

# Practical MTPE Checklists for Real Workflows

## Mastering the Machine Without Losing the Human Pulse

The industry has shifted. Machine Translation (MT) is no longer a futuristic curiosity; it is a standard component of the modern linguistic supply chain. However, the biggest mistake a linguist in transition can make is treating MTPE like traditional editing. It isn't. If you approach a machine-generated draft with the same mindset you use for a human-translated text, you will work too slowly to be profitable or too superficially to be accurate.

To remain relevant, you must become a **Precision Editor**. You need a workflow that identifies machine "hallucinations" instantly while preserving the speed advantages that MT provides. This guide provides the practical, "boots-on-the-ground" checklists required to turn raw MT output into professional-grade content without losing your mind—or your margin.



## 1. The Three Levels of MTPE

Before you open a file, you and the client must agree on the "Pulse" of the project. Not every job requires the same level of intervention.

- **Light MTPE:** The goal is simply "understandability." You fix glaring errors and ensure no meaning is lost, but you don't worry about style or flow.
- **Full MTPE:** The goal is a high-quality, professional result. The final text must be grammatically correct, stylistically appropriate, and culturally relevant. It should read as if a human wrote it.
- **Strategic Transcreation (MT-Assisted):** The MT provides the "skeleton," but you rebuild the "body." This is for marketing and high-stakes creative content.

**The Workflow Shortcut:** Always define the level in your contract. If you are paid for Light MTPE but deliver Full MTPE style, you are leaking profit.

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## 2. Phase 1: The Pre-Flight Check

Never start editing the first sentence immediately. Machine translation errors are often systemic. If the engine gets a key term wrong in segment one, it will likely get it wrong in segment one hundred.

- [ ] **Global Terminology Scan:** Run a quick "Search and Replace" or use your CAT tool's QA feature to check if the MT has respected your client's glossary.
- [ ] **Tag Integrity:** Ensure the MT hasn't deleted or misplaced formatting tags (bold, links, placeholders). Machines are notorious for "eating" tags.
- [ ] **Non-Translatables:** Check names, brands, and codes. Did the machine accidentally translate "Apple" (the company) into "Manzana"?
- [ ] **Length Constraints:** If the text is for a UI or a button, check if the MT has exceeded character limits.



## 3. Phase 2: The "Linguistic Logic" Audit

Machines are masters of syntax but slaves to probability. They don't "understand" the text; they predict the next word. This leads to "fluency traps"—sentences that look perfect but say something completely wrong.

**The "Accuracy over Fluency" Checklist:**

- [ ] **The Negation Test:** Did the MT turn a "not" into a "yes"? Machines frequently flip the polarity of a sentence.
- [ ] **The Number Check:** Verify every date, currency, and measurement. A machine might flawlessly translate a sentence but change \$1,000 to \$10,000.

- [ ] **Pronoun Clarity:** In languages with gendered nouns, machines often lose track of which "it" or "they" refers to which object.
- [ ] **Logical Connectors:** Did the MT use "therefore" when the source implies "however"? Check the relationship between clauses.

#### 4. Phase 3: The Cultural & Stylistic Polish

This is where you earn your "Strategic Partner" status. This is the layer AI cannot reach because it requires empathy and an understanding of the target audience's current world.

##### The "Human Pulse" Checklist:

- [ ] **Idiom Reconstruction:** Machines translate idioms literally. "It's raining cats and dogs" becomes a biological disaster. Identify these and replace them with local equivalents.
- [ ] **Tone Consistency:** Machines often shift between formal and informal (Tu vs. Usted, or "You" vs. "One") within the same paragraph. Standardize the register.
- [ ] **Offensive/Sensitive Content:** AI has no "moral compass." Check for terms that might have become culturally insensitive or politically charged in the target region.
- [ ] **The "Reading Aloud" Test:** If a sentence feels "stiff" or "robotic," it usually is. Read it out loud. If you stumble, the reader will too.



#### 5. Avoiding the "Over-Editing" Trap

The greatest enemy of profitability in MTPE is the "Perfectionist Paradox." This is the urge to rewrite a sentence that is perfectly fine just because *you* would have phrased it differently.

In MTPE, if a sentence is **accurate, fluent, and stylistically correct**, leave it alone. Every unnecessary edit is a minute of your life you aren't getting paid for. Your value is in your **judgment**, not just your typing. Learn to recognize "good enough for the brief" and move on.

#### 6. The QA (Quality Assurance) Checklist

Before delivery, run these final checks to ensure your "Pulse" is visible throughout the document.

- [ ] **Consistency Check:** Did you use the same term for "Settings" throughout the app?
- [ ] **Bracket/Punctuation Scan:** Machines often mess up localized punctuation (like using English quotation marks instead of French chevrons « »).
- [ ] **Forbidden Terms:** Ensure no "MT-isms" (words common in machine output but rare in natural speech) have survived.

- [ ] **Source-to-Target Alignment:** Do a final "spot check" of the first, middle, and last segments to ensure nothing was skipped.
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## 7. Reporting the "Machine Health"

A professional linguist provides feedback. If the MT engine is consistently failing at a specific type of grammar or terminology, tell the client.

**Value-Add Tip:** "I noticed the engine struggles with your legal disclaimers. I've manually corrected these, but I suggest we update the translation memory to prevent this in the future." This makes you a **Consultant**, not just a proofreader. You are helping them improve their internal assets.

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## 8. Summary: The 10-Minute MTPE Routine

To stay relevant and fast, follow this routine for every project:

1. **Minute 1-2:** Skim the whole text for "Global Issues" (names, tags, dates).
  2. **Minute 3-7:** Edit for **accuracy first**, then **fluency**. Ignore "style" unless it's a Full MTPE brief.
  3. **Minute 8-9:** Run an automated QA tool to catch the typos your eyes missed.
  4. **Minute 10:** Write a brief "Delivery Note" (as discussed in Guide 3) explaining any major interventions you made.
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## 9. Conclusion: The Machine is a Tool, You are the Master

MTPE is not the "death of translation"—it is the industrialization of it. By using these checklists, you ensure that you aren't just a "checker" for a machine, but a **Guardian of Quality**. You provide the "Human Pulse" that ensures communication actually connects with people.

The transition shortcut is simple: Let the machine do the heavy lifting of the first draft. Use your human expertise to do the high-value work of ensuring the message is right. When you master this workflow, you stop competing with AI and start directing it.

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