J2 Investigation of Class Characteristics in English Handwriting of the Three Main Racial Groups — Chinese, Malay and Indian — in Singapore

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the class characteristics in English handwriting of Chinese, Malays, and Indians in Singapore.

There are lots of people who are proficient in one or more language other than English. This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by arousing the interest in the forensic community to investigate class characteristics of English handwriting made by different racial group, of which the findings might be useful in investigative work in law enforcement agencies.

The three racial groups, Chinese, Malays and Indians in Singapore learn their mother tongue as a second language: Chinese children learn Chinese, Malay learn romanised Malay in school and Arabic in mosque and at home, and Indians learn Tamil. As the letter or character formation of the second languages is different, the possibility of the presence of class characteristics in their English handwriting was investigated. 152 handwriting exemplars were collected and features such as letter designs, pen-lifts, word and letter spacing and embellishments were studied. A procedure, based on statistical methodology, on the determination of class characteristics in English handwriting of the three major racial groups has established. Six class characteristics were identified, and their habitual influence from writing in their own native language. The findings from our study could be useful in providing indications and investigative leads to the possible racial group of the writer of an unknown document.

Document Examination, Class Characteristics, Statistical Methodology