

A Layered-structure-semantics-based Analysis of the Functional Extension of *(Yo) u*

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This article, based on the layered structure semantics, analyzes the phenomenon in which the semantic function of *-(yo)u* (the volitional form of verbs in Japanese) shifts from non-dialogical to dialogical ones for the speaker's communicative purposes. The relevant functions to be dealt with are [volition], [offer] and [proposal]. Interestingly, the most basic function of [volition], which is non-dialogical in itself, extends to [offer] or [proposal] in the speech event. These semantic extensions are explained in terms of the speaker's communicative strategies. To be more specific, the function of [offer] emerges from the speaker's commitment to performing a (future) action which may benefit the addressee directly or indirectly. As to [proposal], it emerges from the speaker's commitment to performing a (future) action of which agents are the speaker and the addressee. Recently, many cases have been reported in which pragmatic factors cause or strengthen a semantic change. This article as well sheds light on the role of pragmatic factors in semantic change and contributes to the relevant field of research.