

- 17-** Lowis, E.G., (1972),  
 MULTILINGUALISM IN THE  
 SOVIET UNION: ASPECTS OF  
 LANGUAGE POLICY AND ITS  
 IMPLEMENTATION, MOUTON.
- 18-** Lucas, T & A.Katz, Reframing the  
 Debate: The Role of Native  
 Languages in English- only Programs  
 for Language minority students,  
 TESOL QUARTERLY, vol.28,  
 No.3, Autumn 1994.
- 19-** Pease- Alvarez & A.Winsler, "Cuando  
 el Maestor No Habla Espanol:  
 Children's Bilingual language practices  
 in the classroom, TESOL  
 QUARTERLY ,vol. 28, No.3,  
 Autumn 1994.
- 20-** Peyton, J.K., etal. "Implementing  
 Writing Workshop With ESOL  
 Students: Visions and Realities",  
 TESOL QUARTERLY , vol.28,  
 No.3, Autumn 1994.
- Stern, H.H. (1991) ,
- FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF  
 LANGUAGE TEACHING , oxford:  
 O.U.P.
- 21-** Stubbs, M. (1958). THE OTHER  
 LANGUAGES OF ENGLISH :  
 Routbdege & Kegan paul.
- 22-** Ulrich- Atena, E. " National linguistic  
 minorities: bilingual basic education  
 in slovenia ", in  
 PROSPECTS,QUARTERLY  
 REVIEW OF EDUCATION,  
 UNESCO, vol.6, No.3, pp. 430- 438.  
 U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL  
 RIGHTS CLEARINGHOUSE  
 PUBLICATIONS, " A better chance  
 to learn: bilingual- bicultural  
 education" No. 51, May 1975.
- 23-** Wiley, T.G., "Discussion of Klassen &  
 Burnaby and Mckay & Weinstein-  
 Shr: Beyond Assimilatianist Literacy  
 Polices and Pratices, TESOL  
 QUARTERLY, vol. 27, No.3,  
 Autumm 1993.

- 8-**Faltis C. & S. Hudelson, " Learning English as an Additional language in K- 12 schools " , TESOL QUARTERLY , vol. 28, No. 3 , Autumn 1994.
- 9-** Fishman, J.A.,& J.Lovas, (1972), "Bilingual Education in a Sociolinguistic Perspective", in B. Spolsky (ED.), THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION OF MINORITY CHILDREN , (pp.83-92).
- 10-** Gaarder, A.B. (1972)"Bilingualism and Education" in B.Spolsky (ED.), THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION OF MINORITY CHILDREN , (pp.83-92).
- 11-** Harklan, L. "ESL Versus Mainstream Classes: contrasting L2 Learning Environments", TESOL QUARTERLY , vol.28, No.2, summer, 1994.
- 12-** Houis, M. "The problem of the choice of language in Africa". In PROSPECTS, QUARTERLY REVIEW OF EDUCATION, UNESCO , vol.6, No,3,1976, pp. 393-405.
- 13-** Lambert, R.D. & B.T. Freed ( eds ) ( 1982 ). THE LOSS OF LANGUAGE SKILLS. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- 14-** Lightbown, P.& N. SPada, "An Innonative program for primary ESL Students in Quebec," TESOL QUARTERLY , vol.28, No.3, Autumm 1994.
- 15-** Lambert, W.E. & D. Taylor, "Language in the lives of Ethnic Minorities: Cuban American Families in Miami, "APPLIED LINGUISTICS, vol.17, No.4,Dec. 1996.
- 16-** Lambert, W.E & D.M.Taylor (1990). COPING WITH ETHNIC & RACIAL DIVERSITY IN URBAN AMERICA. ny: Praeger.

primary school. Rather, if the policies of governments call for it, the introduction and or transition to the lingua franca should be gradual.

### References:

1- Auerbach, E.R. "Reexamining English only in the ESL calssroom", TESOL QUARTERLY vol. 27, No 1. spring 1993.

2- Charis, C.P., "Problem of Bilingualism in Modern Greek Education", in COMPARATIVE EDUCATION REVIEW , vol.2, No.2., 1976, pp. 216-19.

3- Churchill , S. , " National linguistic minorites: The Franco- Ontarian educational renaissanc", in PROSPECTS , QUARTERLY REVIEW OF EDUCATION , UNESCO , pp . 439 - 449.

4- Crystal, D. ( 1992 ) , AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES , cornwall: Blackwell.

5- Desheriyev, Y., & V.Y. Mikalchenko, "A case in point: The Soviet experience with languages", in PROSPECTS, QUARTERLY REVIEW OF EDUCATION, UNESCO , vol. 6, No.3, 1976, pp.388-392.

6- Di pietro, R.J., "Language Rights and the English Language in the United States" [Review of the Question of an official language: language Rights and the English language Amendment]. WORLD ENGLISHES , vol.7, No 1, 1988, 81-83.

7- Dorian, N.C.(1982). "Language loss and maintenance in language contact situations" in R.D. Lambert & B.T. Freed (eds.) (1982). THE LOSS OF LANGUAGE SKILLS . Rowley, Ma: Newbury House.

teaching reading and writing, and in addition, some of the subjects are also taught in MT. The L2 is dealt with as a separate subject and also is used to teach the subjects which lack material in MT. Solution 3; is the final and the principal aim of the whole program. Indeed in ideal situations , education should start from this very stage. That is to say that, provision for solutions 1 & 2, depends on the fact that there is a shortage of educational resources.

Consequently as soon as these barriers are removed, solutions 1 & 2 can be discarded with; because unless we do this, the children will still have the problem of building upon a language which is not their own MT. At this stage, MT is used not only for teaching reading and writing, and as a separate subject per se, but also it is used as the only medium of all instruction in school. The lingua franca at this stage is treated only as a subject in the curriculum

and has the status of a L2 and nothing more.

The above mentioned solutions seem to be at least one of the feasible ways of educating LMs in their MTs. As it is implied, these solutions are mainly intended for primary school, however they can be extended to secondary or even tertiary education, too. The difference between the primary education and the rest, would lie in the fact that as children pass the primary stage and develop a competency in their MT, more time and effort can be allocated to the teaching of the lingua franca. This is because, as the studies repeatedly suggest, the crucial stage in regards to education in MT, is the primary school. The extent of education in the lingua franca in secondary and tertiary school will depend on the educational policies of each country. But under no circumstances should the instruction in MT be immediately interrupted after the

these changes.

Another significant characteristic of a feasible language policy is that it should be introduced, gradually and each step should build upon the previous one.

Still another feature of any feasible educational policy should be that, it must be regarded and treated as a matter of public interest and responsibility. The Franco-Ontarian case overtly manifests the significance of this fact, because if it was not for the provincial authorities' willingness and the favorable public attitude, in addition to the Federal governments' encouragement, it would have never worked out. In developing countries the situation is very grave, because here, a relatively small minority are expected to guide the masses; therefore the implications of their decisions and especially the responsibility of their policies' outcome, lies solely with these state elites. Indeed, it is in these states that

usually the logic of the state tends to overcome the logic of the populace and especially that of socialization. On the whole in order to ensure the gradual transition from education in a L2 to education in MT, the following solutions seem to be the most feasible:

Solution 1; applies to situations, where educational materials in MT are not yet ready for all subjects. Here the MT of LMs can be used as a medium of instruction only for reading and writing. The L2 will be used not only as a separate discipline by itself, but also it will serve as the medium of instruction in all areas where material in MT is lacking. This solution would constitute the first step in transition from education in L2 to MT.

Solution 2; builds upon the previous one and differs from it, in that at this stage educational material in Mt exist only for certain subjects, but not all. At this stage as in the previous one, MT is used for

hand, Switzerland and Finland, despite the existence of different languages, remain in relative harmony (cited in Di Pietro, 1988). In general, however, the fact remains that even linguistically diverse countries such as India have witnessed the positive values of promoting different languages for national unity (Wiley, 1993: 428).

The solutions looked at from another dimension, will vary from a complete freedom for LMs to complete uniformity, justified in the name of national interest. However, according to Lucas & Katz (1994) the use of MT in education need not be an all- or nothing phenomena. Whatever stand is taken, it can not be denied that the official standard languages usually play a significant role after schooling of children. That is to say that, although allowances can be made for the use of MT in primary and even at secondary school, usually when LMs after their graduation seek to find a job, they

might encounter problems, if they have not developed an efficient proficiency of the lingua franca of their society. This is exactly one of the reasons that the Ontarian solution stands a better chance of success, than other cases studied. Franco-Ontarian program not only had expanded the entire education system, at times including tertiary studies in order to allocate French minorities, but also they had:

- a) designated many Federal civil service jobs for bilinguals,
- b) planned to have administrative jobs only in French,
- c) started in job training of Federal employees in both languages, and
- d) extended all these opportunities to mass media like Canadian TV, etc.

All these significant steps have been taken, primarily because in addition to favorable public opinion, the political leaders have been sympathetic towards

the L2, and according to affective-psychological rational" learners may react more positively to the [standard official] language if they experience acceptance and valuing of the native language" (Faltis & Hudelson, 1994: 464). It is noteworthy that in regards to cognitive functioning, which is perhaps the most important justification for the inclusion of MTs, the findings of research suggest that " ... bilingualism, compared with monolingualism, offers children a number of cognitive advantages (Pease- Alvarez & Winslen, 1994: 508; see also Diaz, 1985; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985: Kessler & Quinn, 1980).

The investigation of all four sample cases clearly reveals that whatever solution and or solutions is adopted, the characteristic socio- economic, geographical, linguistic background, the state of language diversity, and in sum, all the factors of that context pertinent to the problem, must be taken into consideration.

This is not withstanding the fact that some have reservations about the role of language in social status. For example, Veltman believes that "... language statutes have little influence on social practice (cited in Di pietor, 1988:83). However, it can be said that there is no universal solution to the problem at hand; rather, every specific country needs its own special solutions, either by developing their own version or adapting other's experiences to their own society. Lucas & Katz (1994: 559) believe that decisions in regards to incorporating MTs into education" ... must be made within particular contexts, taking into account... the language abilities of educators and students, the number and variety of languages represented ... and the community resources available". For example, according to Beardsmore and Willemyns, Northern Ireland is a country where a common language has failed to promote unity and harmony. On the other

equal chance of education in their MT, during the elementary and secondary education. Despite the fact that the program has met with several hindering problems, it seems that Canadian solution is one of the most effective language policies so far examined.

The Canadian case, leads us to the final and the most important part of this paper, namely, what are some of the solutions and their special characteristics to the educational problems of LMs?

One could claim safely that nowadays almost all quarters agree that education in MT especially in primary schools has significant advantages over an education in a L2 or in a bilingual education of whatever characteristics. The importance of education in MT has more far reaching consequences than only in education per se. According to Lucas & Katz (1994: 537) "the use of the native language appears so compelling that it emerges even when

policies and assumptions mitigate against it". It inculcates in LMs a sense of self awareness and self esteem which undoubtedly has very healthy results. Furthermore, it is believed, by some, that education in MT also facilitates the development of a lingua franca, be it Russian, English, or whatever. (U.S. commission ..., 1975:138). The findings of recent research from different perspectives (Pease- Alvarez & Winsler, 1994; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Peyton et al., 1994) offer different rationals for including MT in education. For example the linguistic rational is that "native language facilitated L2 learning; it is beneficial to the individual to be bilingual". Cultural rational states that "ancestral languages should be retained and / or revitalized, and the schools may be part of this". Cognitive-academic rational runs as "learners may be assisted in their learning of content if they make use of the native language as well as

(cited in Di pietro, 1988: 82). At present several states have passed English- only laws. In general considering the day to day practices of education it can be concluded that in reality the development and maintenance of bilingualism is not regarded as the main objective. Most schools in the U.S. in order to adhere to the assimilation perspective "focus on the acquisition of English and assimilation into the mainstream curriculum" (Moll, 1992, cited in Pease- Alvarez & Winsler: 509)

On the whole it seems that despite the shortcomings which exist in the U.S. bilingual educational policy, the stated policies support the significance of MT in education. However, even more significant point to remember is that according to Di pietro(1988), because the U.S. constitution does not specifically mention any language as the official language of the country, therefore most probably the debate will continue for some time and at present it is

not exactly clear what the outcome will be.

The problem of LMs in Canada is not limited to Quebec, which has an exceptional background, and "the Official Languages Act of 1969 had enhanced the status of French vis- a -vis English in many sectors of public life" (Stern: 241). However, since the mid 1970 as a result of the enactment a legislation, French was made the only official language and nearly all children in Quebec, regardless of their MT, receive their primary and secondary education in French (Lightbown & Spada, 1994: 564). The problems of French LM in Ontario has also been more or less the same as in the other parts of the world. Franco- Ontarians prior to 1960's were restricted in their education in French, and consequently linguistic assimilation was abundant. However since 1960 with the initiative taken by the federal government bilingual schools were established. These bilingual schools offered French minority

who hold assimilationist views (favoring English-only) against those who hold cultural pluralist view (favoring inclusion of the native language"). In general, in addition to new immigrants, three minority groups: a) Mexican-Americans, b) the Puerto-Ricans, -both Spanish speakers, and c) American-Indians have been the focus of bilingual programs. But in view of the fact that speakers of some other dialects like American blacks have also faced the same educational problems, the issue in fact becomes more significant. The stated aim of the bilingual education in the U.S.A. is, the use of both English and MTs as mediums of instruction at school, in order to maintain and or develop linguistic and cultural diversity within the U.S.A., until L2 is learnt efficiently. Pease-Alvarez & Winsler (1994: 409) observe that the central goals underlying federal bilingual education legislation are to develop the English language and to help

language minority children make the transition to an English-only curriculum. It should also be mentioned that "a group called U.S. English has been advocating for a constitutional amendment to establish English as the official language of the U.S. through the English only movement" (Lucas & Katz, 1995: 458). One of the factors which still needs further clarification is that, how and to what extent and under what circumstances are the two languages employed to educate children? Another point noticed by Fishman and Lovas (1972:83), is that the American bilingual programs have not paid enough attention to societal factors. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that in the case of U.S., in addition to the federal bilingual education program, there is so much diversity in the legislation of different states that according to Marshall, it will be very hard, if not impossible "to implement one official-language policy across the entire nation"

state used to claim that all language minorities had the equal right to have education in their MTs. Consequently the state had decided that schools in Slovenia should have bilingual programs. In the course of the implementation of the program, some of the parents become dissatisfied with the program. The state had to order a committee to find the reason for the alleged failure of the program. Results of the research showed that not all children were capable of learning both languages with the same proficiency and therefore it was thought to be necessary to ensure that children get at least their primary education in their MT, because among other things, this would ensure the development of child's personality. Also it was realized that demographic, socio-economic factors has not been adequately recognized and appreciated. Therefore the state decided that during the first 5 years of education,

children should have a chance to receive about 75% of their education in their MT.

Here again as in the former Russian case, the statements of educational policies in regards to LMs sounded very humanistic; yet how much they managed to achieve, remains to be answered. Nevertheless, the fact can not be denied that the Slovenians had admitted that their bilingual programs ran into difficulty, because enough attention had not been paid to the role of MT in primary education.

In the U.S.A. the problem is less-critical than in the previous U.S.S.R. and it was only recently that the significance of the issue was recognized,- bilingual-bicultural programs were first developed in 1968, 1969.

However, according to Lucas & Katz (1994: 537)" the use of languages other than English in schooling is a subject of great controversy in the U.S., pitting those

Y. Desheriyev and V. Y. Mikhalchenko (1976), that the U.S.S.R. had no official language per se. According to the stated educational policies of the state, the national- Russian bilingualism, as the policy was referred to (Desheriyev & Mikhalchenko, 1976), had a dual aim of: a) encouraging the use of MTs and, b) emphasizing the special place of the Russian language as a medium of intra-national communication. In other words, MTs of different nations and the Russian language, were supposed to have a complementary status- whereas LMs were free to use their MTs domestically, in matters of national communication with other nations, the Russian language was used.

It might be safe to conclude that despite the fact that the Russian language was gaining ever increasing significance, due to socio- economic factors such as urbanization and or to direct policies of the

state to promote the supremacy of the Russian language, yet the major "non-Russian languages, in 1970, [were] still very strong, and claim[ed] a considerable degree of loyalty among the respective nationalities," (Lewis, 1972: 153). The question which arises is that whether the educational setting of these so called bilingual schools were strong enough to support and or boost the use of these MTs and consequently provide a scaffolding for further development or not? Without enough evidence it is hard to answer, yet as quoted above it can not be denied that Russians had recognized the significance of MT, especially and at least in primary schools and at least the major nations were benefitting from education in their MTs.

The other example from the previous communist block to be examined briefly is that of Slovenia- one of the federal units of the former Yugoslavia, where there was a Hungrain LM. Like the Russian case, the

Let us examine some of the steps that some of the countries had taken or are considering to take in order to overcome or at least minimize the problem.

Before the collapse of the U.S.S.R., there were about one hundred and thirty languages in that multi-national country, ranging from completely different to more or less similar languages. Prior to October 1917 Revolution, not only the majority of people were illiterate, but also almost all LMs were deprived of the right of education in their Mts. After the Revolution along with attempts to eradicate illiteracy, all different nations and their languages, by law, were granted equal rights, and in addition the significance of MT in education was stated and plans were made to educate major nationals in their own MTs. It was repeatedly claimed that, all major nations use their MT in primary, secondary and even in higher education as the medium of education. In multinational

areas with more than one major nation, the education at school was claimed to be conducted in several languages. In republics where there were more than one linguistic group, the language of education was the language of the majority of people living in that area. In few cases where the number of LMs was very insignificant, it was said that people have decided to be educated in the Russian language. It would be fair to say that it seemed that almost all major nationals got at least their primary education in their MTs. From then on, depending on the number of population of every nation, the Russian language and MTs were used side by side to differing degrees. That is to say that the bigger a nation was, it had more chance of using its MT as a medium of education and vice versa. Russian- the language of the largest nation enjoyed the special status of being the language of communication among all the nations, despite the claim made by

of their very basic belongings, i.e. their language & culture. The fact that in some countries these MTs have no place in education, gives rise to serious practical problems in schooling of these LMs. In extreme cases, where MTs are only used orally at home and society without ever being written or read, children face a very grave problem in their education. That is to say that, up to the age of 5/6, these children only communicate in their MTs; but upon going to school, they have to start their education in another language which, at times might be completely different from their own. Still in other words, at the stage when these children have not completely mastered their own MTs, not only they have to try to acquire new communication skills of reading and writing, but also a virtually new language. The gravity of the problem can be judged by the findings of research which show that it takes "4-10 years to approach grade level competence

in L2 academic skills" (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981, 1984, cited in Lucas & Katz 1994: 538). One of the obvious practical results of this situation is that, these LM children do not stand the same chance of success in their, at least, elementary education, as those whose mother tongue and the language of education is the same. This is because in their schooling these children's language backgrounds, both literally and psychologically speaking, is not made use of and consequently they are bound to feel confused. Therefore whenever possible and feasible, students should be both encouraged and allowed to use their primary language(s) for literacy (Faltis, 1993; Hudelson & Faltis, 1993). Furthermore, the findings of recent research indicate that proficiency in the MT is one of the best means of predicting L2 proficiency (Stanford Working Group, 1993, cited in Lucas & Katz).

loss. For instance Dorian (1982:47) believes that "Language loyalty persists as long as the economic and social circumstances are conducive to it, but if some other language proves to have greater value a shift to the other language begins". Yet, the fact is that these governments might fail to see that these restrictive educational policies might have reverse results to their projected objectives of national solidarity. Because as Wiley observes (1993:428) assimilation policies of the dominant ideology unnecessarily dichotomize the language situations. Therefore it is believed that some of the governmental educational policies, where allowances are made for the use of minority's MTs as well as the official language of a country, stand a better chance of success and consequently integration of these LMs to the mainstream way of life and thinking. At present an over whelming majority of

researchers believe that bilingualism not only is not a problem, rather it is an "individual and social enrichment" (Lambert & Taylor, 1996:479; see also Stubb 1985). That is to say that, eradication of a phenomenon like a language and or culture by forceful restrictive policies seems to be doubtful.

The other beneficiary or interested party of the dilemma are the people who speak these MTs. It should be mentioned at this point that, as modern linguistics repeatedly remind us, it is only due to socio- economic factors that these MTs have not gained the status of the official standard language of the country and nothing else. As it is well known, language is the most important component of a culture. Consequently, if the medium of education is the official standard language of country, making no allowances whatsoever for these MTs, these LMs naturally are bound to feel being stripped

that if children are permitted to learn in their MT, they will do better in their education and also in intelligence tests (also cf.c.p. Charis, 1976). Lucas, Henze & Donato (1990) believe that using student's MT in deucation enhances their learning because in this way they themselves are being valued (cited in Lucas & A. Katz, 1994). Generally speaking it seems that in essence there are two major beneficiaries or interested parties involved in the dilemma.

On the one hand generally the central governments, specially in developing countries tend to believe that, having one lingua franca will facilitate and or improve their national solidarity and unity. To be more exact "official policies & program practices are established through institutions controlled by dominant groups (Wiley, 1993:421). In other words according to Fairclough (1989, cited in Auerbach, 1993:34) authority & power are

manifested by institutional practices around language use." This means that these governments not only do not encourage different LMs to adhere to their MTs, fearing that this might encourage independence and autonomous claims, which might in turn endanger the national unity of country as a whole, but also to differing degrees, in different societal contexts, try to discourage and at extreme situations do not allow them to be educated in their MTs. This is not to suggest that these governments do not foresee the dangerous results that their centralized educational policies might have in endangering these MTs and their pertinent cultural heritages. Becasue as most researchers have observed, assimilation is the factor which most often explains language loss (Lambert & Taylor, 1996: 467; see also Lambert & Freed, 1982). Of course other factors have also been mentioned as regulating language

problem with their merits and shortcomings will be made in some detail. Finally, solutions which seem to be the most feasible will be suggested to overcome the afore mentioned problems.

The core of the problem very simply lies in the question that, in bilingual and or multilingual environments, which language and to what extent should be selected as the medium of education. A related consideration, will be the question of: who should make the final decision in this regard? linguists? politicians or sociologists? The problem is usually treated in sociolinguistics and is referred to as LANGUAGE PLANNING which is "a deliberate, systematic, and theory based attempt to solve the communication problems of community by studying its various languages or dialects, and developing an official LANGUAGE POLICY concerning their selection and use"; it is also sometimes called

LANGUAGE ENGINEERING or LANGUAGE TREATMENT" (Crystal, 1992: 241).

In terms of the "cycle of activities" (Stern, 1991:241) which make up language planning, the present article is limited to the selection stage. Obviously, in many countries, there is no need to be concerned with this problem, because decisions have long been made and are implemented. However, it is not inconceivable to suppose that there might be a need for shift of policy, especially in newly formed states, from monolingualism to bilingualism or even multilingualism, or vice versa. The selection of either the mother tongue (TM) or the second language (L2), has special consequences and significant implications not only to the education of children and people at large, but also, as some have suggested to the mental and conceptual development of the children. For instance, A.B.Gaarder (1972) argues

## گزینش زبان رسمی

دکتر اسماعیل فقیه

دانشگاه الزهرا "س"

### چکیده

مقاله حاضر به بررسی مشکلات آموزشی اقلیت‌های زبانی می‌پردازد. ابتدا تعریفی از مشکل مورد بحث و اجزا مؤلفه آن از دیدگاه جامعه‌شناسی زبان ارائه می‌شود و سپس راه کارهای برگزیده شده توسط چهار کشور مختلف مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار می‌گیرد. این بررسی روشن می‌کند که به زعم اغلب دست اندرکاران، بویژه متخصصان، آموزش و پرورش به زبان مادری نه تنها به آموزش و پرورش به زبانهای دیگر برتری دارد، بلکه منجر به افزایش اتحاد و همبستگی ملی نیز می‌گردد. همچنین روشن می‌شود که راه کار یکسانی برای تمام موارد وجود ندارد و در واقع، مناسب ترین راه کار با توجه به ویژگیهای خاص هر کشوری از لحاظ فرهنگی، اقتصادی، سیاسی، جغرافیایی و غیره اتخاذ خواهد شد. بخش پایانی مقاله با توجه به یافته های مورد پژوهی، به ارائه ۳ راه کار عملی مناسب می‌پردازد که امید است در برنامه ریزی زبان مورد توجه قرار گیرد.

### Selection of the official language

This paper deals with the educational problems of language minorities (LM) in

the context of different countries. An analysis of some of the steps taken by different countries to overcome this