Globalization, socio-political transformations and migration flows are creating social tensions worldwide and are modifying the ethnic and socio-linguistic profile of countries. In this fast-evolving scenario, social workers make a significant contribution by coping with the challenges which arise, particularly during periods of change. Accordingly, the contribution of social workers is increasingly required in many different areas of society and, in line with Recommendation Rec (2001)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on social workers (17 January 2001), they have been provided with legal frameworks within which they can practise. Given this new professional perspective, the Code of Ethics for Social workers has become a relevant and binding document. Indeed, in this document, the Committee clearly stated the expected goal(s) of the social worker’s activities and outlined the best practices for the management of a correct and effective practitioner-patient relationship. Social workers’ commitment to act ethically is an essential aspect of the quality of the service offered to patients/customers, since offering support to vulnerable people/communities is a fundamental part of their professional practice. Nonetheless, while some universal principles based on respect for the dignity of all people are common to all countries, some ethical challenges facing social workers are specific to particular socio-cultural contexts. From this standpoint, this paper will compare both the British and the Italian ‘Code of Ethics for Social Work’ in a lingua-cultural perspective. In particular, by drawing on the Appraisal Framework (Martin and White 2005), selected examples from the two codes will be analysed in order to highlight to what extent the use of different lexico-grammatical choices and rhetorical strategies convey different underlying values and beliefs. Our investigation will aim at providing a possible explanation for such differences, which in turn echo and reflect differences in socio-cultural backgrounds of the countries whose codes are investigated.