

A LINGUISTIC ACCOUNT OF SINGULAR TERMS

[UMA CONSIDERAÇÃO LINGUÍSTICA DE TERMOS SINGULARES]

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ABSTRACT: Vendler (1967b) discusses how we may linguistically recognize a singular term. Even though singular terms are relevant to Philosophy and not necessarily to Linguistics, it may be enriching to know what we can do to disambiguate such a term. Philosophically, singular terms are seen as singular definite descriptions which may be used to refer to a unique entity in the world. Vendler tried to provide a syntactic account of singular terms, and was not taken into account by philosophers. Linguistically speaking, a singular term will be a singular definite determiner phrase which may or may not correlate to something. We will show that a strictly syntactic account, as the one Vendler proposed, is deficient, and that it does not provide necessary and sufficient conditions to recognize a singular term. We will take into account Vendler's spirit. We will use the advances in linguistics to explain how we may form a singular term, and provide syntactic-semantic conditions to recognize a singular term.

KEYWORDS: singular terms; definiteness; uniqueness; reference; Vendler

RESUMO: Vendler (1967b) discute como podemos reconhecer linguisticamente um termo singular. Mesmo que termos singulares sejam relevantes para a filosofia e não necessariamente para a linguística, pode ser enriquecedor saber o que podemos fazer para eliminar a ambigüidade de tal termo. Filosoficamente, os termos singulares são vistos como descrições definidas singulares que podem ser usadas para se referir a uma entidade única no mundo. Vendler tentou fornecer uma explicação sintática de termos singulares e não foi levado em consideração pelos filósofos. Linguisticamente falando, um termo singular será uma sintagma determinante definida singular que pode ou não estar correlacionada a algo. Mostraremos que uma consideração estritamente sintática, como o proposto por Vendler, é deficiente e não oferece as condições necessárias e suficientes para o reconhecimento de um termo singular. Levaremos em consideração o espírito de Vendler. Usaremos os avanços da linguística para explicar como podemos formar um termo singular e fornecer condições sintático-semânticas para reconhecer um termo singular.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: termos singulares; definição; singularidade; referência; Vendler

1. INTRODUCTION

In a paper published in *Linguistics in Philosophy* (VENDLER, 1967a), Vendler discusses how we may linguistically recognize a singular term. A singular term will be one that fits into the logical form of a proposition, and may be atomic

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(VENDLER, 1967b, p. 35). In this paper, we will further assume that a singular term may refer singularly to an individual. Our task will be to analyze the contexts which Vendler takes into account in order to show that they do not provide necessary and sufficient conditions for a noun phrase to form a singular term. We will show that the linguistic contexts provided by the author may very well result on non singular terms, and propose a linguistic alternative to Vendler's. We will defend that a linguistic account of singular terms is both refreshing and new. We will also defend that taking into account linguistic developments can help us to better understand the behavior of singular terms. In order to do so, first, we will briefly sketch Vendler's proposal. Second, we will provide evidence against Vendler's singular terms. Third, we will provide an alternative proposal. Fourth, some brief conclusions.

2. VENDLER'S SINGULAR TERMS

To provide a proper treatment of singular terms, Vendler starts by analyzing proper names. He provides a Millian account of proper names: they have no meaning, they are not listed in dictionaries, and they do not need to be translated. Nonetheless, they do refer to individuals. Proper names also have intrinsic linguistic characteristics which differentiate them from common nouns. They do not have specific co-occurrence restrictions (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 38): they do not appear with a modifier or specifier in English, see (1)-(3).¹ Proper names are already restricted to a single individual, and uniquely refer to it. Since they are restricted, they cannot appear with any linguistic adjuncts (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 42):²

- (1) Martin is a musician.
- (2) *The Martin is a musician.
- (3) ?Tall Martin is a musician.

Pronouns are also referential expressions. Pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *he*, *her* and *it* refer singularly to individuals. They cannot be modified, and the restrictions are stronger than the ones proper names have, as we can see in (4)-(6).

- (4) I am in the room.
- (5) *The I am in the room.
- (6) *Bald he is in the room.

Due to this behavior, Vendler concludes that proper names and pronouns introduce singular terms by themselves. They do not need any adjunct (modifier or complement) to uniquely refer to an individual. Then, he goes on to provide the conditions which common nouns have to satisfy to be singular terms. Since Vendler's position concerning proper names and pronouns is uncontroversial, we will focus on what he has to say with regards to common nouns.

In this regard, he distinguishes the phrases which are formed with demonstratives (7), possessives (8), and the definite article (9). He defends that the first two are identifying in themselves, but not the third. With the definite article we form definite descriptions, and, ever since Frege-Russell-Strawson, we know that their nature is difficult to define. Since there was no linguistic account, on Vendler's time, on how were singular terms constructed with the definite article, Vendler undertook the matter. Thus, he tried to provide linguistic contexts which involve a term with a definite

description, as (9).

- (7) That house
- (8) Your house
- (9) The house

Vendler defends that the definite article alone is not sufficient for the noun to form a singular term. An adjunct which provides the noun with identificatory form must be added, so that (9) transforms into (10) or (11) (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 45):³

- (10) The house (which) you sold yesterday
- (11) The house in which we lived last year

Based on that data, Vendler (1967b, p. 46) proposes the hypothesis that the “definite article in front of a noun is always and infallibly the sign of a restrictive adjunct, present or recoverable, attached to the noun”. The restrictive adjunct of which Vendler speaks is, actually, a relative clause. It will be introduced by relative pronouns, such as *which*, *who*, *that*, which can be omitted between two nouns phrases, and can be omitted with the copula between a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase, see (10), (12) and (13):

- (12) I see the water (which is) in the glass.
- (13) The man (whom) I saw wore a hat.

There is, however, a problem with this approach (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 47). Sometimes, nouns are modified by adjectives, and reducing adjectives to relative clauses seems to be harder. He defends, nevertheless, that it is possible to assume that there is a transformation that allows that to happen, where A is the adjective, and N the noun:

- (14) AN – N which is A
- (15) bald man – man who is bald

He claims that the restrictive clause is a necessary condition for the definite article to appear, and the clause must be formed before the definite article appears. In modern terms, this means that we form, first, the noun phrase (NP), and, then, the determiner phrase (DP). In addition, the definite article should involve a presupposition of uniqueness which allows the following transformations:⁴

- (16) I know a man. A man killed Kennedy.
- (17) I know a man who killed Kennedy.
- (18) I know the man who killed Kennedy.

In these examples, according to Vendler (1967b, p. 50), the uniqueness presupposition is reinforced by the apparition of the verb *kill* which suggests a single agent. This does not happen with verbs like *fight* in *I know a man who fought in Korea*. In those cases, there is no grammatical reason to change the indefinite article for the definite. Thus, there must be something else.

The definite article “marks the speaker’s intention to exhaust the range determined by the restrictive clause” (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 51). If the range is already

restricted to one, as in (18), the speaker is forced to use the definite article. However, the speaker may have the option to choose between the use of the indefinite article and the definite one in some occasions.

Imagine a garden that only has one tree. In that case, we could choose (19) or (20). Both would allow us to recognize a single tree. Nonetheless, if there were more than one tree, the definite article should be preferred, and it should be assumed that we already know about which particular tree we are talking.⁵

(19) I see a tree in our garden.

(20) I see the tree in our garden.

Thus, to produce a singular term we must attach a restrictive clause to the noun in the singular and prefix the definite article to it. According to Vendler (1967b), if we have a definite article without a restrictive clause, the latter should be recoverable from a previous sentence in discourse which involves the same noun, as in (21):⁶

(21) I have a dog and a cat. The dog has a ball to play with. Often, the cat plays with the ball too.

Vendler (1967b, pp. 54-55) recognizes that sometimes the definite article involves genericity, as in (22).⁷ They involve the definite article and a restrictive clause. Nonetheless, for a definite description to be a singular term, it must be preceded by a clause that is actual or presupposed. This makes the presupposition of uniqueness another necessary condition for a definite description to be a singular term.

(22) Sara is a demanding girl. The man she loves must be generous.

After analyzing possible exceptions, as (22), Vendler (1967b, p. 60) provides a list of rules which must be followed to form a singular term:⁸

(a) The definite article is a function of a restrictive clause attached to the noun.

(b) This article indicates that the scope of the so restricted noun is to be taken exhaustively, extending to any and all objects falling under it.

(c) If the restriction is to one individual the definite article is obligatory and marks a singular term. Otherwise the term is general and the definite article remains optional.

(d) The clause is restrictive to one individual if and only if it is derived from a sentence either actually occurring in the previous part of the same discourse, or presupposed by the same discourse, and in which sentence N has an identifying occurrence. This last notion remains to be explained.

(e) Redundant clauses can be omitted.

(f) A clause is redundant if it is derived from a sentence actually occurring in the previous part of the discourse, or if the information content of a sentences in which N has an identifying occurrence is generally known to the participants of discourse.

These rules are supposed to be enough to recognize a singular term, and they introduce a new term: *identifying occurrence*. For a definite description to have an identifying occurrence, it must appear in an environment which allows us to link the common noun with the definite description, and it may form a chain of identifications, as (21) repeated here as (23), or (24):

(23) I have a dog and a cat. The dog has a ball to play with. Often, the cat plays with the ball too.

(24) I saw a man. The man wore a hat. The hat has a feather on it. The feather...

These identifying sentences may be transformed by existential extraction which makes (26) a possible paraphrase of (25):⁹

(25) I see a house. The house...

(26) There is a house.

Vendler (1967b) concludes that every time we come across a definite description which is a singular term, there is an existential sentence entailed by the discourse. If we take into account the existential environments, we may know whether we are in front of a singular term (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 66) without having to rely only on the speaker's use of a singular term, as Strawson (1950) had proposed.¹⁰

Even though definite descriptions do not actually occur normally within an identifying sentence, Vendler argues that it is always assumed or presupposed. We may observe, then, that Vendler sees a close relation between discourse, familiarity, uniqueness and singular terms.¹¹ In the next section, we will provide some counterexamples to Vendler's singular terms.

3. COUNTEREXAMPLES TO VENDLER'S SINGULAR TERMS

Vendler provides a set of rules, introduced in the previous section, which are supposed to be necessary and sufficient to form a singular term. In this section, we will analyze rules (a)-(c) —quoted again in this section as (g)-(i)— which involve the definite article, the restrictive clause and uniqueness.

(g) The definite article is a function of a restrictive clause attached to the noun.

(h) This article indicates that the scope of the so restricted noun is to be taken exhaustively, extending to any and all objects falling under it.

(i) If the restriction is to one individual the definite article is obligatory and marks a singular term. Otherwise the term is general and the definite article remains optional.

It is very easy to find counterexamples for rule (g). Let's remember that Vendler's restrictive clauses are actually relative clauses, and a lot of advances have been made since Vendler (1967b). Ever since Vergnaud (1974), it has been assumed that relatives may appear in -/+ definite environments. (27) shows a non definite reading of meeting some men; and (28) shows an indefinite environment which, in addition,

involves a coordination of two nouns. Thus, they do not involve a single individual.

(27) cinq hommes qu'il a recotree hier (VERGNAUD, 1974, p. 166)

'five men that he met yesterday'

(28) un positon et un électron qui se sont percutés

'a positron and an electron that collided' (VERGNAUD, 1974, p. 167)

Someone could object that Vergnaud's examples come from French, and are not real counterexamples to Vendler's rule (g). Nonetheless, Vendler himself provides examples in which restrictive clauses combine with the indefinite, as (17) rewritten here as (29). We also find examples as (30).

(29) I know a man who killed Kennedy.

(30) There is a certain man (who is) willing to take on this mission (ENÇ, 1991, p. 21).

(30) is interesting because we have a relative clause with an indefinite in an existential sentence with the specific *certain* (ENÇ, 1991). It has a specific reading which approximates it to Vendler's singular terms but should not be one, because it does not involve the definite article. (30) does show that restrictive clauses appear without the definite article in English as well.

One could say that if we read (g) carefully enough we would see that Vendler is talking about *a* function of the relative clause and not *the* function of the relative clause. Thus, this would allow us to interpret that, even though there are restrictive clauses which combine with other determiners, Vendler did not exhaust the possibility of functions of the relative clause to the definite by using the indefinite article as the determiner. Nonetheless, he did provide (g) as a rule to identify singular terms. If the relative clause can appear with indefinite determiners, then it cannot be a condition to recognize singular terms, as all of the counterexamples above show.

Let's move to (h). That rule states that the definite article indicates that the scope is exhaustive and extends to all objects falling under it (which cannot be more than one). However, it has been shown that, in some contexts, definite descriptions which involve a restrictive clause have ambiguous readings, as in (31).

(31) Every child read the book that had been assigned to them (ABBOTT, 2010, p. 134).

This example, which involves quantification, has two different meanings which are due to the relative clause of *book*. It can mean that there is a particular book assigned that every child read or it can mean that every child read a different book. What is interesting about this example is that the definite description has a generic reading: they read the [type of] book that they had been assigned, but not the same book. On the other hand, the distributive reading gives us as a meaning that every child read a different book, which is a particular entity with which the definite description relates. In this case, it exhausts the scope of the phrase to a plurality of individuals, but not to a singular one. Thus, we cannot say that in those cases the definite description refers singularly. However, none of these interpretations seem to be the ones that Vendler had in mind. It seems that we should force a third reading in which every child read the same [token of the] book. Perhaps, if we provide Vendler's context, we may force the concrete reading in (32).

(32) The teacher assigned a book to the students. Every student read the book that had been assigned to them.

If Vendler is right, the second sentence should introduce a singular term. (32) blocks the distributive reading, because we already know that there was one particular book assigned to them. The possible reading of (32) involves a type of book and not a concrete book. We get a generic reading, and not a particular one. There is no object under which the scope of the definite description falls. Thus, it is a counterexample for (h). In addition, this example further provides a counterexample for (i), in which Vendler states that the definite article is only obligatory when there is just one individual. If it does not restrict one individual, the definite article should remain optional. Example (32) shows a case in which we have a general reading, a type reading (VERGNAUD & Zubizarreta, 1992), in which the article is not optional. The problem is that the optionality of the articles in generics is fine in the subject position, but not so much in the internal argument position (KRIFKA et al. 1995, pp. 70-71) which is what happens in (32).

According to Vendler, the restrictive clause restricts the domain of individuals to one. However, relative clauses do not always do so, as may be seen in (33) and (34).

(33) *l' homme et la femme qui se son rencontres hier* (Vergnaud, 1974, p. 151)
'the man and the woman who met yesterday'

(34) The man and the woman who are separated on a white background¹²

These examples show that the same restrictive clause may account for two different individuals, and still carry the definite article. It could be said that, in these cases, the scope of the nouns is restricted and could be taken exhaustively. Nonetheless, they still do not involve one individual, and they carry the definite article which is obligatory in both examples. Thus, rule (i) is inefficient.

Our examples show that the restrictive clause does not force the apparition of the definite article; that the definite article does not always exhaust the domain of the objects that fall under it; and that the definite article is not always optional when we are in front of a type/generic reading. Although Vendler's last three rules were not taken into consideration because they do not directly involve the scope and function of the definite article, we can say that they seem to be, however, on the right track. The idea that the definite article does not introduce new entities was defended by Heim (1982), and is widely accepted—though not uncontroversial, see Abbott (2010)—.

The last rule introduces the notion of identifying occurrence, but may be reduced to the familiarity thesis. If an existential sentence is presupposed, we may defend that the definite article appears because the entity was already introduced (or assumed or presupposed) in discourse.

In the next section, we introduce a new proposal which takes into account more recent linguistic considerations to provide a linguistic approach to singular terms.

4. A PROPOSAL

Our proposal will take into account Vendler's spirit, and use the advances in linguistics to explain how we get a singular term. Nowadays, there is a more profound understanding on relatives (VERGNAUD, 1974; KAYNE, 1991; CINQUE, 2013, etc) which allows us to defend that they do not necessarily form a singular term. Thus, to

give an account on singular terms, we should consider other developments. We assume a non-lexicalist decompositional approach (as BORER, 2005), in which the interaction of syntactic and semantic components may tell how to recognize a singular term. We further assume that a common noun phrase (CNP) forms a singular term when it forms a canonical non-marked singular definite DP (BORIK & ESPINAL, 2012, p. 128).

For a CNP to be in a DP that can be a singular term, we could propose first that it must be count.¹³ We may propose, following Borer (2005), that a count reading results when we have a Classifier Phrase (CIP) and a Quantity phrase (#P) which assigns quantities or divisions of stuff.

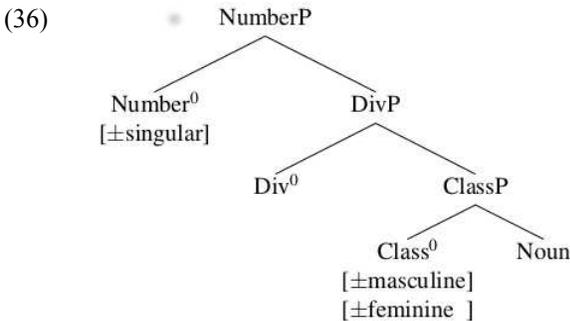
(35) provides us with a count reading in which the noun moves to Cl_0 .

(35) $[_{DP} D [_{\#P} \text{two} [_{CIP} \text{dog}_i +s [_{NP} t_i]]]]$

Borer's account renders the Number Phrase unnecessary. However, we have shown elsewhere that number variation does not always introduce a partitioned entity (POLAKOF, in press), and that it is important to account for different behaviors of definite DP (POLAKOF, 2019). Thus, number should not be in CIP. It should be in the Number Phrase.

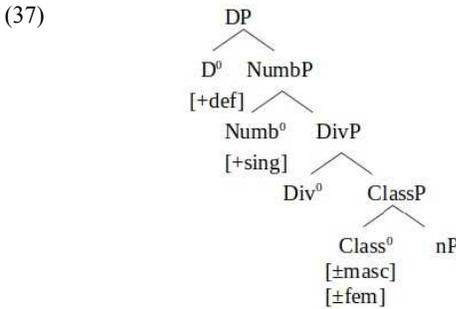
Harbour (2008) provides us with an alternative to Borer that seems to take into account the previous facts. He defends that there should be a Number Phrase which introduces the \pm singular features; a Division Phrase that introduces the partition of the nominal into countable units (*i.e.* it makes the noun count); and a Classifier Phrase (ClassP) that introduces gender features in English (and other features in other languages). The ClassP introduces nominal features, and according to Harbour (2008, p. 7) it could be read as equivalent to the categorial n of Marantz (1997).

The structure (36) (HARBOUR, 2008, p. 6) shows how these phrases interact with each other up to NumberP to have a count reading as a result.



Harbour (2008) provides us with the functional structure count nouns should have. However, (36) is not the functional structure of a singular term. It may, for instance, be plural, or combine with an indefinite article. This is due to the fact that countability has nothing to do with definiteness and has nothing to do with uniqueness. (36), then, has to be taken up to the DP. The D introduces \pm definiteness features, and is needed to form a definite description. Once we have a DP, further restrictions have to be made to have a singular term. For a DP to correspond to a definite description that is a singular term, the D^0 must be the definite article and $Number^0$ should

be in singular, as may be seen in (37).



The idea is that, if we have the functional structure provided in (37), we will be dealing with a definite description that is a singular term. Once we have the functional structure, we may propose the semantics of a singular term. A singular term should be of type $\langle e \rangle$, while the CNP should be of type $\langle e, t \rangle$. We assume, following Hintikka (1989), a possible world semantics. A CNP would be represented as (38), where *atom* expresses that the CNP will have an atomic/count reading. In addition, it must have a location relation that links the entity to a possible world. Then, the CNP would be transformed into a singular term with the iota operator which would link the singular term to the entity in the actual world, as in (39). In the case of definite descriptions, the iota operator is ensured by the definite article which transforms an $\langle e, t \rangle$ into an $\langle e \rangle$.

$$(38) \lambda w. \lambda x [\text{atom}(x) \wedge \text{loc}(w, x)]$$

$$(39) \iota w. \iota x [\text{atom}(x) \wedge \text{loc}(w, x)]$$

The semantics we propose allows us to explain why we may use singular terms to refer to a unique entity in the actual world, as in (40) — represented in (41):

(40) The tree [in the actual world].

$$(41) \iota w. \iota x [\text{tree}(x) \wedge \text{loc}_{\text{in-the-actual-world}}(w, x)]$$

The representation in (41) reflects the fact that we are talking about a singular object in this actual world, and confirms that our semantic representation provides necessary and sufficient object-dependent truth-conditions to know when we are in front of a singular term that refers to a singular object in this world. Thus, we have provided an account of the syntax and semantics of singular terms, which intends to maintain Vendler's spirit: to give a linguistic account of a philosophical problem.

Singular terms involve other aspects that were not taken into consideration. We did not analyze any of the pragmatic aspects that are related to the use of singular terms. Nonetheless, we have provided a syntactic-semantic analysis that can account for the referential uses of singular terms. We have also provided a set of necessary and sufficient conditions to form a singular term. We have not provided a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of a singular term. To do that, we would have to take into account some pragmatic and discursive conditions, but this point certainly deserves another specific study.

5. SOME FINISHING REMARKS

Vendler's idea of the definite article as a function of a restrictive clause is inspiring. The idea of providing linguistic evidence to account for the nature of singular terms is refreshing. Linguistic developments certainly should be taken into account to define what a singular term should be. However, his account was insufficient. The tests he gave are not necessarily a mark of singularity, nor of definiteness. In this paper, we have shown that restrictive clauses appear both with the definite and indefinite article. We have shown that the presupposition of uniqueness does not always bear out, even when the definite article is involved. We have also shown that sometimes the definite article does not exhaust the domain of individuals with which it relates. Thus, nor the definite article nor the restrictive clause are necessary or sufficient conditions for us to form a singular term.

Linguistics has made a lot of progress since 1967. If we take this into consideration, an alternative proposal may be made. One that takes into account the interface of syntax and semantics. Specifically, the interaction between functional structure and semantic meaning. Our proposal reflects the philosophical assumptions that are usually made with regards to singular terms: they are singular, they are definite, and they are actual. The combination of the syntax and the semantics of the DP allows it to be used to refer singularly to a particular entity. They are necessary and sufficient conditions to have a singular term which involves a link to the actual entity to which we refer.

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NOTAS

- 1 Note that the term *co-occurrence restrictions* used by Vendler is due to Harris (1957).
- 2 There are peripheral exceptions in which proper names accept to be modified, such as *The Mozart of my adolescence* or *The Joe in our house*, which have undergone some transformations which approximate them to common nouns (VENDLER, 1967b, p. 40-42).
- 3 This would align Vendler with an expansionalist approach to the problem of incomplete definite descriptions (ABBOTT, 2010, p. 138).
- 4 Note that, even though Vendler accepts that definite descriptions involve the notion of uniqueness (RUSSELL 1905, 1919), he seems to be embracing a Frege (1892a)-Strawson (1950) perspective in which singular terms are referential expressions. The restrictive clause Vendler proposes seems to restrict the description to one single entity, and restrict the domain of individuals to that one. However, the extra content needed for that description to refer to one single entity seems to be undetermined (ABBOTT, 2010, p. 139).
- 5 Vendler (1967b) did not take presupposition seriously into account in examples (19) and (20). As a reviewer noted, it does seem to play an important role in example (20).
- 6 This idea must be familiar to those who have read Heim's (1982), and should be traced back to Christophersen (1939). Heim (1982) proposed that the difference between indefinites and definites was that the first ones introduced novel entities, while the second ones introduced familiar entities. It is relatable to an account that views presuppositions as "part of the common ground in a conversation" (ABBOTT, 2010, p. 219). Even though we will mention familiarity in our paper, we do not adhere to the theory, because there are many counterexamples to it (see ABBOTT 2010). There are also counterexamples to Vendler (1967b) which we will show in the next section.
- 7 Frege (1892b), Strawson (1950), and others, had already recognized that the definite article also introduces universal/generic statements. Nonetheless, they did not provide linguistic conditions to be able to know when we are in front of one form or the other.
- 8 Vendler proposes a last rule which we do not quote, because it is related to generics and not to singular terms.
- 9 Note that, here, existential sentences (MILSARK, 1974) are not used to introduce the difference

between strong and weak determiners. Vendler uses existential sentences as paraphrases of sentences which will yield, with the addition of the definite article, a singular term.

- 10 As one of the reviewers pointed out, Strawson (1950) did not argue that we only rely on our use to identify the existential environment of the occurrence of a sentence. Nonetheless, he did not provide a linguistic account of the expressions that could have a *uniquely referring use* (STRAWSON, 1950, p. 320). It is a general fact that, even more actual discussions on singular terms or referential descriptions (see DEVITT 2004, HALE 1994, STIRTON 2000, WETZEL 1990, among others) do not take into account linguistic developments. Since we are trying to provide a linguistic account on singular terms and Vendler was the one to try to provide such an account, we will only take his proposal into consideration, as well as a more recent linguistic discussion on definite determiner phrases.
- 11 On account of the counterexamples that may be found to the familiarity thesis (see ABBOTT, 2010), and on account of the counterexamples we will provide in the next section, our proposal will not make use of the notion of *familiarity*.
- 12 Example from: <https://www.dreamstime.com/crowd-looking-man-woman-who-separated-white-background-leave-each-other-sp-spouses-love-rupture-image115479805> (accessed on Aug 2019).
- 13 Mass terms, or CNP in mass contexts, seem to sometimes overlap with genericity. Burge (1972, p. 271) argued that mass terms should be regarded as general terms in English; and Vergnaud & Zubizarreta (1992, p. 638) defended that type-denoting bare plurals are mass nouns. Thus, mass contexts would not yield prototypical singular terms, which is why they are not analyzed here.