



Questioned Documents Section – 2008

J5 The Effect of Writing Speed on Handwriting in Turkish Alphabet

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand effect of writing relative speed on handwriting in Turkish Alphabet.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by enabling question documents examining effect of writing speed on hand- writing in Turkish Alphabet.

What is relative speed of writing? Does it mean the writer is writing at one mile per hour then increases his writing speed five miles per hour, etc.? No! Relative speed of writing is not a measurement of how fast the writer is writing at any given point in time. Rather, it is the result of an analysis of the psychological factors affecting handwriting. Relative speed of writing is important. While the absolute speed with which a person writes can vary significantly, the relative speed with which that writer writes remains uniform.

The relative speed of writing is one of its most important features; at the same time it is one of the hardest to assess accurately, being a matter of deduction from a number of clues, and of estimation, rather than being capable of specific measurement. Relative speed of writing is not a measurement of how fast or slow the writer is writing at any given point in time. Rather, it is the result of an analysis of the psychological factors affecting handwriting. The speed of writing is therefore dependent upon: the speed of mental imagery and nervous impulse, the tone and speed of muscular function. So, if the speed of writing can be deduced reliably from examination of the trail, we have arrived at an important assessment that gives us a reflection of the mental, nervous, emotional and physical activity of the writer.

The relative speed of writing is not easy to measure and interpret in the study of questioned documents. Yet in many forensic cases, the estimation of speed is of critical importance to solve a questioned document case. A common approach is to examine the place of dots for small letters "i" and "j" in a handwritten document as is the case in English alphabet. The Turkish language has the same dotted characters as well as small letters with dots, cedillas and umlauts like "ç, ğ, ö, ü, and ş." The purpose of this study is to determine whether diacritical marks in these letters can also be used to discern the speed of writing.

Sixty individuals (thirty male, thirty female) are asked to perform a fast handwriting test using same kind paper and pen. These persons wrote on the same position. They are asked to write a given text with Turkish diacritical marks slow and fast. In the handwritings, the speed is measured by determining how much each diacritical mark deviates from its proper location on the letter. In those documents with the text written slowly, all marks are found in their exact locations. In the fast written documents not all are seen in the same position and even some are omitted. It is also noted that they are written very close to the letters making them appear one single and elongated character. This suggests that these elongated letters can be used to estimate the speed of handwriting. The handwriting by females shows differences from that by males. Females are more careful and systematic in producing letters and adjusting the speed.

In conclusion, it seems clear that Turkish diacritical marks add certain advantages to the identification of a handwritten document. They help to determine the relative speed better than those languages with minimum number of marks on their letters.

Handwriting Examination, Relative Speed of Writing, Turkish Alphabet