



A Study on Japanese Youth Language (*Wakamono Kotoba*) Use on Social Media X

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Abstract. This research aims to understand the forms and usage of youth language (*wakamono kotoba*) using data sourced from tweets by 100 Japanese accounts on social media X during the year 2024. Data in this study was collected using the observation method and conversational scrap technique. The classified data was then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study found 282 instances of *wakamono kotoba* spread across the 100 X accounts. The study discovered that the *wakamono kotoba* found on social media X was dominated by the *shouryaku* (words shortening), which involves creating words by omitting certain parts. Additionally, the *wakamono kotoba* found included forms such as *oto no henka* (pronunciation change), *iikae* (converting Japanese into English), *konkou* (word combination), *kashirajika* (acronymizing), *meishi no haisei* (noun affixation), *keiyoudoushi no hasei* (prefix and suffix additions to adjectives *-i*), *doushi no fukugo* (adding suffix *-suru* to nouns), *touchi* (word reversal), and other forms. Among all the data found, there were instances of *wakamono kotoba* experiencing changes in meaning, while others underwent an expansion of meaning. Lastly, *wakamono kotoba* on social media X was used as a form of creative and emotional expression, creating a more familiar and relaxed atmosphere, and some *wakamono kotoba* were used to simplify the depiction of an event. Thus, *wakamono kotoba* is not just the language of the youth, but also an important tool in social interaction and self-expression among young people.

Keywords: Japanese Language, Media Social, *Wakamono Kotoba*, Youth Language.

1 Introduction

The development of technology and communication has significantly impacted language use, especially among teenagers (Cao, 2021). In Japan, this phenomenon is known as *wakamono kotoba*, referring to words and expressions popular among young people (Matsumoto et al., 2014). *Wakamono kotoba* not only reflects linguistic creativity but also the social and cultural dynamics within the younger generation (Hidayat & Kusriani, 2022). This phenomenon becomes more intriguing when examined in the context of social media, where language interaction and dissemination occur rapidly and extensively (Sanjaya et al., 2021). Social media X, as a prominent platform in Japan,

serves as a primary venue for teenagers to interact and express themselves (Niramaya & Filia, 2022). This platform enables users to share content, communicate, and participate in various cultural trends. Through social media X, *wakamono kotoba* has rapidly evolved and often reflects trends and changes in how Japanese teenagers think and communicate (Boncina, 2017). Thus, social media X provides a rich environment for studying the dynamics of Japanese youth language.

Research on *wakamono kotoba* has garnered considerable interest and has been extensively conducted previously. For instance, studies by Borisova (2018) examined the impact of social media on the language of Japanese youth, Widyastuti and Nurhayati (2020) analyzed *wakamono kotoba* words, and Sayekti et al. (2020) explored the popular use of *wakamono kotoba* among Japanese women on Twitter. Further studies on comparisons of youth language across different languages include Danendra (2022), which discussed the formation of *wakamono kotoba* and compared it with slang in Indonesia, and research by Oktavia and Yulianti (2021), which analyzed youth slang in Japanese, Indonesian, and Malang dialects. Another study by Hidayat and Kusri (2022) analyzed the use of *wakamono kotoba* in chat conversations on LINE social media.

There has been a considerable amount of research on *wakamono kotoba* conducted to date, with varying research questions and data sources. One expert who classifies *wakamono kotoba* based on their formation is Yonekawa (1996). According to Yonekawa, there are 14 types of *wakamono kotoba*, namely: *shakuyou* (borrowing foreign words), *shouryaku* (word shortening), *yomikae* (changing the reading), *iikae* (converting words), *mojiro* (wordplay), *goroawase* (punning or play on words), *konkou* (combining words), *touchi* (changing the syllable order), *kashirajika* (using the initial part of a word as a representative), *doushi no hasei* (converting a noun into a verb by adding the suffix *-ru*), *meishi no hasei* (converting a word into a noun), *keiyoushi* and *keiyoudoushi no hasei* (converting a noun into an adjective), *doushi no fukugou* (compound nouns), and *oto no Henka* (sound modification). In this study, the researcher will use this theory to analyze the *wakamono kotoba* found.

The importance of this research lies in several aspects. First, it provides insights into the evolution of language among teenagers, who often pioneer the adoption and dissemination of new words. Second, a better understanding of *wakamono kotoba* can assist adults, including educators and parents, in communicating more effectively with the younger generation. Third, this research has implications for linguistic and sociolinguistic studies, particularly in the context of Japanese language evolution in the digital environment. Furthermore, it can contribute to the development of social media and communication technologies. By understanding how teenagers use language on these platforms, developers can create features that are more responsive to the needs and habits of young users. This can also aid in designing more effective communication campaigns, both commercially and socially. Overall, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the fields of linguistics, sociology, and media studies. By uncovering the dynamics of *wakamono kotoba* on social media X during 2024, this study not only enriches readers' understanding of the Japanese youth language but also opens avenues for further research in the future. Moreover, it is hoped that this research

will help society understand and appreciate the linguistic and cultural richness possessed by the younger generation in Japan.

2 Method

This study is a quantitative and qualitative descriptive research. Data collection techniques include observation and conversational scrap methods. The data source consists of *wakamono kotoba* found in tweets from 100 Japanese accounts on social media X during 2024 from January to August. The collected data was then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis involved calculating the frequency of *wakamono kotoba* usage overall. On the other hand, qualitative analysis classified *wakamono kotoba* based on word formation, referring to Yonekawa's theory (1996). Subsequently, the findings of *wakamono kotoba* in this study explained their meanings and frequency of usage according to the tweets found.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 The Forms of *Wakamono Kotoba* Found in 100 X Accounts of Japanese People

After collecting data from 100 Japanese accounts, 282 *wakamono kotoba* posts were found from January to August 2024. Based on Yonekawa's theory (1996), which classifies *wakamono kotoba* into 14 types, the most frequently found form among the 282 data points was *shouryaku* (word shortening). Out of the 14 forms, 9 were successfully identified. Additionally, *wakamono kotoba* that did not fit any category were grouped into a separate table.

***Shouryaku* (Abbreviating).** *Wakamono kotoba* in the form of *shouryaku* is a type of Japanese youth language characterized by the use of abbreviations or shortened words to speed up communication and make conversations more concise (Yonekawa, 1996). This form of *shouryaku* is often used among teenagers to save time when typing on social media or instant messaging apps (Sanjaya et al., 2021). From the data collection results, several forms of *shouryaku* (word shortening) were observed as presented in Table 1. The use of *shouryaku* not only demonstrates efficiency in communication but also reflects linguistic creativity and group identity among teenagers (Danendra, 2022). Understanding these abbreviations often signifies membership in certain social communities.

***Oto No Henka* (Sound modification).** *Wakamono kotoba* of the *Oto no Henka* type is a variation of the Japanese youth language that manipulates the sounds or phonemes of original words to create new, more interesting, or funny terms (Yonekawa, 1996). This technique involves altering certain sounds, such as substitution, repetition, or addition of phonemes, resulting in words that sound unique yet are still recognizable in meaning

by native speakers. The use of *Oto no Henka* often reflects the creativity and desire of teenagers to express themselves in a distinct and eye-catching manner in everyday communication, especially on social media platforms. The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Data of *wakamono kotoba* in *shouryaku* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
あざす (<i>Azasu</i>)	Thank you. A shortening of <i>Arigatou Gozaimasu</i> .	11 data
ガチ (<i>Gachi</i>)	Serious; real; or earnest.	6 data
かわちい (<i>Kawachii</i>)	Used to express something cute and childish.	15 data
キモイ (<i>Kimoi</i>)	Looks disgusting.	1 data
マジ (<i>Maji</i>)	Means “serious?” or “really?” Used to express surprise.	51 data
おは (<i>Oha</i>)	Means “good morning.” A shortening of <i>Ohayou Gozaimasu</i> .	6 data
ムズイ (<i>Muzui</i>)	Means “difficult,” derived from shortening <i>Muzukashii</i> .	6 data
しらん (<i>Shiran</i>)	Means “don’t know,” a shortening of <i>Shiranai</i> .	1 data
たまらん (<i>Tamaran</i>)	Means “unbearable,” derived from shortening <i>Tamaranai</i> .	2 Data
うざい (<i>Uzai</i>)	Indicates something annoying or troublesome. Derived from shortening <i>Uzattai</i> (annoying; noisy).	3 data
やっぱ (<i>Yappa</i>)	Means “just as expected” or “as thought before.” Derived from shortening <i>Yappari</i> .	4 data

Table 2. Data *wakamono kotoba oto no henka* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
アッチイ (<i>Acchii</i>)	Means “hot.” Derived from altering the word <i>Atsui</i> .	3 data
エモい (<i>Emoi</i>)	Derived from the word “emotional.” Describes a sentimental, touching state, showing deep feelings.	7 data
てえてえ (<i>Teetee</i>)	Means “precious,” derived from the word <i>toutoi</i> .	13 data
よきよき (<i>Yokiyoki</i>)	Means “good,” an alteration of <i>Yoki</i> to <i>Yokiyoki</i> .	2 data

***Iikae* (Word conversion).** *Iikae* is a phenomenon in Japanese youth language where commonly used words or phrases are replaced with new terms that have similar meanings but are more interesting or fitting for a particular social context (Yonekawa, 1996). *Iikae* is often used to refresh the way of communicating, create variation in conversations, and show affiliation with certain social or cultural groups. Are as presented in Table 3. The use of *iikae* not only enriches the language with new variations but also reflects the social dynamics and changing values within Japanese youth society, where creativity and linguistic innovation are highly valued.

Table 3. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *iikae* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
なう (<i>Nau</i>)	This word is a variation derived from the English word “now,” used by the younger generation in Japan to express the speaker’s current presence.	3 data
スゲー (<i>Sugee</i>)	This word is used to express that something seen is amazing. Derived from the word <i>Sugoi</i> .	4 data
ワン (<i>Wan</i>)	Derived from the English word “one.”	3 data

Konkou (Word combination). *Konkou* is a linguistic phenomenon in Japanese youth language that involves mixing elements from various languages or dialects to create new, more dynamic, and expressive terms or phrases (Yonekawa, 1996). This practice often includes the combination of words to produce new terms as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *konkou* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
早起きな (<i>Hayaokina</i>)	Means “command to wake up early.” It is a compound word formed from the combination of “ <i>hayaku</i> ,” “ <i>okiru</i> ,” and “ <i>nasai</i> .”	6 data
リアルすぎる (<i>Riarusugi</i>)	The word “ <i>riarusugi</i> ” is a combination of “リアル” (<i>riaru</i>), a loanword from English meaning “real,” and the suffix “すぎ” (<i>sugi</i>), which indicates something excessive. Combined, “ <i>riarusugi</i> ” means “too real.”	1 data

Kashirajika (Acronymization). *Kashirajika* is a linguistic phenomenon in Japanese that involves the use of abbreviations based on the initial letters or characters of words in a phrase or sentence (Yonekawa, 1996). This technique is often used to make communication more efficient and quicker, especially in informal contexts such as social media conversations, text messages, or everyday conversations among teenagers as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *kashirajika* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
GW (<i>Ji-Wai</i>)	Golden Week (ゴールデンウィーク) is a period from the end of April to the first week of May in Japan that includes a series of official holidays.	4 data
NG (<i>En-Ji</i>)	NG stands for “Not Good.” Pronounced ‘ <i>en ji</i> ’ because, in Japanese, abbreviations written in romaji (Roman letters or Latin script) are pronounced according to English spelling.	1 data

Meishi No Hasei (Converting word into noun). *Meishi no hasei* is the process of forming new nouns from base words or root words in Japanese (Yonekawa, 1996). This process involves adding affixes, changing forms, or using combinations of words to create nouns with more specific or new meanings as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *meishi no hasei* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
ちやりる (<i>Chariru</i>)	<i>Chari</i> is a common term for bicycles, <i>Charinko</i> , <i>Chariki</i> , or simply <i>Chari</i> , with the addition of the ending “-ru” to turn it into a verb. Means to ride a bicycle.	4 data
じこる (<i>Jikoru</i>)	Means to have an accident (especially a traffic accident), causing an accident. Essentially formed from nouns or other words with the suffix “-ru,” such as the word <i>Jiko</i> combined with <i>ru</i> .	1 data
バズる (<i>Bazuru</i>)	An expression used to describe when a topic spreads explosively in a short period, grabbing the attention and interest of many people, and causing a sensation. Primarily used for viral spreading on the Internet through social media, etc. Originates from the English word “Buzz.”	10 data

Keiyoudoushi No Hasei (Converting noun into adjective). *Keiyoudoushi no hasei* refers to youth language adjectives ending in -i formed by adding suffixes to nouns or verbs (Yonekawa, 1996) which examples presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *keiyoudoushi no hasei* form

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
ちゃらい (<i>Charai</i>)	Includes the onomatopoeia “ <i>chara chara</i> ,” but young people often shorten it and add the suffix “-i” to make it <i>charai</i> . This word describes an appearance and attitude that is flirtatious, careless, and cheap.	3 data
しょぼい (<i>Shoboi</i>)	The word <i>shoboi</i> comes from the onomatopoeia “ <i>shoboshobo</i> ” (the sound of light rain representing fatigue or weakness). The word “ <i>shobo</i> ” from “ <i>shoboshobo</i> ” adds the “-i” suffix to become <i>shoboi</i> , meaning plain, ordinary (something that is below average).	6 data

Doushi No Fukugou (Compound nouns). *Doushi no fukugou* is a phenomenon in Japanese where two or more verbs are combined to form a compound verb with a new, more complex meaning (Yonekawa, 1996). This process allows for a more specific and detailed expression of an action or state (Table 8).

Table 8. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *doushi no fukugou* form

<i>Wakamono Ko- toba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
ディする (<i>Disuru</i>)	“ <i>Disuru</i> ” is internet slang in Japanese meaning “to disrespect” or “to speak ill of.” It originates from the English word “disrespect.” The abbreviated form of this word is “diss.”	1 data

Touchi (Changing the syllable). 倒置 (*touchi*) is a linguistic technique in Japanese involving the inversion of word order in a sentence to emphasize or create a specific rhetorical effect (Yonekawa, 1996) as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Data *wakamono kotoba* in *touchi* form

<i>Wakamono Ko- toba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
ものほん (<i>Monohon</i>)	Derived from <i>Honmono</i> , reversed to <i>Monohon</i> . Means genuine, real, original item.	3 data

Others. Of the 282 data points collected, 91 did not fall into any category within Yonekawa’s theory. Therefore, the author added an “other” category to explain these words presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Data *wakamono kotoba* in other forms

<i>Wakamono Ko- toba</i>	Meaning & Explanation	Frequency
ほんま (<i>Honma</i>)	Derived from “ <i>Hontou</i> ,” meaning “really?” or “truly.”	9 data
草 (<i>Kusa</i>)	Literally means “grass.” Used as an expression of laughter or amusement.	5 data
びえん (<i>Pien</i>)	Used at the end of a sentence to express sadness or sympathy towards an event.	5 data
うける (<i>Ukeru</i>)	Used to describe a situation that is funny or entertaining, eliciting laughter or enjoyment.	4 data
www; ww; w	The letter “W” stands for “ <i>warai</i> ” or laughter. Multiple “w”s indicates more laughter, like “ <i>hahaha</i> .” Used in text messages to express amusement.	48 data
やばい; ヤバイ (<i>Yabai</i>)	This word’s meaning can vary depending on the context of the sentence. It can be used positively or negatively to mean great, intense, crazy, or cool.	20 data

3.2 The Frequency of Usage of Youth Language

The frequency of usage of youth language, or slang, on social media varies widely depending on the context and the user environment. In this study involving the analysis of tweets from 100 Japanese Twitter accounts in 2024, it was found that these words

often appear in everyday conversations among young people. Quantitatively, the frequency of youth language usage is measured by counting the number of occurrences in the collected dataset. Here are the top five youth language terms observed, as shown in Table 11. This study reveals that youth language, or *wakamono kotoba* in Japanese, is used in posts by young people on social media x with various forms and functions. *Wakamono kotoba* illustrates that language dynamically evolves with current trends. Furthermore, the creation of new terms aimed at “describing something” demonstrates the creativity of young people in communication. On the other hand, this linguistic development aligns with the advancements in information and communication technology today. Therefore, it can be concluded that language evolves in tandem with technological progress.

Table 11. The most frequently found youth language terms

<i>Wakamono Kotoba</i>	Frequency
マジ (<i>Maji</i>)	51 data
www; ww; w	48 data
やばい; ヤバイ (<i>Yabai</i>)	20 data
かわちい (<i>Kawachii</i>)	15 data
てえてえ (<i>Teetee</i>)	13 data

4 Conclusion

Wakamono Kotoba, which is a language variety evolving among Japanese youth, reflects their identity, creativity, and social dynamics. This language often differs from the standard language used by older generations and is heavily influenced by popular culture, media, and technology. This research found various forms of *wakamono kotoba* in the tweets of 100 Japanese X accounts. The study discovered that *wakamono kotoba* is formed through processes such as truncation of words, addition of words, combination of words, word reversal, borrowing vocabulary from foreign languages, and changes in pronunciation. This indicates that the language of Japanese youth is highly dynamic and continually evolving, influenced by social interaction and technological developments. This research only briefly discusses some *wakamono kotoba* words found in X and their meanings and usage. Future research is expected to include a more detailed and specific analysis of how these words are used.

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