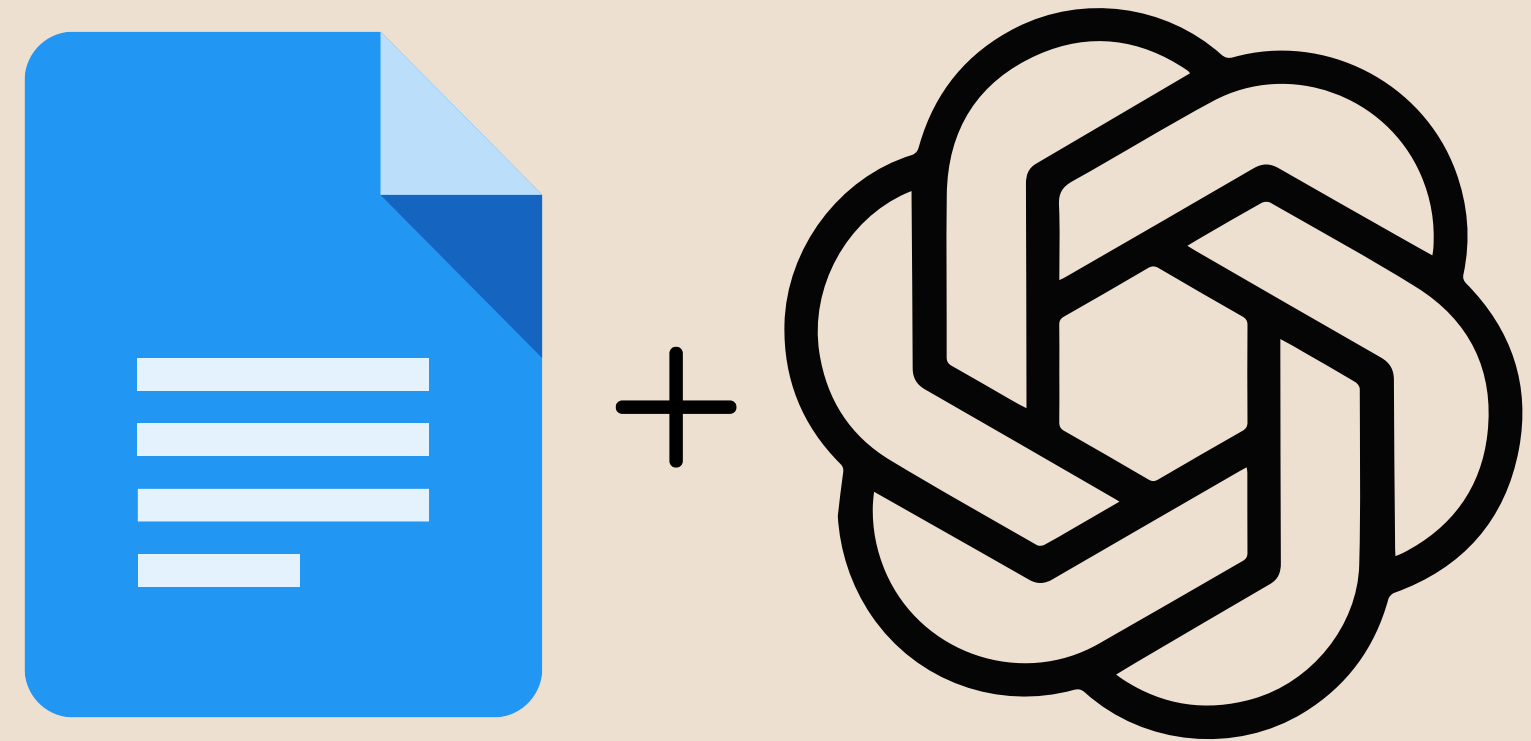


1:1 Virtual Interviews

# STUDY DESIGN



1:1 Virtual Interviews



Observation

# Prompt

*Pretend there is a time that you heard an interesting rumor/ gossip/ tea and you just had to text your bestie/ best friend. In at least 5 lines, we would like you to type out the story as if you were texting them now. Try to be as natural as possible in your writing, feel free to use slang or terms that you are most comfortable with. We are not here to test you but more so the technology that you are interacting with. Don't worry about your grammar, spelling or anything of that sort. If you make a mistake, don't change or alter it.*



Girl, so I saw on the SRT that that lil rapper lil tae died or sum like that.

Not really sur what is going on buttttttttt her family is being a lil sus about the whole thing

THEEEEEENNNNNN there was some news that she was alive like wtf is going on but plaes ket me know if ou are about ready to talk about it

Also I am glad tha the whole Jamie Fox thing was well not a hoax but it did not last tath long

WE AERE WLL PRAYIN FOR JAMIEEEEE :( but I saw that he was in a movei so tithing everything is goo now

Participant Generated

*Continue my story with an additional ten more sentences ensuring to keep my tone and vernacular consistent*

Girl, you won't believe the latest twist in this whole lil Tae situation. Just when we thought things were settled, it's like a rollercoaster of crazy! So, get this, turns out lil Tae ain't dead at all. I know, right? It's like a plot from one of them thriller movies.

But hold up, it ain't that simple. Her family's acting all sketchy about it. Like, why keep that under wraps? Suspicion central, for real. People are talking, theories flying left and right, trying to figure out what's really going on behind the scenes.

And I gotta give you the 411 on Jamie Foxx. I feel you, we were all praying hard for him. That whole thing had us holding our breath. But guess what, girl? He's back in action, making movies like ain't nothing happened. That's the Jamie we love, right?

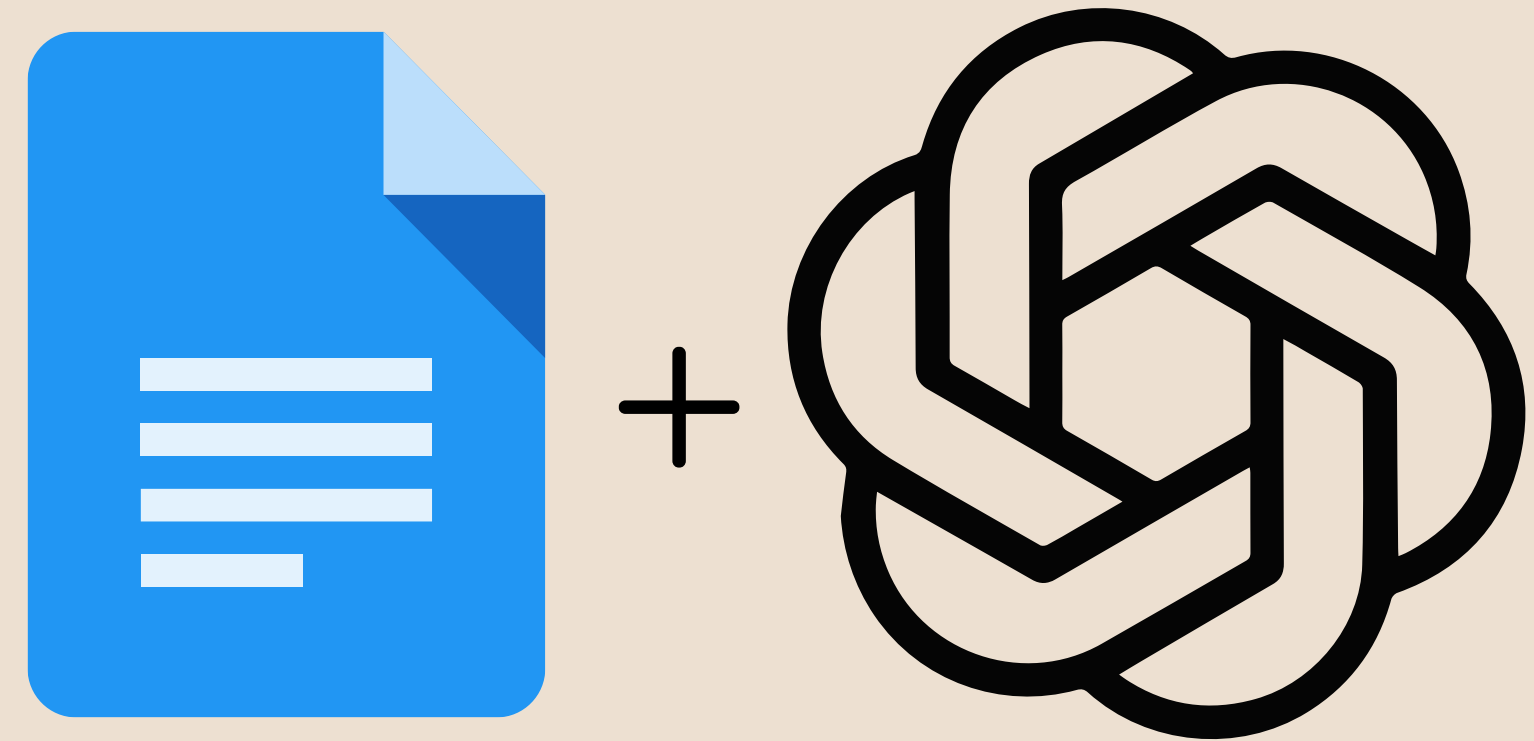
But still, we gotta stay woke. The world's wild, and you never know what's gonna drop next. I'll hit you up as soon as I hear more about this lil Tae saga. Until then, keep those prayers going, and let's hope this rollercoaster ride slows down a bit.

ChatGPT Generated

# STUDY DESIGN



1:1 Virtual Interviews



Observation

# FINDINGS

- 1 Participants felt AISWT was neglecting the Black communities
- 2 Participant's felt AISWT poorly imitated AAVE

AISWT - AI-supported writing technology  
AAVE - African American Vernacular English

# African American Vernacular English

dialect of American English rooted in the grammatical shifts and  
creoles that developed during the transatlantic slave trade

Dacon, J., Liu, H., & Tang, J. (2022). Evaluating and Mitigating Inherent Linguistic Bias of African American English through Inference. In N. Calzolari, C.-R. Huang, H. Kim, J. Pustejovsky, L. Wanner, K.-S. Choi, P.-M. Ryu, H.-H. Chen, L. Donatelli, H. Ji, S. Kurohashi, P. Paggio, N. Xue, S. Kim, Y. Hahm, Z. He, T. K. Lee, E. Santus, F. Bond, & S.-H. Na (Eds.), Proceedings of the 29th International Conference on Computational Linguistics (pp. 1442–1454). International Committee on Computational Linguistics. <https://aclanthology.org/2022.coling-1.124>

# **Black users feel a sense of otherness when using AISWT**

AISWT - AI-supported writing technology

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There is a consistent experience of words common within their community not recognized by language technology leading participants to a collective conclusion that the technology simply "wasn't built for us."

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There is a consistent experience of words common within their community not recognized by language technology leading participants to a collective conclusion that the technology simply "wasn't built for us."

This experience might result in a sense of otherness, continually experiencing the feeling of their name being singled out as incorrect, even though they are fully aware that it is not.

AISWT - AI-supported writing technology

# Black users feel a sense of otherness when using AISWT

Excerpt from observation

GIRLLLLL

You would not believe what I just heard!!

Bruhh so basically akua was trying to call me on the phone

“my name is spelt this way or just other—other Black people's names or just like anything that's not White. Like it just—I **hate that red squiggly thing that comes under it** just feels so.. I hate it. I hate it, absolutely hate it” - P2

AISWT - AI-supported writing technology

# Participants grapple with the challenge of finding common ground between AISWT and AAVE

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“That Quillbot, that's when I start to see I'm like, but I said it the right way or I use the proper terminology or you know, I said [...] things the right way, but **it just completely changes it and it just doesn't understand it.**”

- P6

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# Participants grapple with the challenge of finding common ground between AISWT and AAVE

Some felt AISWT should aim to understand AAVE and effectively communicate in AAVE when necessary, emphasizing the importance of avoiding stereotypes in the process.



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“Having something else regurgitate that back to me does not feel great at all because like, **that's what I use and that's what my community uses and I can't identify with ChatGPT like that.** So the fact that that's being told back to me after I put my thing in there, it's like, oh, **you're making a lot of assumptions right now [..]** so it just doesn't make me feel comfortable.”

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Some participant's felt protective of AAVE and believed it should remain within the community rather than being diluted by widespread usage



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**Where do we go from here?**

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*Tradeoffs Between Imitation and Inclusion*

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AAVE - African American Vernacular English

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## *Tradeoffs Between Imitation and Inclusion*

What does it mean for AISWT to “**accurately**” understand AAVE without rehearsing legacies of **harmful appropriation**?

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What does it mean for AISWT to “**accurately**” understand AAVE without rehearsing legacies of **harmful appropriation**?

## *Complicating Trust*

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How can we **empower and invigorate AAVE** without resorting to methods that **reinforce structural exclusion and harm**, prompting a deeper exploration of the factors influencing people's engagement and **trust in a system**?

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## *Designing for/against Social Difference*

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## *Designing for/against Social Difference*

Is it possible or even preferable to design for the **liberatory experiences of Black users** when categories of blackness operate as, and **potentially reproduce social difference**?

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AAVE - African American Vernacular English





Access paper here!  
<https://tinyurl.com/k29wxr5t>

Our study addresses linguistic disparities in AISWTs for Black users, revealing significant psychological and experiential impact of these disparities. The major findings in our paper illuminate the pressing need for AISWTs to evolve into a more inclusive, nuanced, and culturally aware technology.



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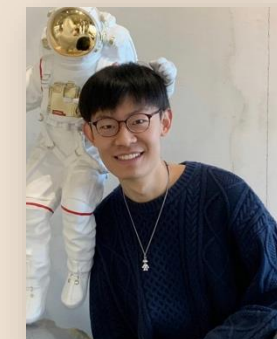
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Research Portfolio  
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