

The Noun Class System of Latege

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Abstract

Latege is a language spoken in south-eastern Gabon, closely related to other Teke languages spoken in Congo. It has a typical Bantu noun class structure with 9 classes (plus two sub-sets). Modifiers in the noun phrase must all be marked for agreement with the head noun but this agreement is derived from a variety of different sources.

La langue Latege est parlée au sud-est du Gabon et elle est proche aux autres langues tékés parlé au Congo. Elle possède un système nominal typiquement bantoue avec 9 classes (plus deux sous-classes). Les modificateurs nominaux dans le syntagme nominal doivent s'accorder avec le nominal principal mais cet accord est dérivé des sources divers.

Abbreviations and conventions used in this paper

N-	Noun class prefix, followed by a number indicating the class
Ø-	Zero prefix
Adv	Adverb
Ass	Associative marker
DemD	Distal demonstrative adjective/pronoun
DemP	Proximal demonstrative adjective/pronoun
Inf	Infinitive
Inter	Interrogative adjective/pronoun
P	Preposition
Pn	Pronoun
Rel	Relative pronoun
IPs	Imperfective present, followed by a number indicating the class of the noun or person which is its subject.
Pfv	Perfective, followed by a number indicating the class of the noun or person which is its subject.
Pfc	Perfect aspect, preceded by a number indicating the class of the noun or person which is its subject.
N	Homorganic Nasal
ˊ	High tone
ˋ	Low tone
ˆ	Falling tone
˜	Falling-rising tone

Examples. Examples usually consist of three lines. The first line gives the phonetic transcription in Latege. The following line gives the grammatical parsing, usually comprising grammatical labels plus the English translation of roots. Where the root requires two words in English these are separated by a fullstop but no space e.g. *old.person*. In both these lines hyphens are used to indicate morpheme breaks.

a. ndé á-wòló Ø-bágá là-kimà	<i>Latege phonetic transcription</i>
Pn3sg IPs3sg-take N5a-knife N5-other	<i>Parsing in English</i>
he takes another knife	<i>Free English translation</i>

Introduction¹

1.1 Linguistic Classification of Latege

Latege is a member of the Teke language group which is itself a sub-group of the Bantu B languages according to Guthrie's classification (Guthrie 1971). In this system the Teke languages are classified as B.70. The table below shows the sub-classification of this group.

Language	Classification
keTege	B.71a
kaTege	B.71b
Ngangulu	B.72
geTsaayi	B.73a
iLaali	B.73b
iYaa	B.73c
eTiee	B.73e
Ndzindzu	B.74a
Ebõõ	B.74b
iTioo	B.74c
iBali	B.75
kiKukua	B.77
iFuumu	B.78a
iWuumu	B.78b

Table 0-1

It will be noticed that **Latege** is not listed in the above table. It is, in fact, to be classified with kaTege B.71b, but as my informants themselves refer to the language as Latege I have preferred to keep this name.

1.2 Geographic Location

The Teke languages as a whole are spoken by around 450,000 people from the south-eastern corner of the Gabonese Republic across much of central Congo-Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) including all the Bateke Plateaux, a small part of the Cuvette along the Alima river around Okoyo and Ewo as well as in the Pool region around Brazzaville and to the south in parts of the Lekoumou and Bouenza districts and extending across the Congo river into Congo-Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) along the Kwa river and around the Pool area.

KaTege is the form spoken in the Cuvette region of Congo-Brazzaville around Okoyo. The Latege variant of this is spoken in the neighbouring region of south-east Gabon along the road through Léconi and Bongoville and the area to the south.

1.3 Sources

The present research was originally carried out while living in Léconi in the Haut-Ogouée province of Gabon between August 2000 and November 2001. Angelique ALOUNGA was the main language resource person with numerous others acting as informal language informants. It was revised in August 2009 after a further eight years living in the area.

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2 Overview

In common with other Bantu languages Latege has a noun class system whereby each noun belongs to a specific class and all the modifiers occurring in the noun phrase agree with the head noun, as does the verb of which it is the subject.

In this paper Latege is presented as having 9 such classes, which following the conventional numbering system, are numbered 1, 2, 5-10 and 14. Typically the odd numbered classes contain singular nouns and the even numbered classes plural nouns with the exception of class 14 which is singular, containing mostly abstract nouns. These singular and plural classes typically pair together as genders in the following ways: 1 & 2 or 8, 5 & 6, 5 & 10, 7 & 8 and 9 & 6.

Class 5 has a sub-class 5a. This consists of the nouns which begin with a zero prefix and is, in fact much more common. Class 5 pairs with class 10 except if the noun radical begins with a prenasalised consonant, in which case it pairs with class 6 while class 5a also pairs with class 6.

Class 1 also has a sub-class 1a consisting of nouns which take a zero prefix rather than /o-/. Although this is designated the sub-class in line with the classification of other Bantu languages, in reality over two-thirds of the class 1 nouns in the current corpus belong to this sub-class. The agreement markers throughout are identical with the main class 1.

Classes 9 and 10 almost always coalesce but as one contains singular nouns and the other plural it is not appropriate to consider them as one class. Furthermore, whereas the nasal prefix of class 10 is clearly a distinct, separable prefix which **replaces** the class 5 prefix, the initial nasal of class 9 is not distinct and separable and when forming the plural the class 6 prefix is **added** on to the class 9 prefix instead of replacing it. It is for this reason I have chosen to represent the class 9 prefix as Ø- rather than N-, though it is true that all (99.96%) class 9 nouns begin with N- and that the agreement marker is often N.

In the corpus of data on which this study is based the nouns are distributed between the different classes and different pairings in the percentages as follows:

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>occurrences</u>	<u>Class pair</u>	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>occurrences</u>
1	3	1/2	6
1a	17	1a/2	19
2	10	1/8	16
5	4	5/6	3
5a	9	5a/6	18
6	17	5/10	4
7	10	7/8	19
8	10	9/6	13
9	7	14	4
10	2		
14	2		

3 Noun classes and their prefixes

Each noun class employs a primary prefix which appears in the majority of its nouns. The table below shows these prefixes plus the secondary prefixes of classes 1 and 5 as mentioned above.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun Class Prefix</u>
1	o-
1a	∅-
2	a-
5	la-
5a	∅-
6	a-
7	ka-
8	e- ²
9	∅-
10	N-
14	o-

Table 3-1

The class 10 nasal prefix causes a certain number of phonological changes to the initial consonant of the noun stem but these are wholly consistent with expected morpho-phonemic rules in Latege.³ These noun class prefixes are inherently toneless. In the citation form they are usually low but may vary according to syntactic context, being mostly low but high when occurring as the object immediately following a verbs (except when the verb is in the Prospective, Perfective, Imperative or Past Temporal form). The following table shows a comparison between two other Teke languages⁴ and with Proto-Bantu.⁵

Noun class	Noun Prefixes			
	Latege	Boma	Kukuya	Proto-Bantu
1	o-	ù-	mù-	mù-
1a	∅-	∅-	∅-	
2	a-	à-	bà-	bà-
3		ù-	mù-	mù-
4		ì-	mì-	mì-
5	la-	ì-	lì-	lì-
5a	∅-	∅-	∅-	
6	a-	à-	mà-	mà-
7	ka-	ì-	kì-	kì-
8	e-	ì-	bì-	bì-
9	∅-	∅-	∅-	N-
10	N-	N-	N-	N-
14	o-	ù-	bù-	bù-

Table 3-2

² There are three class 8 nouns which have a zero prefix

³ In summary these morpho-phonemic rules are as follows: N placed before a fricative causes the fricative to become an affricate at the same place of articulation; N placed before the voiced plosive [d] causes the latter to change to the lateral approximant [l]; N placed before the labio-velar approximant [w] produces the prenasalised voiced plosive [ɲg].

⁴ Boma (Ebōō, B74b) data is taken from Wesche (n.d.). Kukuya (B77) data is taken from Paulian (1975)

⁵ Proto-Bantu data is from Meeussen (1967).

From this table it is clear that there is considerable correspondance across the Teke languages and all still have a clear link with Proto-Bantu. Of the three Teke languages Latege is the one which has diverged the furthest, in most cases both dropping the initial consonant and changing the vowel quality of the prefix to a more open vowel as well as coalescing class 3 with class 1 and class 4 with class 8.

As mentioned above, modifiers of the noun in Latege must all agree with the head noun of the phrase, that is to say they must be marked to show the class of the head noun. This is done in a variety of ways as explained below.

3.1 Modifiers formed from the noun class prefix

A number of modifiers are formed using the noun class prefix as the prefix of the modifier also. In the cases of classes 1 and 5 where there are two possible noun class prefixes it is always the primary form which is used (i.e. cl.1 /o-/, cl.5 /la-/). The tone of the prefix is again underlyingly toneless and generally takes a low tone when acting adjectivally and varies according to its context when functioning as a pronoun, following the same pattern as the prefix on a noun, i.e low when functioning as the subject of the verb and as the object following verbs in the Prospective, Perfective, Imperative or Past Temporal forms and high when the object following verbs in the imperfective and complete aspects. There are a few exceptions to this pattern which will be mentioned in the appropriate places.

3.1.1 Interrogative adjective/pronoun

There are two interrogative adjective/pronouns in Latege one being the definite interrogative ‘which?’, the other being strictly speaking an ‘indefinite’ interrogative, sometimes conveying the sense ‘what sort of?’ though sometimes used interchangeably with the definite form too. The former will be presented in section 4.1.1.2 below, the latter is formed from the noun class prefix of the noun it is referring to plus the morpheme /-má/.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>Interrogative adjective</u>
1	o-	omá
2	a-	amá
5	la-	lamá
6	a-	amá
7	ka-	kamá
8	e-	emá
9	Ø-	má
10	N-	má
14	o-	omá

Table 3-3

As an adjective the prefix has **high** tone :

1.
 - a. là-tsùgù lá-má
N5-day N5-interrog which day?
 - b. ò-tí ó-má
N1-tree N1-interrog which tree?
 - c. Ø-mpùgù Ø-má
N9-village N9-interrog which village?

As a pronoun the prefix has a low tone when it is the object of its clause and follows a verb in the prospective, imperative, perfective or non-past temporal aspects, otherwise it is high, even as the subject of the phrase.

2.

- a. bó bá-bíl-ì là-pílá lá-má → bó bá-bíl-ì là-má
 3pl Pfv3pl-bring-Pfv N5-basin N5-interrog they brought which basin? 3pl Pfv3pl-bring-Pfv N5-interrog
 they brought which (one)?
- b. bó bá-dzilá ká-bàamí ká-má → bó bá-dzilá ká-má
 3pl IPs3pl-wait N7-white.person N7-interrog they wait for which white person? 3pl IPs3pl-wait N7-interrog
 they wait for which (one)?
- c. Ø-mfúmú ó-mà kòr-í → ó-má kòr-í
 N1a-chief N1-interrog look-Pfv which chief looked? N1-interrog look-Pfv
 which (one) looked?

3.1.2 ‘other’ (indefinite)

The indefinite adjective meaning ‘another’ or ‘different’ is formed from the noun class prefix combined with the morpheme /-kìmà/. Class 9 is here the exception taking a nasal instead of a zero prefix, a phenomenon already discussed in section 2.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>other/different</u>
1	o-	okìmà
2	a-	akìmà
5	la-	lakìmà
6	a-	akìmà
7	ka-	kakìmà
8	e-	ekìmà
9	Ø-	ɲkìmà
10	N-	ɲkìmà
14	o-	okìmà

Table 3-4

3.

- a. à-ɲàmà à-kìmà
 N2-animal N2-other other animals
- b. kà-síbì kà-kìmà
 N7-antelope N7-other another antelope
- c. n-dùgà ɲ-kìmà
 N10-tuber N10-other other tubers

This same set may also be used pronominally, agreeing in class with the noun it is replacing.

- 4.
- a. ndé á-wòlò Ø-bágá là-kìmà → ndé á-wòlò lá-kìmà
 Pn3sg IPs3sg-take N5a-knife N5-other → Pn3sg IPs3sg-take N5-other
 he takes another knife he takes another
- b. è-kúbù è-kìmà bé-jà → è-kìmà bé-jà
 N8-old.person N8-other IPs8-come → N8-other IPs8-come
 other old people come others come

3.1.3 ‘Much/many’

The quantifier ‘much/many’ is formed from the noun class prefix plus the morpheme /-lílàgà/. This is usually perceived of as being one word, however, in classes 9 and 10 the agreement is repeated on the second syllable suggesting it may in fact be two separate words consisting of the copula /lí/ plus a quantifier /-làgà/, the agreement on this quantifier being lost where it is a single vowel following the copula. The morpheme /-làgà/ may in fact be used on its own (with the appropriate agreement marker) but has a weaker sense and is far less common.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>‘much/many’</u> (copula + ‘many’)	<u>‘much/many’</u> (as one word)
1	o-	olí làgà	olílàgà
2	a-	alí làgà	alílàgà
5	la-	lalí làgà	lalílàgà
6	a-	alí làgà	alílàgà
7	ka-	kalí làgà	kalílàgà
8	e-	elí làgà	elílàgà
9	Ø-	ndí ndàgà	ndíndàgà
10	N-	ndí ndàgà	ndíndàgà
14	o-	olí làgà	olílàgà

Table 3-5

- 5.
- a. à-ndzó à-lílàgà
 N6-house N6-many many houses
- b. ò-télé ò-lílàgà
 N14-height N14-much much height
- c. è-bìlì è-lílàgà
 N8-owl N8-many many owls

This quantifier may also be used pronominally:

- 6.
- a. brí lé-kwòró é-lógò è-lílàgà → brí lé-kwòró é-lílàgà
 Pn1pl IPs1pl-add N8-thing N8-many → Pn1pl IPs1pl-add N8-many
 we add many things we add many
- b. à-bùlàbùlì à-lílàgà àmà-pàlà → à-lílàgà àmà-pàlà
 N6-wasp N6-many N6Pfc-went.out → N6-many N6Pfc-went.out
 many wasps went out many went out

3.1.4 'some'

The quantifier 'some' is formed from the noun class prefix plus the morpheme /-ké/. For semantic reasons this only exists for plural classes.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>'some'</u>
2	a-	aké
6	a-	aké
8	e-	eké
10	N-	ɲké

Table 3-6

7.

- a. ɲ-kìní ɲ-ké
N10-corn N10-some some corn
- b. à-ɲòní à-ké
N2-bird N2-some some birds
- c. à-ɲgùmá à-ké
N6-machete N6-some some machetes

It may also be used pronominally, though this is not common.

8.

- a. brí lé-wòlò é-lógò è-kè → brí lé-wòlò é-ké
Pn1pl IPs2pl-take N8-thing N8-some Pn1pl IPs2pl-take N8-some
we take some things we take some
- b. mè ám-bùmá á-ɲàmà à-ké → mè ám-bùmá á-ké
Pn1sg IPs1sg-kill N2-animal N2-some Pn1sg IPs1sg-kill N2-some
I kill some animals I kill some

3.1.5 Number 1

The cardinal number one also agrees with the head noun. It is formed from the noun class prefix and the morpheme /-mó/. It can actually be used with plural nouns when they are being considered as a single group. In the single classes a second morpheme /-òtú/ (class 9 /- òntú/) is very frequently added, the final and initial vowels of the two morphemes merging to produce the single morpheme /-mòtú/ with a slight variation in class 9. It can be roughly translated as 'only' or 'alone' but this is an overtranslation.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>'one'</u>	<u>'one'</u>
1	o-	omó	omòtú
2	a-	amó	
5	la-	lamó	lamòtú
6	a-	amó	
7	ka-	kamó	kamòtú
8	e-	emó	
9	Ø-	mó	mòntú
10	Ø-	mó	

Table 3-7

- 9.
- a. Ø-paàbí là-môtú
N5a-wing N5-one one wing
- b. kà-bélè kà-môtú
N7-leg N7-one one leg
- c. Ø-ndzó Ø-môtú
N9-house N9-one one house
- 10.
- a. Ø-mpèlìgí là-mó
N5a-sand.fly N5-one one sand fly
- b. Ø-mpíà Ø-mó
N9-calabash N9-one one calabash
- c. è-kúbù è-mó
N8-old.person N8-one one (group of) old people

Both forms can be used pronominally:

- 11.
- a. ò-môtú kèlé Ø-ɲkùmú, ò-môtú tégè à-ndzà
N1-one cut N9-edible.leaf N1-one draw N6-water
one (child)cut edible leaf one (child) draw water
- b. ò-mó kèlé Ø-ɲkùmú, ò-mó tégè à-ndzà
N1-one cut N9-edible.leaf, N1-one draw N6-water
one (child) cut edible leaf, one (child) draw water

Note: cardinal number 2 is dealt with in section 5.1.2.

3.1.6 Numbers 3-6

The cardinal numbers three to six also use the noun class prefixes to mark their agreement with the noun they modify with the exception of class 10 which takes a zero prefix. These naturally only apply to plural classes.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Noun prefix</u>	<u>'three'</u>	<u>'four'</u>	<u>'five'</u>	<u>'six'</u>
2	a-	atáli	anà	atáani	asémíjì
6	a-	atáli	anà	atáani	asémíjì
8	e-	etáli	enà	etáani	esémíjì
10	N-	táli	nà	táani	sémíjì

Table 3-8

- 12.
- a. à-tángá à-táli
N6-branch N6-three three branches
- b. è-búbí è-táli
N8-lion N8-three three lions
- 13.
- a. è-kàaná è-nà
N8-asparagus N8-four four asparagus

14. b. à-mbòlò à-nà
N2-carp N2-four four carps
- a. è-kàlà è-táani
N8-furrow N8-five five furrows
- b. è-móní è-táani
N8-orange N8-five five oranges
15. a. à-kélé à-sémíjì
N6-stone N6-six six stones
- b. è-kùrá è-sémíjì
N8-packet N8-six six packets

All can be used pronominally:

16. a. à-nà bá-jǎ
N2-four IPs2-come four(people) come
- b. è-sémíjì bé-dzá
N8-six IPs8-eat six(lions) eat

The agreement on cardinal number two will be dealt with below under section 5.1.2. Numbers higher than six do not mark any agreement.

4 Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

Latege employs two sets of demonstrative adjectives, one referring to objects close to the speaker the other referring to objects further away. Both sets of demonstrative adjectives are also used as pronouns and agree in class with the noun they are standing for. Noun modifiers always follow the head noun in Latege but demonstrative adjectives do not necessarily follow immediately after the noun they modify but may instead be placed at the end of the noun phrase even being separated by one or more temporal or conditional clauses.

4.1 Proximal demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

Latege uses a set of independant morphemes as the proximal demonstrative adjective. Although these have certain phonetic similarities with other noun modifiers and prefixes (e.g. same initial consonant in many cases) they do not seem to be clearly derived from any other set of prefixes or modifiers. On the other hand they themselves do form the basis for two other modifiers (see below). The tone on the demonstrative adjective/pronoun seems unstable in that it not only varies in different grammatical contexts but varies from utterance to utterance (even when the same person repeats the same utterance on separate occasions). It still requires further research but for the moment I am positing it as low, though it is often heard as rising and class 2 proximal demonstratives particularly are sometimes falling.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Proximal demonstrative adjective/pronoun</u>
1	wù
2	bà
5	lì
6	mà
7	kì
8	bì
9	jì
10	jì
14	bà

Table 4-1

- 17.
- a. ò-lébé wù
N1-shed DemP1 this shed
 - b. è-mbùlù bì
N8-beak DemP8 these beaks
 - c. kà-bàgà ká ndé kì
N7-richness Ass7 Pn3sg DemP7 this richness of his

This same set is also used pronominally.

- 18.
- a. bó bá-dzá Ø-ntsú → bó bá-dzá wù
Pn3pl IPs3pl-eat N1a-fish Pn3pl IPs3pl-eat DemP1
they eat fish they eat this
 - b. mè án-dáará Ø-mpfâ → mè án-dáará jì
Pn1sg IPs1sg-wear N9-item.of.clothing Pn1sg IPs1sg-wear DemP9
I wear item of clothing I wear this
 - c. brĩ lé-wòló é-lógò → brĩ lé-wòló bì
Pn1pl IPs1pl-take N8-things Pn1pl IPs1pl-take DemP8
we take things we take these

4.1.1 Modifiers formed from the proximal demonstrative adjective

4.1.1.1 Distal demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

The distal demonstrative adjective and pronoun is formed from its proximal counterpart with the addition of the morpheme /-a/. When used as an adjective or as a subject pronoun it carries high then rising tone on disyllables and a falling-rising contour on monosyllables. When it is an object pronoun it has high then low tones on disyllables and a falling tone on monosyllables.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Proximal demonstrative</u> <u>adjective/pronoun</u>	<u>Distal demonstrative</u> <u>adjective/subject</u> <u>pronoun</u>	<u>Distal demonstrative</u> <u>object pronoun</u>
1	wù	wúǎ	wúà
2	bà	ba	bâ
5	lì	líǎ	líà
6	mà	máǎ	mà
7	kì	kíǎ	kíà
8	bì	bíǎ	bíà
9	jì	jíǎ	jíà
10	jì	jíǎ	jíà
14	bà	ba	bâ

Table 4-2

In rapid speech the vowel of the proximal demonstrative is dropped in classe 1 producing the form /wa/. Similarly in class 6 the /-aa/ is sometimes pronounced short (/ma/) and it is always so in classes 2 and 14, the difference between the proximal and distal demonstrative adjectives/pronouns in these cases being purely tonal (low on the proximal and falling or falling-rising on the distal).

- 19.
- a. ò-mpàtà wúǎ
N1-machete DemD1 that machete
- b. ò-sàmì líǎ
N5a-story DemD5 that story
- c. è-bàamì bíǎ
N8-white.person DemD8 those white people

Pronominal use:

- 20.
- a. brǐ lé-wòlò é-dzâ → brǐ lé-wòlò bíà
Pn2pl IPs2pl-take N8-food Pn2pl IPs2pl-take DemD8
we take food we take those (food)
- b. ndé á-nàmá ká-síbì → ndé á-nàmá kíà
Pn3sg IPs3sg-follow N7-antelope Pn3sg IPs3sg-follow DemD7
he follows the antelope he follows that (antelope)
- c. wè á-ká á-kùmbú → wè á-ká mâa
Pn2sg IPs2sg-gather N6-mushroom Pn2sg IPs2sg-gather DemD6
you gather mushrooms you gather those (mushrooms)

4.1.1.2 Interrogative adjective and pronoun

The indefinite interrogative adjective/pronoun ‘which?’ is formed from the proximal demonstrative adjective plus the morpheme /-ní/.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Proximal demonstrative adjective</u>	<u>Interrogative adjective</u>
1	wu	wùní
2	ba	bàní
5	li	líní
6	ma	màní
7	ki	kìní
8	bi	bìní
9	ji	jìní
10	ji	jìní
14	ba	bàní

Table 4-3

- 21.
- a. Ø-súkà líní
N5a-axe Inter5 which axe?
- b. è-bàamí bìní
N8-white.person Inter8 which white people?
- c. Ø-mbùgà jìní
N9-place Inter9 which place?

5 Subject and object pronouns

There is a single set of pronouns used to represent both the subject and object in the noun phrase, agreeing in class with the noun it replaces.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Subject and object pronoun</u>
1	ndé
2	bó
5	ló
6	mó
7	kó
8	dzó
9	jó
10	jó
14	bó

Table 5-1

- 22.
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| a. Ø-mbvá á-bígá
N1a-dog IPs1-bark
dog barks | → | ndé á-bígá
Pn1 IPs1-bark
it barks |
| b. è-kàì bé-bàrá
N8-antelope Ips8-flee
antelopes flee | → | dzó bé-bàrá
Pn8 Ips8-flee
they flee |
| c. Ø-bàlàgà lé-bèré ó-ndzàmbì
N5a-man Ips5-hit N1-youth
man hits youth | → | Ø-bàlàgà lé-bèré ndé
N5a-man Ips5-hit Pn3
the man hits him |
| d. ò-káarì á-kàalá Ø-súpù
N1-woman Ips1-stir N5a-sauce
woman stirs sauce | → | ò-káarì á-kàalá ló
N1-woman Ips1-stir Pn5
the woman stirs it |
| e. kà-kúbù ké-dzá m-bónóṅó
N7-old.person Ips7-eat N10-aubergine
old person eats aubergines | → | kó ké-dzá jó
Pn7 Ips7-eat Pn10
he eats them |

5.1 Modifiers related to the subject/object pronoun

Three noun modifiers are related to the subject/object pronoun. However, it will be noted that class 1 constitutes, at first sight, an exception. However, in reality the exceptions occur in the subject/object pronoun set itself. Here it appears that the 3 person personal pronoun (/ndé/ 'he/she') has replaced the pronoun form which may have been expected if the same phonological pattern were followed as for the other classes, namely /wo/. It is this anticipated but absent form which now resurfaces in combination with the appropriate morphemes to form the new modifiers.

5.1.1 'other' (definite)

The definite adjective meaning 'the other' or 'more' is formed from the subject/object pronoun (but with a low tone) plus the morpheme /-mó/.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Subject and object pronoun</u>	<u>'other/more'</u>
1	ndé	wòmó
2	bó	bòmó
5	ló	lòmó
6	mó	mòmó
7	kó	kòmó
8	dzó	dzòmó
9	jó	jòmó
10	jó	jòmó
14	bó	bòmó

Table 5-2

23.

- a. là-pílá lò-mó
N5-basin Pn5-the.other the other basin
- b. kà-bìlì kò-mó
N7-owl Pn7-the.other the other owl
- c. ndzú jò-mó
N10-peanut Pn10-the.other the other peanuts

5.1.2 Number 2

Like the cardinal numbers one and three to six the cardinal number two is also marked for class agreement with the noun it qualifies. It is formed from the subject/object pronoun plus the morpheme /-élè/. The final vowel /o/ of the pronoun is then reduced to the approximant /w/. This still leaves the appearance of the phoneme /b/ in the class 6 marker unexplained.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Subject and object pronoun</u>	<u>'two'</u>
2	bó	bwélé
6	mó	mbwélé
8	dzó	dzwélé
10	jó	jwélé

Table 5-3

24.

- a. à-mbòmò bw-élè
N2-boa Pn2-two two boas
- b. à-mpùgù mbw-élè
N6-village Pn6-two two villages
- c. è-ngébé dzw-élè
N8-child Pn8-two two children

As with the other cardinal numbers, the number two can be used pronominally:

25.
 a. dzw-élè kà ngùlù, ngùlù sé dzw-élè
 Pn8-two P N9-side, N9-side Adv Pn8-two
 two sticks at one side and two at the other

5.1.3 'all /the whole'

The quantifier 'all/the whole' also seems to be related to the subject/object pronoun in that it shares the same initial consonant, including the distinctive affricate [dz] in classes 4 and 8 and the unexplained [b] in class 6, though there are differences too. To this initial consonant is added the morpheme /-ǔrì/.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Subject and object pronoun</u>	<u>'all'</u>
1	ndé	wǔrì
2	bó	bǔrì
5	ló	lǔrì
6	mó	mbǔrì
7	kó	kǔrì
8	dzó	dzǔrì
9	jó	jǔrì
10	jó	jǔrì
14	bó	bǔrì

Table 5-4

26.
 a. Ø-ngòndò wǔ-rì
 N1a-month Pn1-all a whole month
 b. è-móní dzǔ-rì
 N8-lemon Pn8-all all the lemons
 c. à-mpìbí mbǔ-rì
 N6-night Pn6-all all the nights

5.1.4 Emphatic adjective and pronoun

To express the emphatic modifier '-self/own' Latege uses the subject/object pronoun plus the morpheme /màṅkú/ placed after the noun being modified.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Subject and object pronoun</u>	<u>'him/her/it-self'</u> <u>'his/her/its own'</u>
1	ndé	ndé màṅkú
2	bó	bó màṅkú
5	ló	ló màṅkú
6	mó	mó màṅkú
7	kó	kó màṅkú
8	dzó	dzó màṅkú
9	jó	jó màṅkú
10	jó	jó màṅkú
14	bó	bó màṅkú

Table 5-5

27.

- a. ò-tánǵání ndé mànǵkú á-tǵá
 N1-white.person N1sg 'self' IpsN1-speak
 the white person himself speaks
- b. à-súkà mó mànǵkú mà-bólǵ-ì
 N6-axe Pn6 'self' Pfv6-break-Pfv
 the axes themselves broke
- c. ò-ndzàmbí á-kòró é-bìlì dzó mànǵkú
 N1-youth IPs1-watch N8-owl Pn8 'self'
 the youth sees the owls themselves
- d. à-ntsúrú bá kà-kúbù kó mànǵkú
 N2-chicken Ass2 N7-old.person Pn7 'self'
 the chickens of the old person herself

6 Relative pronoun

Once again there is a single set of pronouns used for the relative pronoun regardless of whether this pronoun is the subject or object of the verb phrase in which it occurs. This set is then combined with other morphemes to derive other noun modifiers.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Relative pronoun</u>
1	wà
2	bà
5	là
6	mà
7	kà
8	bà
9	jà
10	jà
14	bà

Table 6-1

28.

- a. ndé Ø-mbùurù wà á-dzá
 Pn3sg N1a-person Rel1 IPs1-eat she is the person who eats
- b. à-káari bà bá-kùlá é-ngébé
 N2-woman Rel2 IPs2-give.birth.to N4-child women who give birth to children
- c. à-ngàí mà má-sá á-bàlàgà
 N6-illness Rel6 IPs6-do N6-man illnesses which attack men
- d. kà-ntú kà á-súm-ì bó
 N7-pineapple Rel7 Pfv3pl-buy-Pfv Pn3pl the pineapple which they bought
- e. è-pélé bà n-tsùk-ì mē
 N8-plate Rel8 Pfv1sg-wash-Pfv Pn1sg plates which I washed

The relative pronoun is also naturally used where English would require a relative adverb, the pronoun agreeing as usual with its antecedent:

- 29.
- a. Ø-ndzó jà á-pǒ wê
N9-house Rel9 IP2sg-sleep Pn2sg the house where you sleep
- b. Ø-ntĩní jà bá-dzá
N9-time Rel9 IP3pl-eat the time when they eat

6.1 Modifiers related to the relative pronoun

6.1.1 Associative marker

The associative marker is used to link two nouns or a noun and pronoun in a variety of relationships such as possession, attribution, function, kinship, location, part-whole. It differs from the relative pronoun only in the tone of certain classes and in that class 8 has an alternative form /bé/ and class 14 an alternative /bó/. The associative marker agrees with the head noun of the phrase.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Associative pronoun</u>
1	wà ⁶
2	bá
5	lá
6	má
7	ká
8	bá
9	jà
10	jà
14	bá

Table 6-2

- 30.
- a. Ø-bágá lá kà-tô
N5a-knife Ass5 N7-sharpness sharp knife
- b. kà-bàaná ká Ø-ɲgô
N7-skin Ass7 N1a-leopard leopard's skin
- c. Ø-ndzó jà kà-bvùlà
N9-house Ass9 N7-camp house for the camp
- d. à-mpfà má bãaná
N6-clothing Ass6 N2-child children's clothes

⁶ The tone on class one is unpredictable, presumably because it is a coalescing of class 1 which would typically have a low tone and class 3 which would typically have high tone.

6.1.1.1 Personal possessives

Although the word order in associative clauses given above is the most common, it can be, and frequently is changed when an associative marker and personal pronoun are used to express possession. The associative marker and personal pronoun may be moved before the noun possessed.

- 31.
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| a. à-ndúmù bá wé
N2-brother Ass2 Pn2sg
your brothers | → | [bá] wé à-ndúmù
[Ass2] Pn2sg N2-brother
your brothers |
| b. Ø-mpùgù jà bé
N9-village Ass9 Pn2pl
your village | → | [jà] bé Ø-mpùgù
Ass9 Pn2pl N9-village
your village |

In this case the associative marker, if present, is always used in its primary form. However, as the square brackets indicate, it may be omitted entirely leaving just the personal pronoun before the noun possessed.

6.1.2 Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers (except 'first') are expressed using the associative marker plus the appropriate number, which is itself a class 14 noun. As the class 14 noun prefix is [o-] the [-a] of the associative marker drops leaving just the initial consonant.

- 32.
- | | | |
|--|--|---------------|
| a. kà-tsúgù k- ô-táani
N7-day Ass7 N14-five | | fifth day |
| b. Ø-ɲgùamá j- ò-táli
N9-machete Ass9 N14-three | | third machete |
| c. Ø-ɲóní w- ò-nà
N1a-bird Ass1 N14-four | | fourth bird |

7 Verb agreement

The verb in Latege is almost always marked with a prefix to show the class of the noun which is its subject. Latege verbs have many aspects and tenses and there are a range of different concord prefixes to indicate these. As this is not intended as a verb paper I will illustrate only two of the aspect/tense concord prefix sets, that of the present imperfective and that of the non-specified perfective aspect.

7.1 Present imperfective

<u>Noun class of subject</u>	<u>Present imperfective</u>
1	á
2	bá
5	lé
6	má
7	ké
8	bé
9	jé
10	jé
14	bó

Table 7-1

- 33.
- a. bvùrù bó-tsá
N14-day IPs14-dawn day is dawning
- b. ò-bì á-sàará ó-kài
N1-hunter IPs1-cut.up N3-antelope the hunter is cutting up antelope
- c. à-káarì bá-dzá
N2-woman IPs2-eat the women are eating

The initial consonant of the prefix of classes 2, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 14 is sometimes dropped.

- 34.
- a. è-kpá bì é-fá é-kàalà
N8-yam DemP8 IPA8-come.from N8-furrow
these yams are coming from furrows
- b. è-wùlí é-sá Ø-ɲkèrì
N8-throat IPs8-make N8-pain
throats are hurting

7.2 Perfective

<u>Noun class of subject</u>	<u>Perfective</u>
1	ó-
2	bá-
5	lá-
6	má-
7	ká-
8	bé-
9	jé-
10	jé-
14	bó-

Table 7-2

- 35.
- a. ò-káarì ó-tsùk-î à-mpfà
N1-woman Pfv1-wash-Pfv N6-clothes
the woman washed the clothes
- b. à-ndúmù á brí bá-sàar-î Ø-ntsà wúă
N2-brother Ass2 Pn2pl Pfv2-cut.up-Pfv N1a-antelope DemD1
our brothers cut up that antelope
- c. à-ndzá á-tòg-î
N6-water Pfv6-boil-Pfv
the water boiled

However, the initial consonant of classes 2, 6, 8, 9, and 10 may be dropped and in fact, most often is.

36.

- a. à-ntsú á-káy-î
N2-fish Pfv2-dry-Pfv
fish dried
- b. è-mpálǎ é-ṣě-ì à-bí
N8-lizard Pfv8-lay-Pfv N8-egg
lizards laid eggs

7.3 Modifiers formed using the verb prefix

7.3.1 Intensifier ('all/only')

There is a set of modifiers which is best described simply as an intensifier but which only occurs when a number is specified in the noun phrase and which for plural classes is sometimes translated by 'all' and for the singular classes by 'only' though these are rather over-translations. This modifier is formed using the present imperfective prefix plus the morpheme /-ntsǎ/, although classes 1 and 9 do not follow this pattern. Class 14 is absent from the table as this class does not contain count nouns.

<u>Noun class of subject</u>	<u>Present imperfective</u>	<u>Intensifier ('all')</u>
1	á-	wǒntsǎ
2	bá-	bǎntsǎ
5	lé-	lěntsǎ
6	má-	mǎntsǎ
7	ké-	kěntsǎ
8	bé-	běntsǎ
9	jé-	jěntsǎ
10	jé-	jěntsǎ
14	bó-	bǒntsǎ

Table 7-3

37.

- a. à-káari bǎ-ntsǎ á-táli
N2-woman IPs2-(all) N2-three (all) three women
- b. kà-túṅgǎ kě-ntsǎ ká-mó
N7-basket IPs7-(only) N7-one (only) one basket

8 Miscellaneous

8.1 'entire'

The modifier meaning 'entire' is possibly formed from the imperfective verb prefix plus the morpheme /-tsìnà/. Alternatively, it may be derived from the associative marker (with the variant [be] in class 8) plus this morpheme. In either case there are a few variations from the expected pattern and the prefix here is always low so it may even be considered a completely separate set. Interestingly the nasal typical of classes 9 and 10 surfaces between the prefix and the morpheme /-tsìnà/.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Associative marker</u>	<u>Present imperfective</u>	<u>'entire'</u>
1	wà	á-	wòtsìnà
2	bá	bá-	bàatsìnà
3	wà	á-	wòtsìnà
4	bé	bé-	bètsìnà
5	lá	lé-	lètsìnà
6	má	má-	màtsìnà
7	ká	ké-	kètsìnà
8	bé	bé-	bètsìnà
9	jà	jé-	jàntsìnà
10	jà	jé-	jàntsìnà
14	bá	bó-	bòtsìnà

Table 8-1

- 38.
- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----------------------|
| a. | è-mòni bè-tsìnà | |
| | N8-lemon IPs8-entire | entire lemons |
| | | |
| b. | là-bónóǵó lè-tsìnà | |
| | N5-aubergine IPs5-entire | the entire aubergine |
| | | |
| c. | kà-jìngà kè-tsìnà | |
| | N7-week IPs7-entire | the entire week |

8.2 'same'

The notion 'same' in Latege is expressed by a combination of the proximal and distal demonstrative adjectives. However, in classes 2, 6 and 14 the [-a] ending of the proximal demonstrative adjective is changed to [-i] seemingly to form a regular pattern with the other classes. The tone of the first segment (proximal demonstrative) remains consistently high. When the distal demonstrative part is a monosyllable (classes 2, 6 and 14) the tone is a contour fall then rise when it is used adjectivally or as subject pronoun, and a simple fall when it is an object pronoun. When the distal demonstrative part is a disyllable (all other classes) it has a high tone followed by a rising when it is used adjectivally or as subject pronoun and a high followed by low when it is an object pronoun.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>Proximal demonstrative adjective</u>	<u>Distal demonstrative adjective</u>	<u>'same'</u>
1	wù	wúa	wú wúa
2	bà	ba	bí ba
5	lì	lía	lí lía
6	mà	maa	mí ma
7	kì	kía	kí kía
8	bì	bía	bí bía
9	jì	jía	jí jía
10	jì	jía	jí jía
14	bà	ba	bí ba

Table 8-2

39.

- a. Ø-ntsúrú wú wúă
N1a-chicken DemP1 DemD1 the same chicken
- b. è-kúbù bí bíă
N8-old.person DemP8 DemD8 these same old people
- c. à-bágá mí má´
N6-knife DemP6 DemD6 the same knives

In order now to express the demonstrative along with the notion ‘same’ (i.e. this/these same...) the definite ‘the other(s)’ is inserted before the proximal demonstrative adjective but the morpheme /-ómó/ now has two high tones.

<u>Noun class</u>	<u>‘the other’</u>	<u>‘same’</u>	<u>‘this/these same’</u>
1	wòmó	wú wúa	ndé mé wú wúa
2	bòmó	bí ba	bómó bí ba
5	lòmó	lí lía	lómó lí lía
6	mòmó	mí ma	mómó mí ma
7	kòmó	kí kía	kómó kí kía
8	dzòmó	bí bíá	dzómó bí bíá
9	jòmó	jí jía	jómó jí jía
10	jòmó	jí jía	jómó jí jía
14	bòmó	bí ba	bómó bí ba

Table 8-3

40.

- a. kà-bágà kó-mó kí kíă
N7-wall Pn7-the.other DemP7 DemD7 this same wall
- b. è-kòró dzó-mó bí bíă
N8-shrimp Pn8-the.other DemP8 DemD8 these same shrimps
- c. à-mbvá bó-mó bí bá´
N2-dog Pn2-the.other DemP2 DemD2 these same dogs

Clearly once again class 1 does not adhere to the regular pattern and the modifier ‘the other’ has been replaced by the class subject/object pronoun plus the morpheme [mé] the meaning of which is unclear.

- d. ò-lògí ndé mé wú wúă
N1-sorcerer Pn1 ** DemP1 DemD1 this same sorcerer

8.3 Derived nouns

8.3.1 Derivations from nouns

Of the derivational procedures used to create nouns, some are productive or non-productive. Among the productive ones is the formation of diminutives. Diminutives can be formed from any noun where the sense permits and is done by replacing the noun class prefix with the morpheme /kě-/. The use of such diminutives is usually considered pejorative.

- 41.
- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. | ò-káarì
N1-woman
woman | → | kě-káarì
Dim-woman
little woman |
| b. | Ø-ndzò
N9-house
house | → | kě-ndzò
Dim-house
little house |
| c. | kà-lógò
N7-thing
thing | → | kě-logò
Dim-thing
little thing |

These derived diminutives become class 7 nouns, though the new prefix is clearly a variant of the usual class 7 prefix /ka-/, and take the same class 7 agreement markers. Its tone is, however, always rising. Puech (1987) suggests it is in fact a fusion of the class 7 prefix /ka-/ and an prefix /i-/, this prefix then carrying the diminutive force. The plural is formed by the usual pairing with class 8 but with high tone on the prefix and replaces the whole fused prefix /kě-/.

In a similar way the name of a tree or plant is frequently derived from the fruit it produces⁷. In this case the noun class prefix of the fruit is replaced by the class 1 noun class prefix /o-/ and paired with class 8 /e-/ in the plural.

- 42.
- | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| a. | kà-móní
N7-orange
orange | → | ò-móní
N1-orange.tree
orange tree | è-móní
N8-orange.tree
orange trees |
| b. | là-bónóńó
N5-aubergine
aubergine | → | ò-bónóńó
N1-aubergine.plant
aubergine plant | è-bónóńó
N8-aubergine.plant
aubergine plants |

There are a few notable exceptions to this rule (/ko/ is both a banana and a banana tree and a pineapple plant is /sala la kantu/) but it is generally speaking a fully productive procedure.

A more limited and slightly less regular derivational procedure occurs when deriving a person from an abstract noun. In this case the noun class prefix of the abstract noun (usually class 14 but sometimes class 7) is removed and replaced most frequently by the class 1 prefix /o-/, but sometimes by the class 1a prefix Ø, both paired with a class 2 plural. The final vowel may also change from /-a/ to /-i/ and the tone on the radical often changes.

- 43.
- | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| a. | ò-fúgá
N14-poverty
poverty | → | ò-fùgà
N1-poor.person
poor person | à-fùgà
N2-poor.person
poor people |
|----|----------------------------------|---|---|---|

⁷ It could, of course, be posited that the fruit is derived from the tree or plant, but in such a case it is impossible to predict which class the noun designating the fruit will assigned to.

b. kà-bàgà N7-richness richness	→	ò-báì N1-rich.person rich person	à-báì N2-rich.person rich people
c. ò-ndùmbá N14-prostitution prostitution	→	Ø-ndùmbà N1a-prostitute prostitute	à-ndùmbà N2-prostitute prostitutes

8.3.2 Derivations from verbs

A wholly productive derivational procedure involving verbs entails the derivation of the actor from the verb. The class 1 noun prefix and an /-i/ suffix are added to the root of the verb. As may be expected it pairs with class 2 in the plural. This can be done to any verb where the sense permits.

44.			
a. -dzàndz-	→	ò-dzàndz-ì	à-dzàndz-ì
work		N1-work-Actor	N2-work-Actor
work		worker	workers
b. -lòg-	→	ò-lòg-ì	à-lòg-ì
bewitch		N1-bewitch-Actor	N2-bewitch-Actor
bewitch		witch	witches
c. -jírìg-	→	ò-jírìg-ì	à-jírìg-ì
teach		N1-teach-Actor	N2-teach-Actor
teach		teacher	teachers

There are two other derivatives from verbs which are rather more unusual but appear to be fully productive as far as semantics allows.

The first expresses the idea of an action completed a certain number of times (which must be specified). In the singular it becomes a class 5a noun and consists simply of the verb stem plus the class 5a noun prefix (Ø-). In the plural the class 10 nasal prefix is added with the usual phonological changes which that engenders in Latege.

45.			
a. ndé	mì-sá	Ø-sá	là-mó
Pn3sg	3sgPfc-do	N5a-do	N5-one
			he has done once
b. mě	măan-dàgá	wè	Ø-làgà
Pn1sg	1sgPfc-say	Pn2sg	N5a-say
			N5-one
			I have told you once
c. bó	á-mì-dzá	n-dzâ	Ø-táani
Pn3pl	3pl-Pfc-eat	N10-eat	Ø-five
			they have eaten five times
d. brí	là-màa-sá	n-tsâ	Ø-táli
Pn1pl	1pl-Pfc-do	N10-do	Ø-three
			we have done three times

The second expresses the idea of an action badly done and is formed by adding the prefix /é-/ (class 8 noun prefix) to the perfective stem of the verb and doubling it without the prefix.

46.			
a. kà-làgă	é-làg-í	làg-ì	
Inf-speak	N8-speak-Pfv	speak-Pfv	speak any old way
b. kà-sá	é-s-î	s-ì	
Inf-do	N8-do-Pfv	do-Pfv	do any old thing

9 Appendix: Summary table of agreement markers

	Noun Prefix	Interrogative	'other' (indefinite)	'much/many'	'some'	Number 1		Number 3	Number 4	Number 5	Number 6
1	o-	o-má	o-kimà			o-mó	o-môtú				
1a	Ø-										
2	a-	a-má	a-kimà	a-lílàgà	a-ké	a-mó	m	a-táli	a-nà	a-táani	a-sémíjì
5	la-	la-má	la-kimà	la-lílàgà		la-mó	la-môtú				
5a	Ø-										
6	a-	a-má	a-kimà	a-lílàgà	a-ké	a-mó		a-táli	a-nà	a-táani	a-sémíjì
7	ka-	ka-má	ka-kimà	ka-lílàgà		ka-mó	ka-môtú				
8	e-	e-má	e-kimà	e-lílàgà	e-ké	e-mó		e-táli	e-nà	e-táani	e-sémíjì
8a	Ø-										
9	Ø-	Ø-má	ŋ-kimà	n-díndàgà		Ø-mó	Ø-môtú				
10	N-	Ø-má	ŋ-kimà	n-díndàgà	ŋ-ké	Ø-mó		Ø-táli	Ø-nà	Ø-táani	Ø-sémíjì
14	o-	o-má	o-kimà	o-lílàgà							

	Proximal demonstrative	Distal demonstrative	Interrogative	Subject/object Pronoun	'other' (definite)	Number 2	'all/whole'	'him/her/itself'
1	wù	wúa	wùní	ndé	wòmó		wùri	ndé màŋkú
2	bà	ba	bàní	bó	bòmó	bwélé	bùri	bó màŋkú
5	lí	líá	líní	ló	lòmó		lùri	ló màŋkú
6	mà	maa	màní	mó	mòmó	mbwélé	mbùri	mó màŋkú
7	kì	kíá	kíní	kó	kòmó		kùri	kó màŋkú
8	bì	bíá	bíní	dzó	dzòmó	dzwélé	dzùri	dzó màŋkú
9	jì	jíá	jíní	jó	jòmó		jùri	jó màŋkú
10	jì	jíá	jíní	jó	jòmó	jwélé	jùri	jó màŋkú
14	bà	ba	bàní	bó	bòmó		bùri	bó màŋkú

	Relative pronoun	Associative marker	Imperfective present	Perfective	'all/only'	'Entire'	'same'
1	wà	wà	á	ó-	wòntsá	wòtsinà	wú wua
2	bà	bá	bá	bá-	bãantsá	bàatsinà	bí ba
5	là	lá	lé	lá-	lěentsá	lèetsinà	lí lia
6	mà	má	má	má-	mãantsá	màatsinà	mí ma
7	kà	ká	ké	ká-	kěentsá	kèetsinà	kí kia
8	bà	bá	bé	bé-	běentsá	bèetsinà	bí bia
9	jà	jà	jé	jé-	jěentsá	jàntsìnà	jí jia
10	jà	jà	jé	jé-	jěentsá	jàntsìnà	jí jia
14	bà	bá	bó	bó-	bõntsá	bòtsìnà	bí ba

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