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Multiplicatives and event-external/internal quantification in English, Mandarin Chinese and Polish

A sentence such as (1) is ambiguous between an event-external interpretation (quantification over so-called ‘occasions’) and an event-internal interpretation (quantification over so-called ‘acts’ within a single occasion) (e.g., Cusic 1981, Andrews 1983, Cinque 1999). In (2), the sentence-final *twice* unambiguously quantifies event-externally, whereas *three times* unambiguously counts individual knocks within each knocking series. Interestingly, Mandarin Chinese and Polish mark the distinction between occasions and acts formally via distinct verbal classifiers (e.g., Donazzan 2013, Zhang 2017) and dedicated multiplicatives, respectively. Still, the relationship between the two postulated categories remains unclear since both seem to fall into the ontological class of eventualities. In this paper, I argue that the event-external/internal distinction receives a straightforward explanation once mereotopological notions are extended to the domain of events. Mereotopology assumes parthood (the mereological component) as well as connectedness (the topological component) (Casati & Varzi 1999) and allows for distinguishing between units and structured configurations thereof. Building on the mereotopological theory of time by Mazzola (2019), I propose that event-internal interpretations concern quantification over simplex singular eventualities within a single cluster, whereas event-external readings concern counting different clusters (see also Landman 2004, Henderson 2017).

- (1) Kim knocked on the door three times.
- (2) Kim knocked on the door three times twice.