'Taking culture seriously': implications for intercultural education and training

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ABSTRACT

Albeit indispensable to understanding human action, the concept of culture has suffered from excessive enthusiasm in the fields of intercultural education as well as in intercultural teacher training, leading too often to culturalist stances. These excesses of intercultural education and training as well as their contradictory message (between praising and minimising – even ignoring – culture and cultural differences) have led some scholars to advocate for the abandonment of the concept of culture altogether. Rather than this radical and counterproductive approach, we propose a heuristic tool: the dialectical square of cultural difference, as well as three metaphors of culture, that should help teacher educators to foster a dynamic and complex understanding of culture and cultural difference among pre- and in-service teachers.

1. Introduction

Social sciences aim to understand human behaviour. However, they often fail to view it in its context: culture. Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998) compare mainstream psychology to the fish that cannot notice the importance of water before it is out of the pond: 'Any context for human behaviour that is so all-encompassing as culture is for the developing individual is likely to be ignored, or if noticed, to be taken for granted' (1101). Cross-cultural psychologists like Segall et al. (1990) were precursors in advocating that 'all social scientists, psychologists especially, take culture seriously into account when attempting to understand behaviour' (Segall, Lonner, and Berry 1998; 1101). Failing to do so results in ethnocentric theories, which present context-specific observations as universally valid. Not surprisingly, unrecognised ethnocentrism also affects educational sciences (Akkari and Dasen 2004). The awareness about the cultural situatedness of educational processes, as evidenced by Bruner, is still meagre:

> Culture, then, though itself man-made, both forms and makes possible the workings of a distinctively human mind. On this view, learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilization of cultural resources. (1996, 4)

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The issue of culture has been introduced into educational sciences largely by intercultural education (in Europe, see e.g. Allemann-Ghionda and Deloitte Consulting 2008; Allemann-Ghionda 2011; Mecheril 2010; Rey-von Allmen 2011) and multicultural education (at first in the US and then in other parts of the world, see e.g. Banks and McGee Banks 2004; Banks 2009). However, the focus of attention has been placed above all on the 'cultures' brought to school by pupils with a migrant or minority background. Yet, taking into account the cultural dimension in education implies more than attending to the individual cultural differences: it requires an understanding of the cultural embeddedness of education itself, as for example awareness of how much educators' conceptions of normality are culturally related (Leutwyler, Steinger, and Sieber 2009).

After a first period where intercultural education resembled more a social movement (Dietz 2009), it nowadays enjoys a solid institutional recognition – at least in the Western countries – even if the implementation of policies reveals less satisfactory (Allemann-Ghionda and Deloitte Consulting 2008). On the European level for example, the European Ministers of Education issued a 'Declaration on intercultural education in the new European context' (Council of Europe 2003). On the international level, UNESCO (2006) has issued guidelines for intercultural education consisting of three principles considered to transcend regional and national differences. As a result, teachers are expected to demonstrate intercultural competence (Portera 2014), and intercultural training is part of most initial as well as continuing teacher education curricula (OECD 2010). However, according to this report, policies and practices for the intercultural training of teachers vary greatly and lack conceptual clarity: '[…] cultural diversity and difference are conceptualised in various ways and the application of educational approaches – irrespective of being labelled multicultural or intercultural – varies depending on national and local school contexts as well as individual teacher practices' (56). The report also points the lack of rigorous evaluations about the effectiveness of teacher intercultural training programmes. Quite worryingly, an online consultation of teachers revealed that 66% of the respondents felt that they were ill-prepared to address diversity in the classroom, while almost all reported that diversity issues had been covered in their training.

In our view, a major cause of the lack of efficiency of intercultural training in teacher education is its unclear message, resulting from a lack of common understanding of what 'taking culture seriously' (in reference to Segall et al. 1998) means in the field of education. The foundation of this challenging issue is the enduring difficulty to capture the complexity of the concept of culture. As a consequence, intercultural training programmes risk to offer contradictory messages, advocating for colour-blindness and basket-making at the same time (in reference to the title of an article by Cochran-Smith [1995] reporting on a teacher training programme in the United States). It is not a surprise then that practitioners such as teachers hesitate between praising and minimising – or even ignoring – culture and cultural differences (Edelmann 2007, 2009; Ogay 2000).

It is our ambition in this article to present a concept of culture that provides the opportunity for intercultural education to take culture seriously, but in a reasonable way. Hereby, we intend to offer an alternative to the abandonment of the concept of culture called for by other scholars, in anthropology (Abu-Lughod 1991) as well as in intercultural education (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006; Pretceille 2012). We first describe culture as an essential but also misleading concept, often misused. Then we present a dialectical understanding of interculturality that we developed, which gives experts and practitioners a model to question

their position towards cultural difference. Finally, we suggest three metaphors of culture that favour a reasonable understanding of culture, allowing one to take culture seriously but without exaggerating its importance.

2. Culture: essential, and misleading

Culture is an indispensable concept: as Cuche (1996) stated, it makes it possible to conceive humanity in its diversity: human groups are different not because of genetic differences, as racist theories contend, but because they live in different environments to which they have to adapt. Therefore, human groups develop worldviews and ways of doing things, which are shared by the members of the same group, and which may differ from what other groups have developed. Culture is to be understood as an everyday, socially symbolic practice. It is a way to understand how individuals in their specific social conditions of life symbolically acquire their own lifestyle and attribute a unique meaning to their own life. There is culture in any practice (see Mecheril 2010, 96).

Although a central concept of anthropology, 'culture' remains extremely difficult to define and quite different understandings are encountered. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified at least 160 definitions, and some 50 years later, Baldwin et al. (2006) found another 313. If we had to choose only one, we would use the following definition by Camilleri (1989), which addresses most of the themes in definitions of culture (structure, function, process, product and group membership) identified by Baldwin et al. (2006), and is therefore in our view useful to refer to in training:

> Culture is the ensemble, more or less linked, of the most persistent and shared acquired meanings that members of a group, by virtue of their affiliation with the group, are led to attribute most commonly to the stimuli coming from the environment and from themselves, inducing, with respect to these stimuli, attitudes, representations, and socially valued behaviours of which they attempt to assure the reproduction by non-genetic means.[1] (Camilleri 1989, 27)

The 'shared acquired meanings' that constitute culture are references that make it possible for a community of individuals to live together in a given ecological context. As formulated by the eco-cultural theoretical framework (Berry 1971), culture results from an effort of a group of humans to adapt to their ecological context. Culture is therefore dynamic and not static because it would then no longer be able to fulfil its adaptive function. Ting-Toomey (1999) isolates four more functions of culture, showing how indispensable the concept of culture is in order to understand human relations and behaviour. First, by providing individuals with a frame of reference (e.g. values and norms that define how a 'good' person is supposed to act), culture enables individuals to define and maintain their identities. Secondly, shared culture fosters a feeling of inclusion into a group, which satisfies the human need of belonging and enables one to feel secure and accepted. At the same time, to identify oneself with a group reveals differences in relation to the other groups: culture also serves to regulate the borders between groups and orients the perceptions of in- and out-groups. Thirdly and as a consequence, if culture comforts the individual in his or her identity, it also limits his or her perspective and nourishes ethnocentric attitudes and behaviours. The fourth function of culture mentioned by Ting-Toomey is communication: culture gives form to communication, prescribing how to communicate (the linguistic code to use, what to say to whom, when and how). Culture provides a guide for realising interaction with people of the same cultural group as well as of other groups. The link between culture and communication also

goes in the other direction: it is through communication that culture is transmitted and continually reinterpreted.

Unfortunately, the concept of culture, albeit indispensable, is frequently misunderstood and misused. Efforts to 'take culture seriously' too often end up in an exaggeration of the importance of culture: when confronted with the universalistic stance which ignores culture, interculturalists are at risk of overreacting by way of a culturalist discourse, explaining everything in terms of cultural differences, reducing individuals to 'their culture' (as if belonging to a culture were self-evident, just as for some, belonging to a race would be). This is what Camilleri (1990) refers to as the sacralisation of cultures, which he considers the major pitfall of interculturalism : when culture is thought of as approaching the level of sacred, it fixes individuals in their immutable differences (hetero-attributed but also self-attributed). This overemphasis of culture may serve to hide power issues, with dominant but also dominated groups making use of the cultural argument, imposing a cultural definition of the situation, in order to maintain or gain power (Sarangi 1994; Wagener 2014). Gorski (2006) even denounces multicultural education programmes which are focused on the culture of the Other rather than on the struggle for social justice of being complicit with conservatism. To avoid culturalisation, Camilleri stresses the necessity of promoting a reflexive attitude that enables attachment to one's cultural system without being bound to it and to maintain a position of 'emersion rather than immersion' (17). In his final paragraph, Camilleri captures the intricacies of interculturality:

> There is a dialectical movement to work out in order to maintain the field of intercultural research and practice: assure the respect of cultures but in the context of a complex of attitudes authorizing their ability to go beyond themselves. Provide partners with the necessary equipment to see their culture as legitimate and to access the fundamental feeling of being recognized and at the same time the liberty to take position, without making themselves guilty relative to the systems that surround them. All of this in order to eventually elaborate their individual cultural formula. This is one of the ways in which intercultural groups can become a matrix of intercultural creativity. (Camilleri 1990, 17)[2]

Of course, numerous scholars before us have criticised what Dervin (2011) calls a 'solid' understanding of culture. Some have even recommended the abandonment of the concept of culture all together (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006; Abu-Lughod 1991). If we share these critiques, however, we cannot follow the recommendation to renounce the concept of culture. We rather think that a misused concept should not be abandoned but re-defined and defended against inadequate uses. In our view, it is through the dialectical understanding of culture and interculturality, sketched out by Camilleri in the quoted citation above, that such excesses can be prevented.

3. A dialectical understanding of culture and interculturality

Being confronted with cultural diversity implies experiencing dialectical tensions: between sameness and difference, equality and diversity, universalism and relativism, continuity and change, openness and closeness (Demorgon 2005, 2015; Martin and Nakayama 1999). Public policies such as multiculturalism and civic integration (Banting and Kymlicka 2013) reflect these tensions and are often thought to be incompatible. But tensions should not be thought of as contradictions to be resolved: the two competing elements of each pair are in a positive and constructive tension: a dialectic, or a 'dialogic', according to the term preferred by
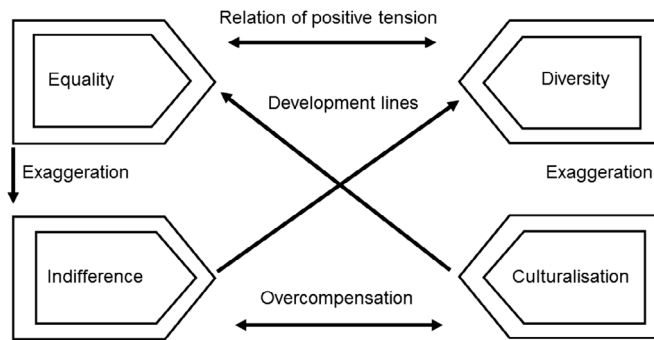
[Adapted from Helwig 1967; Schulz von Thun 1997; Edelmann 2007]

Figure 1. Dialectical square of cultural difference. Source: Edelmann 2007; adapted by Ogay and Edelmann 2011.

Morin (1990, 99): 'The dialogic principle makes it possible to maintain duality in the heart of unity. It associates two terms that are at the same time complementary and antagonistic'.[3]

Such dialectical tensions are characteristic of postmodernity, described by Lyotard (1984). He shows the growing variation of cultural orientations, lifestyles and worldviews. The postmodern age calls for the renunciation of a claim for a unique truth and instead leads to a permanent confrontation between a diversity of perspectives, value systems and lifestyles. Lyotard evaluates this as a positive development because postmodernity opens up a new space for ways of life and attitudes, provided that we are able to renounce the search for unity and clarity and the idea that contradictions can and should be eliminated.

For a proficient approach to cultural diversity, this means that it is neither about the foundation of unity nor the elimination of irresolvable contradictions of various types of discourses, but rather about developing skills and opportunities for navigating between the perception of sameness and difference. The important condition for this is, however, that teachers understand the inner logic of different types of discourses as well as their temporally limited validity and know how to integrate them accordingly into their professional activities (Gogolin and Krüger-Potratz 2006). In summary, it can be stated that in dealing with cultural diversity, the confrontation with the contradictions between emphasis and non-emphasis of difference decisively shapes pedagogical activities. A reflexive approach to this 'dialectic of difference' is therefore a key element of educational professionalism in the transnational social space (Edelmann 2007). The dialectical square of cultural difference, inspired by the dialectical square of values by Helwig (1967) and Schulz von Thun (1997), illustrates the different and contradictory positions in the face of cultural difference (Figure 1).

The logic of the dialectical square of values by Helwig (1967) and Schulz von Thun (1997) is characterised by four premises: (a) a value orientation can unfold constructively only if it lies in a state of sustained tension with a positive counterpart (in the graphic, the upper horizontal connecting line); (b) an over-emphasis on a value leads to its exaggeration (in the graphic, the vertical connecting lines); (c) the lower horizontal line connecting the two devaluing exaggerations characterises the way 'which we take when we want to avoid worthlessness, but do not have the strength to work our way up to the required stress level of the upper plus value' and hence 'flee from worthlessness in one direction to worthlessness in another'[4] (see Helwig 1967); (d) *the diagonal connecting lines* are developmental lines

to follow for example in training sessions, leading from the exaggeration of a single value towards the positive dialectical tension between the two positive – even if opposing – values.

Applied to cultural difference, the dialectical square of values posits that confrontation with cultural difference fosters a tension between the value of equality – recognising the equal worth and dignity of all humans – and the value of diversity – praising cultural differences as enrichment. Equality and diversity, the two central values of intercultural education (UNESCO 2006), both have their darker sides (Payet et al. 2011): too much of the value of equality alone, emphasising sameness only, results in indifference to cultural differences as well as to differences of social status and power, which leads to assimilationism and colour-blindness (Hachfeld et al. 2015; Lewis 2001). Teachers often adhere to this position of indifference to cultural difference (Allard 2006; Mahon 2006), and are proud to claim that they do not see any differences between their students and that they treat them absolutely in the same manner. In so doing, these teachers fail to see that they are not only negating students' identities, but also that they are depriving themselves of the means to really understand their students as social beings. These teachers then contribute to the reproduction of social inequities, as has been denounced by Bourdieu (1966) in his critique of the apparently enlightened slogan of 'indifference to difference'. As stated by Allard (2006), 'treating everyone the same may not mean treating everyone fairly, since in many ways such notions of "sameness" negate material and/or embodied differences' (326). However, diversity, the value that intercultural education has promoted in order to counter the universalist view of education, also has its darker side: too much of the value of diversity alone leads to culturalisation, or sacralisation of cultures (Camilleri 1990) as mentioned earlier. As stated by Dietz, diversity has been transformed 'from an analytic category to an imperative (…), turning to an ideology which politically and even legally promotes the perception of certain traits and features (…)'. (2007, 9). Considering the value of diversity alone leads to a solid conception of culture, which is then taken too seriously, returning to the words of Dervin (2011) and Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998).

The idea that interculturality elicits a tension between the values of equality and diversity is of course not new (see in particular Allard 2006). But by revealing the underground layer of this tension, showing where the exaggeration of equality or diversity alone leads to, the dialectical square of cultural difference opens the way to a better understanding of the challenges of interculturality. Exaggerations, or 'caricatures' (Kymlicka 2012, 1), only lead to sterile debates. With the dialectical square of cultural difference in mind, professionals such as teachers, as well as teacher educators, may then realise that their own hesitations between equality and diversity are not problematic, and that a skilled handling of cultural difference does not mean pursuing equality or diversity, but both of them, even if these values are in opposition and involve apparently contradictory pedagogical actions. They might then appreciate the importance of the nuances in Camilleri's definition of culture: 'more or less linked', 'most persistent', 'most commonly', which indicate that if it is possible to identify something such as culture, its borders are moving: what appears to be different may also be considered as similar (Brewer 1991). In particular, the dialectical square of cultural difference helps teachers to consider critically colour-blindness and its principle of equality of *treatment* to which they frequently adhere. They become aware that indifference to difference results in the reproduction of social inequities and understand why they should rather strive for equality of the *outcomes* attained by their students. This latter principle of justice in education (Crahay 2000) implies nothing else than the positive dialectical tension

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between equality and diversity: the aim of equality as an outcome can be achieved only by taking into account the diversity between individuals and social groups. This is what differentiated pedagogy (Kahn 2010) is all about.

If teachers, social workers or health professionals are often reported to minimise cultural differences (Altshuler, Sussman, and Kachur 2003; DeJaeghere and Cao 2009; Mahon 2006), their intercultural trainers are at risk for culturalisation (like in the 'Teaching the Other' approach described by Gorski in his analysis of US multicultural teacher education programmes, 2009). How to avoid the traps of culturalisation when teaching about culture? In the following section, we present three metaphors for the concept of culture that we have found useful to foster a complex and dynamic understanding of culture which makes it possible to take culture seriously without making it solid or sacred.

4. Three metaphors for a reasonable and dynamic understanding of culture and interculturality

4.1. Culture is like language

In her study of the development of intercultural competence through intercultural exchange programmes between teenagers from the French-and German-speaking regions of Switzerland, Ogay (2000) observed the reluctance of participants to talk about cultural differences, whereas these students at the same time declared to participate in an intercultural exchange. They were rightly concerned about the risk of culturalisation, which would threaten the unity of the federal state of Switzerland. The metaphor of culture as language, proposed by Barmeyer (2007) could have reassured them: stating that two groups speak different languages is usually considered as benign, as should be the observation that two groups refer to different cultural repertoires. Like language, culture is a shared repertoire that each individual of the group interprets in his or her own way. Referring to a common language/culture does not mean that all locutors are going to perform it in the same way and, least of all, that they would say or think the same things (Barmeyer 2007). Different languages/cultures are more or less close, more or less similar/different. They vary in space and time. If languages and cultures, as shared repertoires of signification, have similar functioning they are also deeply interrelated: individuals who speak the same language (or, more precisely, refer to the same linguistic code) develop shared cultural understandings, which differentiate them from other groups. On the other hand, individuals who share common cultural references develop a common language or variety of a language (as in groups of adolescents, or in professional groups), which strengthens their internal cohesion and their differentiation from other groups. This metaphor of culture as language can in our view de-dramatise the idea of cultural difference, inherent to the idea of cultural diversity.

4.2. Culture is like the air we breathe

In the intercultural communication and training field, culture is often represented as an iceberg (see e.g. Ting-Toomey 1999), in order to illustrate that the visible, observable, part of culture (artefacts) is much smaller than the invisible part (assumptions, norms, values). But this metaphor is misleading: it contributes to the idea that culture is solid, and that there would be isolated cultures ('a culture' being then equated with 'a cultural group'), separated

by clear limits and more or less distant from one another. The metaphor of the atoll would be more appropriate in order to take into account the more profound layer: universal human needs. But even if in our view the atoll should replace the iceberg, this metaphor still solidifies and isolates culture, failing to capture its complexity.

As we have seen in the introduction, Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998) prefer to compare culture with water for a fish: essential for its life, but generally unnoticed until the fish is taken out of water. Culture can then be seen as the air we breathe: it is everywhere in our environment but invisible, we notice it only when we miss it. The metaphor can be developed further: there is air on the whole surface of the Earth and all humans (not only them, of course) can breathe it, but its quality varies (humidity, scents, oxygen, presence of pollution, etc.). We have to move into an unfamiliar context to become aware of the quality of the air we breathe, unless there is a sudden change in our environment (a storm, a fire) which makes the change in the air quality perceptible.

Variations of the air on the surface of the Earth are gradual; they of course do not follow the lines of national borders, and there are no clear limits between the different qualities of air which change progressively. However, if cultures can be understood as open-ended and overlapping systems (Mason 2008), variations between cultures have a stronger link to political borders than air has: frontiers delimit territories in which institutions (school in particular for our concern) are active, contributing to the (trans)formation and transmission of the cultural repertoire shared by the individuals living in this territory. Therefore, two individuals may live quite close to one another, breathing a similar air, but have different cultural references as they are part of two different socio-political contexts that are related to territory. We are also reminded of Barth (1969) who shows that it is on the frontiers, on the contact zones, that differences are maintained and performed: geographical closeness does not imply cultural sameness.

The metaphor of culture as air also helps to visualise the different levels of culture: air varies on the vertical dimension as well as on the horizontal dimension, and there are multiple layers ranging from microclimates to larger climatic zones. The same for cultures: an individual refers to different layers of culture to give meaning to his or her experience, from the smaller scale (the neighbourhood he or she lives in) to the larger ones (national, continental). Should we then regard any social group we belong to as contributing to these multiple layers of culture? If we consider that a social group develops a specific culture in the sense of shared meanings which differentiate it from other social groups, any situation implying various social groups should then be considered as 'intercultural'. The question is complex and has given rise to subtle theoretical debates (see in particular Frame 2013), the metaphor of culture as air may prove a useful heuristic tool for comprehension. Like air on the surface of the Earth, culture is thus multi-layered, and each individual is embedded in his or her specific combination of layers. To make it more complicated, the salience of the different layers of culture impregnating the individual varies according to social contexts, and also through the lifespan. Therefore, no individual can be said to 'have a culture', by which it is generally meant a national culture: the cultural references that inspire an individual's thinking and action are always multiple and combine the different layers of culture he or she relates to, from the very specific to the broader ones. If no individual 'has a culture', every individual refers to a unique combination of cultural references, which he or she interprets in his or her unique way.

Representing culture as multi-layered may be considered to be similar to the principle of intersectionality, introduced into intercultural education mainly by German scholars (Krüger-Potratz 2005; Prengel 2007). Intersectionality addresses the multiple identities of the individual, who does not belong to one social group only (a national culture in the culturalist view), but to many at the same time: gender, generations, social classes, ability, religion, etc. Differences intersect, making each individual unique, but also creating similarities between individuals who may be members of the same group on one dimension, but to different groups on another dimension (what is known as crossed categorisation in social psychology, see Crisp and Hewstone 2007). In our view, however, culture cannot be considered as one dimension among others (and then often reduced to a single layer, generally the national layer). Being for example a middle-aged protestant female academic is embedded in a specific cultural context, in other contexts these social memberships and identities would have different cultural meanings. Therefore, we consider culture to be the general frame in which the other dimensions of difference between individuals find their meaning. Differences between genders, generations, etc. are interpreted within a cultural frame of reference. Some social groups and individuals comprising a society adhere fully to this cultural frame of reference, and others more reluctantly. Of course, a common cultural frame of reference does not prevent individuals from referring also to other cultures as a function of their personal and familial history, notably in the case of migration. Thus, when individuals leave their cultural context for another one, they bring to it an ensemble of cultural meanings, among which notably a way of organising relationships between men and women (a theme that appears often in intercultural situations reported by teachers). The way of conceiving relations between men and women is precisely one of the meanings produced by culture; it is culturally situated and cannot be interpreted without cultural contextualisation.

4.3. Culture is like a non-newtonian fluid

When dealing with metaphors for the concept of culture, it is helpful to return to physics and the different states of matter: culture has been compared with water, a fluid, we have compared it with air, a gas, and Dervin (2011) has denounced a solid conception of culture, which is found for example in the iceberg metaphor. Dervin, inspired by another thinker of postmodernity, Bauman (2005), proposes the replacement of the solid conception of culture with a liquid understanding. But are liquid and gas the only possible alternatives to the solid state of matter? Isn't the change from a solid understanding of culture to a liquid or gaseous one nothing else than an overcompensation, an excessive backlash from culturalisation to indifference, as reflected in the dialectical square of cultural difference? Instead of replacing the solid conception of culture with a liquid one, we suggest a further metaphor which illustrates the dialectic of culture. It is neither solid, nor liquid: culture is both at the same time, or more precisely it quickly changes from one state to the other. The metaphor of culture as air has allowed important insights into the complexity of the concept. But another one is needed in order to account for the dynamic of culture. We here tentatively propose the metaphor of culture as a non-newtonian fluid: these special types of fluid become almost solid (their viscosity increases) when a force (like movement, or sound waves) is applied onto them; when the force disappears, the fluid turns back to a liquid state. Culture is usually liquid, (or gaseous like air), permeating everything in the context, but remaining unnoticed.

But when there is pressure (for example through identification/differentiation issues as a result of intercultural contact), culture becomes solid and perceptible, and differences are perceived and performed. Coming back to the definition of culture by Camilleri (1989), when there is pressure, links between the shared meanings tighten, the group affiliation becomes salient and the attributions are more subject to intergroup bias (Gallois, Ogay, and Giles 2005). The aim of intercultural education and training might then be to foster the understanding that culture should not be dismissed when liquid, nor taken too seriously when solidified by pressure.

5. Conclusion

The way for a reasonable understanding of culture and cultural difference is narrow and it is easy to fall into the traps of culturalisation and indifference. Teaching about culture in teacher training is for sure a challenging task; the concept is particularly complex, and pre-service as well as in-service teachers are not necessarily interested in the theoretical debates about it. Intercultural training sessions which present culture as an important dimension to take into account, and then criticise it at length are confusing and unconvincing. The metaphors of culture (as language, air and non-newtonian fluid) are helpful to foster an understanding of culture as indispensable yet at the same time unseizable. The dialectical square of cultural difference helps to put words on the contradictions and tensions experienced in intercultural situations. It helps to understand how short-sighted either-or choices are and to accept the dialectical tension between equality and diversity. The dialectical square is also directly useful for teacher educators: to assess students' needs, to design a training programme that will lead students through the developmental lines towards the positive dialectical tension, and also to stay alert to the pitfall of a culturalist training in response to colour-blind students. We are convinced that the dialectical square of cultural difference as well as the three metaphors of culture developed in this article contributes to a dynamic and complex understanding of culture and cultural diversity in education.

Notes

1. Our translation.
2. Our translation.
3. Our translation.
4. Our translation.

Disclosure statement

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