

OBTF Length Semantics  
Oracle Banking Trade Finance  
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# 1. Introduction

Oracle Banking Trade Finance Solution supports multi-byte characters by means of setting session-level character length semantics during OBTF installation using the NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS parameter of Oracle Database. Most of the application code is written without explicit length semantics (BYTE or CHAR) and, hence, adapts to the session-level semantics during compilation at the time of OBTF installation.

## 1.1 Background

NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS parameter allows you to specify the length of a column datatype/PLSQL variable in terms of characters (CHAR) instead of the default BYTE. Typically, you would need this if you were to deal with (in PL/SQL code) and store data that contains multi-byte characters such as Japanese or Mandarin characters.

Oracle strongly recommends that you do not set NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS parameter on instance level (i.e. in the server parameter file) but only use it to alter session-level semantics as necessary. From MOS note 144808.1:

“Oracle advises to use explicit CHAR semantics in the SQL or PL/SQL syntax  
OR  
To make sure your application does an "ALTER SESSION SET NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS=CHAR;" when connecting if CHAR semantics is required but the semantic is not defined explicit in SQL.”

Based on this note and other available documentation for the parameter, we recommend an approach in the next section, which should be followed in sites where multi-byte character support is required.

**Note:**

SR with oracle mentioned below is feasible. (SR 3-16364463401)

## 1.2 Approach

In situations where PL/SQL code would interact with multi-byte character data and the same kind of data would be stored in Oracle Banking Trade Finance tables, follow below approach:

Please note the approach is suggested for 12c and above Database version only.

1. Complete the database installation and set up as per the Oracle Banking Trade Finance Database Best Practices for your Oracle Banking Trade Finance release.
2. Immediately after creating the Oracle Banking Trade Finance application user (schema), create a logon trigger as the SYS user to alter each new session so that the session-level length semantics are maintained as CHAR for the user at all times. For example, if the schema name were OBTF and the trigger was named “FCUSER\_LOGON”, the trigger would look like:

```
CREATE OR REPLACE TRIGGER SYS.FCUSER_LOGON
AFTER LOGON ON OBTF.SCHEMA
BEGIN
    EXECUTE IMMEDIATE 'alter session set nls_length_semantics=CHAR';
```

END;  
/

3. Proceed with the rest of the Oracle Banking Trade Finance installation as per the installation documents.

In situations where an operation results in Oracle Banking Trade Finance objects being invalidated, make sure the objects are re-compiled either:

1. By the Oracle Banking Trade Finance schema user using one of the following options:
  - a. Manually using ALTER... COMPILER statements
  - b. SYS.UTL\_RECOMP.RECOMP\_PARALLEL procedure
  - c. SYS.UTL\_RECOMP.RECOMP\_SERIAL procedure

Or,

2. By a user with appropriate privileges on SYS.UTL\_RECOMP package (such as the SYS user) **using one of the following options only**:
  - a. SYS.UTL\_RECOMP.RECOMP\_PARALLEL procedure
  - b. SYS.UTL\_RECOMP.RECOMP\_SERIAL procedure

Oracle Banking Trade Finance strongly advises against manually compiling Oracle Banking Trade Finance schema objects (using ALTER...COMPILER) as a non- Oracle Banking Trade Finance application user when length semantics of CHAR are being enforced. Such an attempt may change the NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS parameter setting of the PL/SQL objects to BYTE and this may result in runtime exceptions within the application, such as:

“ORA-06502- PL/SQL: numeric or value error: character string buffer too small”.

**Note:**

If the Oracle Banking Trade Finance schema is ever re-compiled using SYS.DBMS\_UTILITY.COMPILE\_SCHEMA in an environment that is using CHAR semantics, then it must be ensured that for the user executing the procedure, the session-level NLS\_LENGTH\_SEMANTICS parameter is set to CHAR. This is because while SYS.UTL\_RECOMP.x procedures re-use existing PL/SQL object settings, SYS.DBMS\_UTILITY.COMPILE\_SCHEMA compiles the objects with the NLS settings of the invoking user's session and may alter the PL/SQL object settings of the objects (including length semantics).



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