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### Method or approach - between didactics of the mother tongue and glottodidactics

As Maria Kwiatkowska-Ratajczak wrote a few years ago, "the basic question in the methodology is the question of how?, i.e., the question about the method"<sup>1</sup>. The researcher added at once that "the paradox is that until today Polish didactics did not develop a satisfactory / uniform classification of teaching methods"<sup>2</sup>. It is not comforting in this case that our discipline is not the only one in which complaints about methods, their systematization or ambiguity of names are heard in the didactic environment.

And although in many didactic studies concerning the mother tongue, at least a few classifications of teaching methods can be found, none of them gives a finite impression, and even - as Stanisław Bortnowski stated - "the division of teaching methods is a quadrant of circles, it will never achieve unambiguity in this matter, but everyone who wants to be an effective belfeman knowingly should recognize at least the scaffolding on which he stands"<sup>3</sup>. We are also as didacticians of the language, at least for teachers to designate signposts in the mosaic land of methods, ways, tricks, models and techniques. Mosaicism and uncertainty regarding the scope of methods hidden under different names badly influence the teachers' awareness and their effectiveness in interaction.

Among the Polonists, the didactics of literature deal better with the problem of own methods, in which methods of literary analysis of Karol Lausza appeared in the past, followed by Zenon Uryga's literary education methods, and finally the "logically subjugated" behaviour of Bożena Chrzęstowska, combining a relatively simple cognitive strategy of Wincenty Okoń (reaching for general didactics) with the Edward Balcerzan's poetic of reception. Nowadays, school methods of working with literature are developed by Anna Janus-Sitarz, proposing at the school activities referring to the methodology of hermeneutics, deconstruction and intertextuality<sup>4</sup>.

As Uryga argued, "the complexity and multidimensionality of the school of Polish language", on the one hand prevents the breakdown of a coherent and consistent training

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<sup>1</sup>M. Kwiatkowska-Ratajczak, *Metody*, [in:] *Innowacje i metody*, vol. 1, *W kręgu teorii i praktyki*, ed. M. Kwiatkowska-Ratajczak, Poznań 2011, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>3</sup> S. Bortnowski, *Kłopoty z klasyfikacją metod nauczania*, [in:] *Polonista w szkole. Podstawy kształcenia nauczyciela polonisty*, ed. A. Janus-Sitarz, Cracow 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. A. Janus-Sitarz, *Przyjemność i odpowiedzialność w lekturze*, Cracow 2009.

methods, and on the other hand, justifies the separate classification of methods aimed at literary and cultural education and those focused on forming language skills<sup>5</sup>, broad-based skills, sometimes they know about meta-

Although there is a proposal to classify Anna Dyduchowa's language skills, her concept, though consistent - does not cover all language education needs and remains alone between different classifications of general pedagogies and a set of activating ideas and "tricks" often referring to professional development courses<sup>6</sup>.

If you do not have your own concept, sometimes you can take advantage of the didactic achievements of other disciplines, especially those where the field of interest is teaching the language, and which due to the specificity of your own research have refined methodical classification, or at least set a path to it. Undoubtedly, this discipline is glottodidactics, which, due to the international specificity, modifies the methods in many ways, and the European Union's language policy also influences the research (as evidenced by the provisions of the *European Language Description System*<sup>7</sup>). It is worth taking a look at the achievements of this discipline, if only because the mother tongue is currently being taught under different conditions that the Polish teacher must take into account. He has or may have experiences with children coming back from emigration, for whom Polish is not the first language. Today, the teacher teaches young people immersed in an intercultural context, and sometimes he goes to teach in Polish schools abroad. Orientation in the methodological achievements of glottodidactics may, therefore, shed new light on the mother tongue education, and may even contribute to setting landmarks on the methodical map.

As has already been said, classifications of Polish language methods often refer to pedagogical divisions. It is not my intention to present their descriptions, because brief references to the findings of Bogdan Nawroczyński (1961), Czesław Kupisiewicz (1978) or Wincenty Okon (1971) can be found in many texts, including in the work of Stanisław Bortnowski<sup>8</sup>. Thus, Polish philologists differentiate individual methods with pedagogues, referring to the way students achieve knowledge or **strategies they take** (learning, discovering, experiencing, acting). Polish language didactics use the term "method" (with Greek *methodos*, meaning 'the way to the goal', the 'test' method<sup>9</sup>) and pay attention to the fundamental way to understand the method. On the teacher's side, the direction of conscious, planned and assuming the repeatability of the factor system on subsequent topics is important<sup>10</sup>. However, this concept is ambiguous, in Polish didactics most often understood **narrowly - as a way of guiding the students' work** during the lesson (i.e., as the organization of the nature of the processes taking place in the lesson so as to achieve the assumed goal). In this case, the main focus is on **how to organize learning**. The aspect of learning and improving the language falls in the didactics of the mother tongue in the goals sphere.

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Uryga, *Godziny polskiego. Z zagadnień kształcenia literackiego*, Warsaw-Cracow 1996, p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. S. Bortnowski, *Kłopoty z klasyfikacją metod...*

<sup>7</sup> Comp. European Council, *the European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*, Warsaw 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Comp. S. Bortnowski, *Kłopoty z klasyfikacją metod...*, p. 59-62.

<sup>9</sup> [encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/metoda;3940107.html](http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/metoda;3940107.html), DOA 05.01.2017.

<sup>10</sup> As Tadeusz Kotarbiński wrote: "this method differs from the way that the method is usually understood as a predetermined way to apply it in numerous and similar cases." And he goes on to say that "the method is inseparably connected with the concept of the plan, and this is the concept of the goal of action." T. Kotarbiński, *Próba zastosowania pewnych pojęć prakseologicznych do metodologii pracy naukowej*. Selected Writings, vol. 1, Warsaw 1957, p. 667.

Glottodidactics treat the method differently - often referred to as the approach. They capture it **broadly - as all activities** that also consider the components related to the **selection of material, its division and progression**, with emphasis on "**what to teach**" (objectives, themes, materials selection and progression)<sup>11</sup>. First of all, however, in the very approach of the method, the relationship between the language teaching method and the language theory itself is emphasized. The method in teaching a second foreign language (e.g. direct, audiolingual, natural or a communication approach that has been dominating for years), specifies students' activities only in the form of work techniques. It is theoretically associated with the approach (theory), organized by design and practically implemented in procedures and techniques. **The general idea** of the method is a concept for specification and **interconnection of theory and practice on three levels**: approach, design and teaching procedures. Such a concept is proposed in the glottodidactics of Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, based on the theory of an American researcher, a linguist used by Edward Anthony<sup>12</sup>.

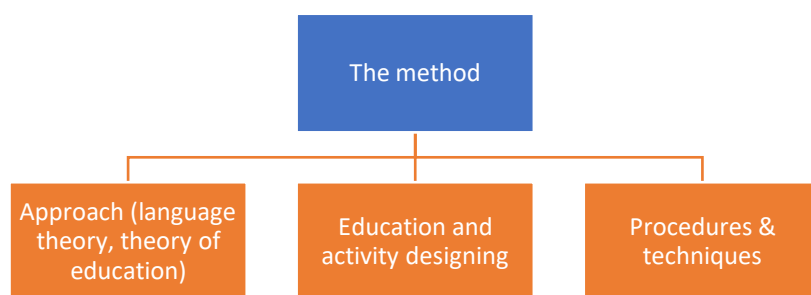


Diagram 1. The concept of the method (J. C. Richards and T. Rodgers<sup>13</sup>)

*The approach* in this frame includes a set of general assumptions, statements and beliefs pertaining to the language nature (its theory) and language training (theory of teaching and learning) derived from linguistic, psychological, pedagogical and sociological knowledge (see Diagram 1). In the next step, the rules of material organization (at the level of design / planning, concretization of the method) and the principles of teaching and learning (at the level of procedures and techniques) are defined. The value of the **approach** (theory) is proven by the **effectiveness of the design and techniques** involved in its implementation. "In addition to such a check, it is axiomatic in nature, which means that the statements made do not require any theoretical evidence - they must only be mutually consistent and consistent - should result from a specific theory of language and theory of teaching"<sup>14</sup>. Probably that is why none of the numerous "approaches" existing in glottodidactics dominated the teaching so far, and teachers, choosing from the various theories the most valuable - in their opinion - components, decide on a kind of eclecticism.

<sup>11</sup> Comp. M. Żylińska, *Postkomunikatywna dydaktyka języków obcych w dobie technologii informacyjnych. Teoria i praktyka*, Warsaw 2010, p. 32-33.

<sup>12</sup> Comp. J.C. Richards, T. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Compare *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> T. Krzeszowski, *Podejścia, metody, techniki*, [in:] T. Piskorska, T. Krzeszowski, B. Marek, *Uczeń z dysfunkcją wzroku na lekcji języka angielskiego. Wskazówki metodyczne dla nauczycieli*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2008, p.9.

**The method** - in the glottodidactic approach - is always based on a specific approach and concerns planning / organizing the pupils' education and activity. However, not always those who use the method are aware that they implement certain theoretical assumptions in practice<sup>15</sup>.

Quite commonly, the approach is treated as superior, broader in relation to the method. It seems that this is not the case - the approach is assumed for glottodidactics to be **the basis for methodological activities, justification for the use of a particular method**<sup>16</sup>, and thus contributing to it or concretizing - at the level of education design - components and subcomponents, such as:

- general and specific objectives,
- teaching content (model syllabus),
- types of activity in education (teaching and learning),
- the student's role,
- teacher's role,
- teaching aid function.

The language theory and theory of education have undoubtedly influenced the individual components of the method - learning planning or specific activities of students and teachers, and their effectiveness, but they do not include methods<sup>17</sup>. Thus, the approach is a basic theoretical assumption (in a specific theory of language and theory of education), and the method - planning of education and a real strategy organizing the activities of a teacher and a student<sup>18</sup>.

**Techniques**, in turn, are what actually functions in the classroom, which is the **implementation of the method** and what refers to specific activities of the teacher and the student. These are tools used to achieve the expected result, a resource - some are considered to be specific to one method, and others can be used for many. The scope of procedures<sup>19</sup> and techniques as indicated by Richards and Rodgers, includes:

- practical and linguistic activities while using the method;
- time, space and tools used by the teacher;
- models of interaction between students;
- tactics and strategies of teachers and students when applying the method.

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<sup>15</sup> The need to base the design of language teaching on his theory is indicated in Polish didactics by Marta Szymańska. Compare with M. Szymańska, *Między nauką o języku a rozwijaniem języka. Koncepcje kształcenia językowego na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Cracow 2016.

<sup>16</sup> I was also convinced by the discussion during the XVII Autumn School of Polish Literature and Language Didactics in Cracow (October 21, 2016), when professor Jadwiga Kowalikowa stated that the approach (broader) includes the method and justification for its use. In my opinion, there is no contradiction in considering the approach as a starting point contributing to the selection of a specific plan / design of education and absorbed by this fact in the method concept. The discussion was also attended by: Zenon Uryga, Zofia Budrewicz, Jolanta Nocoń, Agnieszka Rypel and Ewa Ogłóza.

<sup>17</sup> Compare also the lexical significance of the lexical approach suggesting approximation, reference to ..., the following (to the method): 2. Approach is a road or a construction **that is going somewhere**. " [...] 3. Our approach to some matters is **the way in which we treat these issues or our attitude towards them**. " And further: "approach [...] 1. If someone **approached** a person, **thing or place, he would come closer to them**." Another Polish language dictionary, vol. 2, ed. M. Bańko, Warsaw 2000, p. 115. Selection - B.N.S.

<sup>18</sup> The confusion in terminology - also in glottodidactics - comes from the fact that in practice the approach, method and techniques interpenetrate and are inseparable. It is also misleading to use the terms approach and method interchangeably (as evidenced by numerous glottodidact classifications).

<sup>19</sup> Understood as sequences of techniques.

Appropriate teaching takes place at this level and "includes not only the teaching and learning procedures, but also all technical measures, sensory aids (mostly audiovisual) and supplementary materials"<sup>20</sup>. Techniques can be: tasks, activities, exercises, behaviors, strategy. At the basis of their selection lie - as in the case of educational planning - the theoretical assumptions of the chosen approach (chosen theory of language and theory of education). This can be well illustrated by an example of choosing mistakes correction techniques:

- The teacher often rewords the student when they complete the task correctly (the audiolingual method).
- When a student makes a mistake (e.g. in pronunciation), the teacher repeats the word correctly (the method of reacting with the whole body).
- The teacher does not reword or criticize the student so that the language learner relies on himself (silentway).
- If this does not interfere with communication, the teacher does not care about the student's mistake (natural method).

In a glottodidactic practice, competing theories are the basis for various recommendations and guidelines addressed to teachers, persuaded to the specific theory of language and its teaching. For example, the audiolinguistic and communicative approach is often contrasted as two different ways of teaching grammar - with the conscious, deductive assimilation of rules (in the audiolinguistic approach), and with the assimilation of unconscious, induced context (in the communication approach).

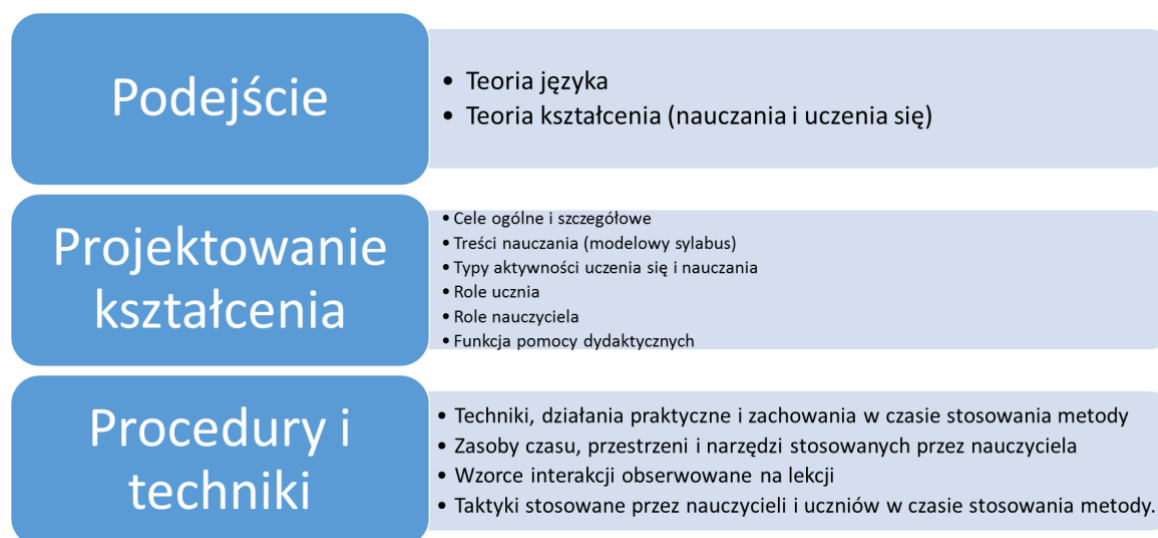


Diagram 2. Subcomponents of the method in a glottodidactic approach

A list of subcomponents concretizing the method at the level of language teaching planning shows (see diagram 2) that the glottodidactic approach of the method resembles a model of education: it covers a number of components considered in Polish didactics at the level of lesson planning. Submission of their method, as well as the approach related to the language theory and the theory of learning and teaching could serve to organize the Polish language formation methods. Separation of the level of design in the method and further -

<sup>20</sup> T. Krzeszowski, *Podejścia, metody, techniki...*, p. 10.

integration of goals and teaching content with it seems to be a good basis for precise ordering of sets of specific techniques related to linguistic planes as content components.

Discernment in glottodidactic methods is also beneficial for a better orientation among the multiplicity and chaos of methodological terminology. There are more and more often appearing foreign-sounding names presenting new methods in Polish didactic works (e.g., recently popular Content and Language Integrated Learning). Then even fragmentary knowledge about methods, approaches or glottodidactic techniques, their mutual relations, can become a part of the didactic consciousness allowing for a kind of "translation" - translating the label, name, explanation with an indication that the method, the way to the goal is the same, that they are in these two "resources" - both polonistic and glottodidactic common spaces, and next - there are places omitted, allowing for the addition, integration or mutual complementation of methods and techniques used in the didactic process<sup>21</sup>. We do not always talk about the same phenomena in the same way.

Observation on the proximity of two methods may serve as an example. The first of them is fashionable in recent years in glottodidactics - an approach known on the Polish ground as **task-oriented**<sup>22</sup>. This is a relatively new method - presented as the effect of developing a communication approach. In turn, the second of them is a **method of the project**, for many years eagerly used in the teaching of the Polish language. In the case of both methods, it is an action-oriented approach, which is undoubtedly a supreme concept, representing the idea of language teaching through the implementation of social activities. According to Iwona Janowska, "a task-based approach is an expression of a teaching/learning philosophy, the elements of which we perceive in a task-based approach, an approach focused on competences and on **the method of projects**"<sup>23</sup>. In both methods, **language activities** seem to be key, the pursuit of which is an essential goal of language education. As defined in relation to the task-based approach, "Both learners and language users are perceived primarily as active" social units "<sup>24</sup>, and actions / tasks are understood in the method as:

any intentional action, considered necessary to solve a problem, fulfil an obligation or accomplish a goal; this definition covers a whole range of activities, such as: [...] writing a book, obtaining certain conditions by negotiation, playing cards, ordering a meal in a restaurant, translating a text from a foreign language or preparing a school newspaper by a group of students<sup>25</sup>.

However, in Polish didactic studies, they were called on the one hand **tasks** (task approach) and on the other - projects (project method). Already, at the level of considerations regarding didactics, there is no common denominator in the form of a name or additional explanation. This contributes to the unnecessary competition of methods with each other and the multiplication of nomenclature in classifications, although these methods can be considered, if not identical, very close - with minor differences at the level of techniques. Both methods should therefore complement each other in the process of language education.

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<sup>21</sup> An example of the perfect use of glottodidactics (communication approach) in improving the efficiency of the Polish language is an Agnieszka Rypel monograph, *Nauczanie komunikacyjne w kształceniu uczniowskich wypowiedzi pisemnych. Problemy, badania eksperymentalne, implikacje dydaktyczne*, Bydgoszcz 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Comp. I. Janowska, *Podjęcie zadaniowe do nauczania i uczenia się języków obcych. Na przykładzie języka polskiego jako obcego*, Cracow 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 80 [distinction - B.N.S.].

<sup>24</sup> European Council, *Europejski system opisu...*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

It is worth taking a closer look at the less-popular **task approach** in didactics<sup>26</sup>. All tasks / activities that appear in this method at the technician level combine a set of features that sets them apart from the usual exercises. The most important of them can be recalled, reaching to the numerous definitions of an effective task proposed by glottodidactics. Its first important feature is the focus of the learners' attention on the content of the speech. A good task allows the student to focus primarily on what he would like to say, and only secondly to him are the requirements regarding the correctness of language forms. A properly designed task also encourages you to find a solution placed in the problem situation task, which also requires: expressing your own opinion, exchanging information or drawing conclusions based on the received materials. During the activity, learners should "rely primarily on their own language capabilities<sup>27</sup>". In this way, activities are to foster the development of creativity and independence of students, preparing them to deal with the events they encounter in everyday life.

Each activity / task must also have a clearly defined goal to which learners are pursuing with the use of a learned language, which, according to glottodidactics, becomes a tool in the task, not a "goal in itself<sup>28</sup>". Therefore, the exercise of selected words and phrases, consisting of their mechanical repetition, cannot be the goal of action. Another important feature is the communication efficiency of each task used in the method, and its specific result, also called the "result", becomes the basis for the assessment of its implementation. A good task will also be interesting in its content and will involve the learners in its implementation. Therefore, it is recommended to use authentic materials as teaching aids, as well as materials used by students themselves. An original task can contribute in the final result to extending the student's knowledge and communication success outside the school classroom, motivating him to act both during classes and at work at home.

We can find similar features in the description of the advantages of **the project method**:

The use of the project method in teaching is also supported by the fact that it puts the student's needs and experience first, creates the opportunity to confront the knowledge acquired in the lesson with reality, connects the school world with reality, gives the opportunity to learn through action<sup>29</sup>.

The author of the quoted study, Małgorzata Niemieć-Knaś, treats the projects broadly, using the concepts of a **task** and a **task project**<sup>30</sup>. In turn, in the basic, on the basis of Polish glottodidactics, a study on the task-based approach emerges thoughts on "teaching and

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<sup>26</sup> As Władysław Miodunka points out, the name of this method, resulting from the error of a translator of a document prepared by the European Council, should be the method of action. Comparison of W. Miodunka, *Podejście zorientowane na działanie w nauczaniu języków obcych: od (małych) zadań do (dużych) projektów*, „Języki Obce w Szkole” 2013, no. 2, p. 80-85.

<sup>27</sup> R. Ellis, *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy*. Wiley-Blackwell 2012, p. 198.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> M. Niemieć-Knaś, *Metoda projektów w nauczaniu języków obcych*, Cracow 2011, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> By the concept of the project the author understands almost all forms of student work: from working with the text, through grammar lessons, to theatrical performances, and as project tasks: small projects, project work with text, creative writing, creative speaking, grammar lessons understood as a project, problem-oriented projects, projects aimed at developing intercultural competence (further divided into: projects - conducting interviews, meeting with the native speaker of the target language and youth exchange understood as an intercultural project). According to the author, small projects are: language games and games, design tasks contributing to the development of receptive skills (e.g., understanding the text being listened, broadcast by school radio) and productive (eg conversations in the target language with a native speaker). Ibid, p. 63-93.

learning based on **cooperation**<sup>31</sup>, and possible team works include **projects implementation**. Its author, Iwona Janowska, also mentions that "an example of a comprehensive and long-term task is a **pedagogical project**<sup>32</sup>". In the descriptions of both methods you can see many convergent places, similar thoughts, using the same terms, and yet the lack of full reflection indicating analogies and tangency<sup>33</sup>.

This simplified comparison of the task-based approach and project method shows already that with the methodical unconscious of a teacher, there are two differently named methods next to each other without understanding that tasks and projects are two interrelated ways, two language teaching methods based on a targeted targeting approach<sup>34</sup>.

There is no doubt that among the methods / approaches / techniques, many names will appear denoting the approaches based on the same theory (language, education) or similar plan and procedures. Do they not belong to the action-oriented (task-oriented) methods described as the new Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method or the language skills training method that has been working for 80 years? In the reflection of didactic language education, it is necessary to understand that different approaches / methods of language teaching: native, foreign do not compete with each other or are not mutually exclusive, because they are ways to put into practice an overarching theoretical approach (as in the case of a student-oriented approach - leading to language improvement). In order to consolidate this awareness, it is worth considering a new classification of mother tongue education methods based on other foundations.

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<sup>31</sup>I. Janowska, *Podejście zadaniowe...*, p. 154-167. Distinction – B.N.S.

<sup>32</sup>Ibidem

<sup>33</sup> Although Iwona Janowska notes: "The model of teaching / learning approaching the task-based approach is widely known and has long been used (not only in foreign language teaching)" project method ", which opens wide opportunities in language education ..." Ibid, p. 156.

<sup>34</sup> Władysław Miodunka paid attention to the relationship of both methods. Comp. W. Miodunka, *Podejście zorientowane na działanie...*



Uryga U, *Godziny polskiego. Z zagadnień kształcenia literackiego*, Warsaw-Cracow 1996.

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