Communicating with colourings

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Abstract: A speaker can express the same thought, true under the same conditions, while using different expressions and grammatical constructions. According to Frege, these are differences in *colourings.* Colourings may convey additional contents; in that, they resemble Gricean conventional implicatures. Sander (2019) argues that Gricean implicatures do not subsume the category of colourings, as some colourings do not *communicate* their content. I show that this argument relies on a notion of communication focused on the speaker's intentions. But a notion of communicative intentions where a speaker is responsible for the intentions her audience ascribes her possible. Under this notion, since so-called non-communicative colourings trigger specific inferences, a speaker who uses them communicates these inferences. Therefore, I vindicate the communicative role of colourings with content.

Keywords: philosophy of language; Fregean colouring; conventional implicature; pragmatics; communicative intention

1. Introduction

(1) My damn bike has a flat!

(2) One of my bicycle tires has emptied of air.

Utterances in (1) and (2) express similar thoughts, and are true under the same conditions. They differ in the choice of words that carry the meaning. Frege calls these differences in *tone* or *colouring* (Frege, 1879, 1892). *Colourings* are expressions, or grammatical constructions, that do not modify the truth of a sentence when substituted to an alternative expression, but may convey an additional content. The use of the formal address in languages that have one conveys that the relation between speaker and addressee is somewhat distant. The use of *but* instead of *and* to form a conjunction conveys that the conjuncts stand in some sort of contrast. The use of *damn* in (1) conveys the speaker's annoyance at her bike.

Colourings resemble Grice's conventional implicatures: inferences that are entailed by the conventional meaning of lexical items, but are compositionally independent of the explicit contribution of a sentence (Grice, 1975; Potts, 2005). However, Sander (2019) argues that

Gricean implicatures do not subsume the category of colourings. According to him, some colourings are non-communicative.

My goal in this paper is to challenge the notion of communication at stake in this argument. When we say that a speaker can *convey* some content by the use of a colouring without *communicating* this content, because she does not *mean* to communicate such content to her audience, we are relying on a picture of communication where speaker intentions are the landmark of communication. However, I argue for an intersubjective picture of communication, where *what the audience infers* that the speaker intends to communicate is also relevant to what is communicated. In such a picture, the use of colourings impacts what a speaker communicates when she makes an utterance.

After exposing the concepts of colourings and conventional implicatures at stake, I show that the claim that some colourings do not communicate anything requires a narrow notion of communication (section 2). If a speaker only communicates what she intends to communicate, then the content of some colourings is only conveyed. This allows to distinguish them from conventional implicatures, that communicate their content. However, a more intersubjective notion of communicative intentions is possible, and compatible with Grice's theory of conversation (section 3). Under this notion, a speaker who uses certain expressions is attributed a communicative intention by her audience based on what speakers generally intend when using these expressions. Since so-called non-communicative colourings trigger specific inferences, a speaker who uses them communicates these inferences. Therefore, I vindicate the communicative role of all colourings with content (section 4).

2. Colourings and Conventional Implicatures

According to Frege, if two sentences have the same *Sinn* and hence the same *Bedeutung*, they express the same thought and are true under exactly the same conditions. However, they can differ in what Frege calls *tone* or *colouring* (Frege, 1879, 1892). Differences in colouring may affect connotations of a sentence, but do not touch its truth-conditions.

The characterization that Frege gives of colourings is mostly negative. Typically, colourings are triggered when a lexical item or expression contributes the same thought than an alternative expression but may differ in the connotations (hints) it carries. Frege gives a variety of examples: colourings include the difference between active and passive voice,

formal and informal address (in languages that have such a distinction), evaluatives (*fortunately, damn*), and even the difference between *but* and *and.*

> The way that *but* differs from and in that we use it to intimate [*andeuten*] that what follows it contrasts with what was to be expected from what preceded it. Such conversational suggestions make no difference to the thought. A sentence can be transformed by changing the verb from active to passive and at the same time making the accusative into the subject. In the same way we may change the dative into the nominative and at the same time replace *give* by *receive*. Naturally such transformations are not indifferent in every respect but they do not touch the thought, they do not touch what is true or false . . . (Frege, 1918, p. 331)

The sentences in (1) are a pair of sentences that do not differ in thought, but in colouring.

(1) a. The dog howled all night.
b. The cur howled all night.

When uttering (1b), the speaker expresses the same thought as when uttering (1a). But by using the term *cur* instead of the term *dog*, she conveys her dislike of the dog she is referring to. In (1), colourings affect connotations of a sentence, but not its truth-conditions.

Following the Fregean characterization, colourings occur when different lexical items or expressions are truth-conditionally equivalent alternatives. Their connotations and use may differ, but they could be substituted to each other without changing the truth (or falsity) of a sentence. The use of active or passive voice in (2) does not affect the thought expressed by the sentence. (2a) and (2b) are true under the same conditions.

(2) a. Caesar crossed the Rubicon.
b. The Rubicon was crossed by Caesar.

Sander (2019) uses Frege's list of examples to delineate four features of colourings. He calls the truth-conditionally equivalent expressions that trigger colourings *c-devices*.

i. Colourings are assertorically inert.

   All c-devices are assertorically inert: If Σ is an assertoric sentence that contains a c-device which hints that q, then uttering Σ does not amount to asserting q.

Asserting *the cur howled all night* does not amount to asserting that one disapproves of the dog.

ii. Colourings are alethically inert.

All c-devices are alethically inert: If Σ is an assertoric sentence with the propositional content p that contains a c-device which hints that q, then the truth-value of q does not affect the truth-value of p or the truth-value of Σ as a whole.

The disapproval of the dog has no bearing on the truth of the assertion *the cur howled all night*.

iii. Colourings are inferentially inert.

All c-devices are inferentially inert: If Σ_1 and Σ_2 are assertoric sentences with the propositional content p that differ only in colouring, then Σ_1 and Σ_2 are logically equivalent.

The dog howled all night and *the cur howled all night* are logically equivalent assertions.

iv. Some colourings are communicatively inert: they do not communicate anything.

Some c-devices are communicatively inert: Not every c-device contains a hint (*Andeutung*) that q as part of its meaning.

Given these features of colourings, Sander denies that colourings are uniquely aesthetic phenomena (Dummett, 1981). On the contrary, colourings may have content. They are adequate to certain situations. They also, sometimes, convey additional meanings by triggering inferences to their content. A prime example of a colouring with content is the difference between *and* and *but*.

(3) a. Linda is tough and fair.
b. Linda is tough but fair.

(3a) and (3b) are true under exactly the same conditions: Linda is tough, Linda is fair. However, the use of but in (3b) conveys an additional content: that Linda being tough, and Linda being fair, stand in contrast.[1] But not all colourings hint at established, conventionalized

1. The exact nature of the contrast that the adversative marker *but* indicates is a difficult topic. The interested reader can compare formal contrast accounts (Saebø, 2004; Umbach, 2005) and argumentative approaches (Kripke, 2017; Winterstein, 2012) that attempt to characterize the specific contribution of *but* more accurately.

contents. While the difference between *and* and *but* is shared among speakers of English – the content is grounded intersubjectively – some colourings have contents that are less conventionalized – the subjective difference in how an audience interprets *tempest* against *storm*. The less conventionalized contents are at play in the poetic use of colourings (Frege, `Logik' p. 151sq; Beaney, 1997 p. 240; Dummett, 1981 p. 85). But, be they conventionalized or not: some colourings have contents they communicate by means of hinting [*Andeutung*]. Horn (inter alia) likens this relation to Gricean conventional implicatures (Grice, 1975).

> . . . the *Andeutung* relation, for a component of linguistic meaning that does not affect propositional content or touch what is true or false, is a direct precursor of Grice's conventional implicature. (Horn, 2013, p. 153)

Conventional implicatures were born in neglect: in their first mention, Grice contrasts them with conversational implicatures.

> In some cases the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, besides helping to determine what is said. If I say (smugly), *He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave*, I have certainly committed myself, by virtue of the meaning of my words, to its being the case that his being brave is a consequence (follows from) his being an Englishman. But while I have said that he is an Englishman, and said that he is brave, I do not want to say that I have *said* (in the favored sense) that it follows from his being an Englishman that he is brave, though I have certainly indicated, and so implicated, that this is so. I do not want to say that my utterance of this sentence would be, *strictly speaking*, false should the consequence in question fail to hold. So some implicatures are conventional . . . (Grice, 1975, 44sq)

As implicatures, conventional implicatures trigger defeasible[2], pragmatic inferences. However, by contrast with conversational implicatures, conventional implicatures follow from an utterance in virtue of the words the speaker uses. That leads to differences from conversational implicatures.

First, conventional implicatures are not calculated from breaking a Gricean maxim of conversation. Instead, they are associated with the conventional meaning of a word. Secondly,

2 Defeasibility of conventional implicatures is distinct from their cancellability. Conventional implicatures are hard to cancel: a speaker who follows up her claim that *Linda is tough, but fair* with *Not that toughness and fairness are usually in contrast* appears, at best, clumsy. However, the inference that follow from conventional implicatures is by nature pragmatic. As such, it can be revised without contradiction, conversely to entailments. A speaker can follow up *My damn bike has a flat again* with *I'll get it repaired, I love the damn thing* and undo the inference that she hates her bike.

conventional implicatures are detachable: if I substitute the truth-conditionally equivalent sentence *He is an Englishman and he is brave* to the sentence *He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave*, the inference that the subject being brave follows from his being an Englishman is not triggered anymore. Conventional implicatures are also harder to target and cancel than conversational implicatures. While the speaker in (4) easily cancels the implicature that not all students passed the class, the speaker in (5) is, at best, clumsy, but most likely contradictory.

(4) a. Some of the students passed the class.
b. In fact, all of them did!

(5) a. He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave.
b. # But I don't mean to imply that Englishmen are brave!

Finally: conversational implicatures are truth-conditionally independent from the sentence they are associated with. If the implicature that not all students passed triggered by (4a) is false, the utterance remains true – as the successful cancellation shows. On the other hand, whether the truth of conventional implicatures is indifferent to the truth of their trigger utterance is debatable (Bach, 1999).

Unfortunately, except from setting them apart from conversational implicatures, Grice does not provide a principled characterization of conventional implicatures. He gives examples: *but, therefore, even*... And the Gricean examples of conventional implicatures seem right at home in the Fregean category of colourings. In Fregean terms, conventional implicatures are differences in lexical items, or expressions, that do not affect the thought of a sentence, but nonetheless *hint at* an additional connotation. For example, that being brave in some way follows from being an Englishman.

Potts (2005) narrows down the category of Gricean conventional implicatures to implicatures that bring about commitments (p. 11); and he adds to the Gricean examples supplemental expressions and expressives. According to Potts, these conventional implicatures convey additional commitments. By using the expressive *damn*, the speaker of (6) commits to a certain dislike of her bike at the moment of utterance.

(6) My damn bike has a flat again.

Sander (2019) distinguishes Fregean colourings and conventional implicatures. He classifies colourings in:

i. Purely aesthetic phenomena
ii. Colourings with content
    a) communicative colourings or 'hints': *but, cur, unfortunately*, etc.
    b) non-communicative colourings: *tu* vs. *vous*, *it is true that*, double negation, etc.

Communicative colourings, that bring about extra commitments, correspond to Potts' conventional implicatures. On the other hand, according to Sander, non-communicative colourings with content and aesthetic colourings do not bring about commitments. The use of *it is true* to preface a statement allegedly does not bring about extra commitments from the speaker (or, if it brings them, they are not easy to subsume under one proposition). Thus, Sander sets colourings apart from conventional implicature.

I argue against Sander's distinction of communicative and non-communicative colourings. This distinction relies upon a picture of communication according to which a speaker communicates a content only if she means to commit to it. But when we take into account the fact that speaker intentions are reconstructed by an audience, we arrive at another notion of communication: where a speaker can communicate a content without necessarily *meaning to*, or committing to it in a strong sense.

3. Notions of communication

Non-communicative colourings, according to Sander, do not communicate their content. That is, in his theory of communication grounded on speakers intentions. He opposes Horn's account of the linguistic meaning of *tu* in the sentence *Tu es soûl* (*you* [informal] *are drunk*):

> Thus in affirming *Tu es soûl*, my belief that a certain social relationship obtains between us and that you are male is not part of the thought or of what is said; both propositions are indeed communicated, but what is said is simply that you're drunk. (Horn, 2013, p. 159)

> . . . typically, *S* utters a sentence such as *Tu es soûl* (as opposed to *Vous êtes soûl*) because, among other things, there are certain social rules for using the word *tu* and because *S* intends to abide by these rules, but *S* does not thereby communicate to *H* (or to somebody else) that a certain social relationship obtains between *S* and *H*. Similarly, it would be odd to say that by using the masculine form *soûl* (vs. *soûle*) *S* is communicating to *H* that *H* is male or that *S* believes *H* to be male. (Sander, 2019, p. 386)

The difference between Sander and Horn stems from different understandings of the notion of communication. For the utterance *Tu es soûl* to be felicitous, certain conditions need to obtain. The addressee needs to be a man, and a certain social relationship needs to obtain between the speaker and the addressee. Now, according to Horn and Sander, these conditions are not part of the thought, or of what is actually *said* in the utterance. Indeed, the English translation '*You are drunk*' that preserves the thought of the utterance does not preserve the extra conditions of the French utterance. Where Horn and Sander disagree is on whether these conditions, which are not part of the utterance, are communicated.

Sander takes a hard line on Gricean communicative intentions: according to him, a speaker only communicates what she intends to communicate. He uses other terms for meanings that are associated to non-communicative colourings with content. When using *tu* instead of *vous*, the speaker 'displays her knowledge' of social rules and command of French, conveys the existence of a certain relation, etc. The term of communication is reserved to a content that the speaker meant to share with her audience – and that the audience appropriately recognizes.

> From a Gricean point of view, the term 'communication' should be roughly equivalent to 'non-natural meaning', and it seems obvious to me that in Horn's example the core condition for non-natural meaning is not satisfied: *S* can only mean or communicate something by 'tu' if *S* intends her use of 'tu' 'to produce some effect in an audience'. (Sander, 2019, p. 386)

Based on this picture of communication, Sander distinguishes between two categories of colourings with content. Some, according to him, hint at their content in a Fregean sense: these are communicative colourings with content, such as *but* vs. *and*, *therefore*, *cur*. He likens these colourings to conventional implicatures. On the other hand, non-communicative colourings with content are, to him, Frege-specific, as they do not properly communicate their

content, but only convey it. In this category, Sander classifies formal vs. informal address, double negation, *it is true that*... Because a speaker, when using formal voice, does not mean to *communicate* that a specific relationship obtains with her interlocutor, this content is not communicated, but only *conveyed*. On the other hand, presumably, when a speaker uses *but*, she means to communicate the existence of a contrast between the conjuncts of her utterance.[3] Sander notes:

> Since a certain type of social relationship is just what makes a sentence containing one of these two words appropriate or felicitous, correctly using such a sentence conveys the speaker's belief that a certain social relationship obtains between S and H (on the difference between conveying and communicating, see Stanley 2002: 327). Alternatively, we might say that, by using 'tu' or 'vous', a speaker displays her knowledge of the rules for speaking French felicitously. (Sander, 2019 p. 387)

However, a more intersubjective take on communicative intentions is possible and compatible with a Gricean perspective. This intersubjective picture of communicative intentions blurs the line between communicative and non-communicative colourings.

To establish this picture of communication, the first thing to do is establish that speaker's intentions are not transparent. An audience is not omniscient, and thus not automatically aware of what a speaker means by their utterance. Moreover, in most cases, speaker's intentions are not explicitly communicated to the audience. Instead, the audience recognizes and guesses speaker's intentions on the basis of general use.

> Explicitly formulated linguistic (or quasi-linguistic) intentions are no doubt comparatively rare. In their absence we would seem to rely on very much the same kinds of criteria as we do in the case of nonlinguistic intentions where there is a general usage. An utterer is held to intend to convey what is normally conveyed (or normally intended to be conveyed), and we require a good reason for accepting that a particular use diverges from the general usage (e.g. he never knew or had

3 Another challenge to Sander's picture of Gricean communicative intentions is the question of the *level* of intent required for an intention to be communicated. In the case of *tu* vs *vous*, I certainly intend to convey that the use of *tu* is appropriate in a certain dialogue. It is just not my primary intention. However, it is also hard to say that when using *but*, the speaker has a primary goal of communicating the existence of a contrast, or even is aware of communicating the contrast.

> forgotten the general usage). Similarly in nonlinguistic cases: we are presumed to intend the normal consequences of our actions. (Grice, 1957, p. 387)

The gist of it is: while speakers intentions do matter for communication, *intention recognition* is also crucial. In his later works, Grice focuses on speaker intentions, but I believe it is under the premise that such speaker intentions need to be recognized by the audience.

Bach and Harnish (1979), in a very traditional picture of Gricean intentions, count as crucial intention recognition for communication to actually take place.[4] Their Speech Act Schema is the pattern according to which an audience infers speakers intentions from what they utter, under the communicative presumption.

> The communicative presumption is the mutual belief prevailing in a linguistic community to the effect that whenever someone says something to somebody, he intends to be performing some identifiable illocutionary act. (Bach and Harnish, 1979, p. 12)

Speaker intentions don't exist in a vacuum. They are recognized by an audience. So, while it is tempting to have speaker's intentions be law in how to interpret speaker utterances, there is always an element where the audience matter: the audience is the one who ascribes intentions to the speaker to illuminate their utterances.

Of course, the guesswork of intention recognition is principled: not every type of intention is up for grabs. Intention ascription follows common use of utterances and expressions.[5] In the same way as an agent is expected to intend the normal consequences of their actions, a speaker is expected to intend the normal interpretation of their speech. If an agent lets go of a cup, they are assumed to intend the cup falling to the ground and breaking. If a speaker says *Please close the door*, they are assumed to intend that their addressee closes the door. To reconstruct the intentions of the speaker of an utterance, the audience needs to

4. Bach and Harnish also counter Searle's (1969) argument that Gricean effects of utterances are not produced by the recognition of an intention to produce them. For example, one might recognize that a speaker intends them to close the door, and yet refuse to do so. They solve this problem by distinguishing between illocutionary and perlocutionary effects (Austin, 1975).

> the speaker's illocutionary act, whose identity he is trying to communicate, can succeed without the intended perlocutionary effect (if there is one) being produced. (Bach and Harnish, 1979, p. 14)

5. In that, Grice is closer to Wittgensteinian semantics of use than one might think (Wittgenstein, 1953).

hold some reasonable assumptions: they assume that the speaker is competent, sincere, and respects the other Gricean maxims (Grice, 1975). In addition, the audience makes use of conventions, general use of expressions, etc. In this sense, the only speaker's intentions an audience comes to know are *the intentions that an audience rightfully ascribes to the speaker*. So what a speaker communicates is what her audience recognizes she intends to communicate.

To further the argument: there are cases where the actual speaker intentions and the intentions that the audience ascribes to the speaker differ. But because the audience is justified in their intention ascription, we judge that the speaker *communicated* what the audience interpreted, even though it differs from what the speaker meant. Here is an example:

(7) I want to meet with Patricia for drinks. I call her:

'Let's meet at the Descartes bar and go for drinks!'.

The reason why I suggest the Descartes is that, albeit closed, it is ideally situated for a meeting point – close to the metro, good parking spots, etc. Other nice bars are in the same street.

I make this proposition under the assumption that Patricia knows that the Descartes is closed. This is where I am wrong: she is not from the same neighbourhood, and doesn't know the Descartes is closed.

My intention to communicate a meeting point is recognized: Patricia correctly judged that I suggested the Descartes as a meeting point. However, she also ascribed me the intention to communicate that we would have drinks at the Descartes specifically. It was a perfectly reasonable intention to ascribe me given her knowledge state. Thus, I can be said to have, albeit unknowingly, communicated to Patricia that we would drink at the Descartes.

In a theory of communication fully focused on speaker's intention, we would have to say that what I communicated in (7) is only that we would meet at the Descartes, and go somewhere else for drinks. That would make Patricia's interpretation of my speech (her

assumption that we would go have drinks at the Descartes specifically) a mistaken assumption, and not a result of my speech. But considering that, in context, the utterance: ‘Let’s meet at the Descartes and go for drinks!’ is generally used to communicate that one wishes to have drinks at the Descartes specifically, Patricia’s assumption that I intended her to understand that we would drink at the Descartes is fair game. In fact, I can be held to wish to communicate that we would have drinks at the Descartes. What exactly is communicated also depends on the intentions the audience ascribes to the speaker.

As seen earlier, not any interpretation is up for grabs for the audience. For example, if in (7) Patricia were to ascribe me the intention to convey that we were to go canoeing – under the assumption that *drinks* actually meant *canoeing* – she would not be ascribing intentions in good faith. And the speaker is also expected to play by the rules. For them to properly communicate their intentions, they should take into account what their audience can reasonably assume they wish to communicate. In (7), I, as a speaker, cannot expect Patricia to understand that by *drinks* I mean *canoeing*, unless we previously established such a convention. By taking me to be a competent speaker Patricia assumes that I am aware of the general use of certain terms and expressions, such as *go for drinks*. And, wish it or not, as a competent speaker, I communicate the general content associated with a term when I use it. This is why retracting my proposal to go for drinks, and claiming I actually meant to suggest canoeing, would be in bad faith, and not be readily accepted.

That what the speaker communicates depends, in fact, on what the audience recognizes the speaker intended to communicate considerably broadens the notion of communication. It includes multiple cases where the speaker didn’t *mean* to communicate what she did. She made an off-colour joke, she claimed something that turned out to have repercussions she did not intend. In a narrow picture of communication, these cases count as *communication failure* where the audience misunderstood the speaker (and example (7) is interpreted as a communication failure). I propose, instead, that these are part of what the speaker communicated. To understand why, I turn to the commitment analysis of discourse (Brandom, 1983; 1998). According to Brandom, when a speaker makes a discourse move, she undertakes a certain amount of commitments and responsibilities with respect to the content of her discourse move. Suppose that her discourse move has unintended consequences: say, it triggered a conversational implicature that was offensive to her audience. While her audience

is mistaken into ascribing the speaker the intention to offend, the audience is *justified* in doing so, following ordinary use of expressions. In a narrow picture of communication, the offense was not communicated, as the speaker did not intend it. In the hearer-oriented picture of communication I defend, the offense was communicated: the speaker can be held responsible for it, and the audience can demand a *retraction* on the basis of their justified ascription. The existence of retractions, by which a speaker can acknowledge that her utterance no longer corresponds to her intentions (Caponetto, 2020; MacFarlane, 2014; Marques, 2018) is crucial to understand speaker's responsibilities towards unintentional effects of her utterances.

When we integrate intention ascription and intention recognition in our picture of communication, what we get is an intersubjective structure that relies on constant feedback loops.

i. A speaker makes an utterance, by which she means to communicate content *p.*
ii. But for this to work, the audience has to attribute to the speaker the intention to communicate content *p* on the basis of her utterance.
iii. So the competent speaker will use lexical items that are generally (in the community), used to communicate *p*.

    For example: *Beware, there are bees!* is generally used to communicate to an audience that there are bees, and they should be careful in the area.
iv. When the speaker uses lexical items, the audience reconstructs their communicative intention on the basis of what the lexical items are generally used to communicate.

    For example, the audience interprets that the speaker uses *Beware* to communicate a warning, as it is generally used to warn others from a danger.
v. Maybe the speaker actually meant to warn their audience to look out for the pretty bees.
vi. But crucially, v. only matters if the speaker manages to make it known that they will henceforth use *Beware* as a general attention grabbing item, instead of a warning.

A note on the last point: speakers can change the general use of words (there is a creative use of language, such as reclaiming slurs). They do so only to the extent that their intention to use an expression in a way that diverges from the already established general use is recognized by, and sometimes made explicit to, the audience.

> (10) A professor starts a botanic lesson on berries. She declares that she will henceforth use the botanical definition of *berry*: a fruit produced from the ovary of a single flower in which the outer layer of the ovary wall develops into an edible fleshy portion (pericarp). This use of the word *berry* will cover many fruits that are not known as berries in the common use: grapes, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, bananas, and chili peppers.

But a speaker who attempts to use an expression in a way that differs from the general use without establishing her intentions runs into risks of misunderstandings. The professor in (10) would (reasonably) cause some confusion by stating that strawberries are not actually berries if she didn't clarify her intentions in using the term *berry* first.

This also brings forward an interesting consequences of accounting for ascribed intentions in communicated content. In a speaker-oriented view of communication, what is communicated is what the speaker intended. Communicative failure occurs when the audience does not ascribe the right intentions to the speaker. In our broader view of communication, what is communicated is what the audience ends up recognizing. Communicative failure still occurs, under similar circumstances, when what the audience recognizes is not what the speaker intended. But, crucially, there is a shift in responsibility: it is not the audience who failed to recognize speaker's intentions. Instead, it is the role of the speaker to clarify herself so that she can communicate what she intended to communicate.

This picture is, of course, schematic. The interactional nature of discourse and conversation refines it. Yes, the speaker communicates the content her audience ascribes her the intention to communicate, in the sense that she is responsible for the effect of her utterances even if her intention was mistaken by the audience. But the existence of a conversational feedback loop also makes it a responsibility for the audience to question their grasp of speaker's intentions, and if needed modify it based on further utterances. The *defeasibility* of pragmatic inferences (Asher and Lascarides, 2003) is crucial here: it allows the audience to refine and revise their picture of speaker's intentions along the way.

Gricean communicative intentions still determine the interpretation of an utterance. But the communicative intentions are not only what the speaker *intends* to communicate, but also *what the audience recognizes* that the speaker intends. This leads to a broad understanding of communication: not only what the speaker says, or means is communicated. Additional inferences, based on the speaker's utterance, are also part of what the speaker communicates.

4. Communicating with colourings

When we consider intention ascription in communication, what a speaker communicates is not limited to what she intends to communicate. Instead, what a speaker communicates are the communicative intentions that her audience rightfully ascribes her on the basis of her utterance and reasonable inferences.

How does that apply to the category of non-communicative colourings with content? Recall that the main argument Sander provides for the existence of this category is that there are colourings with content (e.g. *tu* vs *vous* in French) that a speaker can use without communicating their content. The reason, according to Sander, is that when using such colourings, the speaker does not usually intend to communicate their content. When a speaker uses *tu* instead of *vous* in a conversation, she does not mean to communicate that a certain relationship obtains with her interlocutor.

I argue that under a theory of communication that takes into account intention recognition, these colourings actually communicate their associated content. To streamline the argument: since intention recognition matters, the speaker has to take into account the general use of an expression. She knows that she will be held by her audience to intend what is generally intended by the use of this expression. In particular, if a colouring conveys or hints at a certain content, it is because it is generally used to communicate this content. So when a speaker uses this colouring, she knows that she will be ascribed (and reasonably so) the intention to communicate what this colouring is generally used to communicate.

To focus on an example: a competent speaker knows that *tu*, in its general use, conveys a certain sense of familiarity and equality, distinct from the more distant *vous*. She is aware that other competent French speakers know the distinct uses of *vous* and *tu*; and that other

competent French speakers will ascribe her the intention to convey the familiarity and equality that generally comes with the use of *tu*. Therefore, she should only use tu in a situation where it is adequate for her to convey such meaning. But what allows us to say that the speaker actually communicates that a relation obtains, and not only displays her knowledge of the rules of French?

Recall that colourings, in their first Fregean approximation, are expressions, or constructions, that may convey an additional content, but do not affect the truth of a sentence. So colourings, almost by definition – such as *tu* vs. *vous*, *and* vs. *but*, passive vs. active voice – constitute alternative ways of dressing up the same sentence.

> Two colourings c_1 and c_2 are alternatives when c_1 and c_2 are expressions that can be substituted to one another in an utterance without affecting the thought it expresses.
>
> For example: formal and informal address are alternatives.

And what we know about alternatives is that we may use them to trigger conversational implicatures (Grice, 1975):

(11) – Teacher: *Anna, je te prierai de me vouvoyer*.

* Anna, I ask you [informal] to address me as *vous* [you, formal].

– Anna: *Et je te prierai de me vouvoyer.*

* And I ask you [informal, focus] to address me as *vous* [you, formal].

In (11), Anna uses colourings to produce a conversational implicature. By using a *tu* address after being told by her teacher that a *tu* address was inappropriate, she implicates her refusal to use a formal address until the teacher also does it. She also, more generally, communicates what the *tu* address generally conveys, which is a sense of familiarity and proximity; this is the main reason for the sassiness of the example, that after being told to use the formal

address, Anna still uses the familiar *tu* while echoing the teacher. Thus, she emphasizes the unequal treatment: that the teacher requires a formal address while addressing her informally.

For a competent speaker, a sentence with a certain colouring is an immediate alternative to another sentence expressing the same thought, with a different colouring. When a competent English speaker uses *but*, she is aware that she could have used another conjunction, such as *and*, and chose not to. Similarly, since *tu* and *vous* are alternatives, the competent French speaker who uses *tu* knows that she could have used the other form of address. The same goes for other examples of 'non-communicative' colourings: double negation, *it is true that*, etc. When using a double negation such as (12), the speaker knows that there is a more concise alternative. So she is also aware that she will be taken to implicate something by her use of an unnecessarily convoluted formulation.

(12) Marta is not not a lawyer.

What she will be taken to implicate specifically depends on theories of negation at play in the conversation, and whether the participants take a double negation to actually equate with an affirmation (Dummett, 1981; Horn, 2001; Rumfitt, 2000). But it does seem that the speaker communicates something different from the content of *Marta is a lawyer*. In my opinion, she would communicate something along the lines of *Marta is in a law-adjacent field*, or *Marta is a very bad lawyer*.

A competent speaker is aware that colourings are alternatives to another formulation; and she is aware that when she uses one, she conveys that she did not choose the other. So it is very easy for a speaker and an audience to generate conversational implicatures by drawing attention to the use of a colouring. The general rule is:

> Suppose colourings c_1 and c_2 are alternatives. They may hint at different contents. When a competent speaker uses c_1, she conveys the content associated with c_1. She additionally conveys that she did not choose to use c_2 in the context.

The competent speaker is aware of the rules of use of c_1 and c_2 respectively. These rules can correspond to what Sander distinguishes as communicative contents, like being aware that the use of *but* instead of *and* conveys the presence of a contrast between the conjuncts of a

sentence. But they can also correspond to the contents of non-communicative colourings, like being aware that the use of *tu* is adequate in a conversation struck in a casual context, between people that are not concerned by hierarchical relationships.

The competent speaker is aware that, when she utters a sentence with a colouring c_1, she will be ascribed the intention to convey that the sentence with the alternative colouring c_2 was inappropriate, or did not convey her intentions accurately. The parsimonious explanation is that she wishes to communicate the content generally associated with the colouring c_1 she uses. So, in the intersubjective picture of communication I delineated in section 3, the speaker will communicate the content associated with the colouring she used.

The content associated with alternatives colourings might be more or less close. The choice of *but* instead of *and* is more significant than the choice of *however* instead of *but*. In the latter type of cases, where there is less distinction between the content associated with the alternatives, the hearer may infer indifference of the speaker between two formulations.[6] I believe this type of cases, where there is no significant content difference between alternative colourings, falls under Sander's category of æsthetic colourings; that is, colourings that do not have a particular content. When colourings differ in content, this content ends up being part of what is communicated by the speaker, as it is part of what the hearer can legitimately recover from the speaker's utterance and hold the speaker responsible for.

5. Conclusion

The argument to distinguish Fregean colourings from Gricean implicatures is that some colourings do not communicate the content that is associated with them. This argument relies on a notion of communication according to which a speaker communicates a content only if she intends to communicate such content. We can deem this position a hard line, speaker focused, take on Gricean communicative intentions.

However, Gricean communicative intentions are not transparent. Instead, they are known insofar as an audience recognizes them in a speaker. Recognizing intentions involves ascribing to a speaker communicative intentions based on what they say, under some reasonable assumptions. For example, that a speaker uses expressions according to a general

6 I thank a helpful referee for pointing out the issue of indifferent elections.

use; or that she indicates if she intends to stray from the general use. When we take into account intention recognition in the picture of communication, we have to assume that a competent speaker means to convey the content associated to a certain colouring when she uses it. This is because colourings are alternatives to other possible ways of expressing the same thought in a sentence. So the competent speaker is ascribed the intention to communicate the content associated with a certain colouring.

To ease some possible worries concerning the intersubjective notion of communication: having a wider notion of communication, that also covers implicated content, or content that is hinted at by certain constructions, does not come with a strengthening of speakers commitments. Why? because we maintain a distinction between content that is merely communicated, and content that is communicated and asserted. Speakers have responsibilities for the contents they communicate. But the heavy justificatory responsibilities come with asserting content. When a content is supposed, or implicated, or conveyed, the speaker is still assumed to communicate that they subscribe to it. But she is not held responsible to the same degree than when she makes assertions.[7]

In such a theory of communication, the distinction between colourings with content and conventional implicatures on the basis of some colourings being non-communicative collapses. If we take seriously intention recognition, competent speakers are supposed to mean the inferences normally associated with a colouring. Colourings with content are communicative devices.

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7 MacFarlane (2011) compares different theories of assertion and surveys the associated responsibilities that the speaker bears (Brandom, 1983, 1998; Lackey, 2007; Stalnaker, 1978; Weiner, 2005; Williamson, 1996).

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