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Dialogues over decolonisation in East Africa: A case study of History education in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates History education in Uganda by interrogating data emerging from interviews with secondary History teachers. Two strands of literature are brought to the data analysis: one strand relates to how decolonisation has been conceptualised in interpretations of History education in Uganda; a second strand relates to what the most appropriate pedagogies might be to underpin History teaching and learning in this postcolonial setting. The pedagogical text is informed by the work of Bruner, Vygotsky and Hedegaard. This work feeds into reflections on how mutuality (Boyanton, 2015) and opportunities for dialogue, ownership and internalisation might be established and developed. We explore how psychological, social, emotional and cultural aspects of learning play a part in establishing a link between identity, relevance and significance which takes into account how teachers and learners give and receive value through a search for authenticity. The research findings confirm the need for students to be able to see themselves in the narrative, but they also include recognition of a broader imperative to understand the personal and local within wider regional and global contexts.

KEYWORDS

Decolonisation, History education, Inclusion, Cultural rediscovery, Mutual value theory, Ownership

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Introduction

Decolonisation is a central and yet problematic concept in social sciences education, and there are many questions surrounding it. Decolonisation in Africa is a social project dating from the 1950s and 1960s, which entails three discourses involving post-colonial Africans. These discourses include among other things: power to self-govern (self-governing nation-states); power relating to ownership of the economy and economic resources; and power to run and design education systems. In this paper, we focus on decolonisation in a broader sense to elucidate and position History education as one of the essential tools post-colonial African governments employed immediately after Independence to seek to throw off colonial influence in East Africa, taking Uganda as a case study.

We conceptualise decolonisation from three viewpoints:

1. Decolonisation according to Senghor (1971) is the abolition of all prejudice and all sense of a superiority complex in the mind of the coloniser and also of all elements contributing to an inferiority complex in the minds of the colonised.
2. We draw from the work of the Kenyan writer, Wa Thiong'o (1986) on decolonising thinking and acting. He suggested that a sound educational policy is one which enables students to study the culture and environment of their own society first and then apply those understandings in relation to the culture and environment of other societies.
3. Decolonisation is viewed as embracing and valuing local perspectives and not solely the perspectives of the colonisers and their allies. It is important to incorporate indigenous languages and cultures into the curriculum in a more meaningful and systematic manner (Mampane, Omiride & Aluka, 2018).

There is an unfolding global debate about decolonisation linking both to what schools and universities teach and whether curricula are relevant to today's students. Post-colonial East African governments worked to Africanise their curricula from elementary (primary in some jurisdictions) to tertiary levels (Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2001; Mngomezulu & Hadebe, 2018). Social Studies (and the disciplinary areas of History and Civics) took the lead in conscientizing young people and the public in general about their culture, history and survival as people. School syllabuses were reshaped to make them more relevant and sympathetic to African indigenous knowledge and less European-oriented. Across East African nations, Tanzania made an initial effort to achieve this by the Education Ordinance of 1962 and Uganda and Kenya by the Education Acts of 1964 and 1965 respectively.

Debates and trends in the decolonisation of history education in Africa

The term decolonisation is rooted in the mid-twentieth-century anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia that sought to dismantle European colonial rule, as well as promote indigenous self-determination and antiracist social movements in settler colonial and European nations during the 1960s and 1970s. Although several notable moments and steps have punctuated decolonisation efforts, it may be understood as a set of diverse, ongoing dialogical conversations, rather than a distinct event or set of events (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). While it is not a central focus of this paper to argue why History education is important, the authors follow Chiodo and Byford (2004) in seeing History as a school subject whose role, among others, is to orient learners towards the beliefs and values of all cultures in order to understand the world and enable learners

to participate in it. History education involves learning about past events to recover the history, culture and languages of colonised peoples and, applying these understandings, to inform and influence the present (Grange, 2016).

One of the most debated questions in History education is whether decolonisation is possible in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, if education – and learning history in particular – continues being conducted in the languages of the colonial masters (Brock-Utne, 2016; Ramoupi, 2014). Ramoupi contends that for effective teaching and learning, students should be taught History and other subjects in a language that supports the creation of knowledge and skills that connects them directly to their culture and heritage. The idea of teaching African history in the languages of the colonial masters (English, French or any other European language) echoes the colonial legacy and can be seen as the product of colonial education in Africa. In order to realise a true decolonisation in history education, there is a need to contest the language hegemony. That is to say, History in Uganda needs to be taught in the languages that connect learners to their history and heritage. However, since Uganda houses several indigenous languages, there is a continuous debate on a univocal language that cuts across all Ugandan schools. Kiswahili, which is officially used in Kenya and Tanzania, has since been proposed together with a dominant language used in the particular region where the school is located. It is difficult to develop ideas and beliefs through the language of the former colonial oppressor. Such awareness is helpful to avoid making History classrooms (and indeed other lessons) a colonising space. We argue for the need to decolonise History content and pedagogy and make it relevant to indigenous students.

The current situation of history education in Uganda

Studying the colonial episode of History education in Uganda (Holmberg, 2017) begins at primary level where children are taught Social Studies under the theme of living together. History is compulsory at the Ordinary level (O-level) and taken as an optional subject at the Advanced level (A-level). This assessment nomenclature was a British legacy. The History curriculum at O-level places emphasis on widening students' understanding of the political, social and economic development of East Africa, and Africa in general. The O-level History curriculum, which has been in existence since colonial times, is criticised for being knowledge-based with little emphasis on skills, values and an inadequate focus on the issues faced by today's learners (Uganda Media Center Blog, 2020). The curriculum is based on British written accounts that harbour a Eurocentric colonial mentality and focuses on studying the history of Europeans in Uganda (Mino, 2011). This Eurocentric focus is also reflected in the way History is taught, embracing largely the same didactic instructional methods used by the missionaries and Europeans during the colonial period (Mino, 2011; Holmberg, 2017). Most schools in Uganda take European History: 1789-1970 at their A-level as an option to other papers. As a result, high school students obtain epistemic ideas on European history that may not closely align with their own history in Uganda. This is not to suggest however that, the coverage of European History: 1789-1970 as a case study is pointless. But it would seem necessary first to identify the most important factor needed to decolonise history education in Uganda; and what emerges is a strong case for the inclusion of Ugandan history itself which is largely absent in the Secondary curriculum at both O-level and A-level. This means an inclusion of Uganda's political, economic, social and cultural aspects so that students (and indeed their teachers) feel represented in the academic version of the History curriculum. Several steps and studies have been undertaken in Uganda on decolonising the curriculum and related pedagogies through curriculum review processes at the elementary/primary level (Altinyelken, 2010; Sikoyo, 2011); secondary level (Nambi, 2018); and higher education (Mamdani, 2016). These studies have mostly focused on aligning the curriculum to the local context, local languages, learner needs, life skills and learner-centred pedagogies.

Dialogues over the decolonisation of history education at the secondary school level in Uganda are reflected in the lower secondary school curriculum reforms that were implemented in February 2020. In fulfilment of the recommendations of the Government White Paper (1992), the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through the National Curriculum Development Centre

(NCDC), embarked on reviewing the lower secondary curriculum to focus on concepts, attitudes, skills and values (Uganda Media Centre Blog, 2020). The four-year revised curriculum for History and Political Education transits from a knowledge-based curriculum to a competence- and skills-based curriculum that seeks to foster deep learning by placing the learner at the centre of the learning process (MoES & NCDC, Lower Secondary Curriculum History and Political Education Syllabus, n.d.). These schemes recognize that teacher-instruction is not enough and that ownership and internalisation can only take place through the medium of active learning.

All students who joined Senior One (February 2020) enrolled on the revised curriculum for History and Political Education. The content of History and Political Education entails the following thematic areas. For Senior One: Understanding our past; Senior Two: Colonisation and the struggle for Independence; Senior Three: Uganda; Senior Four: Interactions with the world (MoES & NCDC, n.d.). The related recommended pedagogy aligns to an approach where the teacher is a facilitator and guide of the respective learning activities. In addition to this, there is a requirement for the integration of ICT in the learning processes, including debates, group discussions, project work, field visits to historical sites and cultural institutions, as the employed learning activities feed in to generic skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and digital skills. This connection between the study of the past and students' needs certainly enhances their motivation in learning about the past (Stockdill & Moje, 2013). The nature of student-teacher relationships in the study of History can be a complex one and is explored in the next section using a range of theories which contribute to understanding (a) how individuals might gain a greater sense of ownership and internalisation; (b) how students might feel a deeper sense of authenticity and empowerment in transactions between themselves and their teachers; and (c) how different groups in the class might recognise the need for an increased sense of mutual value in seeking to understand each other, especially when different identities are involved.

Theoretical underpinnings

The idea of a more dialogic (and mutualist) approach links the African indigenous oral tradition to some twentieth-century 'advances' in pedagogical thinking, such as are found in the work of Vygotsky (1896-1934) on the role of the significant 'other' in learning through the 'zone of proximal development' (e.g. in the 1978 and 1986 translations of his work), and Bruner (1915-2016) on involving even the youngest children in the essential discipline of a subject (1966) through a 'spiral' curriculum. Bruner himself in a later work (1996) described knowledge as 'what is shared within discourse, within a 'textual' community'; and Hedegaard (1990) developed this, drawing on a Vygotskian paradigm. This approach might also draw on Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of *cognitive apprenticeship* as *situated cognition*. The model could involve children (or students) working intensively like apprentices in a traditional trade, learning from a 'master' (or mistress) of that trade or skill. Thus, listening could be enhanced with an element of questioning and interacting. Hedegaard (1990) saw Vygotskian scaffolding as bridging the distance between understood knowledge, as provided by instruction, and active knowledge, as owned by individuals. The key concept here, which links with the decolonisation, both of the curriculum and the mind, is 'ownership', and this involves more self-awareness, participation and internalisation in the process of gaining knowledge.

The relevance of mutual value theory (MVT)

Mutual value theory (MVT), within the broader family of social constructivism, is a formulation of Dengting Boyanton (2015) in the field of educational psychology. It can also be applied to an active approach to decolonisation and reclaiming ownership. The theory draws from other learning theories including: the social cognitive perspectives of Bandura (1986) and the constructivism of Bruner (1966, 1996) and Vygotsky (1978, 1986). MVT acknowledges that despite the fact that the previous learning theories differed in terms of key conditions for learning

to occur, still they supplemented each other. The central element for learning as brought in by MVT is value (Boyanton, 2015). Boyanton argues that it is unrealistic to claim that factor A affects learning (as established in the previous theories of learning). The more important thing is how much value students assign to factor A and it is therefore the assigned value that will determine the quality of their learning motive and efforts. This is particularly relevant in postcolonial settings where regaining value becomes a driving force. Principally, mutual value theory builds on two key elements, each having implications for teachers and learners if learning is to occur in the classroom context. The first are what Boyanton calls authenticity factors (non-cognitive) which relate to the psychological, social, emotional and cultural aspects of learning (Boyanton, 2015, p.13). This is particularly relevant in embracing authentic individuality in the classroom and celebrating the different narratives that students might bring to history lessons. Secondly, MVT is concerned with cognitive factors (powerfulness) which involves directly using students' cognitive faculties in learning, and moving to a mode where teachers and students are acting in mutual recognition as co-learners. Finding authenticity and gaining a sense of personal empowerment are very relevant in curriculum decolonisation debates (see also Bertram, 2019).

Identity and dialogue

MVT theory emphasises the importance of a mutual exchange of value as an underpinning element in dialogue in the classroom context where the student and the teacher can each function at the same time as a value-assigner (giving value to others) and a value-receiver (who can take value judgement from others). For meaningful learning to occur, the quality of the dialogue should demonstrate that students value one another, value what the teacher is teaching, value the subject matter and value the way each is involved and how s/he participates in the lesson both emotionally and cognitively. Correspondingly, the teacher should value her/his learners and provide participative and representative learning activities which take into account both cognitive and non-cognitive factors in order to create powerful learning. Consequently, valuing one another is strongly linked with respecting different identities, and appreciating that those identities may carry diverse narratives and perspectives. Valuing can extend from the classroom and school out into the wider community, drawing on the concept of dialogue as a mutual exchange of understandings.

The colonial experience reduced African higher education to a tool of communication between the coloniser and the colonised with African indigenous knowledge rarely featuring in this interaction (Adebisi, 2016). Adebisi argued that this educational incompatibility led to a significant level of unemployment, erosion of African cultures, as well as language problems with a limited focus on the needs of the African child. History education should emphasise a practice that focuses on learners' family, cultural and local needs if they are to see the importance of learning about the past. And yet, decolonisation cannot achieve a return to precolonial Africa because acculturation is also a fact of history, and not only in Africa. Formal education cannot be wholly replaced by indigenous knowledge: decolonisation should point forwards, not backwards. This can be achieved through an equal relationship of dialogue so that education 'expresses the consciousness' of the teachers and students. In this paper, we closely align with the recommendation of Wa Thiong'o (1986) for a sound educational policy which enables students to study the culture and environment of their own society first, then in relation to the culture and environment of other societies.

Historical thinking and decolonisation

This paper explores and interprets the construct of the decolonisation of History education through the lens of Ugandan secondary History teachers' perspectives, underpinned by a range of both general and history-specific pedagogical theories as well as literature on decolonisation. These literatures (theories of pedagogy and of decolonisation) can intersect, especially as the current vogue for historical thinking (Seixas & Morton, 2013) suggests opportunities to engage locally and individually with the concepts of historical significance, evidence, continuity and

change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives, and the ethical dimension. The internal histories of peoples and nations in East Africa offer ample opportunities and evidence to illustrate all of these historical thinking concepts, and – because of their proximity and relevance – for both teachers and learners to take ownership of them. The research inquiry included an exploration of the content knowledge taught to students at O-level and related pedagogies and well as exploring teachers' suggestions around the content knowledge and pedagogies aimed at decolonising the curriculum.

Research questions and working hypotheses

This paper focuses on addressing two research questions:

1. What are the History teachers' perspectives on the topics/content taught and pedagogies related to slavery and colonialism at O-level?; and
2. What are the possible ways of decolonising the History curriculum and related pedagogies at O-level?

The data collection method chosen involved interviews with open-ended questions with Ugandan history teachers in order to evaluate their thinking about history education. The results were analysed in the light of the working hypotheses below:

1. A need for ***ownership*** (including a sense both of ***belonging*** and ***attachment***) at the level of process and inquiry in order to engage with the narrative.
2. In connection with this, a recognition of the importance of the use of ***dialogue*** (conversation, listening, discussion, discourse, debate as well as collaboration and negotiation); moving towards a model in which knowledge is seen as ***an exchange of understanding*** between learners, across the community, and between learner and teacher.
3. A need to seek and/or recognise (i) ***mutuality*** in dialogue and (ii) ***mutual value***. This may involve ***empathy, standing in other people's shoes***, as well as understanding the ***moral consequences of actions in the past*** from the viewpoint of contemporaries and from the present.
4. ***Inclusion*** of all students, especially marginalised groups; this involves a recognition that others have different identities.
5. Finding ***relevance*** and ***significance*** in the curriculum to current concerns.
6. Finding links between ***ownership*** and ***identities***.
7. Developing ***independence*** and ***criticality*** in attitudes to the sources and narrative(s) and an ability to ***think historically***; a willingness to complicate and disrupt the narrative is included in this.
8. A recognition that answers will ***anticipate, reflect or fulfil or even challenge*** the expectations embedded in the ***decolonisation literature***.

Participants' background information

Participants included 24 secondary school teachers from three types of schools in Central Uganda: government-aided (10); privately owned (12); and church-founded (2). Gender was as follows: male (14); and female (10). Numbers associated with three levels of qualifying education were pre-service teacher-training (7); Bachelor's degree (12); and Master's degree (5). Experience of teaching fell into four groups: 0-5 years (10); 6-10 years (4); 11-15 years (2); and more than 16 years (8). The level of teaching was Ordinary (O) Level (8); Advanced (A) Level (8); and both O- and A-level (8).

Findings: History teachers' perspectives

Research question 1: How significance depends on relevance in the content taught

Twenty of the participants indicated that the history content knowledge taught around colonialism, slavery and imperialism was relevant but should be taught in such a way that it has an influence on students' lives in the present and is aligned to students' day-to-day life experiences. This was reflected in an excerpt from a participant's response to the semi-structured questionnaire:

> Topics on the above theme should be taught in the history classroom because the current generation should understand the African past and why Africa is the way it is today. This will enable them to appreciate and find solutions and make decisions in the current situations. These form part of our past which has greatly impacted our present way of life and will automatically affect our future. (Participant 6)

Another participant added:

> Learners should know how colonialism has influenced and shaped East Africa's development and underdevelopment. Moreover, learners can know how underdevelopment in Africa is influenced or engineered by the western world. These enable learners to obtain knowledge and evolution of the present Independent African governments. (Participant 16)

Other participants similarly underlined the importance of curriculum content aligning to learners' lives in the present and the importance not only of reflexive pedagogy but also of critical thinking, and moving away from the culture of the right answer. This clearly relates to Hypothesis 7.

> The methods used to teach such topics ought to be reflective in nature. Reflection on the benefits of colonialism for example, the formal education helped in fighting ignorance; they introduced new technological skills in roads, health etc.; these enable learners to think critically that in case they are faced with problems these topics also help both the learner and the teacher to know what happened in the past and they can relate the past and the present to influence the future. (Participant 10)

> The curriculum must bear in mind a) critical thinking, b) integration. Critical thinking on the side of the learner so as to produce thinkers who are answer-orientated [rather] than [just] rehearsing the historical facts. (Participant 2)

On the other hand, a minority of the teachers (4 out of the 24 participants) indicated that themes around colonisation, imperialism and slavery should not be included on the History Syllabus. Two participants noted:

> These topics don't in any way stimulate critical thinking and innovation as they are [too] distant to enhance interactive development with future generation learners. (Participant 2)

> Remove topics on collaboration and resistance and give more attention to post-Independence history [because] there is need to focus on the contemporary needs of society. I don't see the relevance of such knowledge to my students and its application in problem solving. (Participant 9)

Use of dialogue and mutuality in the pedagogies used

Out of the 24 participants, 15 revealed that they preferred to use dialogical and active learning methods in teaching about the past. Interactive methods included: group discussions, inquiry methods, demonstration, questioning, debate and role-play. Asked about the rationale for engaging in dialogical methods of teaching history, the following responses provide a sample of their perspectives:

> In a group discussion, the students will be grouped to represent different trade routes: southern, northern and central routes. Inquiry introduces the learner to what colonialism is, so as to integrate European colonialism into their analysis of trading patterns and engage in the discussion on this basis. They highly involve the consumer who is the student. Less is heard from the producer who is a teacher. Hence, research skills are developed with ease. (Participant 2)

> Discovery and inquiry methods because they enable the students to discover their own ideas on various historical aspects and widen inquiries to be connected. While demonstration helps the student to put and have a clear picture of what really happened in the past. (Participant 6)

> Such methods enable the History teacher to 'freely' interact with his/her students that is crucial in the teaching and learning process. Students also find a role to play for example in group discussions. (Participant 7)

Research question 2: What are the possible ways of decolonising the History Curriculum and related pedagogies at O-level?

To obtain responses for research question 2, we sought examples of how decolonisation vis-a-vis the History curriculum was being addressed. The emerging themes of inclusion, ownership, relevance and dialogue arising from the data are notable. What follows is a list of suggested topics that cater for decolonisation of the curriculum for inclusion in Uganda's post-Independence History curriculum.

Inclusion

Out of the 24 participants, 20 agreed that there is need for deeper and wider inclusion of political, economic and social elements in the history of Uganda in the Ordinary Level History Syllabus. This is reflected in the qualitative perspectives below:

> Students need to know Uganda history more especially the history after Independence, also cultural heritage, geopolitics, family and the history of various local places should be included in the curriculum because students need to know why everything is the way it is today. (Participant 6)

> I don't feel part of the History curriculum; with exception of the Buganda Kingdom and the Bantu migration more is needed about how these Ethnic groups helped to shape the cottage Industry. For example, how did the Baganda develop the country? (Participant 2)

The comments of Participant 2 about the Baganda imply a demand for more depth and criticality to the study of that tribal group. Other tribes are mentioned as being there, such as Ngoni, Bantu, Luo, and Plain Nilotics (also Participant 2), but there was a sense that some tribes did not have sufficient presence, like the Banyole in Butaleja district in Eastern Uganda, or the Iteso and Sabiny (Participants 16 and 17), or the Basoga and the Batoro (Participant 17). Here there is reference to the concern of the classic postcolonial author, Wa Thiong'o (1986), about the use of local languages (Participant 12). The importance of providing (and respecting) local contextualisation was also explored in the work of Altinyelken (2010). Interest was expressed by participants here

as elsewhere about investigating how local governmental structures were organised (Participant 2), and how justice was administered and disputes settled in different parts of Uganda (Participant 11).

Participants often articulated a need to include the history of all of Uganda's current ethnicities including the minority groups. For example: the Bagungu, Batwa, Bamba, Bavuma, Lendu, Kakwa, Bakenyi, Bakonjo, the Kia in Kasese and Alur in Northern Uganda, as well as the Basongora and Banyabindi in Western Uganda. To illustrate this point one participant had these observations:

> I don't feel represented in the curriculum because we are a minority group. I just hear from rumours but nothing has been written down about my own tribe, Batwa. We are taught too much of Buganda and other centralised regions as a dominant tribe. (Participant 16)

There were also some perceptive comments touching on the nature of government and how democratic processes, conflict resolution and international relations have worked in the past, as well as how Africans understood the meaning of human rights. Here is a collection of the range of subjects and themes other participants wanted to see included:

> Economic Integration into the East African Community. (6 participant responses)
>
> The Ugandan Economy before and after Independence. (3 participant responses)
>
> The economic systems of various regimes, e.g. Common Man Charter 1969, Economic war 1972; 1971 coup in Uganda and the expulsion of Ugandan Asians (4 participant responses).
>
> The mixed economy of the 1980s, the Etandikwa 'Prosperity for All' Schemes 1995 and 2006, privatisation 1999, NAADS (The National Agriculture Advisory Services) and Operation Wealth Creation, as well as economic activities like trading, hunting and agriculture, i.e. Buganda, like coffee growing. (Participant 5)
>
> The political party state in Uganda to cater for the roles in state- and nation-building, challenges, positive contribution of political parties in Uganda and the future of political parties. Political developments/transition/change in Uganda since Independence; post-Independence governance in Uganda from 1962 to-date, the political crisis in Uganda 1966-67. (7 responses)
>
> Democratic programmes, e.g. Constitution/constitutionalism/constitutional history of in Uganda since Independence: 1962; 1967; 1995. (10 responses)
>
> The NRM Revolution 1986-2020/to-date (contemporary history); the history of personalities of liberation leaders especially the NRA/war, NRM; NRM Liberation War. (9 responses)
>
> 1980-86 Luweero Civil War. Relationship between of Uganda and her neighbours. Documenting the history of Uganda; Post-Independence prospects and challenges (historiography of Uganda is sketched and not detailed). The 1992 White Paper; Devonshire White Paper and Ssenteza Kajubi Report, roles of Africans in civilising fellow African[s]. (5 responses)
>
> Key personalities in Uganda's history; contribution of post-Independence leaders and rebels in Uganda covering their strengths and weaknesses; Milton Obote, Idi Amin, Yusuf Lule, Okello, Lutwa, Yoweri Museveni and rebels like Kony need more attention. (5 responses)
>
> Also, coverage of how Africans in the past resolved conflicts; how Africans understood human rights. How leaders involved their masses – inclusive leadership; how Africans maintained peace and justice. (4 responses)

The mention of constitutional history by 10 participants (above) feeds into a sense of what the ingredients might be for higher levels of citizenship education. Concerning the reasons why the suggested topics (above) should be included under the themes of Decolonisation, Independence, Post-Independence and Contemporary period, was this comment:

> It helps to tackle the political challenges Uganda has been facing since Independence: It enables us to promote our culture since it is one of the aims of Education: inculcating cultural aspects in very important. (Participant 13)

Ownership: Aspects of Cultural/ Family History covered by the History Curriculum

The research findings also revealed the cultural importance of decolonising the History curriculum. The excerpts below illustrate this further.

> There is need to decolonise the History curriculum because we need to make our students love and appreciate their cultures other than learning about abstract European history. They need to love their cultures, dressing codes, social ways, language and backgrounds. African students need to love their cultures, identify as much as the Europeans love our minerals. (Participant 6)

Another participant expressed similar views, showing an appreciation of the central importance of inclusion of all ethnic groups that make up Uganda. It also demonstrates an appreciation of suitable curriculum frameworks, with a recommendation for a balance of local, national and global with built-in choice for the global, making the history of Europe an optional alongside that of China:

> The National Curriculum Development Centre (Uganda) should introduce a compulsory paper for O- Level and A- level that covers the cultural heritage, identity and family history so that all tribes are represented and it should be a core paper. Therefore, students should cover two core papers: (i) a history of Uganda, (ii) history of Africa, and [in addition] an elective history of Europe or China. (Participant 16)

Within the research findings, a link can also be made between ownership, culture and identities. Social aspects of kingdoms include initiation ceremonies, marriage, roles of elders, parents and children in the social set-up of kingdoms. A sense of belonging was stressed by two participants while values and customs attracted three responses. An appreciation of the important roles of culture and development, ethnicity, social composition and state formation was captured in the following excerpts:

> I don't feel represented in the curriculum because it doesn't cover my cultural heritage, identity, family history/Sabiny or local history. I just hear from rumours but nothing has been written down about my cultural and local history. (Participant 16)

> The current curriculum does not cover cultural heritage. They could consider including the family history of the rulers after Independence. Cultural history of the food, dance, music and drama must be given enough coverage in the Syllabus. They should concentrate more on the cultural history of Uganda like tribes. This will enhance cultural tourism and also promote unity and a sense of belonging for example through music, dance and drama; they should also include the history of cultures and society so that people come to know about their respective cultures [also]. (Participant 2)

> Topics on cultural history will enable learners to know more about their cultures and how they relate in society; culture and society; documentation of history enable[s] teachers and learners to discuss significant events in the history of Uganda so that key issues aren't left out. (Participant 11)

> Learners' cultures, interests should be covered more than anything. Such topics inculcate a sense of belonging and great love for our cultural heritage since all tribes in Uganda are diluted. (Participant 10)

> Cultural history: how cultures and heritages have led to the development and growth of certain areas in Uganda; cultural ceremonies, backgrounds and origins; music, dance and drama which store our regional cultures, our cultural histories are not documented such as Kadodi dance, emphasis on the history and cultures of local communities. (Participant 9)

> Include local history in the curriculum and examine it. (Participant 18)

Participant reflections on the representation of recent Ugandan history

In the interview extracts below, there is much identification of significant local, national and regional history, even stressing how certain groups can be praised as trail-blazers, like the 'African Elites' (Kumalo, 1966) and an awareness that East Africans themselves made a great contribution to the development of the region.

> Knowledge about the African Elites will help students appreciate that Africans were willing to put their lives forward for development. And also, that if mis-governed the masses have a responsibility to refuse those who mis-govern them just like the African Elites did. They will help in de-linking African Economies. (Participant 7)

> The young generation needs to know that Africans (blacks) played an important role in civilising East Africa and Africa at large and not Europeans only. (Participant 12

There is also a perceptive juxtaposition of colonialism with neo-colonialism, 'the Asian dragon' and the influence of China, Taiwan and Singapore.

> They make more sense to the current study and future generations than the old history that envisions [what] Eurocentric news does or doesn't capture. The above topics are very important and can help Uganda deal with its current problems which are largely caused by colonialism and neocolonialism. (Participant 8)

> The curriculum should reflect and contain African achievements, challenges and [what is] behind the process. It can help us fully understand our relationship with our neighboring states like Kenya and Sudan. There should also be something to do with: How Uganda/ Africa can develop amidst challenges of neo-colonialism just like the Asian Dragons like China, Taiwan, Singapore among others. (Participant 7)

Although one teacher believed that adhering to a broad East African perspective might dilute the details and dimensions of a fully inclusive Ugandan narrative, by contrast Participant 5, echoing the concerns of Participant 7 above, makes an appeal for reaching out by travel, observing:

> It can help us fully understand our relationship with our neighbouring states like Tanzania, Kenya and Sudan. Importantly, we should emphasise tours to historical and archaeological sites such as Bigo Bya Mugenyi, Tanda Pits and Nakaima tree in Mubende. Moreover, history should be for learning experiences, people should have a close relationship between the past and current [times] in order to draw lessons. (Participant 5)

The majority of these reflections show an awareness of the need for a kind of mutuality (Hypothesis 3), especially in appreciating that neighbours are facing the same problems, thus in allowing 'border-crossing' to understand the histories of neighbours (Giroux, 1992).

There is overall agreement in the literature, confirmed by that coming out of South Africa (Weldon, 2009) and elsewhere in the world after curriculum reform, that one of the problems in History education is the dominance of a traditional, singular official narrative of the past. There is certainly clamour for a balance of perspectives from across Uganda's different ethnic groups. As was anticipated in the working hypotheses, there is evidence of agreement about a need for a contextually relevant curriculum that will reflect significance, and for educators, teachers and students to be agents of curriculum and pedagogical change that will make their voices and perspectives heard. What emerges from the interviews is that mutuality should extend to the community itself.

Dialogue and teaching methods

The qualitative participant response data here starts with general lists of dialogical methods of teaching, but continues with some detailed observations and suggestions for their application in the Ugandan context. A number of methods as shown in the table below were suggested.

Methods	Number of responses
Group discussion	9
Guided discovery	12
Inquiry method	4
Experiential learning	4
Role play	8
Debate	4
Projects	3
Story telling through legends	12
Visiting historical sites	12
Learners interviewing different people about the past (e.g. elderly)	3

Table 1 Participants' responses on the methods appropriate for teaching History lesson

In addition to the methods presented in Table 1, there seemed to be a general agreement among participants that active learning, exploring local history (field-studies and projects) by seeing the places (and evidence of events or situations) in person, perhaps also through role-play or making connections with the community (e.g. through interviews [Participant 7]), would enable students to get inside the events and stand in other peoples' shoes. This could apply to accessing tribal history; the example given by Participant 13 is about using storytelling to explain the migration and settlement of a tribe like the Banyole in Eastern Uganda.

There is also a link with creativity (Participant 5). Members of the community are seen to benefit too by becoming partners in an increasing mutuality across the educational system (Participants 9 and 24). This corresponds with Hypothesis 2 where knowledge is seen as an exchange of understanding not just between learners and teachers, but also between them and the community or wider society. Interviews were recommended as ways of exploring memory and local history, and these of course add an element of authenticity to inquiry. Music, dance and drama were all mentioned as ways of increasing not only student involvement but also investigating the meaning and significance of events. Social learning through sharing and discussion was also prized (Participants 3 and 12). These responses in many ways confirmed the

latent propositions in the working hypotheses, especially the need for a strong commitment to active learning in order to achieve ownership of the learning matter through internalisation (Participants 8 and 10). Participant 13 draws on the notion of deep understanding (which corresponds with Boyanton's relating of 'powerfulness' to authenticity), by exploring culture through participation in role-play, music, dance and drama. The following sentiments highlight why the methods above were identified by participants as key pedagogical content knowledge for decolonisation:

> They are participatory and create interest in learners and at the same time, they can improve creativity of learners. These teaching methods are basically learner-centred and enable the learner to obtain knowledge, apply the knowledge to solve problems and thus creating relevance of the content to the learners. (Participant 8)

> I think the active methods can help to teach history content because learners are able to participate in each and everything and they can act and play what happened in the past using role-play method and this will enable them grasp the content better. (Participant 10)

> The content necessitates a connection between educational institutions and society and thus, students should interact with society members. For example, through field studies and projects. Through interviews students are able to know the history of local places. Certain things need to be taught using field-work and role-play which enable learners to understand and enjoy more historical events rather than just being theoretical which creates boredom more than activeness. (Participant 9)

> Brainstorming and role play encourage activeness in class; the teacher is in a position to identify learners' understanding. It encourages hands-on teaching, which enables deep understanding or mastering of content because learners learn by seeing. Role play will enable students to participate and act out roles of the past that will display cultural values for example music, dance and drama. (Participant 13)

> A guest speaker who is knowledgeable about historical facts can shed light on some issues. Guest lecturers and visitors attract attention of the learners and some provide firsthand information with relevant examples. This also strengthens the community's involvement in the education system. Guest speakers always have something new and crucial to share about the past that may be origin[ated] from a primary source that may not appear in any textbook. (Participant 24)

Further comments about decolonisation of the History Curriculum and related pedagogy

A further selection of interview data touches on regaining ownership both personally and locally, with Participants 6, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 19 recommending a shift away from too much European history (17 mentions 'cultural imperialism' in connection with too much European history). Participant 8 wants the examinations board assessment procedure to be decolonised, and Participants 9 and 10 recommend active teaching and learning methods. Participants 10, 11, 17 and 18 want practical engagement, and not just listening to stories. Participant 22 wants discussion as a key to active learning. Participant 16 wants all of the tribes of Uganda to be studied so that everyone is represented and included. There are some interesting thoughts here too on core and choice as curriculum principles. Participant 18 wants some topics that are no longer relevant to be phased out, like the history of East African coastal towns and the long-distance trade topic. Here is a small sample:

> Use traditional systems that have worked in our neighbouring countries. For example, taking the example of Rwanda, a country that was faced with numerous challenges after the 1994 Genocide but using traditional justice systems (Gacaca courts), the country was able to at least manage the post-conflict period effectively and today development is vivid in Rwanda through community engagements and 'inclusive' leadership at least at lower levels. Thus, students should much be exposed to their traditional experiences and heritages. (Participant 7)

> Abolish the history of coastal towns in East Africa if not it should be taught with a relevance to the present situation. Long-distance trade [as a topic] should be phased out because it will not happen again due to the advancement in technology. (Participant 18)

> The topics covered around East African history are relevant; however, there should be more content coverage on Ugandan History especially the post-Independence history and even the methods of teaching should change. Topics in European history seem irrelevant at A-level apart from a few like World War 1 & 2 where Africans were involved we should study the history of Uganda as it's more relevant to us. (Participant 21)

> There is need to re-centre narratives that have been rendered invisible and misrepresented by the structures of colonialism. (Participant 24)

The last comment reflects what Linda Chisholm wrote about the revised (2002) South African History Curriculum, which aimed 'at permitting the unofficial, the hidden, to become visible' (Chisholm, 2004, p. 188). This also provides a context for Weldon's observations (2015, p. 101):

> This would hopefully provide opportunities for young people, in Giroux's terms, to become border crossers. According to Giroux's concept of border pedagogy, young people need to be provided with opportunities to engage with texts that both affirm and interrogate the complexity of their histories. They should not be seen as a cohesive group, but young people whose 'multilayered and often contradictory voices and experiences intermingle with the weight of particular histories that will not easily fit into the master narrative' (Giroux, 1992, p. 34). (Weldon, 2015, p. 101)

Conclusion

How far do the participants' perspectives confirm the propositions in the working hypotheses? Ownership, mutuality, active learning, dialogue and discussion, relevance and inclusion undoubtedly emerge as key positive factors in the responses. The participants also list and reflect on what they themselves value for the present and the future and how best this might be communicated. Local examples of conflict resolution are given (for example, Gacaca courts in Rwanda). This reflects a wider awareness of the need for 'glocal' solutions (Mampane et al, 2018) in this case finding within local wisdom an approach to the global, for example the use of the goodwill-based 'ubuntu' framework as a paradigm for reconciliatory (or inclusive) narratives as evaluated in the decolonising literature of Assié-Lumumba (2016) and Brock-Utne (2016). Neo-colonialism from China and other parts of Asia is also mentioned. The teaching methods which are identified and favoured emphasise those which allow activity, ownership, mutuality and the process of internalisation to run parallel with the content itself. Where the content is seen as exclusive of the histories or cultures of some ethnic groups, then those methods cannot be used meaningfully. This corresponds with Keet's critique (2014) of 'epistemic othering' and shows that decolonisation is an ongoing process of resistance.

The richness of Uganda's cultures in music, dance, costume and storytelling is celebrated, and the use of the local communities as partners in the process of education is strongly recommended, feeding into – but also broadening – the concepts set out in the working hypotheses of mutuality,

authenticity and powerfulness or empowerment. The wider significance of community involvement in inquiry-based learning undertaken by local schools is that older generations can share a dialogue based on unofficial history (or memories) that sit alongside other more official narratives. As a method it also has several virtues. It is both diverse and inclusive, as it is applicable across the nation's regions and ethnicities. It involves an exchange of understanding, and it touches on the fifth and sixth benchmarks of historical thinking, historical perspectives and the ethical dimension, the latter to investigate and perhaps even deploy, the working of the ubuntu paradigm. As one of the participant interviewees eloquently states, the need to 're-centre narratives that have been invisible and misrepresented', gets to the heart of the problem, and this indeed can certainly be applied to Uganda, both locally and nationally, but might also be applied to wider regional and global contexts.

The findings suggest how decolonisation vis-à-vis the curriculum might be included. It is important to acknowledge that the decolonisation mission is a challenge; it is not an event but a process that involves careful planning; listening to many divergent voices; reflecting on what is possible and not possible in a school or university context; and implementation and review of all actions (Mheta et al., 2018). African knowledge traditions have hitherto been on the periphery due to over-reliance on western and northern knowledge traditions. But does this mean an outright abandoning of hegemonic knowledge traditions and replacing them with the previously marginalised knowledge traditions? We argue that it does not. There should be ways of working with existing knowledge traditions in a manner that will make them more relevant to the African context. This also draws on the deeper meanings within the 'ubuntu' paradigm. The paper is by no means prescriptive but opens dialogue on rethinking the Ugandan school History curriculum and the ways in which it is organised and taught. It is hoped that the paper will prompt more discussions and dialogical conversations on the decolonisation of history education in Uganda, the East African context and African history generally.

Figure 1 Map showing the distribution of language families in Uganda, with names of most of Uganda's languages (Dingemanse, 2006).

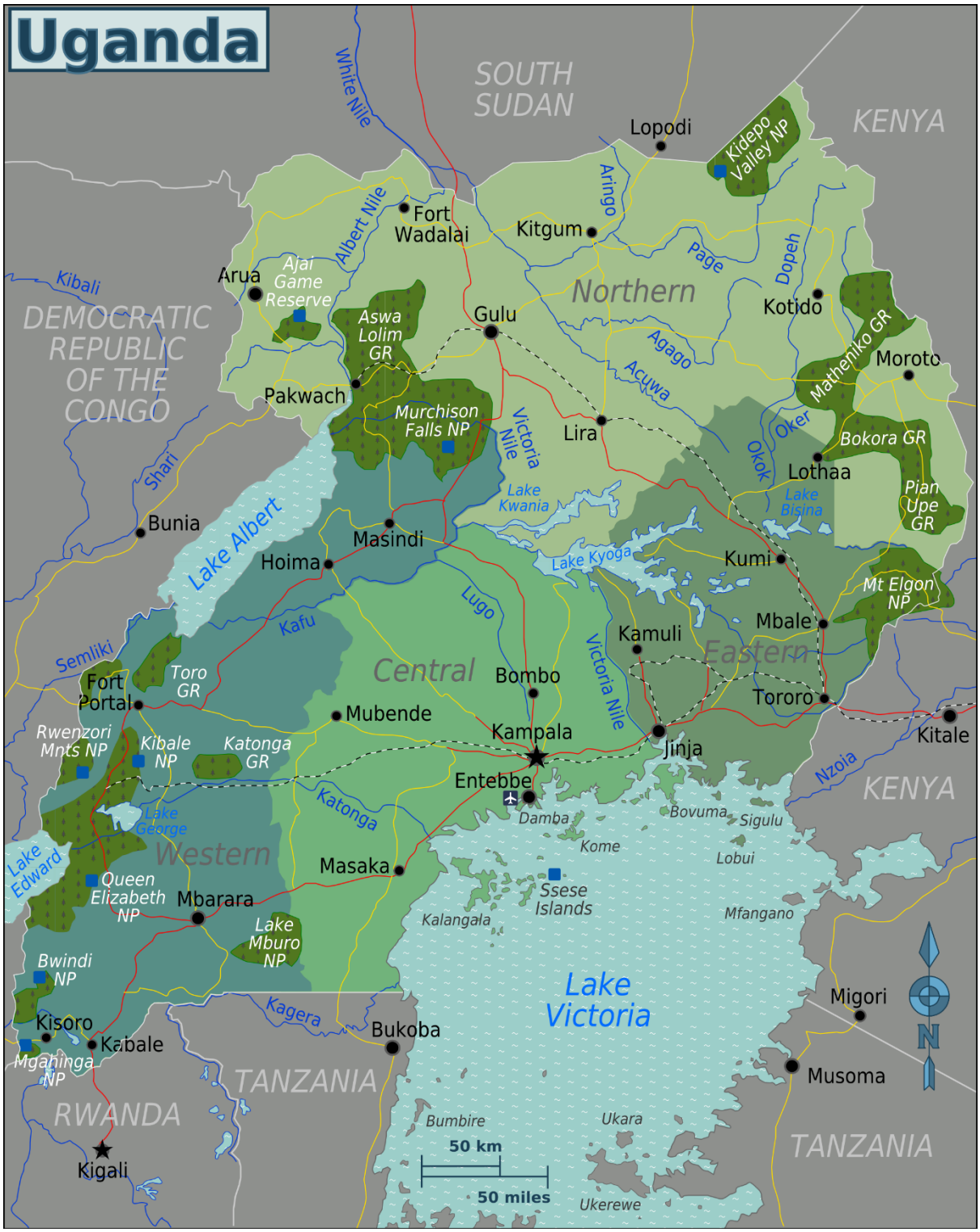

Figure 2 A Map showing the regions of Uganda (Burmesedays, 2010)

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Endnotes

[1] Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu language term that might be translated to mean a quality that includes the essential human virtues, e.g. compassion and humanity; its use can be seen in a quote from South Africa's Interim Constitution (1993), "… there is a need for understanding not vengeance, ubuntu not victimization". (See Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 200 of 1993, National Unity and Reconciliation)