1. In Italian, the preposition *a* “at”/“to” must be pronounced with locative nouns such as *casa* “home”/“house”, (1a), and other locative nouns such as *scuola* “school”, qualifies as a bare noun (Carlson 1977, Kishimoto 2000, Longobardi 2001, Collins 2007), see (1a, 2). In Fallese, a dialect spoken in Abruzzi, the determiner can also be pronounced, (1b). These facts indicate that Collins (2007) light vs. bare noun account for the optional pronunciation of the preposition with English locative nouns such as *home*, e.g. *He stayed (at) home*, cannot be extended to Romance.

(1)  
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{È rimasto a casa. (I)} \\
& \text{is remained at home} \\
& \text{“He stayed (at) home.”}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{È rimaste a (la) casa. (F)} \\
& \text{is remained at (the) house} \\
& \text{“He stayed (at) home.”}
\end{align*}

(2)  
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{È rimasto a casa/*e. (I)} \\
& \text{is remained at home/s} \\
& \text{“He stayed (at) home.”}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{È rimasto a (*bella) casa. (I)} \\
& \text{is remained at nice home} \\
& \text{“He stayed at the nice home.”}
\end{align*}

We focus on Italian and provide an analysis of the facts based on Merge and Principles of efficient computation (Chomsky et al. 2019). We bring independent evidence for our analysis, extend it to coordinate bare nouns and draw consequences for linguistic theory.

2. Derivation. We take PPs to be phases (Drummond et al. 2010) of extended PP projections (Cinque and Rizzi 2016). We provide a feature-based derivation (Chomsky 2008; Pesetsky and Torrego 2004, Bošković 2014, Barrie and Yoo 2017) of the pronunciation of the preposition with bare nouns in Italian. See the partial structure in (3).

(3)

The noun *casa* is associated to valued Nominal [N] and Locative [Loc] features. The preposition *a* is associated to a valued prepositional feature [P] as well as with unvalued nominal [uN] and locative [uLoc] features. In Italian, contrary to English, the same preposition is used in locative and in directional contexts. Assuming feature valuation under Probe-goal search, *casa* is displaced to the Specifier of the lower phase to value the [uN] feature of P. The lower P Head is then displaced to the higher P Head position to value its [uLoc] feature with the valued [Loc] feature of *casa*. The copies of the displaced constituents are not pronounced, given Chomsky’s (2011) condition Pronounce the Minimum. Given Collins’s (2007) Spell-out Condition, according to which the Specifier or the Head of a phase must be pronounced but not both, it follows that the higher P Head is pronounced. We analyze variation between Italian and French in the externalization of the locative preposition *a* (It./Fr.)
“at” vs. in (It.) /chez (Fr.) “at”/”in” with locative nouns, e.g. stare in casa/ rester chez soi “stay at home”, in terms of differences in the internal feature structure of locative prepositions and locative nouns.

Independent evidence for our analysis comes from the derivation of deictic pronouns here and there in Fallese. The preposition AT/TO is silent in Italian, qui/li “here”/”there”, as a consequence of the movement of the pronoun to the Specifier position (see also Van Riemsdijk 1978, McCawley 1988, Kayne 2005, Collins 2007 for languages such as English). The preposition however can be pronounced in Fallese, (a)ecche/(a)locche (at here/at there), from Latin ad hic/ad locum “at here/at there”, when the Specifier of the higher PP phase has no phonetic content. We discuss limits of alternative accounts not relying on displacement and principles of efficient computation including Barrie and Yoo (2017).

2. Extension. In Italian the coordinate conjunction in coordinate nouns, can be silent in some cases, e.g mela pesca (Lit. apple peach) “peach apple”, and pronounced in other cases, e.g. ago e filo “needle and thread”. The nouns in these expressions also qualify as bare nouns. They cannot be preceded by an article, allow adjectival modification, or be pluralized, without consequences on acceptability and semantic interpretation. Furthermore, when the coordinator is silent, the coordinate structure has an intersective reading; when the coordinator is pronounced, it has a group reading. According to Winter (1995, 1998), Zhang (2010) and Szabolcsi (2015) set intersection and group forming are not performed by the coordinating conjunction itself. We discuss the hypothesis that higher functional projections in the nominal spine bare group and intersection features, which active features further support the displacement of the coordinating conjunction or the lack thereof.

Focussing on the derivation of the pronunciation/silence of the coordinator, we assume that the internal structure of coordinate is asymmetrical and derived by phases (Munn 1993; Kayne 1994; Goodall 2017, a.o.). Feature valuation proceeds as in (4). In (4a), the [N] feature of mela values the [uN] feature of the conjunction. Given Collin’s (2007) Spell-Out Condition, the conjunction is not pronounced < >. In (4b), ago is displaced to the higher Specifier position and values the [uN] feature of the conjunction. Given Collin’s (2008) Condition on Spell-Out the conjunction in the lower phase is pronounced.

Independent evidence that Internal Merge applies in coordinate structures comes from Latin additive cardinal numerals. Near the 10th, the digit can be reordered to the left of the base, e.g. viginti unus (Lit. twenty one), unus et viginti (Lit. one and twenty). Further independent evidence for our analysis comes from multiple coordinate DPs where the conjunction is pronounced in the last conjunct, e.g. Gianni Paulo e Maria vs. *Gianni e Paulo, Maria. We point to limits of alternative accounts with respect to the Transparency thesis (Chierchia 2013, Jacobson 2009) and syntax-semantic interface legibility.

3. Consequences. A phase based feature driven analysis of locative and coordinate nouns in Romance brings support to the relation between movement and silence, as well as a unified explanation for apparently unrelated facts. It also brings further support to the role of principles of efficient computation, maximizing asymmetry and minimizing externalization, in the derivation of linguistic expressions.
 Selected references