The Online #StopAsianHate Movement: More Global and BTS-Driven Than You'd Think

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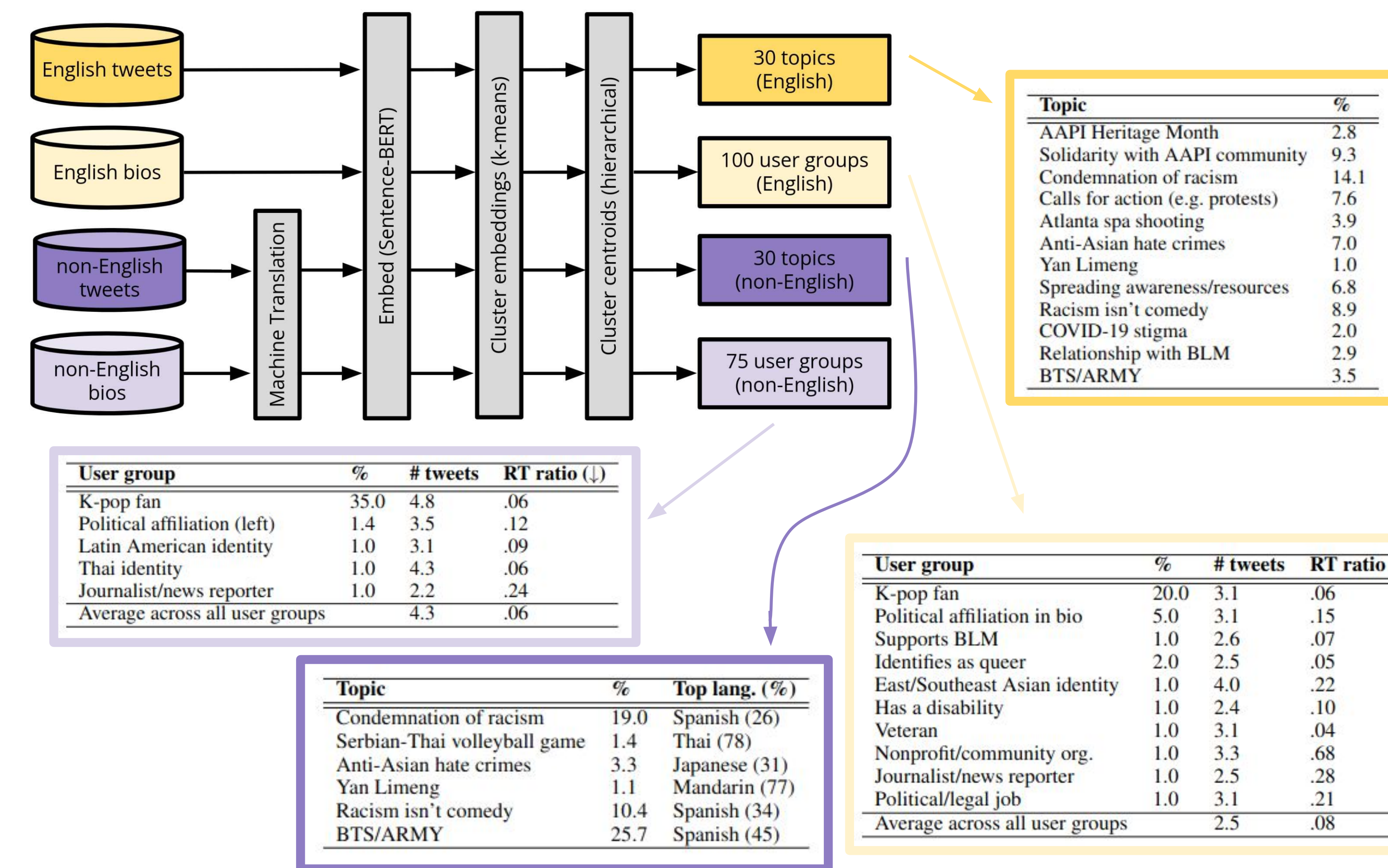
Research Questions

The #StopAsianHate (SAH) movement is a social movement against violence targeting Asians and Asian Americans.

What are the topics in SAH, and do they change over time?
Who are the main users driving conversation?
Do English and non-English topics/users differ?

Topic and User Modeling

Approach: we (1) translate non-English tweets/bios, (2) embed tweets/bios using Sentence-BERT, (3) cluster embeddings, (4) order clusters in semantically coherent way, and (5) manually label clusters

Topic	%
AAPI Heritage Month	2.8
Solidarity with AAPI community	9.3
Condemnation of racism	14.1
Calls for action (e.g. protests)	7.6
Atlanta spa shooting	3.9
Anti-Asian hate crimes	7.0
Yan Limeng	1.0
Spreading awareness/resources	6.8
Racism isn't comedy	8.9
COVID-19 stigma	2.0
Relationship with BLM	2.9
BTS/ARMY	3.5

User group	%	# tweets	RT ratio (↓)
K-pop fan	35.0	4.8	.06
Political affiliation (left)	1.4	3.5	.12
Latin American identity	1.0	3.1	.09
Thai identity	1.0	4.3	.06
Journalist/news reporter	1.0	2.2	.24
Average across all user groups		4.3	.06

User group	%	# tweets	RT ratio (↓)
K-pop fan	20.0	3.1	.06
Political affiliation in bio	5.0	3.1	.15
Supports BLM	1.0	2.6	.07
Identifies as queer	2.0	2.5	.05
East/Southeast Asian identity	1.0	4.0	.22
Has a disability	1.0	2.4	.10
Veteran	1.0	3.1	.04
Nonprofit/community org.	1.0	3.3	.68
Journalist/news reporter	1.0	2.5	.28
Political/legal job	1.0	3.1	.21
Average across all user groups		2.5	.08

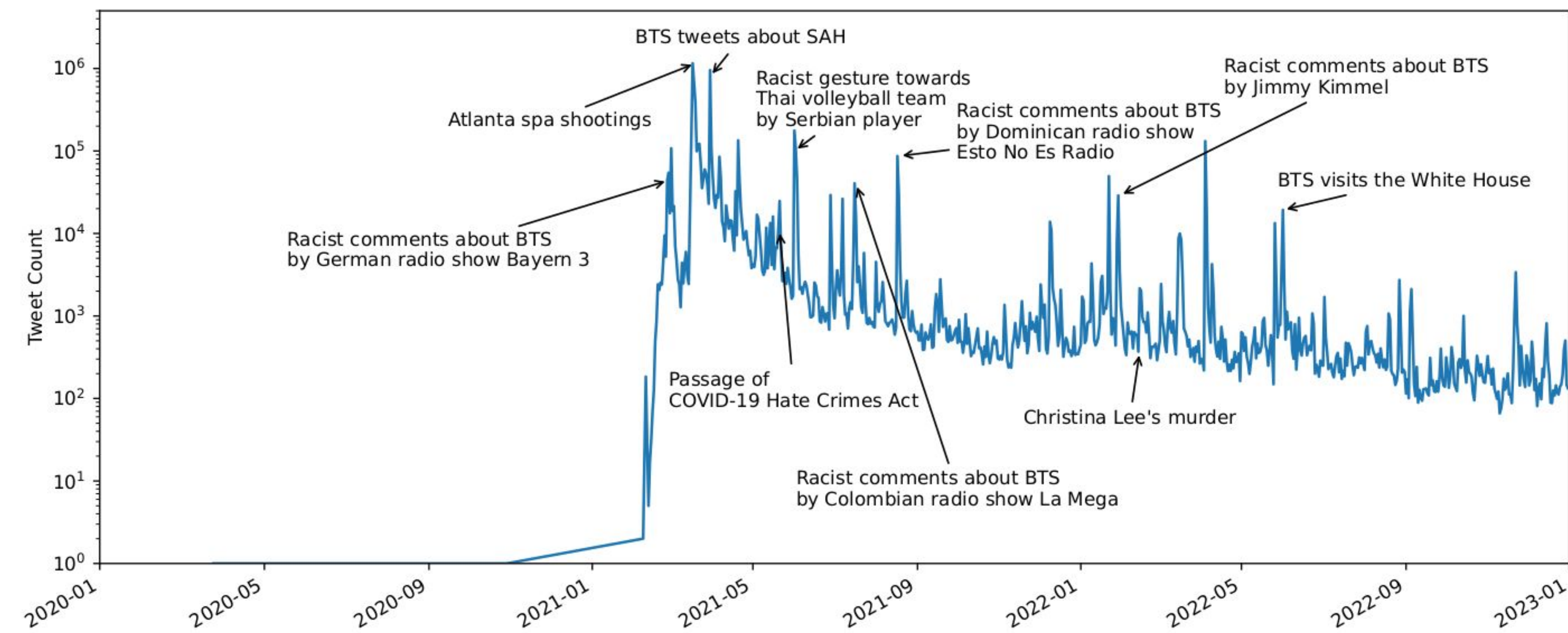| Topic	%	Top lang. (%)
Condemnation of racism	19.0	Spanish (26)
Serbian-Thai volleyball game	1.4	Thai (78)
Anti-Asian hate crimes	3.3	Japanese (31)
Yan Limeng	1.1	Mandarin (77)
Racism isn't comedy	10.4	Spanish (34)
BTS/ARMY	25.7	Spanish (45)

Example bios from "K-pop fan" user group:
*♡B T S #방탄소년단 HELLO I AM A.R.M.Y :) 메인지민,정국 #kookmin #Allmin ★ ⁷)((*
love you more than love BTS ♡

Example tweets from "COVID-19 stigma" topic:
#StopAsianHate If you call Covid-19 the Chinese Virus, you part of the problem.
The Asian community has been experiencing racism long before COVID, however with this virus there's been too much of an increase in Asian hate & violence against the community #StopAsianHate

Data

All tweets with "#stopasianhate" posted from 2020-2022, totaling 6.5M tweets from 2.2M users

Findings

Local to global: broad shift in topic from violent crime in the US, e.g. *Atlanta spa shootings*, to general anti-Asian sentiment globally, e.g. *Dominican radio host makes racist joke about BTS*
- Shift from policing anti-Asian violence to policing anti-Asian language
- Substantial participation from non-US countries

K-pop activism: largest group of users are K-pop fans, making up more than ⅕ of English users and ⅓ of non-English users
- Fan activism had significant impact on sustaining the movement

Divided opinions on Black and Asian solidarity: the main tension within SAH is between Black and Asian communities
- While we find broad stated support for BLM, a small subset of users express anti-Black sentiment while another small subset are upset with lack of solidarity between the communities

Black people choosing to be racist against Asians is truly an interesting choice. Stop blackwashing asians. Stop harassing asians. #StopAsianHate
We support #BlackLivesMatter and this is what we get nah #StopAsianHate

Summary & Future Work

- The largest study of the online SAH movement to date and the first to examine non-English tweets and users, which constitute ⅓ of tweets and ¼ of users
- Identified major topics and user groups driving conversation within SAH and how they evolved over time
- Ongoing work investigating, do SAH tweets lead or follow mainstream media news?