

THE IMAGE OF LATVIA AND LATVIANS ON JAPANESE TWITTER: REFLECTIONS ON PEOPLE

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Abstract

As Japanese tourists to Latvia have quintupled during the last seven years, polarized information regarding Latvians in Japanese on Twitter used by 45 million Japanese has likewise increased and keeps shaping the image of Latvia, affecting the further inbound tourist dynamics. The purpose of this study is to analyze Japanese tweets published from 2006 to 2013 reflecting the characteristics of Latvians. The methodology of acquisition and sentiment analysis of Japanese tweets is provided along with content analysis of tweets collated in five groups – 1) the historical, political and intersocietal view, 2) the bright side of Latvians, 3) the dark side of Latvians, 4) the surprising side of Latvians, and 5) a time-wise dense feed of tweets.

Keywords: *digital humanities, ethnography, social media, tourism, natural language processing.*

Introduction

During the last seven years the number of Japanese tourists to Latvia has quintupled, attracting more than 29.5 thousand visitors in 2018 (CSP 2019). The circulation of the information regarding Latvia and Latvians in Japanese has risen on Twitter used by 45 million Japanese, which is five million more than a year before [Nussey, Ingram 2018], yet the polarization of experiences has been shown likewise. Therefore, the image of the relatively poorly known Latvia is shaped by responses on the open space, i. e., the Internet. It directly affects the further inbound tourist dynamics. A Digital Humanities and Folkloristics research reflecting the Latvianness via Japanese point of view may provide solutions in several sectors, thus eventually propelling economic performances, especially after lifting the travel restrictions necessitated by the *SARS-CoV-2* pandemic outbreak. The purpose of this study is

to analyze tweets published in Japanese reflecting the characteristics of Latvians as people a segment of tweets from year 2006 to 2013 as a part of entire data acquired from the inception of Twitter (2006) until the end of the Centennial Year of the Republic of Latvia (2018).

Cultural Characteristics of Japanese Communication

Edward Hall [Hall 1976] illustrates the implicitness and indirectness of Japanese as a high-context culture: “It is very seldom in Japan that someone will correct you or explain things to you. You are supposed to know, and they get quite upset when you don’t.” A Japanese “will talk around and around the point, in effect putting all the pieces in place except the crucial one. Placing it properly – this keystone – is the role of his interlocutor. To do this for him is an insult and a violation of his individuality.” Richard Lewis [Lewis 2006] describes Japanese as a reactive culture – courteous, amiable, accommodating, compromisers, and good listeners who avoid confrontation and don’t interrupt. Mitsuko and Katsunobu Izutsu [Izutsu Mitsuko, Izutsu Katsunobu 2019] explain the popularity of tweeting among Japanese as “the Twitter nation” due to the fact that Japanese employs ideographs, *kanji*, which can convey much more information within the 140-character limit of message as “a short burst of inconsequential information” than English. Speakers do not always expect to invite joint attention to what they say. They sometimes want to simply murmur their thought with no intention to communicate them to others. On the contrary to other ideographic scripts, Japanese provides rich grammatical devices for monologization to fulfill such a desire, and Twitter is an ideal platform to realize it. Consequently, it is a particularly useful tool for studying the perception of another culture among the members of high-context reactive cultures.

The search for previous studies of Japanese tweets in the Baltic Sea region did not yield the desired results. Tuomo Hiippala et al. [2020] indicate that the distribution of Japanese tweets in Finland corresponds to their tourism preferences, yet the small size of Japanese population in Finland raises the question whether the spatial pattern reflects places of residence or visits. Furthermore, unless a detailed analysis of linguistic content is conducted, the data may be generated also by businesses communicating with Japanese tourists or Finns who study Japanese. Although Sachiko Hatanaka [1998] has studied Lithuania as viewed by Japanese, apart from the ongoing doctoral study which this article is a part of, and comparative studies of Latvian and Japanese cultural aspects by Uģis Nastevičs [Nastevičs 2014, 2017, 2021], and a bachelor’s thesis on the adaptation of Japanese in Latvia by Madars Ozoliņš [Ozoliņš 2015], according to publicly available information, there has not been much attention given to studying the image of Latvia and Latvians among Japanese either on Twitter or elsewhere.

Acquisition Of Tweets

Twitter provides its own application programming interface for acquisition of tweets (*Twitter Search API*), which offers 180 queries each 15 minutes acquiring a maximum of a 100 tweets per query; moreover, the access is granted for tweets published only within the last seven day (Twitter 2019). *Google* search results reveal a multitude of tweet acquiring scripts developed by various authors, however, most of them are dependent on the aforementioned *API*, which requires logging in with an authentication code acquired in advance. Among others an open-access tool *twitterscraper* on *GitHub* developed by Ahmet Taşpınar [Taşpınar 2016], a data scientist, *M.Sc.* from Delft University of Technology, proved being the only solution¹ capable to acquire tweets without any of the aforementioned limitations, and hence was selected for this study.

In order to acquire tweets published in Japanese from 2006 to 2018 including the morpheme *Latvia*, and store the data in a file *ratobia.json* using a *Windows 10 Home* workstation with *Python 3.6.2 (32-bit)* software installed, further actions were carried out. First, extract files from the archive *twitterscraper-master.zip* (downloaded from the *GitHub* site) to a certain directory on the workstation's hard drive. In a *command-line interface* (run it by holding the *Shift* key with a mouse right-click on an empty area within the directory) type the text – *python setup.py install* –, and install the tool by clicking the *Enter* key. Then, using a text editor *Notepad++* create, save, close, and run within the directory a *Python* script file *tweet_harvester.pyw* with the following contents, specifying the search query and language within double quotation marks (ラトビア OR ラトヴィア OR ラトヴィヤ *lang:ja*), the first (*-bd*) and the last (*-ed*) date of the period to harvest, and the file name (*-o*) where to store the acquired data:

```
# -*- coding: utf-8 -*-
#coding: UTF-8
import codecs, json, os
os.system('twitterscraper "ラトビア OR ラトヴィア OR ラトヴィヤ
lang:ja "
-bd 2006-01-01 -ed 2019-01-01 -o ratobia.json')
print "done"
```

¹ As an alternative to the *twitterscraper*, a new solution – *Scweet* developed by Yassine Ait Jeddi [Altimis 2021], a data scientist from Casablanca – became available at the end of 2020. After its installation, this *Python* script compiles the data similarly to a *csv* file:

```
# -*- coding: utf-8 -*-
#coding: UTF-8
from Scweet.scweet import scrap
data=scrap(words=['ラトビア', 'ラトヴィア', 'ラトヴィヤ'], start_
date="2006-01-01",max_date="2019-01-01", lang="ja", display_
type="Latest", headless=True, interval=30)
```

As the acquisition of tweets is completed, a new file *ratobia.json* is created within the directory. In order to proceed to the content analysis of the data with *Microsoft Excel 2016*, the *json* file was converted to a sorted *xlsx* spreadsheet file using an open-access online solution (Data Design Group 2018). This yielded **377,235 tweets**, with a maximum of 140 characters each – a text amount comparable to 1.4 times volume of the Cabinet of Folksongs (*Dainu skapis*), the UNESCO World Heritage monument made in 1880 comprising 268,815 leaflets, each having a Latvian folk song handwritten. A segment of **7521 tweets** (incl. 313 by the author of this article) which contain the Japanese morpheme meaning *Latvian* in the sense of “a person, an individual, or a people” – including 6070 instances of “ラトビア人” and 1451 instances of “ラトヴィア人” – extracted to another file *ratobiajin.json* to be analyzed further in this paper. The spreadsheet contains columns: *row_id*, *root_id*, *fullname* (full name of the Twitter user), *id* (tweet id), *likes* (count of likes), *replies* (count of replies), *retweets* (count of retweets), *text* (text of the tweet), *timestamp* and *user* (as in *@username*).

If geotagged (geolocalized) tweets from within a certain area are required, the query can be modified, specifying the *GPS* coordinates and the radius – *56.7718330451,24.5974875554 within:360km* – corresponding the average center point and the radius encompassing the area of the Baltic States. According to a previous study for the image of Daugavpils, however, there is still a very small share, i. e. no more than 5%, of tweets published with geolocation data enabled [Nastevičs 2018: 335, 343] – this option was available on Twitter from 19 November 2009 to 18 June 2019 [Benton 2019]. This yielded **8600 geotagged tweets** (incl. 18 geotagged tweets by the author of this article) published in Japanese from within this area, where 534 of them contain a morpheme meaning *Latvia*, and among them just 9 geotagged tweets contain a morpheme meaning *Latvian*, e. g.:

*“They seem to love sweets. Chocolates, candies and jams are extremely sweet! Yesterday, when I was taking a bus ride, a Latvian lad gave me a candy.”*¹
 [17.01.2014 @ilfbatoam] *“Yesterday there was a birthday party for my Latvian friend, yet the venue was the Museum of the History of Riga! In Latvia which cannot be described as a rich one, cultural facilities also show a little ingenuity in terms of their source of income. They rent out the place for private events as well!”*²
 [12.10.2014 @rina_okumura] *“To sum up yesterday, when I did not tweet at all, straightforward, I got invited to a house of a Latvian high-school girl, whom I had*

¹ 甘いものが大好きみたい!チョコとかお菓子とかジャムもすごい甘いよ!昨日バスに乗ってたラトビア人の兄ちゃんがお菓子くれた^o^笑

² 昨日はラトビア人の友人の誕生日会だったけど、会場がリガ歴史博物館!□□お金持ちとは言えないラトビア。文化施設は、収入源にも一工夫。プライベートのイベントにも場所を貸しちゃう!

*met for the first time.*¹ [22.03.2015 @nandef] “*The Christmas market of Riga. It was much better than I imagined. Snugly, yet each thing there was a lovely one, and all vendors were very kind. Seems that Latvians are nice.*”² “*The Cat House. Well, this is Art Nouveau, too. A wish to become admitted to the Hanseatic League was ignored just because one was a Latvian. So, as a revenge one turned cats’ butts towards the adversary. I can relate to this feeling.*”³ [13.12.2018 @mayulattevino]

These geotagged tweets published from within the area of the Baltic States indicate the diet preference, ingenuity of cultural facilities, and hospitality of Latvians, as well as exceeding visitor’s expectations, and the appreciation of wit of the unadmitted to the Great Guild (not the forenamed Hanseatic League).

Sentiment Analysis

The sentiment analysis of tweets in Japanese was originally done by the script *jNLPjSentiments* in the Japanese Natural Language Processing Libraries *jProcessing* by Pulkit Kathuria [2017] based on the Japanese syntactic parser *Cabocha*, the Japanese Wordnet database *Wordnet-jp*, and the sentiment lexicon *SentiWordnet* for the word sense disambiguation. The script calculates the total positivity score and total negativity score of the words contained in the given text sample, indicating the overall polarity or neutrality of the contents. However, during ongoing study, the Dictionary based Sentiment Analysis module for Japanese *oseti*, developed by Ikegami Yukino (池上有希乃, 2019) in 2019, using the *Japanese Sentiment Polarity Dictionary* (日本語評価極性辞書), and taking into account both grammatical negation and double negative, yielded more reliable results, and hence was chosen for further analysis. Here is a *Python* script *sentiment-calculator.pyw* which has been customized for the purpose of this study, joining lines of multi-lined tweets:

```
# -*- coding: utf-8 -*-
#coding: UTF-8
import oseti, re, json
an = oseti.Analyzer()
stri = json.load(open('ratobiajin.
json', 'r', encoding='utf-8'))
i = 0
```

¹ 全くツイートしていなかった昨日1日を端的にまとめると、初対面のラトビア人女子高生の家に招かれた

² リーガのクリスマスマーケット。想像よりもかなり良かった。こじんまりとしてるけどひとつひとつ可愛らしくて売り子さんがみんなすごい親切♡□ラトビア人が良いって事なのかしら。

³ 猫の家。□これもまあユーゲントシュティールだね。□ハンザ同盟に入れて欲しかったんだけどラトビア人と言うだけで相手にしてもらえなかったもんだから腹いせに猫のお尻を向けちゃったという。気持ちはわかるw

```

f = open('ratobiajin-oseti.txt', 'w', encoding='utf-8')
for x in stri:
    stri = re.sub(r"...|..+|!!+", u".", u'
'.join(x["text"].
    splitlines())) .rstrip('.')
    u = an.analyze(stri)
    f.write(str(x["timestamp"])[:-9]+"
¥t@"+str(x["username"])+ "¥t"+str(sum(u))+ "¥t"+str(stri)+
"¥t"+ "¥n")
    print(format(i, '06d'), "OK")
    i += 1
f.close()

```

The results of the sentiment analysis in the graph (Figure 1) show the monthly dynamics of sentiment polarity score, which is primarily positive. Months when more than 50% of sentiment score has been negative have the exact tweet count indicated with a leading minus sign, whereas months when there have been published more than 100 tweets regarding Latvians are indicated underlined.

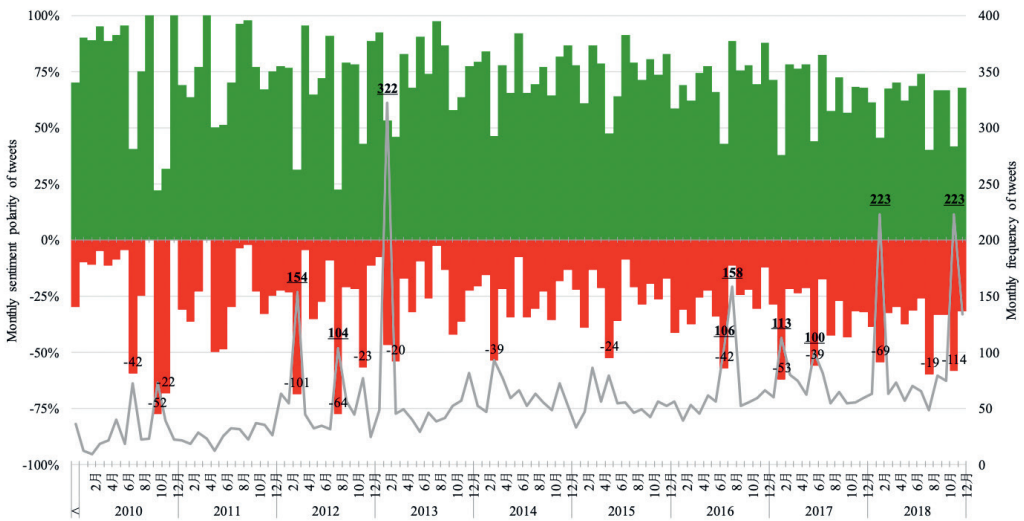


Figure 1. **Monthly sentiment polarity** (exact tweet count shown when monthly sentiment polarity of tweets has been scored as rather negative) **and frequency** (values larger than 100 are shown underlined) **of tweets.**

Content Analysis

In the content analysis tweets were collated in five groups: 1) the historical, political and intersocietal view of Latvians, 2) the bright side of Latvians, 3) the dark side of Latvians (this mostly covers the content published in months of the high ratio of negative sentiment tweets), 4) the surprising side of Latvians, and 5) a time-wise dense feed of tweets due to a particular event happening.

The historical, political and intersocietal view of Latvians. There are several tweets on complicated relationships between Latvians and Russians, topical issues and attitudes regarding their respective languages, characteristics of mentality, and incredible interaction between Latvians and Japanese going through a bad time under the occupation. Among illustrative tweets quoted here, there are some published by a Latvian user *@kinokoyani*, while other tweets are written by Japanese users.

“Recently a friend who has a Latvian grandma told that, when she learned that Russian troops are invading, she escape with only clothes she happened to wear made her survive; so, in emergency one should trust one’s arbitrary decision. The point is survival instinct, isn’t it?”¹ [16.03.2011 @naomishibata] “Recently I got to know a Latvian living in Japan. In recent years youth cannot speak Russian anymore. Time flies.”² [08.04.2010 @sougakushijin] “Supporters of Skonto Rīga are all men, about 10 in number. After the game they high-fived with athletes. Their cheering song wasn’t in Latvian but in Russian. It was unexpected for I thought that this was a rather Latvian club.”³ [20.04.2011 @nagatsuka_hrv] “Taking into consideration that when Latvia got its first independence in 1918 a nation-state with unprecedented framework of ‘Latvians’ established depending on Latvian language, the lately voting whether to make Russian the second state language poses a big challenge adding Russian to Latvian language which is the major premise for statehood of Latvia.”⁴ [13.01.2012 @noripey] “Just because one moved to Latvia during former Soviet era, you must not recognize two state languages. Latvians who didn’t recognize Russian as the official language, Good

¹ 最近、ラトビア人の祖母を持つ友達が、ロシア軍が侵攻してきていると分かった時、着の身着のままで逃げて助かった経験を聞かされていて、有事では自分の判断を信じるべき。と強く言っていました。要は生存本能？

² 先ごろ、日本に住むラトビア人と知り合いになった。最近の若い人は、もうロシア語を話せないという。時の経つのは早いものだ。

³ スkonto・リガのサポーターは男ばかりで10人ほど。試合後は選手達とこんな感じでハイタッチをしました…。彼らの応援歌はラトビア語ではなくてロシア語。ラトビア人寄りのクラブだと思っていただけに意外でした。

⁴ ラトビアが1918年第一次独立時、「ラトビア人」という今までになかった外枠をラトビア語に依拠して民族国家を作り上げた歴史をみても、今回のロシア語第二公用語是非に関する投票は、そもそもラトビア国家の大前提であるラトビア語にロシア語が加わるという極めて重大な問題になる。

*Job!*¹ [20.02.2012 @eight1002] “When I said ‘I’m Latvian’, got a response ‘Здравствуйте’ [Hello in Russian]. Somehow it doesn’t make me happy. I’ve once replied with ‘Tere!’ [Hello in Estonian]”² [12.06.2012 @kinokoyani] “Lithuanians are fervent with strong spirit of unity, Latvians are calm individualists, Estonians and Latvians share same pragmatic view on things but have less compromising attitude. ... temperament is shared with related countries – Poland, Germany and Finland.”³ [18.10.2012 @HSDomestas] “Glasses of a Japanese soldier acquired by a Latvian detainee in Siberia by barter for bread. The name is clearly written on it. As for NHK, they are going to make another documentary seeking for the owner.”⁴ [15.01.2013 @yancha7]

The case of glasses bears the name of the former owner Yoshio Shōda (正田好男), a Japanese prisoner of war, who bartered them to a myopic former *Flakhelfer* Alberts Ante (1921–2010), one of more than 4000 Latvian boys drafted into the German Air Force during the World War II, for several bread rations in 1946 at the NKVD filtration camp in Urgal, the Amur Region. A comment on a Japanese blog on 3 June 2007 – a week after the visit of Emperor and Empress of Japan to Latvia, and to the exhibition of the said items – suggests that the glasses case belonged to then 82-year-old father of the commenter Kōichi / Hirokazu Shōda (正田浩一). Yet, further investigation is required to clarify the details of this and other rare evidence of interaction between Japanese and Latvians at Soviet camps – e. g., a poem by Ozare³ Arumi (1946) as a gift to Alberts Ante, a pair of *kokeshi* wooden dolls as a gift to Alfrēds Liepa (1923–³), a Latvian former conscript in the German Army, and a flag of Japan (1949) signed by 41 Japanese as a gift to Bruno Briuks (1914–1971), a Latvian military surgeon, at the NKVD filtration camp in Sakhalin [Ante 2004; Jaunbērziņa 2019; LOM 2019; マキコ 2007].

“They, Latvians, also have the same thoughts towards ethnic Russians [as Japanese have towards Koreans in Japan] – When in Rome, do as the Romans do. If you live in Latvia, do respect Latvia, and do not intervene in the internal

¹ 旧ソ連時代にラトビアに移住したからって、国に2つの言語を認めるなんてことをしてはイケな。ロシア語を公用語として認めなかったラトビア人! Good Job!...

² 「ラトビア人です。」と言うと返信は「ズドラーストブイチェ」です。何か、嬉しくない。一回「テレ!」と言われたけど。

³ リトアニア人は激しやすく団結志向が強い、ラトビア人は冷静で個人主義、エストニア人もラトビア人動揺現実的な物の見方をするが彼らよりは非妥協的。これは各国と関係の深いポーランド・ドイツ・フィンランドと共有されている気質だ...と書いてたのは『ヨーロッパの百年』だったか?他資料にもあった肝

⁴ ラトビアの博物館に、シベリア抑留されていたラトビア人がパンと交換してて入れた日本兵のメガネ。名前がはっきり書いてある。NHKならその持ち主を探し出してもう一本ドキュメンタリー作るところ。

affairs."¹ [17.04.2013 @m42jp] "Speaking to Latvian people in Russian is more likely to make them angry than rejoicing. Latvian language has nothing to do with Russian. Maybe that 'Latvian' was just a Russian born in Latvia?"² [24.04.2013 @kinokoyani] "The message of Tokyo is not necessarily equal to the opinion of Japan as a whole, however in Latvia, there are cases where the message of Riga is the opposite of the general opinion of Latvia. The idea of upgrading Russian to the official language was successfully rejected, but many Latvians even still do speak Russian as a means of compromise."³ [09.05.2013 @HSDomestas] "The prototype of Latvians seems to have been around since the 9th century, but it was only after the 15th century that it was shaped completely. The Latvian people is a type with a long infancy stage... Lithuanians and Estonians shaped as ethnic group around the same time, but because there was the Great nation era, it seems that nowadays Lithuanians are the oldest."⁴ [07.08.2013 @J_M_Tallinn]

These tweets illuminate the issues caused by the "reverse linguistic behavior of indigenous population and minorities, because one minority language – Russian – remains self-sufficient" as a "linguistic consequence of the occupation period of Latvia (1940–1991)" verified by Vineta Poriņa [Poriņa 2019].

The bright side of Latvians. This segment of tweets shares the impression of positive features of Latvians compared to traits of other nations, based on personal interaction and observations.

*"Thank you' in Latvian is 'Paldies'. Latvians are reserved and shy, however, when you become friends, a long-lasting friendship is established."*⁵ [30.09.2010 @finlandcafe] "Came back from the church worship which had a time for a prayer for Japan afterwards. People at the Latvian church prayed together. I received a card with a text: 'Now is the most painful time for your country. May Our Lord

¹ 彼らラトビア人もロシア系に対し「郷に入れば郷に従いなさい。ラトビアに住むなら、ラトビアを尊重し、内政干渉はするな」と思うところは同じ。

² ラトビア人にロシア語でお話しをしたら喜ぶより怒られる可能性が高いです。ラトビア語なんてロシア語と関係が無いですね。もしかしてそのラトビア人はただのラトビア出身ロシア人だったのかな？

³ 東京のメッセージも当然日本全体の意思とはイコールではないけれど、ラトビアの場合、リガ市のメッセージが国内で一般的とされる意思意見と真逆なケースもあるわけで。ロシア語を公用語に格上げするって話は無事否決されたが、それでも多くのラトビア人は歩み寄りの手段としてロシア語を話すのさ

⁴ 一応ラトビア人の原型は9世紀くらいから居た模様口でも完全にまとまったのは15世紀以降とかラトは乳幼児の期間が長かったタイプかな……口リトとエストは民族が今と同じになったのは同時期ごろだけけど、大国時代があったから現代ではリトが一番歳上なのかな

⁵ ラトビア語でありがとうはPaldies(パルディエス)、ラトビア人は内気で恥ずかしがり屋だから友達になると長い友情を築くそう。

and prayers be with you and Japan.”¹ [14.03.2011 @love_testimony] “Thank you! As the Latvian perspective on nature and way of connecting with others are comprehensible to Japanese, I would like to share my thoughts on this further, too.”² [03.09.2011 @tengyo] “Seems that there are many amusing people in the Baltic states. There are many beautiful and joke-understanding Lithuanian and Latvian girls around the aunt [me]. Much better than prideful Russians. Seems that political corruption is advancing here – it perfectly suits me as I’m interested in suspicious communism.”³ [26.07.2012 @ObasamaMadam] “Both Estonians and Latvians basically lack emotional expression, and I thought: ‘Ah, they’re Northern Europeans’, however I got impression that Latvians are people that both tell jokes and laugh hard... Anyway, handsome men are wonderful creatures.”⁴ [01.09.2012 @HSDomestas] “As tourists from Western Europe increase in streets, Latvian fineness (subtlety) becomes prominent, and to me Latvians began to seem similar to Japanese.”⁵ [19.04.2012 @tengyo] “Spent weekend in forest. Latvian girl, I was together with, searched the earth’s surface in the night and showed me what she had found. Amidst sound of wind and swaying trees, she said: ‘In forest there are many really beautiful things of the Nature. Yet, they are not to be waited for, they are to be found by yourself.’”⁶ [17.06.2012 @tengyo]

These Japanese utterances show the perceived Latvian amity, compassion for the East Japan earthquake and tsunami in 2011, similar affection to nature and fineness, beautiful women and handsome men.

The dark side of Latvians. Tweets quoted here have been aggregated mostly in months which have a rather negative sentiment score, especially due to criminal cases featured in media headlines, furthermore some tweets reveal sulkiness, clannishness and other dark traits of Latvian character.

¹ 今、礼拝からもどりました。礼拝後に日本のための祈りの時をもちました。ラトビア人教会の方々と共に祈っていただきました。「今が貴国にとって一番苦しいとき。私たちの主、祈りは、あなたと日本の方々と共にあります。」と書かれたカードもいただきました。

² ありがとうね!ラトビア人の自然観や人とのふれあい方は日本人に通じるものがあるので、そういったところもこれからシェアしていけたらって思ってるよ~☆

³ バルト三国の人違って面白い人が多いのかも?おばさまの周りのリトアニア、ラトビア人の女子は綺麗でギャグのわかる人が多いです。プライドの高いロシア人よりは断然いいわ~ 結構政府の腐敗が進んでるみたいで、怪しげな共産主義に興味あるワタクシにはピッタリ。

⁴ エストニア人もラトビア人も基本は無表情っぽくて「あ、北欧人だ」と思ったのですが、ラトビア人は割と冗談も言うし爆笑もする人々な印象ですね…何にせよケメンは素晴らしい生物です

⁵ 街に西ヨーロッパからの観光客が増えてきたら、ラトビア人の繊細さが際立って、余計にラトビア人と日本人が似てるように思えてきた。

⁶ 週末を森の中で過ごした。一緒にいたラトビア人の女の子が、夜、森の中で地面を探り探り、色んなものを見つけて見せてくれた。風と、木々の揺れる音だけが響く中、「森の中には自然界の本当に美しいものがたくさんある。でもそれは待っててもだめ、こうして自分で見つけなくちゃね。」と言ってくれた。

“I’m busy, read it fast!’ – got bothered. Called the Consulate of Latvia and solved a Latvian name transcription issue. I thought also when travelling in Latvia that people are good, yet not amiable & seem angry in way of reception. The word I’d like to present is ‘smile for 0 yen.’”¹ [04.06.2010 @gez kaz] “After 11 years’ absence 10,000 tabs of LSD confiscated – Latvian woman arrested for contraband at the Narita Airport.”² [05.07.2010 @jjicom] “Man arrested by police for leaving a British fancy restaurant without paying 300,000 yen [2500€]. On November 17 police reported that an unemployed man who repeatedly left a fancy restaurant in London without paying got arrested. Suspect is Latvian Janis Nort...”³ [18.11.2010 @thumsgo] “My unamiable Latvian housemate has come over to borrow printer for 3 times, yet the gratitude was just a blunt ‘Thank you.’ That unfriendly attitude makes me feel being used and I don’t want to cooperate anymore. Next time I’ll refuse saying – ‘I’m sorry it’s run out.’”⁴ [14.01.2011 @udachop] “When I take off earphones, I can hear only voices by Latvians who should have been quite far behind me. Their voices are very loud indeed.”⁵ [01.11.2011 @mimimo1122] “When I asked a Latvian: ‘Why do you have many suicides?’ got answer: ‘The weather is bad throughout the year and mood gets gloomy.’ Seems that the reason quite differs from that in Japan.”⁶ [09.03.2012 @the_taboo_] “Innocent verdict for a Latvian psychoactive drug smuggler due to ‘excessive lack of nervousness as a recipient’: at the lawsuit of accused unemployed citizen of Latvia Z. Klepe[c]kis (32) charged with violating the stimulants control law for smuggling 10 kg of stimulants hidden in stone statue...”⁷ [12.03.2012 @007_div] “The Chiba District Court approved the claim of the Latvian man charged with stimulant trafficking crime: ‘I thought those

¹ 忙しいのよ、早く読みあげて！ と超迷惑がられたが、ひとまずラトビア領事館に電話して、ラトビア人の名前の表記問題は解決……。ラトビアって、旅行したときも思ったけれど、いい人なんだろうけど、愛想がない、というか、デフォルトが怒ってる対応なのよねえ。プレゼントしたい言葉、スマイル0円。

² 11年ぶり、LSD1万片押収＝密輸容疑でラトビア人逮捕－成田空港

³ 英高級レストランで30万円分を無銭飲食、警察が男逮捕：[ロンドン17日ロイター]英ロンドンの高級レストランで無銭飲食を繰り返した無職の男が逮捕された。警察当局が17日発表した。それによると、ラトビア人のジャンス・ノルト容疑...

⁴ ハウスメイトのラトビア人。無愛想。プリンター3回も借りに来たくせに、お礼は、無愛想な Thank you だけ。□愛想悪いと、利用された感がでて、協力しなくなる。□次回は、I’m sorry it’s run out. と言って断るわ。

⁵ イヤホン外すとかなり後ろにいるはずのラトビア人の声ばかり聞こえる…あいつらやっばり声でかいんだよ！

⁶ ラトビア人に「おたく何で自殺多いの？」って聞いたら「年中天気悪いネー、気持ちウツウツ」って言ってたから、あんまり日本とは理由が違うみてえだな。

⁷ 覚醒剤密輸「受け取り役として、あまりに緊張感欠く」ラトビア人に無罪判決：□覚醒(かくせい)剤約10キロを石像に隠し密輸したとして、覚せい剤取締法違反などの罪に問われたラトビア国籍の無職、ザニス・クレペキス被告(32)の裁判...

*were diamonds in the rough, rejecting violation of the stimulants control law, and sentencing to 10 months in prison for diamond smuggling attempt.*²¹ [05.11.2012 @nhk_chiba] “One day a Latvian farmer sadly slouched around. In front of him God appeared and asked why is he so sad. As Latvian started complaining God said: ‘You may make a wish. Yet, whatever you wish, your neighbor will get the same twice as much.’ Latvian thought a bit and said: ‘Pierce my eye, please.’”²² [07.01.2013 @ugisu] “Latvians arrested on suspicion of fake card use: According to the Tourism Police, two Latvian men (53, 56) were arrested for shopping with a counterfeit credit card.”²³ [11.03.2013 @BangkokBlog] “In Latvia, English is normally spoken. Latvia has a population of over 2 million people, and there are no particular industries or resources, making it economically difficult. In order to survive, ordinary Latvians have to learn foreign languages, such as English and German, and develop global business with foreigners. // In reality, the Japanese [athletes] team up with each other during team trainings and matches, and there is very little interaction with Latvians. It’d be due to the language. But they are mates of the same team. // This is not a problem for Japanese players only. Two Georgian players were also fixed to their own nationals, so I warned them. I’ll snap at them, if Latvian players also would fix only to their own nationals and alienate foreigners. FK Auda (2nd league of Latvia) is fair to all athletes.”²⁴ [23.03.2013 @wpscproject]

The drug trafficking by foreigners has been a hot topic on Twitter and other Japanese media causing fervent comments, especially in cases of innocent verdicts for the accused, including those from Latvia. Furthermore, such features as ingratitude,

¹ 【ニュース】覚醒剤密輸の罪に問われたラトビア人の男の裁判員裁判で、千葉地方裁判所は「ダイヤモンドの原石だと思っていた」とする被告の主張を認め、覚醒剤取締法違反の罪にはあたらず、ダイヤモンドの原石を無許可で輸入しようとした罪にとどまるとして懲役10か月の判決を言い渡しました。

² 【ラトビア民話】ある日悲しげに俯いて歩くラトビア人の農夫の前に翁の姿で神が現れ、なぜ悲しいのかと聞く。愚痴り始める農夫に神は「何でも君の望むものをあげよう。ただ望むものは何であれ、隣人が同時にその倍を受けることになる」と仰る。農夫は暫く考えて「さあ片目を突き刺して貰おう」と言う。

³ 偽カード使用容疑でラトビア人逮捕：観光警察によれば、偽造クレジットカードを使って買い物をした容疑でラトビア国籍の男2人(53, 56)を逮捕した。

⁴ ラトビアでは、普通に英語が通じます。ラトビアは人口200万人強で、これといった産業・資源がなく、経済的に厳しいです。一般のラトビア人がサバイバルを生き残っていくためには英語、ドイツ語など外国語を習得し、外国人を相手にグローバルビジネスを展開していかなければなりません。／実際は、チームの練習や試合の際に、日本人同士で固まり、ラトビア人との交流は極めて少ないです。言葉の影響はあるでしょう。しかし、同じチームメイトです。／これは日本人選手だけの問題ではありません。2人のグルジア人選手も自国人だけで固まっており、注意しました。ラトビア人選手も自国人だけで固まり、外国人を疎外するようであればきつく言います。FKアウダ(ラトビア2部)は全ての選手の対してフェアであります。

loudness of speech, depressive mood, envious discontent (*nenovīdība*), and linguistic isolationism have also been attributed to Latvians.

The surprising side of Latvians. This is the most voluminous segment of Japanese tweets regarding Latvians. Diverse cultural discoveries have been made upon getting to know each other, through both direct and indirect interactions and observations about diet, flowers, ingeniousness, polyglotism, sports, drinking and singing habits, women's preferences, stature, closeness to nature, sensibility, mentality, way of doing business, celebrations, elegance, attractiveness, and engageability.

“People of the Baltic States and Poland eat the most potatoes in EU. A Latvian eats 274 g a day, Polish 248 g, Lithuanian 234 g, and Estonian 188 g. In whole EU it is 134 g, and the minimum is an Italian having 76 g.” [21.09.2010 @Youtonbaka] *“Latvia is the Land of Flowers – there is even a street of flower shops open 24/7 in Riga! A Latvian would even cancel a visit to someone if he has no flowers to bring there. // Latvians are nature-oriented – they thrust a straw into a birch trunk and drink the tree sap.”*² [30.09.2010 @finlandcafe] *“A young Latvian man, I drank with in Russia last month, used the mobile phone as a substitute for the bottle opener. :)”*³ [19.10.2010 @mon_emon] *“Lithuanian is objectively the most difficult language in the world. In contrary to this opinion – it is easily learnable for Latvians. Latvian and Lithuanian are closely related languages.”*⁴ [08.09.2011 @kproject_aulie] *“Invited by a friend I watched a hockey game for the first time. Riga Dinamo vs. a Russian team. Dinamo is the strongest team where fearless fighters summon. Also, most athletes for the Latvian national team are selected from this team. Complete victory for Dinamo 2-0. I felt the Latvian love for hockey. I'll support the soccer pinnacle Skonto tomorrow.”*⁵ [14.10.2011 @tengyo] *“A Latvian I became friends with at the hotel is drunk. He drank chacha a lot. 2-meter guy being wasted is a quite intense sight. Staggering while being such*

¹ バルチック3国とポーランドの人々はEUの中で最もジャガイモを食べる国民。ラトビア人は毎日1人当たり274g、ポーランド人248g、リトアニア人234gそしてエストニア人188gを食べている。EU全体で134gそして最少はイタリア人で76gである。

² ラトビアは花の国、リガには何と24時間営業している花屋台通りがある。ラトビア人は花がないと他の人の家に訪問するのを止めてしまうくらいだ。// ラトビア人は自然志向、白樺の幹にストローのようなものを刺し、樹液を飲みます。

³ 先月ロシアで一緒に飲んだラトビア人青年は、何と携帯電話を栓抜き代わりにしました(^_^)。

⁴ リトアニア語が客観的には世界一難しい、という意見に反論：ラトビア人には簡単に習得可能。ラトビア語とリトアニア語は近縁関係。

⁵ 友達に誘われて初めてホッケーの試合を観た。リガのディナモ対ロシアのチーム。ディナモはラトビア中の猛者達が集う最強集団でラトビア代表選手も殆どこのチームから選出されている。試合は2対0でディナモの完勝。ラトビア人のホッケー愛を感じた。明日はサッカー、崖っぷちのスコントを応援します！

*tall is scary.*¹ [03.11.2011 @thitomin] “Once in 5 years Latvians from across the country gather in Riga and enjoy 8-voiced acapella by a chorus of ~12,000 people. Celebration... Yes! Singers are so many. Stunning! Organizing a Baltic states’ photo exhibition. I’m in cuisine classroom.”² [09.11.2011 @shoes0ff] “The Latvian porn actress called Beata (Beata? Beāta?) I noticed recently was very cute. It was the first time I saw a Latvian. What a fortune that the first Latvian I have seen is so cute. Is that so? I don’t know. Whatever...”³ [10.02.2012 @rikudou_kaito] “Women prefer strong, resolute and healthy men’ (Nature Communications) Women prefer men with high levels of testosterone in blood. Higher the testosterone, stronger the immunoreaction to the pneumonia vaccine. It is about Latvians... #biology”⁴ [22.02.2012 @OkuwakiT] “Accordingly, women’s preference to masculine-featured men is substantiated by the higher immune strength. Only the fact that the survey targets were Latvians makes it doubtful.”⁵ [27.02.2012 @nassevanor] “I’ve seen opinions that songs sung at the Song Celebration don’t differ. Estonia: Estonia is beautiful, Estonians are wonderful! Latvia: this is how Latvia has been living! Lithuania: Oh, Lietuva, Lietuva! – I think there is inclination like this.”⁶ [04.04.2012 @HSDomestas] “Why all Russians like Orient so much? While I was wondering, this time it was a Latvian. A Baltic state with population of only 2 million. That’s a rare Pokémon!”⁷ [22.04.2012 @zi_] “Anyway, the Latvian I met yesterday said that he can speak 7 languages. Everyone speaks Russian, Latvian, English. If one doesn’t there is no job. When I asked him: ‘What is

¹ 宿で仲良くなったラトビア人(2m5cm)がべろんべろんに酔っている。チャチャを相当飲んだようだ。2mがべろんべろんになると迫力も結構なものである。長いのでよろよろしていると恐ろしい。

² ラトビア人は、5年に一度、ラトビア全土からリガ(首都)に集結し、約12,000人のコーラスによる8声のアカペラを楽しみます。祭典、、、そう!歌い手がこの人数です。圧巻です。そんなバルト3国の写真展やってます。僕は、料理教室。

³ この間たまたま見掛けたBeata(ベアタ?ベアータ?)っていうラトビア人のポルノ女優が凄く可愛かった。ラトビア人なんて初めて見たけど最初に見たラトビア人があんなに可愛くて幸運だった。そうなのか?わからんが。まあ良かろう。

⁴ 「女性は強くたくましく健康な男性を好む」(Nature Communications)女性は血中テストステロン量が多い男性を好む。テストステロンが多いと肺炎ワクチンへの免疫反応が強い。ラトビア人はだけど…□#生物

⁵ 故に女性が男らしい顔つきの男性を好むのは高い免疫力の裏付けがあるからだ、というのだが、調査対象がラトビア人というところが微妙。。。。

⁶ 歌の祭典、というか祭典の中で歌っている歌は三国間に違いは無い、という説も見かけますがエストニア→エストニアって美しい!エストニア人って素晴らしい!□ラトビア→こんな感じでラトビア人は生きてきたんだよ~□リトアニア→おおりーとーヴァ!りーとーヴァ!□…って感じの傾向はある、と思う

⁷ なんでロシア人はみんなそんな東方大好きなの…と思ったら今度はラトビア人だった。これは人口200万くらいしかいないバルト三国だ、レアポケモンだぞ

*English for you?’, he replied: ‘Nothing.’ Hmm, is that so? So that’s not a sort of communication tool.”¹ [16.08.2012 @Oeste773] “Latvians are people that live in trees and eat mushrooms. Their language is full of magic that is able to invoke rain and wind, and can give orders to animals, too. Ancient Germans wrote this about Latvians.”² [20.09.2012 @kinokoyani] “There’s sauna in Latvia, too, they call it *pir[t]s*. Latvians insist that it is not sauna. Actually, it is pretty much the same.”³ [27.01.2013 @matkatori] “Latvians are tall. Especially among Europeans. There are some even taller than 2 meters.”⁴ [24.02.2013 @septoss]*

Polandball (*Countryballs*) memes with Latvia starving for potatoes occasionally circulate on Japanese Twitter causing derived content. A scene from the Riga International Airport where many arriving passengers are welcomed by family members with flowers (according to the journalist’s interpreter, even if the passenger’s absence had lasted just a day) broadcasted repeatedly on a Japanese TV program has had its influence on the image of Latvians to be perceived as excessive flower-givers. Recently, the tall stature of Latvians (world’s tallest women), the Song Celebration and *pirts* traditions are getting well known among Japanese famous for singing along *karaoke* and soothing soaks in *onsen*.

“I saw your works. They are all very powerful and amazing. Dievturība is also interesting. For some reason, I thought that Japanese sensibility (sense, emotional feeling) is close to the Latvian one.”⁵ [29.04.2013 @baroncia] “The question I wanted to ask the most was the difference in the mentality among the Baltic States. I was told that when someone has to do something, Lithuanians act first, Latvians think and act, Estonians think, think and do not act. It seems, there is such a joke.”⁶ [22.05.2013 @Heikki_kyoto] “The most important annual event for Latvians, the summer solstice festival, is finally here. The festival is on the 23rd and 24th, but before it begins, the most important thing is to go to meadow and pick the flowers

¹ それにしても、昨日会った、ラトビア人は7ヶ国ができるといった。誰もがロシア語、ラトビア語、英語はできるという。その位できないと仕事がないみたい。彼にあなたにとっての、英語は何?って聞いたら、nothingだって。ふむ、そうか。コミュニケーションツールとかでないんだ。

² ラトビア人は木に暮らしたり茸を食べたり民族である。言葉は全部魔法で雨や風を呼ぶ事を出来ますし動物に命令も出来ます。昔のドイツ人はラトビア人について書いた事だ。

³ ラトビアでもサウナがあるが、ピルスと呼びます。ラトビア人はそれはサウナではないと言っている。実はほとんど同じ。

⁴ ラトビア人の背が高い。ヨーロッパの中でも特に。2m越えもある。

⁵ 作品を拝見させていただきました。とても力強い作品ばかりで、素晴らしいです。ラトビア神道も興味深いですね。何故か、日本人の感性とラトビア人の感性は近いものがあるのでは、と思いました。

⁶ 一番聞いてみたかった質問はバルト三国の性格の違い。教えてくれたのは何かをしなきゃいけない時の例えでリトアニア人はまず「act」する、ラトビア人は「think & act」する、エストニア人は「think, think & not act」っていうジョークがあるらしい。

and herbs. They are used for making crowns and home decorations.”²¹ [20.06.2013 @Riga_Annai] “The average height of Latvian men seems to exceed 180. Well, next to Russia, and being North Europeans, it seems natural... So why is Hetalia’s Latvia height... [so short]? I wondered and checked that it is due to the [size of the] national land – one sixth of Japan. And the capital Riga, the Baltic Pearl, is too attractive! I have to buy a travel guide book!”²² [25.06.2013 @himako08]

The affinity between Latvian and Japanese autochthonous religions – *Dievturība* and *Shintō* – and their traditional rituals have been increasingly appreciated in recent years. In *Hetalia*, the Japanese anime series allegorically portraying political and historical events and international relations between personifications of countries, as a 15-year-old short-statured blonde boy named Raivis Galante wearing a maroon military uniform, Latvia is in friends with other Baltic States, yet often gets bullied by Russia. The stereotypical joke about Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian temperament has leaked to Japanese, too.

“The nearby barber shop children went today seems to be run by a Latvian. For one child it was just £5! Awesome! To come to a foreign country, open a barber shop, speak English, and do business welcoming customers at such a low price. I think he is a skillful merchant on a global scale.”²³ [31.08.2013 @kyokob] “Kurši, one of ancestral tribes of Latvians, was a people that frightened Vikings out as pirates around the 7th to 10th centuries. The Danish Vikings went sailing after having a prayer to the church – God, protect us from Kurši!”²⁴ [10.10.2013 @HSDomestas] “Thunderstorm in Vilnius. Ancient Lithuanians and Latvians placed pork offerings whenever thunder rolled, praying that it wouldn’t hit them directly.”²⁵ [15.10.2013 @HSDomestas] “The Latvian, whom I met at the concert yesterday, said he lived in England for 9 years, and as a swimmer got 77 medals in 9 years. Next time, I’d

¹ いよいよラトビア人にとって最も重要な年中行事、夏至祭が近づきました。祭りは23, 24日となりますが、夏至祭がはじまる前、もっとも重要なのは草地に行つて草花を摘むことです。花冠作り、家の飾りなどに使われています。

² ラトビア人男性の平均身長は180越えらしい。まあロシアのお隣、北欧系だし当然なのか… じゃあなんでヘタリアのラトビアの身長は…?と調べてみたら国土か(°ω°) 日本の六分の一ほどだそう。そして首都のリガ、バルトの真珠が魅力的すぎる…! 旅行ガイドブック買ってこなくては

³ 今日子供たちが行つた近所の床屋はラトビア人経営らしい。子供一人たった£5! 凄いな。外国来て床屋開いて英語喋ってそんな安さでお客様とて経営してるんだから。どんだけグローバルで商売上手なんだろと思う。

⁴ …今のラトビア人のご先祖様にあたる民族の1つであるクルシ人は7~10世紀頃、海賊としてヴァイキングを恐れさせた民だったのでよ…デンマークのヴァイキング達は当時「神よ、我らをクルシ人から守りたまえ!」って教会に祈ってから航海に出たそうですよ…

⁵ ヴィリニユスの雷雨。昔のリトアニア人やラトビア人は雷が鳴ると豚肉をお供えて直撃しないよう祈つたそうだよ

take a picture of him with medals on his neck. He was an interesting person with a very strong character.” [17.11.2013 @tantantango] “I happened to be at a café in the old town of Riga, where a Latvian teacher gave a private Japanese lesson to Latvian students. I got a phone call from my Latvian friend who is a Japanese interpreter, so I also spoke in Japanese. A rare scene where all the customers speak Japanese.” [18.11.2013 @tengyo] “Yesterday was Latvian Independence Day. Fireworks held every year in Riga are one of celebrations. The next big fireworks are New Year’s. For Latvians, unlike Japanese, fireworks are associated with winter, not summer. Always watching outside, withstanding the cold.” [19.11.2013 @Riga_Annai] “Daughter of a Latvian, who was my classmate in the Netherlands, recently celebrated her 15th birthday. Her eyebrows and eyeliner were clear, the mascara was perfect, yet the features I knew when she was about 10 were gone... I miss her.” [04.12.2013 @AkaneSaito] “Latvian women are all beautiful! Gulp, I’ve a lot of free time.” [10.12.2013 @kind_Dark] “Women of Latvia, the country with No.1 rate of blonde beautiful women in the world: Help! Due to a shortage of men in our country, we have trouble getting married!... Ukrainians seem to have no interest in Asians like Japanese, yet I hope that Latvians are interested in us.” [10.12.2013 @gurafu_under] “Latvians kick ass! The level of blonde beautiful women is too high! Let’s learn Latvian!” [11.12.2013 @shunsukepon]

The daring Latvian ancestral tribes, contemporary competitive capacity and diligence abroad, as well as the beauty of women are often praised not only by Japanese.

A time-wise dense feed of tweets. There have been nine occasions when monthly frequency of Japanese tweets regarding Latvians has exceeded a hundred, in

¹ 昨日のライブで会ったラトビア人は在英9年で水泳の選手で9年間でメダル77個取ったと言っていた。次回はメダルを首に掛けてもらって写真を撮らせてもらう予定。とっても強烈なキャラクターで面白い人だった。

² リガの旧市街にあるカフェでラトビア人の先生がラトビア人の生徒に日本語の個人授業をしているところに居合わせた。そこに日本語の通訳をしているラトビア人の友達から電話が入り、僕も日本語で話し出す。客全員が日本語を話しているという珍風景。

³ 昨日はラトビアの独立記念日でした。毎年リガに行われている花火はこの祭りのひとつです。次の大きな花火はお正月です。ラトビア人にとって、花火は日本人と違って夏ではなくて、冬のイメージです。いつも寒さに負けず外で見えています。

⁴ オランダで同級生だったラトビア人の一人娘が最近15歳の誕生日を迎えたのだけれど、アイブロウもアイライナーもくっきり、マスカラもばっちり、私が知っていた10歳頃の面影が微塵もなくて寂しい。

⁵ ラトビア人って、美人さんばっかり!!(°A°;)ゴク:暇人\(^o^)/

⁶ 金髪美女率世界NO.1のラトビアの女性「助けて!国に男性が少なすぎて結婚できないの(´;`;)」... ウクライナ人は日本人みたいなアジア人には全く興味ないらしいけど、ラトビア人は興味持ってくれるといいね。

⁷ ラトビア人ばねえ 金髪美女レベル高すぎ ラトビア語勉強しよ

most cases it is due to a particular happening in the given period of time. The greatest number of overall daily tweets containing a Japanese morpheme meaning *Latvia* (23,651 tweets, i. e., 6.27% of entire data; 267 tweets among them contain a Japanese morpheme meaning *Latvians*) were published within 24 hours of 6 February 2013 (UTC), due to a Japan vs. Latvia national football team game which took place in Kōbe that day. The fact that the majority of tweets aggregated during hours of gameplay reveal how prominently here-and-now and spur-of-the-moment reactive utterances without temporal displacement manifest as the soliloquy (*hitorigoto*) in Japanese communication on Twitter. Some of tweets from this occasion:

“Tomorrow is a game against Latvia. Taking things easy, but where is Latvia? Checked the information on Latvia at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is a Latvian language. Unemployment 16%. 33 Japanese residents there, and 73 Latvian residents [in Japan]. [05.02.2013 @LoveSamuraiBlue]”¹ “Seems that names of Latvians often end with ‘s.’”² [06.02.2013 @mtt2gw] “Search results of ‘Latvia’ return: Hetalia Latvia, Latvian military uniforms, Latvians, Latvian beautiful women.”³ [06.02.2013 @bobbyindahouse] “Latvians are too handsome.”⁴ [06.02.2013 @hayatefrancisco] “Are Latvians also resistant to cold? They are short-sleeved!”⁵ [06.02.2013 @KDojho] “Latvians are gigantic!”⁶ [06.02.2013 @ami_nya] “Latvians. They have faces I have never seen before. Not like Germans, nor like Russians. I know almost nothing about Latvia.”⁷ [06.02.2013 @mototagawa] “The opponent of the Japan national football team, Latvia, has the most beautiful women in the world, whereas women ratio largely surpasses men, very many of such beauties are unmarried. Just in case if you have a chance to get to know Latvian women passing by in the city.”⁸ [06.02.2013 @kogiasgtdfs] “A set of Latvian handsome guys.”⁹ [06.02.2013 @cherrycube] “Are Japanese small? Or are Latvians big? If I got surrounded by Latvians, no doubt

¹ 明日はラトビア戦。余裕で構えてましたが、?ラトビアって?どこ?というわけで外務省のラトビア情報調べてみました。ラトビア語というのがあるんですね。失業率16%。在留邦人33人、在留ラトビア人73人。

² (*・ω・*)ラトビア人の名前は～スで終わることが多いのかな

³ ラトビアの検索結果→ヘタリア ラトビア、ラトビア 軍服、ラトビア人、ラトビア 美人 (∴)

⁴ ラトビア人イケメンすぎ

⁵ ラトビア人も寒さに強いのか?半袖だぞ(°;))

⁶ ラトビア人でけえな。

⁷ ラトビア人。いままで見た事のない顔をしている。ゲルマンっぽくもないし、ロシア系でもない。ラトビアについてぼくはほとんど何も知らない。

⁸ サッカー日本代表の対戦国ラトビアは世界一美人が多い上に男女比では女性が大きく勝る為、こんな美人でも未婚者がとても多いそうだ。街で通りすがりのラトビア人女性と知り合う機会があれば

⁹ ラトビア人イケメン揃いだな

*I'd look like a dwarf!*¹ [06.02.2013 @k_kumo] “*Sukitokimekitokis – a name like this would be nothing strange for a Latvian, I began wondering.*”² [06.02.2013 @846hashimu] “*Latvians have difficult names.*”³ [06.02.2013 @rihei_i] “*Latvians have very beautiful eye color.*”⁴ [06.02.2013 @p_yama_san] “*At any rate, the impression of Hetalia made me think of Latvia as a little one, however actually Latvians are big indeed.*”⁵ [06.02.2013 @Aoi_marumayu12] “*I like the positivity of Latvians!*”⁶ [06.02.2013 @maccha_maccha] “*I see, Latvians are humble/modest!*”⁷ [06.02.2013 @tezukazu]

These tweets cast light on the stream of consciousness, i. e., the flow of thoughts, of game spectators noteworthy enough to be tweeted right away on the spot. The broad scope of focus points of attention and associative network of observant Japanese tweeters unfolding the series of serendipities exceeds the boundaries of a sports event reaching into the realm of ethnology.

Conclusion

This article provides the methodology of acquisition and sentiment analysis of Japanese tweets, and a first-time insight into a segment of reflections of the multifaceted image of Latvian people through 81 illustrative tweets published from the inception of Twitter until the end of 2013. The spontaneous nature of the majority of Japanese reactive utterances in a soliloquy on Twitter suggests them to be free of self-censorship, and hence authentic and genuine sources of perception of another culture. Apart from seldom negative experiences, Japanese perceive Latvians in a rather positive and surprising way, providing room for new discoveries to reflect on ourselves through the perspective of others shared online.

Twitter is a platform where most users publish their thoughts in an open-access environment, and thus provide broad Digital Humanities fieldwork opportunities for Ethnography and Folkloristics scholars. Furthermore, the geotagged tweet acquisition, and the development of sentiment analysis for Baltic languages, too, are particularly interesting topics to elaborate on. As there is an article size limit, results of analysis of Japanese tweets published from 2014 to 2018 and later would follow in further publications.

¹ 日本人が小さいの?ラトビア人が大きいの?私がラトビア人に囲まれたらきっと小人。

² スキトキメキトキスって名前のラトビア人がいても不思議じゃない気になってきた。

³ ラトビア人なまえむずかしい

⁴ ラトビア人の瞳はとても綺麗な色をしているね

⁵ どうしてもへたりあのイメージでラトビアが小さい感じがしてたんだけどラトビア人大きいね

⁶ ラトビア人のポジティブさ好きだわw

⁷ ラトビア人って謙虚やな～

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