

**María Ángeles Orts\***

*University of Murcia, Spain*  
mageorts@um.es

## LEGAL ENGLISH AND LEGAL SPANISH: THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE CREATION AND INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL TEXTS

### Abstract

The paper is situated against the background of a globalized world, where English as a *lingua franca* tends to neutralize the real character of legal texts in other languages, when transnational application and interpretation are deployed in the course of the establishment of commercial and juridical relationships. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that cultural and epistemological variances shape legal traditions and, hence, the peculiar traits of their legal texts and their interpretive techniques. Particularly, the Spanish and English-speaking legal cultures spring from different epistemological and cultural contexts which have developed over the centuries. While the former is based upon the French rationalist tradition that supports abstract idealism, deductivism and spiritualism, the latter is modelled on Anglo-Saxon empiricism that promotes pragmatism, philosophical materialism and inductive techniques of reasoning. These differences mark the way in which legal texts are produced and applied in either system, no matter the common purpose they may have. The paper calls for a greater awareness of cross-cultural differences as a necessary tool for the comprehension of the underlying differences in these legal discourses, which may lead to a more accurate application and interpretation of their legal texts.

25

---

### Key words

Anglo-internationalization, legal Spanish, legal English, legal texts, legal interpretation.

---

\* Corresponding address: María Ángeles Orts, Departamento de Traducción e Interpretación, Facultad de Letras, Plaza Sto Cristo s/n, 30071 Murcia, Spain.