

8.4. Definite descriptions

8.4.0. Overview

Up to this point, we have analyzed definite descriptions only by identifying component individual terms; now we will consider two ways of analyzing them to identify the descriptions from which they are formed.

8.4.1. Definite descriptions as quantifier phrases

On one approach, the definite description *the* X is a quantifier phrase that differs from the phrase *a* X by adding the claim *there is at most one* X .

8.4.2. Definite descriptions as individual terms

On another analysis, which yields a different account of their logical properties, definite descriptions are formed by an operation that applies to predicates to yield individual terms.

8.4.3. Examples: restrictive *vs.* non-restrictive relative clauses

The analysis of definite descriptions makes it possible to represent the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses in the case of definite descriptions.