According to the Strong Minimalist Thesis (Chomsky 2001, et seq.), language is an optimal solution to interface conditions, in that language is an optimal way to link sound and meaning. There is a significant asymmetry between the semantic interface, the system of thought, and the sensorimotor interface, externalizing the system of thought, with the first having primacy. I develop the thesis that basic components of thought, not limited to proposition, are derived from the optimally constructed generative procedure. I focus on the derivation of complex numerals and time counting expressions in Romance languages, relying on Merge and externalization conditions. Firstly, I discuss the derivation of cardinal numbers, such as vingt-et-un (Fr) ‘twenty-one’ and time counting expressions, such as le due e mezzo (It) ‘two thirty’. I argue that cardinal numerals merge with additive and multiplicative morphology, e.g. one hundred (and) one (Di Sciullo 2012, 2015). This morphology is silent in some cases, e.g. venti due (It) ‘twenty-two’, due cento (It) ‘two hundred’, as an effect of Internal Merge and Externalization Conditions (Collins 2007, 2014, a.o.), as part of third factor principles reducing complexity. Secondly, I argue that additive, multiplicative, as well as subtractive and partitive morphology is part of the derivation of time counting expressions. These expressions include unpronounced nouns, such as HOUR and YEARS (Kane 2003, 2006, 2015), and sometime silent prepositions anchoring time in an abstract space (Di Sciullo 2016). Interestingly, the prepositional structure may in some cases have delimiting properties, e.g. un quarto *(alle due) (It) ‘a quarter *(to two)’, as well as a Relative View property (Cinque 2010, et seq.), compare the preceding example to the following le due meno un quarto (It) (the two minus one quarter) ‘a quarter to two’. However, pseudo partitive morphology does not have a delimiting effect in cases such as the following from Catalan, e.g. un quart i cinc de nou (a quart and five of nine) ‘twenty past eight’. The derivation of cardinal numerals and time counting expressions in terms of Merge and Externalization Conditions provides a unified analysis of these expressions, does not rely on labels such as complement, contra Ionin & Matushansky (2004, 2006), and brings further support to the Strong Minimalist thesis.