# How to Be a Gricean Russellian

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**Abstract**

According to many philosophers, many utterances of sentences contain unarticulated indexical expressions. In response to the problem of incompleteness, for instance, many Russellians hold that definite descriptions contain unarticulated indexical expressions which restrict the denotation of the description's nominal. I argue that such unarticulated indexical expressions pose a problem for Griceans who wish to explain meaning in terms of speakers communicative intentions. Roughly, the problem is that if there are unarticulated indexical expressions, then speakers can't rationally intend to have their audience entertain a single complete proposition by their utterance of a sentence.

Following Buchanan (2010), I suggest that the only way for the Gricean to meet this problem is to argue that often *restricted proposition-types* (and not propositions) are the objects of speakers communicative intentions. In particular, I argue that restricted proposition-types should be understood as proposition-types restricted by speakers' *act-coordinating intentions*. In uttering a sentence speakers intend their audience to entertain any token proposition of their communicatively intended proposition-type; furthermore, speakers intend that the proposition the audience entertains by means of their utterance disposes them to act in coordination with the speakers intended action.

## 1 Introduction

According to Russellians, definite articles (e.g. the determiner 'the' in English) semantically express *existence* and *uniqueness* of their nominals. So, for instance, for 'the beer is cold' to be true, according to Russellians, it must be the case that (among other things) 'beer' denotes a set with at least one member and at most one member (i.e. a singleton set). Since there are many cases in which speakers can intuitively say something true by uttering a sentence containing a description, although the description's nominal doesn't seem to denote a singleton set (Strawson 1950, 332), many Russellians suggest that often a description's nominal contains a hidden indexical element such that in context the nominal denotes a singleton set. So, for

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instance, although $\{x : x \text{ is beer}\}$ isn't a singleton set, Russellains argue that 'the beer is cold' can be true in context since the set denoted by the description's nominal is the intersection of $\{x : x \text{ is beer}\}$ and a set denoted by an unarticulateed indexical expression. The intersection of these two sets is a singleton set.

I will argue that the above Russellian-indexical account of descriptions is problematic for Griceans. In many contexts there will be too many potential values the nominal's hidden indexical element might be thought of as referring to and hence it's hard to see how a speaker's communicative intention should fix the indexical element's value in context. I will further argue that the best way for the Gricean Russellian to meet this difficulty—known as the multiple-candidate problem—is to argue that sometimes the object of a speaker's communicative intention is a *restricted proposition-type* (and not a proposition). A restricted proposition-type, is a proposition-type restricted by the speaker's *act-coordinating-intention*.

The plan for this essay is as follows. In §2 and §3, I outline Gricean semantics and Russell's theory of descriptions. In §4 I present the multiple-candidate problem and in §5 I argue that this problem shows that speakers can't mean single complete propositions by their utterances of sentences containing incomplete descriptions. In §6, I endorse Buchanan's suggestion that the objects of speakers communicative intentions are *restricted proposition-types*. In §7, I try to make sense of what a restricted proposition-type is; I argue that it's a proposition-type restricted by a speaker's *act-coordinating intention*.

## 2 Gricean Semantics

According to Gricean semantics the fundamental notion of meaning is speaker-meaning. Speaker-meaning is what a speaker means by his utterance on an occasion of use. Speaker-meaning (for indicative speech) is metaphysically determined by the speaker's communicative intention that his audience entertains the proposition the speaker has in mind *via* the speaker's utterance. Roughly, a necessary and sufficient condition for (indicative) speaker-meaning is that the speaker has the following reflexive communicative intention (Grice 1989, 110):

(Speaker-meaning) Speaker $S$ means proposition $p$ iff in uttering $u$ $S$ intends:

(1) his audience, $A$, to entertain that $p$;

(2) $A$ to recognise $S$'s intention (1);

(3) $A$ to recognise (1) by means of recognition of (2).

So, for my utterance 'Beer is nice' to mean *Beer is nice*, it's necessary that I intend my audience to entertain this proposition and that I intend my audience to recognise my intention by recognising that this is what I communicatively intend by my utterance. What's required for *communicative success* is that my audience entertains exactly this proposition and recognises that I intend them to entertain this proposition by my utterance.

Now, according to Griceans, regular speaker-meaning metaphysically determines *timeless meaning* (Grice 1989, 91). Timeless meaning is a word's or sentence's conventional meaning. So, for instance, the fact that speakers in a linguistic community regularly utter 'Beer is nice' to mean *Beer is nice* gives rise to something like a convention that 'Beer is nice' means *Beer is nice*.

Timeless-meaning isn't something like the content of an assertion or inscription[1]. Rather, according to Griceans, it's similar to an instruction or constraint to speaker-meaning: it tells speakers what *types* of propositions they can rationally intend to induce in their audience by a literal utterance of a sentence and it guides the audience in interpreting which proposition the speaker *might* literally mean by his utterance.

How does timeless-meaning constrain speaker-meaning? According to Griceans, it's a fact about human agency that speakers can only intend what they believe to be possible (Grice 1989, 98). Call this principle *Grice's principle*. Now, if speakers adhere to this principle, then they can't ordinarily use (say) the utterance 'Beer is nice' to mean *Wine is nice* because they don't believe it's possible for their audience to work out their intended meaning by exploiting the timeless-meaning of 'Beer is nice'[2]. Hence, a sentence's timeless-meaning constrains speaker-meaning by constraining what propositions speakers can rationally intend to communicate by their utterances.

How should 'possibility' be understood in the above formulation of Grice's principle? I suggest, following Buchanan, that for $S$ to mean $p$ by uttering $u$, $S$ *must expect it reasonable* that $A$ is capable of working out $S$'s intended meaning from $S$'s utterance (Buchanan 2010, 350). This formulation is admittedly vague, yet I think some precisification of Grice's principle along the lines of *what it's reasonable for speakers to expect* should be right. 'Possibility' can't be understood as physical or logical possibility because then the constraint on communicative intentions will be too weak such that Gricean semantics collapses into humpty-dumptyism—the view that you can use words to mean whatever you want them to. 'Possibility', however, also can't be understood as 'being very likely' because then the constraint on intentions will be too strong such that speakers can't use sentences non-literally to conversationally implicate.

## 3 Russell's Theory of Descriptions

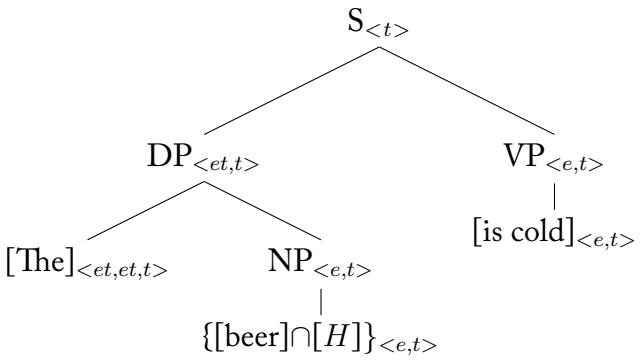
According to Russell's theory of descriptions, definite articles (and possessive determiners such as 'my' or 'her') semantically express existence and uniqueness of their nominals (Russell 1905, 481). So for a sentence of the form 'The F is G' to be true, the description's nominal, 'F', must denote a set with at least one member and at most one member (i.e. a singleton set). Furthermore, this singleton set must be a subset of the set denoted by the VP 'is G'. A problem for Russell's theory, known as the problem of incompleteness (Strawson 1950, 332), is that

1. Griceans follow Strawson (Strawson 1950, 326) in maintaining that sentences don't express propositions; speakers *use* sentences to express propositions. See Neale (2004, 151).

2. There might of course be special contexts in which $S$ can conversationally implicate *Wine is nice* by uttering 'Beer is nice'.

there are many cases in which speakers can intuitively say something true in uttering a sentence containing a description, although the description's nominal doesn't seem to denote a singleton set. Consider, for instance, Stephen telling Anita 'The beer is cold' at a philosophy conference. Intuitively, Stephen can say something true by this sentence if there's a single cold beer in the vicinity on the occasion of utterance[3]. According to Russell's theory, however, Stephen will almost trivially say something false because 'beer' doesn't denote a singleton set—there's more than one beer in the universe.

One popular response to this problem is to argue that the set denoted by 'beer' is restricted to a singleton set in context[4]. Stanley, for instance, suggests that for sentences such as the above, the description's nominal co-habits a node with a hidden indexical expression $H$[5] which denotes a contextually-salient set such that the sentence's logical form is as follows (Stanley 2002, 9):




If the set of beers is intersected with the set denoted by $H$ such that $\{\text{beer} \cap H\}$ denotes a singleton set, then Russell's theory predicts that 'The beer is cold' can be true in context although there are more than one beer in the universe.

## 4 Gricean Russellianism and the Multiple-Candidate Problem

A problem with Stanley's proposal is that there must be some explanation of how H's value is determined in context. For Gricean Russellians this explanation must be couched in intention-based terms. In particular, a Gricean will want to say that in uttering 'The beer is cold' the speaker communicatively intends his audience to entertain a complete proposition

3. 'The beer is cold' also has a generic-reading in which 'the beer' refers to a particular *kind* of beer (e.g. a particular brand or the set of beers at the conference). On this reading there needn't be a single cold beer in the vicinity on the occasion of utterance for 'the beer is cold' to be true. I will ignore generic definite descriptions in the confines of this essay. Ultimately, although I can't argue for it here, I think the problem I present in §3 also arises for generic-readings. See Carlson (1977) for a discussion of generic descriptions.

4. A different response is to say that 'The beer is cold' *semantically expresses* a false proposition, however, *communicates* (i.e. conversationally implicates) a true proposition (Blackburn 1984, 308–310). I won't have anything to say about this pragmatic strategy, although I think ultimately it gives rise to the same problem presented in §3.

5. Stanley's proposal is in fact more complex. According to him $H$ is itself composed of $f$, a contextually-sensitive function from objects to sets, and $i$, a contextually-sensitive object $f$ takes as argument to yield the restricting set. For purpose of this essay, I will ignore the nuances of Stanley's view.

$\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap H\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ [6], where $H$ is a particular restricting set (e.g. {in this fridge}) which is a constituent of the speaker's communicatively intended proposition.

Now, Stanley's proposal raises a problem for Gricean Russellians—the multiple-candidate problem—because it seems implausible to think that in uttering 'The beer is cold' at the conference Stephen can have a complete proposition (with a definite value for $H$) in mind which he intends to communicate by his utterance (Schiffer 1995, 114–15).

That's because, as noted above, speakers can only intend what they believe to be possible. In the above example, however, there are many contextually-salient candidate propositions (corresponding to different values for $H$) which Stephen knows that Anita might reasonably interpret him as expressing by his utterance. For instance:

(1) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{you like}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(2) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{from this corner shop}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(3) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{for you}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(4) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{at this conference}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(5) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{in this fridge}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(6) $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{on the top shelf of this fridge}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$
(...) [7] [8]

Given the sheer amount of candidate propositions in context, Stephen knows that he can't reasonably expect Anita to work out any proposition of (1)-(6) in particular by his utterance. Hence, he can't mean a definite proposition—say (1)—by 'the beer is cold' without violating Grice's principle. Communicative success wouldn't be a matter of chance or luck, but something close to a miracle. *Ipso facto*, Gricean semantics, according to which the objects of speaker's intentions are definite propositions, is flawed[9]; speakers can't always intend to communicate definite propositions by their utterances.

6. This representation of the logical form of 'the beer is cold' is a bit inaccurate. It would be more precise to represent it as $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap H\}) \wedge \exists y(\ y$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap H\} \wedge y$ is cold$)$. To avoid an excessively complicated presentation, I will ignore this matter in what follows.

7. The list of propositions the speaker could be understood as meaning in the above context could I think potentially go on indefinitely.

8. The anonymous reviewer and Kimon Sourlas-Kotzamanis note, that my description of the party scenario is somewhat underdescribed and that if we were to flesh out the situation and context, the list of potential can- didate propositions Stephen might be understood as meaning will be significantly smaller. I agree with them that fleshing out the context will reduce the list of potential candidate propositions. Yet it seems to me that even if we were to fully elaborate the context, the list of potential candidate propositions would still be far too large for Stephen to mean one definite proposition in particular.

9. One might think that this problem refutes Russell's theory of descriptions, rather than Gricean semantics.

I disagree. The multiple-candidate problem arises for many constructions besides definite descriptions. For instance, for non-sentential assertions such as 'Tiger!' (uttered when a tiger is coming) the explicit linguistic material also underdetermines the proposition expressed, such that *prima facie* speakers can't mean a single complete proposition by their utterance. This suggests that the multiple-candidate problem undermines Gricean semantics, rather than the theory of descriptions.

# 5 Gricean Replies to the Multiple-Candidate Problem

If the Gricean picture of communication is to be maintained, we must find a proposition corresponding to 'the beer is cold' the speaker can mean and the audience must have entertained for communication to be successful.

(A) One suggestion is to maintain that in contexts such as the above—contexts in which there are prima facie too many description completions—there's something like a convention that speakers usually mean object-dependent propositions by their utterances. Following Neale's Russell-friendly account of referential uses of descriptions (Neale 2004, 171), we could then maintain that in uttering 'the beer is cold' Stephen communicatively intends Anita to entertain $\exists!x(\, x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap x = o\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ , where $o$ is a particular beer (the object of the proposition) which is the object of Stephen's communicatively intended proposition. If there's such a convention of usage, then Stephen can mean a definite object-dependent proposition by his utterance without violating Grice's principle—there's only one candidate proposition salient in context.

The main problem with this suggestion is that it lacks generality (Bowker 2017, 7). *Prima facie*, there are many cases for which the multiple-candidate problem arises where we can't plausibly say that the speaker meant an object-dependent proposition by his utterance.

Consider, for instance, Stephen and Anita on their way to the conference. Now, imagine Stephen uttering 'the beer, *whichever it is*, is cold'. In that case, there will be multiple propositions 'the beer, *whichever it is*, is cold' could express in context. Intuitively, however, none of them will be object-dependent propositions because *prima facie* Stephen is making a *general* statement about whatever it is which has the property 'beer'. This example suggests that the above response to the multiple-candidate problem is at best incomplete.

(B) Another similar response by Michaelson is to suggest that for sentences containing incomplete descriptions there's something like a convention that speakers usually mean propositions in which $H$ refers to the speaker's *de dicto* mental state (Michaelson 2016, 13). So, in uttering 'The beer is cold', it's standard usage that Stephen will mean the proposition $\exists!x(\, x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap$ in the speaker's mind$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ . If that's the case, then Stephen can mean a definite proposition by his utterance of 'the beer is cold' without violating Grice's principle—$\exists!x(\, x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap$ in the speaker's mind$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ is the only proposition salient in context. A nice thing about Michaelson's suggestion is that, unlike Neale's, it doesn't only meet the multiple-candidate problem for object-dependent propositions.

The problem with Michaelson's response[10] is that it leads to humpty-dumptyism and hence should be unappealing to Griceans. Consider, for instance, Stephen at the conference. For what ever reason he wants to communicate to Anita the proposition *The beer which is in the safe in Kripke's office is cold* and produces 'The beer is cold'. Can Stephen mean this proposition by

10. I don't mean to imply that Michaelson thinks that (B) is a satisfactory response to the multiple-candidate problem. In fact in personal correspondence he agreed with me that (B) isn't a viable response because it collapses into humpty-dumptyism.

his utterance without violating Grice's principle? According to Michaelson's suggestion we'd have to say yes, since Stephen has the proposition involving Kripke's safe in mind. Hence, Anita should be able to identify this proposition in a semi-opaque manner *via* Stephen's *de dicto* mental state.

This seems implausible. If Stephen can mean *The beer which is in the safe in Kripke's office is cold* by his utterance, then there's a real danger that Stephen can mean any proposition of the form $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap H\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ so long as he intends Anita to identify the value for $H$ via his *de dicto* mental state. I take it, therefore, that Michaelson's suggestion isn't a viable response for Griceans.

## 6 Buchanan's Solution to the Multiple-Candidate Problem

Although I can't claim to have considered all responses to the multiple-candidate problem, I think the Gricean picture of communication can't be maintained as it is.

One helpful suggestion made by Buchanan, in response to this problem, is to say that sometimes the object of a speaker's communicative intention is a *restricted proposition-type* (and not a proposition) and that communicative success merely requires the audience to entertain at least one proposition which is a token of the speaker's communicatively intended restricted proposition- type (Buchanan 2010, 358–59).

A proposition-type is the property common to all propositions which a sentence with a discrete logical form can be used to express in different contexts. So, for instance, the proposition-type for 'The beer is cold' is $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \_\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ , where '_' is a gap to be completed by different values corresponding to different token propositions this sentence can express in different contexts. Propositions (1)-(6) are all tokens of the type $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \_\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ .

A *restricted* proposition-type is a proposition-type for which the value of '_' has been restricted in context by the speaker's preferences. So, for instance, for 'The beer is cold' at the conference, the value of '_' might be restricted such that (1) is a token of the speaker's restricted proposition-type, but not (say) $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \text{belongs to George Bush}\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ .

Now if Buchanan's account of speaker-meaning is correct, then Stephen doesn't violate Grice's principle when he utters 'The beer is cold' at the conference: it's perfectly reasonable for him to have the expectation that Anita works out at least one proposition which is a token of his restricted proposition-type. If Anita interprets Stephen as meaning $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \text{at the conference}\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ , but not the other tokens—say (2)-(6)—of Stephen's restricted proposition-type, then this is sufficient for her to understand Stephen and for communication to be successful. Hence, the multiple-candidate problem is overcome.

A problem with Buchanan's proposal is that he leaves a few things unexplained. According to Griceans, as noted in §2, successful communication consists in $A$ entertaining proposition $p$ and *recognising* that $S$ intends them to entertain $p$ *via* recognition of this intention. Now, if on Buchanan's picture $A$ merely needs to entertain a *token proposition* of $S$'s restricted *proposition-*

*type*, then presumably successful communication needn't consist in *A fully recognising S*'s communicative intention to have $A$ entertain a token of his restricted proposition-type (Bowker 2017, 8). Hence, Buchanan will still have to work out the details a watered down version of **speaker-meaning** which presumably only involves $S$ having the intention that *A partially recognises* the speaker's communicative intention by his utterance.

Another general concern, that I intend to address in the rest of this essay, is that Buchanan says very little about what restricts the speaker's proposition-type. One might think, following Michaelson, that a restricted proposition-type just is a cluster of propositions the speaker *has in mind*; each proposition of this cluster is a proposition the speaker has a representation of and is happy to be understood as meaning by his utterance[11].

This simple suggestion, however, won't do. To see this, consider again Stephen uttering 'the beer is cold' in order to inform Anita that they might drink beer after the conference. Furthermore, assume that the conference is held in a bungalow. Lastly, assume that for whatever reason Stephen doesn't possess the concept 'bungalow'. Since Stephen doesn't possess this concept, it seems that if a restricted proposition-type is a certain cluster of propositions the speaker *has in mind*, then $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \text{in the bungalow}\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ won't be a token of Stephen's restricted proposition-type. Now, assume that for whatever reason Anita interprets Stephen as meaning $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \text{in the bungalow}\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ by his utterance.

Is communication successful? According to Michaelson's interpretation of restricted proposition-types communication can't be successful, since the proposition Anita entertains by Stephen's utterance is a proposition Stephen doesn't have the concepts to represent; Anita's proposition, therefore, can't be a token of Stephen's restricted proposition-type.

This seems implausible. It's intuitive to think that communication may still be successful in the above scenario, so long as Anita grasps a proposition of type $\exists!x(\ x \text{ is } \{\text{beer} \cap \_\} \wedge x \text{ is cold})$ and knows from Stephen's utterance that she might drink beer with Stephen after the conference. Life will go on perfectly well: Stephen won't notice that Anita entertained a proposition he doesn't have the concepts to represent and after the conference they might both have beer together which seems to be the main purpose of Stephen's communicative act. This suggests that Michaelson's interpretation of restricted proposition-types can't be right; communicative success doesn't require there to be an overlap in the propositions speaker and audience *have in mind*[12].

## 7 Proposition-types restricted by Act-Coordinating Intentions

Following Paul (1999, 158), I maintain that (at least in part) communication is a means of coordinating actions between speaker and audience; speakers utter words or sentences in conversational contexts with higher-order intentions to coordinate their actions with their audience's.

11. Michaelson (2016, 13) seems to assume this interpretation when he says that according to Buchanan '[speakers have a] cluster of propositions [...] in mind [they intend] to convey'.

12. This argument is indebted to Michaelson (24)

Call these higher-order intentions *act-coordinating-intentions*. So, for instance, when Stephen utters 'the beer is cold' we might think of him as having the *act-coordinating intention that*, as the result of his utterance, Anita is *disposed to act* in coordination with his intended action[13] of (say) potentially drinking beer with her after the conference.

Now, to provide an improved account of restricted proposition-types which meets the above difficulty with Michaelson's interpretation, I suggest that for utterances of sentences with incomplete descriptions speakers communicatively intend their audience to entertain at least one proposition of their intended proposition-type. What restricts this proposition-type is the speaker's act-coordinating-intention; speakers intend their audience to entertain any proposition of their proposition-type the entertainment of which disposes the audience to act in coordination with the speaker's intended action[14]. So, for instance, when Stephen utters 'the beer is cold', then he intends Anita to entertain at least one proposition of the type $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \_\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$. He also intends—this is what restricts the proposition-type—that the proposition Anita entertains is a proposition the entertainment of which disposes her to act in coordination with Stephen's intended action of (say) potentially drinking beer with her after the conference[15].

How can the entertainment of a proposition dispose the audience to act in coordination with the speaker's intended action? I suggest that the entertainment of a proposition can supply the audience with sufficient information such that they're able to *infer* the speaker's intended action. Knowing the speaker's intended action (*via* this inference) is to have a disposition to act in coordination with it. So, for instance, if Stephen utters 'the beer is cold' and Anita thereby entertains the proposition $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{in this fridge}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$, then she can use this proposition to infer Stephen's intended action. Since she believes that Stephen meant $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{in this fridge}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$, she can reason that he probably intends to drink a beer with her after the conference—why else would Stephen mean the above proposition at the conference? Hence, she'll have a disposition to act in coordination with Stephen's intended action.

If act-coordinating intentions restrict proposition-types, then communication will presumably succeed in the conference scenario if Anita entertains $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{in this fridge}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$, but not if she entertains $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{\text{beer} \cap \text{belongs to George Bush}\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ by

13. The object of a speaker's act-coordinating intention may also be an intended *inaction*. This leaves it open whether omitting to do something is an action.

14. I suggest that act-coordinating intentions are reflexive just like ordinary Gricean communicative intentions. For $S$ to have the intention that $A$ be *disposed to act* in coordination with $S$'s intended action, it's *prima facie* necessary that $S$ also intends that $A$ *recognises* $S$'s act-coordinating intention. If there's no such recognition involved, it's hard to see how $A$'s actions should properly be *coordinated* with $S$'s actions.

15. Sourlas-Kotzamanis notes that act-coordinating intentions might also help to explain Grice's *maxim of relation* to be relevant to the communicative purpose. The idea might be that speakers (tacitly) agree on some act-coordinating goal in a communicative exchange and that the maxim of relation states that speakers should make conversational contributions which are relevant to this shared act-coordinating goal. I am sympathetic to this suggestion. Grice himself is rather reluctant in 'Logic and Conversation' to satisfactorily explicate the maxim of relation (Grice 1989, 27).

Stephen's utterance. The former proposition, unlike the latter, provides Anita with sufficient information to infer Stephen's intended action and therefore disposes her to act in coordination with it.

Communication will presumably also succeed if Anita entertains $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{$beer $\cap$ in the bungalow$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ —a proposition Stephen doesn't have the concepts to represent—so long as the entertainment of this proposition disposes her to act in coordination with Stephen's intended action. Since act-coordinating intentions restrict proposition-types, Stephen needn't have the token propositions in mind which Anita *could* entertain in order to understand him. Hence, on my proposed view, communication may succeed although there's no overlap in the propositions speaker and audience have in mind.

Presumably, if successful communication consists in part in the audience being disposed to act in coordination with the speaker's intended action, then communicative success will have *degrees*[16]. That's because, presumably, acting in coordination with the speaker's actions has degrees. For instance, consider Stephen uttering 'the beer is cold' thereby intending Anita to entertain a proposition of type $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{$beer $\cap$ _$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ and intending that the entertainment of this proposition disposes her to act in coordination with his intended act of drinking *Guinness* with her after the conference.

Now, if Anita were to entertain $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{$beer $\cap$ in the bungalow$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ by his utterance, then presumably communication wouldn't be *fully* successful. That's because, on the face of it, the entertainment of $\exists!x(\ x$ is $\{$beer $\cap$ in the bungalow$\} \wedge x$ is cold$)$ in context doesn't provide Anita with sufficient information to infer Stephen's *exact* intended action. Presumably, she'll only expect, by entertaining the above proposition, that she might drink beer (but not necessarily *Guinness*) with Stephen after the conference.

I think folk-intuitions support the idea that communicative success has degrees. We often say things like 'he didn't understand me completely' or 'he roughly understood what I meant'. My proposal explains such talk as follows: the proposition $A$ entertained by $S$'s utterance doesn't fully dispose $A$ to act in coordination with $S$'s intended action.

# 8 Conclusion

I have argued that, at least for definite descriptions, unarticulated indexical expressions don't pose a problem for Griceans. We can all be Gricean Russellians so long as the objects of communicative intentions are restricted proposition-types. The multiple-candidate problem merely shows that sometimes speakers can't communicatively intend discrete propositions by their ut-

16. Because speakers intended actions often seem vague—when $S$ utters 'the beer is cold' it seems plausible to think that it will be indeterminate whether $S$'s intended action is (i) to potentially drink beer with $A$ after the conference or whether it is (ii) to potentially drink beer with $A$ *on the sofa* after the conference,—a speaker's act-coordinating intention will presumably often be vague too.

I don't think this vagueness is problematic, however. Some act-coordinating intentions may just be irredeemably vague, such that it's indeterminate whether communication was *fully* or *partially* successful.

terances.

I have argued that restricted proposition-types are proposition-types restricted by speaker's *act-coordinating-intentions*. This proposal explains how communication may succeed, although the proposition the audience entertains by means of the speaker's utterance is a proposition the speaker doesn't have the concepts to represent[17].

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