

Examination Language Translation

In 1998, SMT performed our first examination translation in French for a Canadian client. Working with a translation firm, the examination questions were translated and entered into the SMT item banking system. The item banking system produced parallel French and English editions as new test forms were generated.

Over the course of new test form releases, candidates complained about some item meanings. Upon investigation, the translations of these items were found to be inadequate because the translation did not accurately meet the source English question. SMT developed a translation process that has resulted in accurate and reliable translation examinations. Today, SMT test developers working with Bilingual Subject Matter Expert (BSME) create examination specific Translation Rules designed to address linguistic/cultural differences and unique profession-specific vocabulary before initiating examination translation.

The Translation Rules are tested by having a BSME translate source questions into the foreign language, than a second BSME independently back-translates the questions to the original source language. SMT test developers compare the products of the two BSMEs to note differences. Rule adjustments are made as needed to avoid translation errors. Where a rule adjustment is insufficient to avoid translation error, a panel decision is made on how to translate that specific item as similar to the subject question. This process is successively repeated until a defined set of rules is established in order to begin the complete examination translation.

SMT has modified our item banking system to support the automatic assembly and production of examination editions in multiple languages. SMT has guided the development of parallel examinations in;

- French
- Korean
- Japanese
- Mandarin
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

SMT is currently working with the **National Peoples Republic of China** to provide English and Mandarin screen prompts and outputs of our item banking system.

As a result of our extensive translation experience, SMT is uniquely qualified as the premier test development company positioned to support international testing programs.