

MODULE 3

Unit 1	Les Réactions Phonologiques dans la Chaîne Parlée
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UNIT 1 RÉACTIONS PHONOLOGIQUE DANS LA CHAÎNE PARLÉE**CONTENTS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn how sounds/phonemes interact and function in the French language system. You will also learn the interaction between sounds provoke some phonological reactions in speech such as élision, enchaînement and liaison.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the phonological reaction of sounds in the French language system; and
- apply the resulting phonological phenomena whenever you speak French.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Réactions Phonologiques

In speech, there are series of sounds produced, and some phonological reactions take place in the course of their production. Here, you will study only the commonest reactions, which are: élision, enchaînement; and liaison.

3.1.1 L'élision

You have already learnt in the phonological rules, among which is l'élision. Emphasis was laid on the élision of e muet, that is (ə).

Some examples:

Le livre: i-ə-I-i-v-R-ə I- ə -I -i v- R

Le un et le autre > l'un et l'autre:

I-ə-œ-e-I-ə-o-t-R-ə I-œ-e-I-o-t-R

In these examples, the final ə in livre has undergone élision, just like the ə of le and the ə of **autre**.

In this unit, you will learn more cases of élision that are systematic.

Examples:

- *élision* of final letters of words:
enfant (ă f ă) (where le t has undergone *élision*)

Les étudiante (lezet djă) (where s and ts are not pronounced, having undergone élision).
- *élision* of identical sounds
si ils (si il) → /**s-i-l**/ (where the i of si has undergone élision)

la alliance (laalijăs) → /**I-a-I-j-ă-s**/ (where the a of la has undergone élision).

You should note that all these examples are not similar. Each case is peculiar. You should therefore not generalise; rather, you learn the peculiarities in each case.

3.1.2 L'enchânement

This consists in changing the frontier between syllables. This change occurs when two words follow each other, with the first word ending with a consonant type, and the second word beginning with a vowel.

Example:

Une petite amie /yn-pə -ti-ta-mi/

3.1.3 La Liaison

In the case of enchaînement, there is movement of syllabic frontier, but the total number of phonemes does not change. On the contrary, in the case of liaison, there is a number of adjustments that change the number of phonemes, depending on the context. For example:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Ils ont | /ilzə/ |
| 2. | Trois heures | /tRwazœR/ |
| 3. | ont-ils | /ətɪl/ |
| 4. | Sept heures trios | /setœRtRwa/ |

- (a) In the examples (1) and (2), there is consonant z between the two words: it is the **s** at the end of **ils** that changes to z to allow for **liaison** with the vowel o beginning the word ont. This type of liaison is termed liaison obligatoire, because it is the case of a pronoun ils depending on the verb **ont**. In the examples (3) and (4), you have the case of liaison **obligatoire**, **ont** and **sept** depending on **ils** and **heures** respectively.
- (b) There are cases where liaison is not possible at all, because the words in contact do not depend on each other. Examples:

Jean attend	/ʒãatã/
Un soldat armé	/œsəl daaRme/

In the two examples, Jean and soldat do not depend respectively on attend and arme.

- (c) Also not that there are cases where you may or may not apply the liaison, depending on the competence of the speaker.

Example:

Je suis allé may be pronounced /ʒəsyizale/ or /ʒəsyiale/ (in the first instance, there is liaison, while in the second there is no liaison). More details and examples will be given in the next unit. This is la liaison facultative

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that some phonological reactions are inherent whenever speech is produced; the main reactions are elision, enchainement, and liaison. You have also learnt that there are three different types of liaison: compulsory, impossible and optional.

5.0 SUMMARY

With this unit, you have learnt some more technical terms in French phonology, especially terms relating to the way sounds interact in the course of speech production. It is also a way for you to learn how to be fluent or proficient in French language.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain with illustrations the following: elision; liaison; enchainement.
2. Study the following sentences and apply the main phonological reactions accordingly:
 - Je te le jure, je suis innocent
 - une grande étudiante est à la porte
 - nous sommes enfin réunis.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Juilland, A.G. (1965). *Dictionnaire Inverse de la Langue Française*. La Haye: Mouton. (REF)
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UNIT 2 LES PRINCIPES DE LIAISON EN FRANÇAIS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you learnt what liaison is about. In this unit you will learn the rules and principles guiding the application of liaison. In effect, there are many principles and rules for an acceptable pronunciation in French. The principles of liaison are part of these rules and principles. And each type of liaison has its particular rule and principle, be it compulsory (obligatoire), optional (facultative) or forbidden (impossible).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- acquaint yourself with liaison as it is correctly used in French
- state the two main causes of liaison; and
- identify compulsory, forbidden and optional liaisons.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Liaison?

Liaison can be defined as the linking of the final and usually silent consonant of a word with the beginning vowel sound of the following word. It is an oral principle in French whereby two words are pronounced as if they are one. For liaison to take place, however, the first word must end with an unpronounced consonant, while the second word begins with a vowel sound. For instance, study the illustration below:

Nous aimons nos amis

In this sentence, there will be a liaison between the first two words - nous **aimons**, the first word ending with an unpronounced consonant **s** and the second word beginning with a vowel sound **ɛ**. Between the second word **aimons** and the third word **nos**, there cannot be any liaison because the former ends with an unpronounced consonant **s** and the latter begins too with a consonant **n** and not with a vowel sound. But between **nos** and **amis**, another liaison will take place; this is made possible because **nos** ends with an unpronounced consonant **s** and **amis** begins with a vowel sound **a**. To pronounce this sentence correctly therefore, you will have n-u-z- \square -m- ə- n-o-z-a-m-i (whereby **s** will be produced as **z** as a result of the liaison).

3.2 Liaison Obligatoire

Compulsory liaison (liaison obligatoire) means that a liaison must take place between two words, provided they satisfy the criteria already discussed above. Remember that the two criteria are that:

1. there must be two words and they come one after the other in a sentence.
2. the first word ends with an unpronounced consonant while the second word begin with a vowel sound.

Liaison is compulsory in the cases enumerated below:

1. *Between an article and a noun.*
e.g les-amis, les-étudiants, de-hommes un-an
2. *Between an article and an adjective*
e.g les -anciens combattants,
3. *Between an adjective and a noun*
e.g mon-ami, grand-homme, bon-amis, petit-enfant
4. *Between a pronoun and a verb*
e.g nous-avons, ils-ont, vous-êtes, nous les-avons
5. *Between a verb and a noun or an adjective*
e.g il est-avocat, nous sommes-impatients
6. *After the auxiliary verb être*
e.g il est-allé, elles sont-arrivés, il était-allé, il est-ici, je suis-ici.
7. *After a monosyllabic preposition, adverb or conjunction*
e.g. chez-eux, en-Amérique très_intéressant, quand-elle parle
8. *In certain expressions of compound words.*
Accent -aigu, pas-encore, avan-hier, petit-a petit, tout-à coup, tout-à fait, tout-à l'heure, vis-à-vis, de plus-en plus, de moins-en moins, de temps-en temps de mieux-en mieux etc.

3.3 Liaison Impossible

There are situations where liaison is forbidden (impossible), even when the two major criteria earlier discussed are met. In the three cases below, there is no liaison:

1. *After a singular noun.*
e.g. Le pied # ou la jambe
2. *with the conjunctions “et” and “ou”*
e.g. femmes et # homes, lui et # elle, du pain # ou un croissant.
3. *Before a verb coming after an inversion*
e.g. Vont-ils # arriver?
4. *After an interrogative adverb*
e.g. quand # est-il arrivé? Combine # en as-tu?
5. *After a proper noun*
e.g. Jean # est là, Jacques # a dormi.
6. *Between a singular noun and adjective coming after the noun.*
e.g. un étudiant # américain, une femme # élégante
7. *In certain fixed expressions*
e.g. nez # à nez, mort # ou vif, riz # au lait.
8. *la # haine, le # heros, le # hazard, la #honte, le # haut, le #hariot, la # Hollande.*

Note that “h” can be silent and therefore behave as a vowel. It can also be aspirated and behave as a consonant. This is why there cannot be liaison between for example la honte because the “h” in honte is aspirated. Meanwhile, the “h” in words like heure and homme are silent and so, there is compulsory liaison between the two words les and hommes, les ending with s, and hommes beginning with silent h.

3.4 Liaison Facultative

In the case of optional liaison (liaison facultative), you are at liberty to either use liaison or not. The following situations bring about optional liaison:

1. *Between plural nouns and adjectives.*
e.g. des romans # - italiens, des appartements #- élégants, des femmes #- élégantes.
2. *Between auxiliary or modal and their principal verbs.*
e.g. il doit # apprendre, je suis # arrivé
3. *After adverbs*
e.g. vraiment # - inutile, considérablement # - accepté
4. *After conjunctions (note that liaison is forbidden after the conjunction “et”* e.g. mais # - enfin,

5. *Chez # Anne, sans # Henri*

Note the use of the symbols: means there must be a liaison; the symbol # means that liaison is forbidden, and # - means you may or not apply liaison.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Liaison constitutes a source of wrong pronunciation in French language by many. Nevertheless, if you devote time to learning liaison, you will end up having a solid background in the pronunciation of French. To concretise what you have learnt, you are advised to do some practices of liaison, using the internet. I recommend to you two websites:

<http://www.languageguide.org/français/grammar/pronunciation/>
and

<http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/phonetique/intro.htm>.

When you get to each of these sites, click on liaison, and you will have the opportunity of listening to the pronunciation of some examples of liaison.

5.0 SUMMARY

Through this unit, you have learnt the principles and rules of liaison. As a reminder, you have learnt that before a liaison can take place, there must be two words coming one after the other and that the first word should end with a consonant while the second word should begin with a vowel sound. In the same vein, you have learnt the three different situations in liaison: compulsory, forbidden or optional. You are strongly advised not to go into the next unit until you have thoroughly understood the principle of liaison. Note that there is no pronunciation in French without obeying the rules of liaison.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The assignment below is to be done and submitted to your tutor as indicated in the assignment file.

1. Briefly define French pronunciation.
2. State the two main criteria for a liaison in French
3. In the following sentences, indicate where there should be compulsory, forbidden or optional liaison, using appropriate symbols:

- a. - compulsory liaison
- b. # forbidden liaison
- c. # optional liaison
 - Nous allons au restaurant chez Antoine.
 - Les étudiants sont absolument intéressés
 - Quand est-ce que Emma va arriver?
 - Je suis ici ce soir pour prier
 - Jean a tout d fait raison.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'Exercices écrits*, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, New York.

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<http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/phonetique/intro.htm>.

UNIT 3 ÉLISION ET ENCHAÎNEMENT EN FRANÇAIS

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 - 3.2 L'Enchaînement
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

You learnt that elision, liaison and enchaînement are normal phonological reactions in speech in French. You also learnt the principles guiding liaison in French pronunciation. In this unit, you will learn the rules and principles of elision and enchaînement for an effective and efficacious pronunciation in French. At this juncture, you should note that lack of adequate learning and mastery of these pronunciation principles has caused many learners of French to have bad command of French pronunciation. Good understanding of the functioning of these principles will help you to build a solid background in the pronunciation of French language in general.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define both élision and enchaînement;
- recognise when to use élision and enchaînement in speech; and
- identify the difference between liaison, élision and enchaînement.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 L'élision en Question

Élision is a process by which some words drop their final vowel and replace it with an apostrophe before words beginning with a vowel sound. It must be noted here that élision does not only have pronunciation implication; it also has orthographic implication. Generally in French, when words ending with a vowel sound are followed immediately by another word beginning with a vowel sound, the vowel sound of the first word drops to be replaced with

apostrophe, as illustrated in the examples below:

La hirondelle	becomes	l' (h)irondelle
Le étudiant	becomes	l' étudiant
La ardoise	becomes	l' ardoise
Le enfant	becomes	l' enfant

Also, when the conjunction *si* is followed by the pronoun **il** or **ils**

Examples:

Si il veut parler	becomes	s'il veut parler
Si ils sont là	becomes	s'ils sont là

At this juncture, it should be noted that there cannot be élision between the conjunction **si** and the personal pronoun **elle**. In other words, you cannot have:

Si elle	becoming	s'elle
Si elles	becoming	s'elles

So, **si elle** and **si elles** remain as they are; there is no change.

Also note that there cannot be élision between the vowel letter *u* and letter *e*. You cannot therefore have:

Tu es mon ami becoming t'es mon ami

3.2 L'enchaînement en Question

There are two types of enchaînement in French: enchaînement vocalique and enchaînement consonantique. The first type occurs when a word ends with a pronounced vowel and the word that follows it immediately begins with a vowel. In the second type, the word ends with a pronounced consonant but followed by another word beginning with a vowel sound.

- (i) Examples of enchaînement vocalique:
- Il va-au cinéma
 - J'ai-eu -un billet
 - Il a - eu un ami
 - Il a parlé- une langue inconnue.
- (ii) Examples of enchaînement consonantique:
- Il - est treiz(e) - heure(s)- à Paris
 - Ell(e) _ adore _ êtr(e) - amiable
 - Un bel _oiseau.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Elision and enchaînement constitute a source of wrong pronunciation of French words among people learning French as a foreign language, especially among English-speaking learners of French. However, this can be corrected if adequate time is devoted to their learning, right from the first year. You are therefore advised to make sure you have thoroughly mastered these principles before you proceed to the next unit. Do not rush to go to the next unit if you discover that you still have problem in understanding and using these principles of practical French.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the principles of élision and enchaînement as they relate to pronunciation in French. At the beginning of the unit, you were told that if you fail to have a solid background in these principles, you may have difficulties in future to correct the errors associated with them. You also learnt the difference between liaison and enchaînement. As you have been advised earlier on, make sure you master the functioning of these phonological principles before you proceed to the next level of the course.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Differentiate between élision and enchaînement.
2. Differentiate between enchaînement and liaison.
3. Give three examples each to identify the functioning of élision and enchaînement.
4. Correct the following expressions if necessary using the principle of elision.
 - a. tu est une fille
 - b. le home et la hirondelle
 - c. Je suis allé à le hôpital
5. Put the symbol - to indicate enchaînement in the following expressions:

Elle adore Authur
 Port-au-prince
 Port-Hacourt
 Par exemple
 Après avoir entendu.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'Exercices écrits*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York.

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<http://www.languageguide.org/Français/grammar/pronunciation/> and
<http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/phonetique/intro.htm>.

UNIT 4 L'ACCENT EN FRANÇAIS

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 - 3.2 L'Accent d'Insistance
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Previously, you learnt some phonological phenomena that govern fluency in French speech production, such as élision, enchaînement and liaison. In this unit, you will learn yet another phonological phenomenon call Accent (stress). Accent is characteristic of every sound produced in speech, especially in the French langugae. Your ability to speak French with a “French accent” will inform your proficiency in that language.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define what is called accent;
- determine where an accent should be placed in a word when speaking French;
- distinguish between French accent and English accent; and
- speak French with the appropriate accent where necessary.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 L'accent

In speech, we produce series of sounds. Each sound produced is characterised by some fundamental varying parameters which include: energy, frequency and duration. A sound produced with energy is determined by a heavy air flow from the lungs, which causes an important vibration of the vocal cords. Also, a sound can be produced with an increase in the frequency of the voice, thereby causing a rapid vibration of the vocal cords; so also can a sound be produced longer in duration than the other sounds. Those are the three factors that define

Accent in a given language.

In the case of French language, the last factor, that is duration, is prominent. French language uses two types of accents; accent final and accent d'insistance

3.2 L'accent Final

In French, stress (l'accent) is always placed on the final syllable of a word, and that is why in French we talk of accent final. Stress placement in French is totally different from that of English because in English, the syllable that bears the stress varies according to the word itself; thus the stress can be on the initial, medial or final syllable of a particular word. The implication of this difference is that the study and use of stress in French is easier than the one in English. Examine the examples below for illustration:

Examples:

- i. la fille [la 'fij]
- ii. la petite fille [la pətit 'fij]
- iii. la petite fille malade [la pətit 'fij ma'lad]

You will notice that in all the three groups of French words, it is the last syllable of each group that is stressed: fij, fij and lad respectively.

Autres exemples:

- 1. Il aime regarder la téléviSION
- 2. Je finirai le devoir deMAIN
- 3. Les étudiants sont fainéants

3.3 L'accent d'insistance

This is the sound type of accent in French. It is used to lay emphasis on a syllable in particular within a series of syllables. Contrary to what is done in the case of accent final, the accent d'insistance is placed, not at the final syllable, but rather at the beginning of each word. Very often, the Accent d'insistance is manifested by the frequency rising of the voice.

Examples:

- 1. C'est par sur la table, c'est sous la table [sepə 'syr la 'tabl se 'su la 'tabl]
- 2. Moi je trouve ça inacceptable [mwəʁə tRuv sa ''i naksep 'tabl]

In those examples, the accent final falls on the last syllable tabl while the accent d'insistance falls on sur, sous and i respectively.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what stress (accent) entails in French and how it is used in different situations. The more you understand and practice it, the better your oral expression in that language.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been taught French stress (accent). You have learnt about the stress pattern of French, especially how it is different from what you have in English. Always make sure that you are not confused and that you have adequately understood the content of this unit. As it is often said, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. So, do not relent in your effort to put all those phonological aspects in practice anytime you express yourself in French.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is compulsory and you are to do it and submit to your tutor as indicated in the assignment file.

1. What is stress in language diction generally?
2. State the difference between English and French stress.
3. Put the stress on the following words and sentences:
 - Le Nigéria est un beau pays
 - Le Nigéria est un beau pays de l'Afrique
 - Le Nigeria est un pays de l'Afrique de l'ouest.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'exercices écrits*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York.
- Lucile, C. & Annie-Claud, M. (1998). *Phonétique Progressive du Français*. Paris: CLE International.
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UNIT 5 L'INTONATION EN FRANÇAIS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Having learnt French pronunciation principles such as liaison, elision and enchaînement in the previous units, you are now, more than ever before familiar with the pronunciation of words in French. Meanwhile; there are still few principles that you will need to learn. In this unit, you will learn the principles of intonation. These principles are essential to good pronunciation of French sounds and letters.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define both intonation and stress in a language;
- distinguish between intonation and stress in pronunciation; and
- identify the intonation pattern that goes with each type of sentence in French.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of Intonation

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines intonation as a pattern of rise and fall in the level of the voice, which often adds meaning to what is being said; e.g. to show that the speaker is angry or elated, etc. The *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary* corroborates this definition by defining intonation as the rise and fall of voice in speaking especially as it affects the meaning of what is being said.

The pattern of intonation in English is not the same as that of French. So, as you go further in this unit to learn about French intonation, it is important for you to note that you are learning the pronunciation of a

language that is different from English. Before you go into learning French intonation, try to pronounce the following English sentences:

- (a) Could you please come?
- (b) Your name was mentioned.
- (c) What a nice attempt!

If your voice goes up towards the end of the sentences, then the intonation is said to be a rising one, but if your voice comes down, then it is a descending or falling intonation. Now, suggest the type of intonation in each of the three sentences.

3.2 Intonation in French

A good French pronunciation requires mastery of several elements as has been underlined in the previous units. Intonation is a major element of pronunciation in French language. In French, as in other languages, Intonation refers to the varying pitch levels of speech often referred to as the “melody” of a language, intonation is associated with certain sentence types: declarative, exclamative, imperative and interrogative (questions). In French, rising intonation is called intonation montante, while the falling intonation is called intonation descendante.

Declarative intonation:

- Short declarative sentences typically have a falling intonation.
Je mange du riz Nous allons à l'école Il est Nigérian Maman viendra demain.
- Longer declarative sentences often have a rise then a fall intonation
S'il pleut, je ne sortirai pas Les animaux dans la forêt sont sauvages Le vice-chancelier de l'université est une femme J'étudie le Français a l'Université Convenant.

Exclamative intonation

- Exclamative intonation is marked by a sharp fall in pitch:
Quelle bonne idée! Oh la la! Comme elle est belle !
Quel mauvais sort !

Imperative intonation

- Imperative intonation is similar to exclamative intonation - that is, a sharp fall at the end.

Donnez-moi de l'argent Ouvre la porte Allons à la maison Viens ici
Interrogative intonation A/ Yes/No (oui ou non) questions are marked by a sharp rise of intonation at the final syllable Vous êtes

Nigérian?

Est-il le président de l'association? Est-ce qu'il est étudiant ?
Tu prends de la bière ?

B/ Information questions begins with a intonation on the question word (où, pourquoi, comment, quand, qu'est-ce que, quel, etc) and then gradually fall.

Comment vous appelez-vous ? Quand est-ce que tu es arrivé ? Qu'est-ce que vous-voulez ? Où se trouve le Togo?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what intonation is about in French and how it is used in different situations. The more you understand and practice it, the better your oral expression in that language.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been taught French intonation as it applies to different sentence patterns. You have learnt that French intonation is generally the same as what is obtained in other languages. Remember that a falling intonation is characteristic of declarative sentences, while a rising intonation characterises interrogative sentences. As it is often said, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. So, do not relent in your efforts to practice these intonation patterns anytime you express yourself in French.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is intonation?
2. What are the characteristics of French intonation?
3. Apply appropriate intonation patterns to each of the following sentences:
 - Je ne suis pas blanc.
 - Les étudiants étant partis, je pus me reposer un peu.
 - Que font-ils debout dans la cour de récréation?
 - Pourquoi n'es-tu pas venu(e) me voir?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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