Ferguson (1959: 240-41) suggested that diglossic situations may remain relatively stable for long periods. He implied that, in spite of this, there is an underlying imbalance in the relationship between the two language varieties which will, at some point, lead to the disappearance of the existing diglossia. The rate at which this change takes place may vary from one situation to another. It may, in some cases, last centuries or even millennia. Ferguson did not, however, provide any detailed proposals about the kinds of stages or steps through which a diglossic situation passes on its way to dissolution. This is one goal which, based on analysis of the ongoing situation in Jamaica, we will attempt to achieve in this paper.

In classic diglossia situations, one of the major differences in the functions of the two language varieties is that the High language is the normal language of writing. By contrast, the Low language is normally excluded from this domain. It is on this aspect of diglossia that we will focus.

Literates in diglossic situations may, for purposes of our analysis, be viewed as belonging to one of two categories. In reality, of course, the majority of such literates may be placed at some point on a continuum between these two extremes. The first type is made up of diglossic speakers who speak both the L and the H language. They speak the L language in private informal interactions, while they speak the H language in public formal domains, and
acquire literacy as an extension of the functions of this language. Members of this group usually constitute the elite within the society and have a strong vested interest in the maintenance of the diglossia. These literate bilingual/dialectal speakers are, without being conscious of it, in a quandary. In order to retain their monopoly over writing technology, they have got to restrict writing to only one of the languages which they control. Over time, they find themselves as a group unable to resist the natural pressure to extend the use of writing to the other language which they speak, the L-language. This may have the effect of subverting the diglossia and eliminating the privileges which they enjoy within it.

There is as well the second category of literates. These have relatively little everyday access to public formal domains within the society. As a result they gain very limited exposure to the H language through normal interaction. Their exposure to it comes through the process of acquiring literacy, since the H-language is the sole language variety through which literacy is taught and generally practised in the society.

Rudimentary literacy skills require no more than the recognition or production of individual lexical items in writing. In many diglossic situations, the H and L languages have similar lexicons. In such cases, non-speakers of the H language variety need very little of the H language in order to gain rudimentary literacy skills. Given the limitations of the situation in which most formal language teaching takes place, most members of this group are likely to end up with only limited levels of competence in the H-language variety. Although unconsciously, they are freeing the technology of writing from the limits imposed on it by the language variety in which they were taught that technology. Programmes of mass literacy and universal education in the H language will inevitably produce a mass of people with rudimentary literacy skills and limited competence in the H language. This will, in turn, lead to the development and expansion of the body of written L-language material as these persons attempt to exercise literacy independence of the H-language.

The Jamaican Case

The Jamaican diglossia involves English as the H-language and Jamaican Creole as the L-language. In diglossic situations such as this, L-language come, bit by bit, to invade the domain of writing, previously the domain of the H-language. Speakers employ one of two routes to expand the L-language. One route is taken consciously, the other unconsciously. Speakers can be divided into two groups depending on the route they are more likely to use.

The first group does not need Jamaican for use in ordinary everyday written communications such as notes, letters, public signs, etc. Their command of writing in English is quite adequate for these purposes. They, however, also use writing to create, maintain and spread ideas and cultural values. One specific function is producing literature, i.e., bodies of written work involving the creative use of language. The normal language of such literature would be the H-language. In much literature, however, a major goal is to represent the real world. Voices which speak within it, therefore, have to be made to sound the way they would in real life. As a result, in novels and other forms of creative writing, characters have to be represented using the L-language. This could either be because such characters in real life would be monolingual in the L-language or because in the situations in which they are supposed to be operating, use of the H-language would be inappropriate.

The bilingual/diglossic elite in Jamaica was and is steeped in the ideology of the literate tradition. According to this tradition, an established body of writing in a language variety is what confers on it the status of 'a language'. By the middle of the twentieth century, there had already been a slow infiltration of the use of writing from the High language to the Low. This had produced a body of literature in which Jamaican Creole was being used for social realism in the manner already discussed, a fact which caused some people, mainly members of the bilingual/diglossic elite in the first instance, to question the existing restricted role and status of Jamaican Creole.

Jamaican Creole first appeared in literature, not as a full-blown literary language but only to perform functions which English could not perform. This triggered the ambivalent response among the literate bilingual/diglossic group. Sections of this group began to develop a set of attitudes which represented a compromise between totally ignoring its existence and accepting it as an autonomous language. The view was that Jamaican should be regarded as a dialect of English which should be accorded the same respect and status as regional dialects in Britain such as Yorkshire, Scottish or Cockney. This view is clearly presented in a poem: 'Bams o' Killing' by Louise Bennett (1966: 218; 1982: 4-5). This poem which seems to have been written in the 1940s (Bennett 1982: 121), is directed against those who wish to kill the Jamaican vernacular. It argues that such persons have, in order to be consistent, to extend their concerns beyond the shores of Jamaica and
recommends that they should deal with Britain which has far more non-
standard dialects than does Jamaica. These would have to be destroyed before
the murder of Jamaican ‘dialect’ is committed. This view of Jamaican Creole
has become firmly established in those sections of the bilingual/diglossic elite
who view themselves as having a positive attitude to Jamaican. In fact, the
term ‘dialect’, adapted from its usage in England to describe nonstandard
dialects of English, is the term widely used for the language among the
educated sectors of the society.

Writing in Jamaican is also produced by the second category of literate
With them, however, it is not employed in the production of literature. Their
creative language use is predominantly oral. Within this group, systems for
producing and transmitting oral bodies of creative language are being main-
tained and constantly expanded. Oreature is, for them, performing the func-
tion which literature performs for the bilingual/diglossic elite group.

Writing as a technology offers this group a big advantage in a particularly
important activity, however. This is in the offering of goods and services for
sale. Unless the goods or services offered are directly visible to the public,
only two options exist for informing potential customers and attracting their
interest. One of these is oral, in the form of street crying and word-of-mouth
recommendation. The disadvantage is that someone has to be physically
present to call out or otherwise pass on the information to the potential
customer. This would be the only option in a society in which writing did not
exist. However, in Jamaica, writing does exist and public signs in English are
there for all to see. The monolingual or near monolingual mass of the
population is therefore aware of the option of using writing on public signs
in conspicuous places to advertise goods and services for sale. These persons,
therefore, employ writing widely for these purposes.

At the conscious level, members of the group do their best to conform to
the norms of writing in the High language, English. This is, after all, the only
language which they have been taught to write. It is, in addition, the only
language in the society which they consider possible to write. At the
unconscious level, however, technology transfer across language barriers is
taking place. This group, faced with their own limited command of the written
H language, produces writing in which, usually without realizing it, they use
the L language, Jamaican, to fill gaps in their knowledge of the H language,
English.

This can be seen in a sign appearing in Lee (1986: 30), a work which
presents photographs of public signs seen in Jamaica. The sign reads ‘WILKIE
GARAGE BEET’ OUT AND WELDING’. There is first a lexical gap which is being
filled. The term ‘BEET’OUT in the sign is the Jamaican Creole term referring
to the activity of beating out dents in the metal surfaces of motor vehicles.
At the morpho-syntactic level, one would expect ‘WILKIE’S GARAGE’. How-
ever, juxtaposition of the possessor before the possessed is the way in which
possession is signalled in Jamaican Creole. It is this in the sign which
substitutes for the English possessive morpheme. There is, however, a
peculiarity in the sign which has nothing to do with the linguistic differences
between English and Jamaican. This is the full stop between ‘BEET’ and ‘OUT’.
Except for ‘BEET’OUT, every word in the sign appears on a separate line.
The purpose of the full stop, therefore, is probably to indicate that these are
two separate words since the size of the lettering does not allow for a space
to mark off word boundary.

There are numerous items in English which have cognates in Jamaican.
When the sign writers are not sure of the phonological and orthographical
form in English, they often use the pronunciation of the Jamaican cognate as
the basis for writing the word. Thus, as presented in Lee (1986: 54), one sign
proclaims ‘RED HAT VULCHINISING DONE HERE’. Such a sign in English
would normally be written ‘Red hot vulcanizing done here’. The ‘HAT’ in the
sign represents the pronunciation of the Jamaican cognate /h/aud. Similarly,
‘VULCHINISING’ represents a different pronunciation from that associated
with the English cognate. In another sign, one advertising ‘Fresh Fish’ for
sale, two interesting items appear, ‘LA’STER’ and ‘SWIMPS’, representing
English ‘lobster’ and ‘shrimps’ (Lee 1986: 10). The Jamaican pronunciations
which these representations approximate are /læstə/ and /swɪmps/, respec-
tively. The conclusion that the representation of Jamaican pronunciation of
these items was entirely unconscious in this case is supported by another item
appearing on the same list. It is ‘SPROUT’, representing what in English
would be ‘sprout’. This is clearly a hypercorrection. English words with the
vowel /ou/ appear in Jamaican cognates with /au/, for example, English ‘hot’ vs
Jamaican Creole /həu/. The writer, when putting this item on the sign, worked
on the theory, inapplicable in this case, that when an item has /au/ in Jamaican,
the English cognate would have /ɔu/ represented orthographically by ‘o’.

The intrusion of Jamaican into public signs that are supposedly written in
English poses no difficulty to the potential readership. The vast majority of
potential readers are either bilingual/diglossic or are near monolingual in
Jamaican. As a result, literate persons in the community generally have
access to the linguistic information needed to make sense of these signs. In
addition, only the bilingual/diglossic minority are likely to notice that there
is anything even remotely not English about these signs. In addition, only the
bilingual/diglossic minority are likely to notice that there is anything even remotely not English about these signs.

There are thus two sources of writing in Jamaican Creole in the diglossic situation existing in Jamaica. One source is the bilingual/diglossic elite. The other is the monolingual or creole-dominant sectors of the population who have had some access to literacy instruction. The nature of the material produced by each of these processes is not the same, however. Writing in Jamaican Creole performs rather distinct functions for each of these groups. These complement each other and over time converge.

The point of convergence is seen in the use of public posters to advertise Dance Hall. The origin of the music played and performed at Dance Hall sessions goes back to the late 1960s when record producers began to make gramophone records on which the bass and rhythm sections of the music on the first side would appear on the second. Out of this there developed a tradition at parties of disc jockeys doing spoken improvisations using the music of the second side as background. Thus arose what has come to be known successively as dub, deejay and dance hall music. The topics covered by this music range from the political to the lowd, from the comical to the violent. Dance Hall has emerged as the major cultural expression of popular sentiment in modern day Jamaica.

Alongside the dominance of this music, there has grown up a tradition of large Dance Hall events, usually in the open air, where established and aspiring deejays perform to live audiences. The issue of how to advertise these events arose. It turned out that in a society where the majority of the population had at least rudimentary literacy skills, writing was the cheapest and most effective means of advertising Dance Hall, an oral event. This involved the production of a large number of cheaply produced posters which are stuck up on lamp posts, bus stands, walls in markets, and any other surface likely to be visible to many people.

In general, the organizers of Dance Hall events would be monolingual or near monolingual speakers of Jamaican Creole. One would expect, therefore, a considerable degree of unconscious writing of Jamaican Creole in these posters. Interestingly, however, this is not a general feature of them. Instead, what exists is a self-conscious and deliberate use of Jamaican Creole for a specific portion of each. A typical poster would read as follows: “Hi Party Fans! X as Y presents . . . Z . . . Date, Place, featuring A. Admission: Good Behaviour, Buy Out the Bar”. “X” would represent the name(s) of the organizer(s), “Y” their aliases or names by which they are more popularly known, “Z” the Jamaican Creole theme for the event, and “A” the names of the providers of music both live and recorded.

The titles or themes for such events which appear on posters are usually some Creole phrase or expression associated with Dance Hall culture. Some examples are (i) Slackness Bite the Dust, Culture Come First, “Lewdness bites the dust, culture comes first” (ii) A Love We A Deal Wed “It’s love with which we are dealing” and (iii) Come Again Gem “Do it again, won’t you”, a line from a Dance Hall piece by the deejay Tiger, entitled “Come Again”.

This type of explicit separation of language varieties in use is characteristic of the language behaviour of the bilingual/diglossic group. Such posters seem to be the result of collaboration between individual Dance Hall organizers and the printers. There is a reasonable chance that the latter, given their trade, would have language competence more typical of the bilingual/diglossic group. Even if they do not, the written English on these posters follows a standard pattern which is presumably simply copied from one poster to another. Organizers would, therefore, provide the basic information about who is performing, what sound system is playing, time and place. They would also provide or help decide on the title or theme for the poster.

The norms of the bilingual/diglossic group are rigidly adhered to in the language used in these posters. This is in spite of the fact that they are being produced for oral cultural events whose potential participants in the main do not belong to this group. Even though this might represent underlying evidence of the continued subtle control exercised by the elite language ideology over popular consciousness, there is also evidence pointing in the direction of popular resistance to this ideology. When one examines the size of the print used on the average poster, what is prominent is names, dates, places and the title/theme, with the last being the most prominent. The English text is written in very small print. This is understandable since it provides no important information which could not be deduced from the context and the material in large print. On the poster, as in the diglossic society at large, English is being employed as a largely ceremonial language, for symbolic purposes only.

This model of written language behaviour has not been restricted to advertising Dance Hall events. The University of the West Indies campus carnival, organized by students, has developed over the years into quite a popular event, attracting thousands of participants every year. Even with its wide popularity, the campus carnival following has been traditionally educated and middle class, i.e. the bilingual/diglossic elite. The holders of the event, university students, are either members of or are in the process of becoming members of this same group.
The advertisement for Carnival 1991 is worthy of some special analysis. The Guild of Undergraduates prepared a very glossy and colourful poster which was used to cover lamp posts and walls in prominent places both on the campus and around the city. A version of this poster was used as a newspaper advertisement. Its design was far more sophisticated and the finish far more expensive than that of the normal Dance Hall poster. In typical Dance Hall poster style, however, the event had a Jamaican Creole title theme, "Pan Canu Done "Endless Fun". The slogan was printed twice in the largest letters immediately above and below the carnival logo at the centre. The lettering was in a stylized form of the free hand lettering which appears on Dance Hall posters. In a different and slightly smaller stylized free hand lettering, appeared the information 'UWI Carnival 91 Feb 3-12'. The location of the event 'UWI Campus' appeared in large but standard printed letters. On the edges of the poster advertisement, at the top and bottom were the only other items in large size print, the frames of the commercial sponsors of the event. The detailed schedule of events appeared in very small standard printed letters.

There was one important giveaway, however. The spelling conventions used for Creole on normal Dance Hall posters are quite conservative. The producers and readers of these posters are linguistically insecure and are more likely to be thought of as unfamiliar with the conventions of written English. Not surprisingly, therefore, they play it safe. They retain English spellings even when the Creole equivalent is pronounced quite differently and this difference is crucial for the effect of the slogan. An example is the Creole pronunciation of the last word in each sentence would be dos and fos, making them rhyme. It is this pronunciation which was clearly intended even though the English spelling used suggests otherwise. On the University students' publicity, the decision to write "can" rather than the English cognate "can't" was born of greater linguistic security. Students are less likely to be regarded as unfamiliar with the writing conventions of English. They are free, therefore, to experiment with a spelling of the Creole form which more closely approximates pronunciation.

The Dance Hall poster style has penetrated the conventions of public signs even more profoundly. Even in cases not involving the advertisement of entertainment, the style is becoming established. Thus, even a handwritten poster for Saturday classes at a community college posted on a notice board in the University mimics the style. The central slogan, "Uhu come fast "You (plural) come quickly/fast" is in larger letters of a different colour from those on the rest of the poster. This, the only identifiable use of Creole in it, serves as an attention getter. It is also worth noting the use of spelling which deviates from English conventions. The other information on the poster simply gives details such as time, place, etc. What this use of Jamaican to promote formal educational activities suggests is that it is not simply a fad associated with the advertisement of entertainment. The Jamaican Creole central slogan is becoming part of the conventions for producing public signs in the country.

There is another area of convergence between the language practice of the two groups within the society. We have already pointed out the tendency of the bilingual diglossic elite to use creative bodies of written language as the focus of their cultural identity. The monolingual or near monolingual group, on the other hand, employs the creative use of oral language for this purpose. However, from the 1930s onwards, there developed in Jamaica a tradition of what may be called performance literature. Inspired by the oral tradition, many members of the former group produce creative material in Jamaican which they perform to audiences and which are published as gramophone records. A prime example of this was Louise Bennett who, inspired by the tradition of Aana stories and folk songs, produced a significant body of performance literature (Bennett 1966, 1979, 1982). The justification for referring to this material as 'literature' is that, in addition to her oral production, Bennett produced it in print in several collections. The producer of performance literature, as distinct from the traditional producer of oral bodies of work, intends to use writing as one of the media for disseminating the material.

Dub poetry is simply a more recent version of this phenomenon. It is inspired by Dance Hall or dub music. The dub poets also belong to the bilingual diglossic elite. Like the deejays, dub poets use musical accompaniment as a background against which to perform their lyrics. The difference is that the dub poets, in addition to live performances and the use of cassette tapes and gramophone records, do have print as one of their intended media.

The dub poets, in particular, are involved in experimentation with writing systems which would allow them to accurately represent on paper some of the features of their oral Jamaican Creole presentations (Morrison 1990: 22-24). In fact, one of the poets, Mutabaruka, is interested in having the introduction to one of his works written in the Cassidy writing system for Jamaican (Carolyn Cooper, personal communication). Here again, we see the strong influence of deejay and Dance Hall culture, entirely oral in nature, in expanding and developing the use of Jamaican in writing.
Convergence is not restricted to the bilingual/diglossic group adopting some of the practices of the monolingual or near monolingual group. Some influence is also being exerted in the opposite direction. Over language consciousness, a characteristic of the bilingual/diglossic elite who favour expanding the roles and functions of Jamaican, is generally absent from the monolingual or near monolingual section of the population. Some of this attitude has, however, rubbed off on this group. There is a sign on a concrete wall of one of a series of shops just outside the Papine market in Kingston which reads: \textit{NO PISS YA SO ‘Do not piss here’}. The shop is run either by Rastafari or people who have strong ties with Rastafari culture. Just above the sign are images of Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley and Haile Selassie, with their names written alongside, painted on to the concrete. The sign does not simply represent unconscious Jamaican Creole use creeping into writing. Any person who has had the minimal exposure to English necessary to acquire literacy in Jamaica would know that (i) ‘don’t’ is the appropriate English negator in a sentence such as this, the form \textit{duon} being widely used in many English-influenced varieties of Jamaican (ii) “here” is the appropriate English item corresponding to Jamaican \textit{ya so}. The choice of language used in the sign is therefore quite deliberate. One reason for selecting Jamaican Creole is shock effect. The writer wished to signal a certain seriousness, urgency and explicitness in the message, which he achieved by violating the established norms for written language in the society. The reader is much more likely to take such a message seriously and do as the sign asks.

**Conclusion**

The advanced industrial countries of the North either retain or are strengthening centralized state control. In those situations, centralized approaches to language planning and policy remain relevant. In Third World countries, particularly now in the post-Cold War era, the power and authority of the centralized state is rapidly contracting. The failure of the centralized state planning, very often modelled on those of Eastern Europe, has created a situation where foreign creditors are insisting on government ‘getting out of people’s faces’ and leaving the producers, i.e. private capital, to get on with business. The state in these countries has neither the moral authority, the political will, nor the economic resources to involve itself in even modest language planning and language reform.