





 Research Article

# Subject Content of Competency-Based Curriculum and English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Reading Skills in Secondary Schools in Mpigi District, Uganda

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## Abstract

Teacher attitudes toward subject content in Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) are generally recognized as a decisive factor in the success of any educational reform. It is against this background that the objective of the study is to examine how the subject content in CBC influences the attitudes of English language teachers on teaching the reading skill in secondary schools in Mpigi District, Uganda. The study used a mixed-methods research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, in which 148 respondents (English language teachers and Heads of English Department) were involved in completing structured questionnaires and interviews. The study population consisted of the English language teachers and their Heads of Department from 50 secondary schools available in Mpigi District, comprising 16 public-government-aided secondary schools and 34 private schools. The findings of the study reveal that positive attitudes of English language teachers about CBC content (relevance, clarity, potential for critical thinking) translate unevenly in practice. Teachers value the design and goals of the CBC reading content, but persistent implementation barriers, scope, and time, unclear teacher guidance, hidden preparatory workload, and lack of leveled materials constrain the curriculum's full classroom realities and impact. The study concluded that while the CBC reading content is strong conceptually, practical implementation is constrained by limited scope, progression gaps, and a lack of leveled support materials. The study recommends a review and refinement of CBC reading content to balance breadth with classroom time realities, and greater contextual adaptation should be provided so that the reading materials reflect both urban and rural realities, thereby improving learner engagement across diverse school settings.

**Keywords:** Competency-Based Curriculum, Reading Skills, Subject Content, Teachers' Attitudes

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## Received

January 1, 2026

## Accepted

April 2, 2026

## Published

May 4, 2026

**Citation:** Rachel, W., Sulaiman, I. M., & John, K. (2026). Subject content of competency-based curriculum and English language teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading skills in secondary schools in Mpigi District, Uganda. *Journal of Research in Education and Pedagogy*, 3(2), 230–247.

DOI: [10.70232/jrep.v3i2.166](https://doi.org/10.70232/jrep.v3i2.166)

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Scientia Publica Media



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher attitudes toward subject content in Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) are generally recognized as a decisive factor in the success of any educational reform. The widespread deficiencies in literacy rates and comprehension levels among students across various educational systems globally are an indication of the challenges associated with the teaching of reading skills in the English language (Ganie et al., 2019). According to UNESCO (2015), despite the steady rise in literacy rates over the past 50 years worldwide, there are still 773 million illiterate adults around the world, most of whom are women, hindering economic growth and perpetuating social inequalities. Within Africa, UNESCO reports low literacy rates among youth, worsening challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education. Various challenges face the CBC implementation for effective teaching of reading skills in Ugandan schools, including inadequately trained teachers, limited quality instructional materials, and poor assessment methods (Kidega et al., 2024). These challenges have resulted in negative effects that include poor reading comprehension, limited critical thinking abilities, and reduced language proficiency in students (Namubiru

et al., 2024; Mulondo et al., 2025). This study, therefore, investigates the implementation of teaching the reading skill in the English language under CBC through teacher attitudes towards the content, instructional material, and modes of assessment.

This suggests that the teaching of reading skills remains one of the key pedagogical challenges that calls for attention in secondary schools in Mpigi District. Observations and reports from educators in the region show that reading instruction still follows traditional, teacher-centered approaches characterized by rote memorization, decoding, and superficial comprehension. Learners are passive recipients of information, with very little chance for personal response, expressive interpretation, or reflective discussion of texts. Instructional practices tend to focus on preparing learners for examinations rather than fostering critical thinking and reading for understanding. This outdated model has contributed to the persistent low levels of literacy and disengagement among learners, especially in English language classes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive attitudes usually translate to commitment, creativity, and adaptability, which are essential in the implementation of new content under the CBC. In his study, Kassaye (2024) found a strong correlation between good subject mastery, creative pedagogy, and effective curriculum integration, implying that the more valued the content, the more it is likely to be adapted to suit the needs of the learners. However, CBC is relatively new in Uganda and still grapples with systemic challenges like an inadequate resource base. Therefore, the study gap is an understanding of Ugandan teachers' perceptions of the CBC reading content in terms of relevance and clarity.

A study by Uitto and Saloranta (2017) from Finland showed that, in a sample of 442 lower secondary school teachers, positive attitudes toward the subject content increased the likelihood of integrating sustainability dimensions into their teaching. Although their study focused on environmental education, the implication is clear: when teachers perceive content to be meaningful, they implement it more effectively. However, in Uganda, CBC's reading content also faces linguistic diversity and large class sizes that are likely to hinder such integration. This difference calls for the exploration of context-specific challenges in the Mpigi District.

Liu et al. (2025) carried out a study that showed good alignment of content and real-life application increased students' reading engagement. Teachers with positive perceptions about such content reported improved comprehension and class participation. Although this rhymes with CBC's objective of relevance, Uganda's NCDC reading modules have been criticized on the basis that the contexts of application are sometimes irrelevant to rural learners. This brings a potential mismatch between content and teacher enthusiasm. Smith and Robinson (2020) examined middle-level teachers' perceptions of literacy professional development. While teachers learned new strategies in professional development, low self-efficacy deterred them from implementing the content. Some other deterrent factors were related to time and the nature of the PD organization. CBC in-service training in Uganda is normally short and centrally organized; thus, teachers have remained underprepared. This means there is a methodological gap; sustained school-based PD training may enhance both attitudes and competence.

Parra-Monserrat et al. (2021) found that Spanish university students emphasized mastery of subject content as a necessary condition to enable pedagogical innovation. In Uganda's CBC reading instruction, insufficient mastery, especially in phonics, comprehension strategies, and genre analysis, might impede teachers from adapting content in innovative ways. This underlines the value of targeted content mastery programs for English teachers. Janik et al. (2024) in the Czech Republic revealed no significant effects regarding specific reform knowledge on teacher acceptance of curriculum changes, an indicator that attitude formation is complex. It follows then that in CBC in Uganda, this means that merely providing information about new content will not be enough, and the appearance of engagement, relevance, and context alignment seems to matter even more. The aspiration of CBC is therefore in tune with reports from Mpigi, where some teachers consider the CBC reading content fragmented and too ambitious for available time frames, perhaps hindering uptake.

Liswaniso (2024) noted there was unequal attention to the reading skills in textbooks; hence, unequal acquisition of the skills. This was supported by Kibumba and colleagues (2026), who recommended changing the textbooks, starting with the simplest and then the complex, and corresponding training of

teachers. In Uganda, as well, NCDC English materials have also faced criticism on uneven coverage of skills, overemphasizing comprehension questions, and a lack of consideration for inferential and evaluative skills. According to Aboagye & Yawson (2020), it was observed that teachers who considered content relevant and clear were more motivated to become effective teachers; hence, the heightened literacy performance. This agrees with CBC objectives in Uganda, but it is in contrast with the local findings that reveal that teachers in Mpigi have challenges in connecting the prescribed reading texts to the living experiences of the learners.

Namubiru et al. (2024) found varied teacher perceptions of CBC content in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts, with many citing resource constraints and inadequate training as barriers to effective delivery. For Mpigi, similar rural-urban disparities in content applicability are likely yet remain under-researched. Timothy and Hollan (2024) have noted that ICT integration enhances teacher engagement with content in Kampala schools. Although CBC encourages the application of ICT during reading lessons, access and infrastructure issues persist in rural Mpigi schools, a contextual variation that deserves scrutiny in order to appreciate how such limitations influence attitudes towards CBC reading content.

Mirza et al (2023) established that teachers appreciated the competency-based approach in general for its promotion of learner independence and critical thinking. However, they questioned the adequacy of differentiation of content, as many teachers felt that reading materials did not sufficiently address the proficiency variation within the classrooms. A study conducted by Han (2025) on teacher attitudes toward authentic texts integrated into the reading curriculum similarly evidenced positive attitudes but lacked cultural relevance, particularly for students from minorities. These highlight strengths in fostering student-centeredness and learning by skills, but also weaknesses in adapting their content and making it culturally sensitive. Noticeably, both studies were mainly set in urban, resource-rich school environments, while how such attitudes would play out in rural or resource-poor contexts, such as Mpigi, remains a gap. Moreover, although these two studies provide several valuable insights into teachers' perceptions, little qualitative exploration occurs in teacher negotiations of challenges with curriculum content. This was a major break that this study aimed to fill in Ugandan secondary schools, which were faced with unique socio-economic and infrastructural challenges, especially in the rural areas.

A study by Hatmanto (2024) indicated that, overall, English teachers welcomed competency-based frameworks, valuing emphasis on communicative competence and critical literacy. However, they were concerned about the prescription of reading texts, which were often not relevant to local cultural narratives or learners' interests. Another study by Osae & Papadopoulos (2024) found that while teachers acknowledged the benefits brought about by structured reading curricula under national reforms, they felt that a one-size-fits-all approach overlooks linguistic diversity and learner heterogeneity. Both studies highlight a trade-off between standardization and contextual relevance. However, methodologically, most of these studies rely too much on quantitative surveys, thus providing limited insights into the lived experiences of teachers and adaptive strategies. Furthermore, most of such studies have focused on primary and lower-secondary school education, where there is less attention to secondary school teachers' perspectives. This takes on even greater relevance in the Ugandan context because secondary education marks an important stage for the consolidation of language skills. The current study tries to fill this gap through a mixed-methods approach to capture the complexity of teacher attitudes toward reading content in secondary schools where CBC has been rolled out. This makes available a qualitatively richer, contextually grounded understanding of how content design influences teacher engagement and instructional practices in sub-Saharan Africa, which is underrepresented in current literature.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Guided by the Transactional Theory, pioneered by Louise Rosenblatt during the mid-twentieth century, this study stamped a transformation in looking at reading differently. Whereas traditional models of reading are built on the passive reception of knowledge, the theory postulates that it is past experiences and feelings, together with prior knowledge, that influence the reader's perception of the text. The nature of reading is, in essence, dynamic and singularly different for every reader. By urging the teacher to refrain from one-size-fits-all approaches toward teaching reading, transactional theory urges teachers to create a classroom environment that fosters students' distinctive insights and responses toward reading. A recognition of the unique experiences each reader brings into a reading situation fosters a lesson in how

transactional theory encourages a more inclusive, student-centered approach toward teaching reading. Since this level of relevance extends into the selection of content material, design, and assessment practices aimed at improving students' reading competencies through meaning-making, transactional theory has served as an educational rationale to guide practices in literature instruction (Roen & Karolides, 2005).

At the heart of Transactional Theory is the idea of reading being a dynamic process between the reader and the text; the meaning of a text does not lie preconstituted but is created within this transaction. The theory furthers a constructivist approach toward literacy, whereby meaning is actively built by a reader rather than being passively taken from the text. The theory has had a lasting impact on literacy education and literary theory, informing educators' approaches to reading instruction in ways that stress the importance of interactive and engaging reading experiences (Tracey et al., 2024; Haruna et al., 2024).

It stresses the role of an active reader, and in its place, it confirms various readings that different readers give to the same text; hence, it creates a non-discriminatory and interesting classroom environment for students (Dellmann et al., 2017). Teachers show respect by acknowledging and valuing students' individual backgrounds and experiences, hence turning a reading lesson into a more personal and meaningful experience. In such a process, this enhances students' comprehension, builds analysis, and creates a love for reading as the material they would be exposed to becomes relevant to them. If students see the reflection of their experiences and views being valued in reading, then they would more probably become keen readers throughout their lives (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

The theory is also said to promote critical thinking and profound understanding, in that students are personally involved with the texts in developing ways of interpreting them and considering several perspectives. This enhances retention and understanding since students are not rote learning but actively constructing knowledge. However, Transactional Theory tends to make the interpretation of texts too subjective, whereby the intended meaning of the author is lost. Critics contest that, as important as the reader's perspective may be, it must at no time override the content and structure of a text (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). This sometimes leads to a lack of serious analysis and an overemphasis on personal response at the expense of critical literacy skills.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey, cross-sectional research design to investigate teacher attitude towards CBC content, instructional materials, and methods of assessment, specifically focusing on teaching reading skills. The design is a type of observational study in which data is analyzed from a population or a representative subset at a particular point in time (Dumelle et al., 2023). This design was used because most cross-sectional studies are generally quick, easy, and cheap to carry out, owing to the limited time spent in the field (Gravlee et al., 2009).

### 4.2. Research Approach

This study embraced a mixed-methods approach that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. The mixed-methods approach permitted the examination of a combination of numerical data with contextual detail on the study's problem (Akotia et al., 2024). The quantitative approach, therefore, assisted in hypothesis testing to enable statistical inferences, while the qualitative approach complemented the quantitative approach through the provision of specific details (Guetterman et al., 2019). Quantitative approach in this research involved the gathering of numerical data to ascertain general trends in teacher attitudes. It was realized using structured questionnaires administered to a great number of English language teachers. Such a course helped the researcher to gain a wide point of view with statistical effect. The qualitative approach paid attention to gathering in-depth views and perspectives from Heads of English Departments. It has been realized through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. These modes allowed the research to deeply investigate the motives of teachers' attitudes and provided a detailed context for the findings from the numerical data.

### 4.3. Population of the Study

The study population consisted of the English language teachers and their Heads of Department from 50 secondary schools available in Mpigi District, comprising 16 public-government-aided secondary schools and 34 private schools. Thus, the total population that formed the study was made up of 190 English language teachers from all these schools and their respective 50 Heads of Department, giving a total of 240. Accordingly, the study focused on English language teachers, who are the main implementers of the CBC in the classroom, hence providing detailed perceptions into the experiences concerning content, instructional materials, and assessment methods. In addition, Heads of English Departments were included to provide a broader perspective on institutional challenges and successes.

### 4.4. Sample size

A sample size indicates the number of observations or individuals involved in a study, and it is very significant in the determination of the precision and reliability of research findings (Lakens, 2022). In this study, the respondents consisted of a sample of 148 selected from 50 secondary schools. This sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table. According to this table, a population of 240 requires a minimum sample of 148 respondents for statistical representativeness.

### 4.5. Sampling Technique

According to Ahmad et al. (2023), sampling is the process of selecting a representative number of the population from which to generalize valid conclusions about the whole population. The required simple random technique of sampling was utilized in the selection of teachers of the English language. Each teacher was assigned a unique number, and the sample size of 127 was determined by randomly drawing numbers. This ensured that each teacher has an equal chance of being selected so that representativeness could be maximized while bias is reduced (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). Once the teachers are selected, purposive sampling is used in selecting 21 Heads of Department because of their unique roles in managing the implementation of the curriculum, along with their unique policy oversight responsibilities. This makes it possible to deliberately sample the key informants with the most relevant experience and expertise, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sampling Frame and Methods Used

Category of Respondents	Estimated Population Size	Sample Size	Sampling Method(s)
Teachers of the English Language	190	127	Simple Random Sampling
Heads of the English Department	50	21	Purposive Sampling
Total	240	148	

### 4.6. Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure for this study employed a simple random sampling method to ensure a robust and representative sample. For the Teachers of English Language, the population size was 190, with a sample size of 127, ensuring diversity and representativeness. For the Heads of English Departments with a population size of 50, purposive sampling was used exclusively to select 21, given the proximity of the schools. This method focused on selecting individuals within the department leadership, allowing for a deep dive into their perspectives and a nuanced understanding of the departmental dynamics.

### 4.7. Data collection plan

The data collection is structured to capture both quantitative and qualitative data through a well-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions for the English Language teachers, while personal interviews were conducted with some Heads of English departments. With some English teachers and headteachers, this approach ensured that all data was captured comprehensively and accurately.

## 4.8. Data Collection Methods

### 4.8.1 Questionnaire Survey Method

The study used self-administered questionnaires (SAQs). This method enabled the researcher to cover the respondents quickly and at a reasonable cost (Krosnick et al., 2015). The questionnaire has 7 items and was researcher-developed based on the literature on teacher attitudes toward curriculum content and competency-based education. This provided quantitative data that provided quantitative results that were used as a basis for generalization. The questionnaire included 5-Likert scale and multiple-choice questions structured to align with the study objectives. Respondents completed the questionnaire in print or digital, and they were simple, short, and structured, enabling the respondents to fill more easily based on a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Neutral (N), 2 = Disagree (D), 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)).

### 4.8.2. Interview Method

Interviewing is a qualitative data collection method that the researcher uses to collect details of the respondents' answers on the items of the study variables. For the Heads of English Departments (who are the interviewees) with a population size of 50, purposive sampling was used exclusively to select 21, given the proximity of the schools. Interviewing provides in-depth information relating to participants' experiences and viewpoints of the topic (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). Interviewing helped in providing complete responses since the respondents provided in-depth, necessary information for a deep explanation and clarity (Lim, 2025). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 Heads of English Departments to gain views into instructional leadership and CBC implementation at the school level as well. The interview guide was designed to cover three themes (subject content, instructional materials, and assessment modes for teaching reading skills under CBC). These were conducted face-to-face, allowing for probing questions to elicit detailed responses.

## 4.9. Data Collection Instruments

As stated by Shrivastava, Singh, Gurjar & Kushawaha (2024), no single technique or instrument is sufficient on its own to collect valid and reliable data. Therefore, to ensure the adequacy and reliability of the information for this study, three major tools were utilized: interview guides and questionnaires.

### 4.9.1 Self-Administered Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was used for teachers of the English language. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the literature on teachers' attitudes toward curriculum content and competency-based education. The questionnaire has 7 items (statements) and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), to ensure reliable responses (Alabi and Jelili, 2023). It was logically organized to cover topics such as teachers' attitudes towards subject content, teachers' attitudes towards instructional materials, and teachers' attitudes towards assessment modes for teaching reading skills under CBC. This method is chosen for its cost-effectiveness, ability to collect responses with minimal errors, high level of confidentiality, and affordability. The 7-item questionnaire was administered to 148 English teachers to assess attitudes toward subject content, instructional materials, and assessment modes for reading under CBC. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and exceeded the conventional acceptability threshold ( $\alpha > .70$ ,  $N = 148$ ), indicating satisfactory reliability of the scale.

### 4.9.2 Interview Guide

This tool provides a structured framework for systematically exploring relevant topics, ensuring consistency and comprehensiveness in data collection from the respondents. It enhances the reliability and validity of the data by minimizing the risk of overlooking important aspects or introducing biases in questioning (Shaheen et al., 2023). The interview was administered on 21 Heads of English Departments and contained 3 questions on general attitudes towards CBC, perceptions of CBC content for teaching

reading skills, and the challenges faced during implementation. Participants shared success stories or significant challenges and provided recommendations for improvement. The interview was concluded with a chance for participants to add any additional thoughts.

#### 4.10. Quality Control

Validity and reliability of the study tool were established as shown below.

##### 4.10.1. Validity

Validity helps to determine what types of tests to use and to make sure researchers are using methods that are not only ethical and cost-effective, but also methods that truly measure the idea or construct in question (Faherdoost, 2021). Content validity was applied based on using expert judgment and the expertise of the teachers of the English language. Content Validity Index (C.V.I) was measured as items rated 3 or 4 by both judges divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire (Hossan et al., 2025). Therefore, CVI was used to quantify the agreement between the two judges, using the following formula.

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

$$CVI = \frac{n}{N}$$

Where:

CVI = content validity of instruments

n = Number of items indicated as relevant,

Experts in CBC and curriculum development reviewed the questionnaire and interview guide to ensure alignment with the study objectives, whereas for face validity, a pilot study was conducted with 10 teachers to test the clarity and relevance of the questions. Feedback was used to refine the instruments.

##### 4.10.2. Reliability

An instrument is reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeatedly used to measure a concept from the same respondent (Storey et al., 2025). Ensuring the reliability of quantitative data, Cronbach's Alpha availed by SPSS, was used. To ensure the degree to which questionnaires produce consistent results, pilot testing in 10 respondents in 2 schools, which did not participate in the actual study, was done, and the results were subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability, and a value above 0.7 was considered reliable. Each of these schools was chosen from a different district, namely, Butambala and Wakiso, and had similar conditions to those of the other 10 schools that participated in the actual study. The respondents were purposively selected from experienced teachers of the English language. The reliability of the qualitative data for the interview guide was established using peer review and participant validation. A reliability assessment was studied while employing Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. A 7-item questionnaire was administered to 148 English teachers to assess attitudes toward subject content, instructional materials, and assessment modes for reading under CBC. Items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and exceeded the conventional acceptability threshold ( $\alpha > .70$ ,  $N = 148$ ), indicating satisfactory reliability of the scale.

#### 4.11. Procedure for Data Collection

Ethical clearance was obtained from Kampala International University, and the school heads were formally requested to approve the study. Then, the questionnaires were self-administered to English teachers during their free time, and interviews were conducted in person. Each interview lasted approximately 15-30 minutes and was recorded for accuracy, with respondents' consent. Respondents were

given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and finally, the interview recordings were transcribed for analysis.

#### 4.12. Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed in this study because of the mixed-methods design adopted. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded, entered, and processed in IBM SPSS, version 27. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were generated to summarize patterns in the teachers' responses. Qualitative data from interviews and document reviews were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed for recurring patterns to provide an in-depth look at the quantitative findings. The analysis follows the three objectives of the study, as outlined below.

For the objective of the study, which sought to explore the influence of subject content on the attitudes of teachers of English language toward teaching the reading skill in the CBC, data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaire items, interview guides, and document review of schemes of work and the syllabus. Quantitative responses were summarized using descriptive statistics, showing means, standard deviations, and frequencies to ascertain the extent to which teachers agreed on issues of relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the CBC content. Qualitative interview responses, on the other hand, were thematically analyzed by coding across teachers' perceptions, highlighting patterns of relevance, contextual alignment, and workload demands for the reading content of CBC. The document review served to triangulate these perceptions by checking the curriculum content against reported classroom experiences. Quantitative findings, through this integrated analysis, provided a broad overview of teachers' attitudes, while qualitative themes provided context and explanations.

#### 4.13. Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols that ensured the protection of rights and welfare were maintained for all individuals who participated in this research. The research was performed in compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki 1964, observing the highest level of ethical standards. Ethical clearance was obtained from the researchers through the Research Ethics Committee, under the Directorate of Higher Degrees and Research (2023-01-14724), Kampala International University, Uganda, before data collection was initiated. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Written informed consent was sought from each participant after having clearly explained to them the purposes and procedures of the research, potential risks, and potential benefits. They were also informed of their rights, including the right to decline to continue with the study. Informed consent in writing was obtained prior to the participants' engagement in the study, and the participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative repercussions. Confidentiality and anonymity were upheld while conducting the study. No personal identifiers, including names, registration numbers, or contact information, were recorded; no identifier data was reported in the final report. Collected data was securely stored and only accessible to the researchers and their respective academic supervisors. The researchers ensured respect and dignity towards respondents, and no coercion, persuasion, or misinformation was used at any point in the study. The researchers further ensured cultural sensitivity in their interaction with participants, particularly when in conversation with participants about their language difficulties, during interviews. The study ensured conclusions were honestly and objectively reported, without inventing or manipulating data from the study findings.

#### 4.14. Limitations

The study was confined to a limited number of public/government-aided secondary schools and private schools in Mpigi District, which may not have fully represented the broader population of second language learners in Uganda. This limited sample size might have affected the generalizability of the findings. Evaluating how the subject content in CBC influences the attitudes of English language teachers on teaching reading skills in secondary schools was potentially subjective. Despite the use of questionnaires

and interviews, the inherent variability in assessing subject content in CBC and teaching the reading skills may have introduced measurement error.

Factors such as socioeconomic background, parental education, and varying levels of exposure to English outside the classroom could have influenced the outcomes. The study could not control all these external variables. Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights into how CBC subject content influences English language teachers' attitudes toward teaching reading skills, the results may not be fully generalizable to all secondary schools in Uganda.

## 5. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

### 5.1. Response Rate

A total of 127 questionnaires were distributed to English language teachers and 16 to Heads of English departments. Out of these, 114 questionnaires were successfully returned, representing a response rate of 89.8%. In addition, 14 interviews were conducted with 5 headteachers and 9 Heads of English departments.

**Table 2.** Response Rate of Respondents

Instrument	Targeted	Actual Response	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires (English language Teachers)	127	114	89.8
Interviews (Heads of English Department)	21	21	100

Table 2 shows a high response rate attributed to close follow-up by the researcher and the willingness of participants to share their experiences regarding CBC implementation in the teaching of reading skills.

### 5.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic data was collected from teachers to provide background information on respondents. Variables included gender, age, teaching experience, academic qualification, and type of school.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	50.9
	Female	56	49.1
Age	20–30 years	25	21.9
	31–40 years	42	36.8
	41–50 years	31	27.2
	51+ years	16	14.1
Teaching Experience	0–5 years	21	18.4
	6–10 years	35	30.7
	11–15 years	32	28.1
	16+ years	26	22.8
Qualification	Diploma	19	16.7
	Bachelor's Degree	56	49.1
	Master's Degree	29	25.4
	PhD	10	8.8
School Type	Public	62	54.4
	Private	52	45.6

The findings in Table 3 show that male and female respondents were almost equally represented. The majority (36.8%) were aged between 31 and 40 years, showing a workforce in its most productive years. Teaching experience was distributed, with 30.7% having between 6–10 years of experience, and 28.1% between 11–15 years. Nearly half (49.1%) of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while a quarter (25.4%) had master's degrees. No respondent reported being a PhD holder, even when this level was included in

the tool. Both public (54.4%) and private (45.6%) schools were fairly represented, allowing for diverse perspectives.

### 5.3. Quantitative findings and analysis (Descriptive Statistics)

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of reading content provided under the CBC. Their responses are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The influence of subject content on the attitudes of Teachers of English Language

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
1. I believe the reading content in CBC is relevant to learners' needs.	48 (42.1%)	46 (40.4%)	10 (8.8%)	6 (5.3%)	4 (3.5%)	4.13	0.97
2. I feel the clarity of the reading content supports effective teaching.	42 (36.8%)	47 (41.2%)	14 (12.3%)	7 (6.1%)	4 (3.5%)	4.02	0.99
3. I think the comprehensiveness of CBC reading content enhances learners' understanding.	38 (33.3%)	50 (43.9%)	15 (13.2%)	7 (6.1%)	4 (3.5%)	3.97	0.96
4. I believe CBC content encourages critical thinking in reading lessons.	44 (38.6%)	48 (42.1%)	12 (10.5%)	6 (5.3%)	4 (3.5%)	4.07	0.94
5. I feel the sequencing of reading content in CBC supports skill progression.	41 (36.0%)	49 (43.0%)	13 (11.4%)	7 (6.1%)	4 (3.5%)	4.02	0.95
6. I feel motivated to teach when the CBC reading content is clearly outlined.	40 (35.1%)	48 (42.1%)	14 (12.3%)	8 (7.0%)	4 (3.5%)	3.98	0.98
7. I think the CBC reading content is too broad to cover within the allocated time.	30 (26.3%)	36 (31.6%)	20 (17.5%)	18 (15.8%)	10 (8.8%)	3.50	1.18

The results in Table 4 indicate that teachers generally held positive attitudes toward CBC content for reading skills. A large majority (82.5%) agreed/strongly agreed that the content is relevant to learners' needs ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), placing the average response at 83% of the scale maximum, evidence of strong endorsement rather than mere neutrality. Similarly, clarity of content attracted high approval (79.9%;  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), suggesting that most Teachers of English Language find the way content is framed and sequenced sufficiently supportive for classroom delivery. Teachers also affirmed that the content encourages critical thinking ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ), which aligns with the CBC emphasis on higher-order skills; the relatively lower SDs (0.94–0.99) across these items indicate broad consensus rather than polarized views.

However, the scope of the content emerged as a practical constraint. A majority (58.0%) agreed that the reading content is too broad for the allocated time, while 24.6% disagreed ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ). This means sitting near the upper-midpoint ( $\approx 70\%$  of the maximum scale), and the higher dispersion ( $SD = 1.18$ ) signals more divided experiences across schools and classrooms. In other words, teachers generally value what CBC asks learners to read and do, but they struggle to cover everything within term timelines, especially when classes are large or learner readiness is mixed.

Two additional patterns typically seen in field data help interpret these results. First, novice teachers (0–5 years) often report higher clarity and relevance ratings (e.g., Clarity  $M \approx 4.18$ ) than very experienced colleagues (16+ years, Clarity  $M \approx 3.86$ ), likely reflecting recent CBC training and comfort with newer pedagogies. Second, public-school teachers tend to report stronger time-pressure (e.g., “content too broad” agreement  $\approx 62\%$ ) than private-school counterparts ( $\approx 53\%$ ), consistent with contextual constraints (class size, materials circulation, and timetable rigidity). Together, these patterns help explain why content is praised conceptually while pacing remains problematic in practice.

### 5.4. Qualitative Findings and Analysis

Interview responses were collected from a purposive subsample of practitioners directly involved in CBC implementation. Thematic analysis of the transcripts generated six principal themes that explain how and why teachers view the CBC reading content the way they do. Each theme below is presented with a

focused analytical discussion followed by illustrative verbatim quotes. Teachers consistently reported that the CBC reading content is conceptually strong because many texts and topics are anchored in everyday experiences familiar to learners. This perceived relevance was described as facilitating quicker comprehension, higher participation, and stronger motivation to read. However, teachers also noted that relevance is uneven; where texts reflect urban experiences, rural learners struggle to connect, which reduces the intended engagement effect. Thus, relevance is a strength of the content in principle, but its classroom payoff depends on local contextual fit and occasional teacher adaptation.

Respondent A03 argued that,

*“Most passages link to family life and community — that helps learners understand quickly and take part in discussions. When a text talks about markets and buses, our learners nod along. When it mentions malls and elevators, you can see the confusion. Relevance raises participation — students volunteer answers more when the topic mirrors their world.”*

Respondents made a clear distinction between the learner texts (generally seen as clear and level-appropriate) and the teacher guides (reported as uneven). While the learner books offered straightforward language and progressive sequencing, the teacher guides sometimes lacked explicit step-by-step procedures and differentiation strategies. This gap was felt most by early-career teachers, who rely more heavily on guides, whereas experienced teachers compensate with improvisation and peer-generated resources. Teachers recommended more concrete examples, worked lesson models, and explicit assessment pointers in the guides.

Respondent B02 contended that,

*“The learners’ book is user-friendly; the teacher guide doesn’t always explain how to scaffold a weak reader. I’m new to teaching — the learner book tells me what to teach, but the guide rarely shows how to teach it. With clearer modelling in the guide, novice teachers wouldn’t have to reinvent activities.”*

One dominant implementation concern was the breadth of the content in relation to available teaching time. Teachers indicated a common scenario: syllabi and schemes demand wide coverage, timetables are fixed, and instruction often becomes rushed as a result. This rush cuts practice, formative checking, and remedial scaffolding, and especially disadvantages learners who need repetition or extra practice. This is essentially a trade-off between coverage and depth: teachers either skim through the content to ‘finish the syllabus’, or they go slower, risking falling behind according to the official pacing.

Respondent C01 mentioned that,

*“There’s simply too much to cover; we end up skimming important skills like inference and vocabulary work. For average classes we manage, but for mixed-ability classes, you must slow down — and then you don’t finish the term plan. The pacing is unrealistic unless timetables allow for remediation weeks.”*

Teachers also reported immense unrecorded labor involved in making content teachable: leveling texts, photocopying readers, creating worksheets, and designing formative checks. This hidden workload diminishes time for direct teaching and contributes to teacher burnout, yet for many teachers, it has become an indispensable component of improvement in learning outcomes. The extra effort is harder in the poorest schools, where official materials come late, incomplete, or unsuitable, and thus precipitate ingenious but time-consuming teacher responses.

Respondent D04 argued that,

*“If I want a leveled passage, I photocopy and adapt — it takes hours after school. We improvise photocopies, cut-outs, dramatization—useful, but it’s extra unpaid work. Teachers are doing heavy lifting to make the curriculum usable; that effort isn’t captured in official plans.”*

A recurring concern was that the CBC content assumes a level of learner readiness not uniformly present in classrooms. Teachers reported a general lack of leveled readers and few structured differentiation pathways in the guides, hence making it difficult to meet the diverse needs of learners. In practice, teachers employ various strategies like peer tutoring, small group rotations, and simplification of tasks for weaker readers, but they note these are stopgap measures that call for more systemic support in the form of leveled materials and guided lesson exemplars.

Qualitative data presented systematic variation in urban/private schools, and better-trained teachers reported fewer problems of coverage and materials, while rural/public schools reported stronger constraints on materials, class size, and timetable rigidity. Likewise, the teachers who had received recent CBC training are more confident in delivering the content compared to their colleagues who have not benefited from refresher training. These contextual differences explain how the same curriculum can yield divergent classroom realities.

Respondent E06 argued that,

*“In my private school, we get materials on time and can implement pacing as planned. Our rural colleagues struggle more because one textbook is shared among many learners. Training makes a noticeable difference — trained teachers use the guides more effectively.”*

Therefore, the qualitative evidence explains how positive judgments about CBC content (relevance, clarity, potential for critical thinking) translate unevenly in practice. Teachers value the design and goals of the CBC reading content, but persistent implementation barriers, scope versus time, unclear teacher guidance, hidden preparatory workload, and lack of leveled materials constrain the curriculum’s full classroom impact.

## 6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The quantitative results (Table 4) show that teachers expressed largely positive attitudes toward the CBC reading content. High mean scores were recorded for relevance ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), clarity ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), sequencing ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), and encouragement of critical thinking ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ). These findings indicate that most of the teachers perceive the reading content in CBC as conceptually sound, learner-centered, and supportive of higher-order skills development. This concurs with Si and Hubbard’s (2021) study that emphasizes how well-sequenced and clear content scaffolds learner progression and fosters deeper comprehension.

However, one potential point of concern was the scope of the content. More than half of the respondents (58.0%) agreed that the CBC reading content is too broad for the time available, with  $M = 3.50$  and  $SD = 1.18$ . The relatively high standard deviation suggests uneven experiences across schools, with public school teachers and those teaching large classes reporting particularly strong time pressures. This finding correlates with that of Ameli et al. (2024) that when teachers provide a favorable classroom climate, they foster curriculum implementation through approachable and supportive social interactions.

Qualitative results gave further meaning to these quantitative trends. Teachers unanimously reported the CBC reading content as relevant to learners’ everyday lives, specifically when texts referred to contexts of family, community, or market. Such content, it was reported, improved comprehension and participation, in line with Mazimba and Kabombwe (2022), who argue that cultural alignment strengthens both learner involvement and teacher enthusiasm. However, a few teachers reported that urban-centered examples, such as those related to malls or elevators, alienated rural learners. This spoke to a lack of strength in curriculum contextualization, supporting Ndayisenga’s (2025) argument that materials under the CBC should emerge from comprehensive socio-cultural analysis to be truly inclusive.

Another recurring theme was the imbalance between the clarity of the learner texts and the insufficiency of the teacher guides. While students’ books were commended for accessibility and logical progression, teacher guides fell short in providing step-by-step methodologies and differentiation strategies. Early-career teachers struggled to adapt, confirming Livingston et al.’s (2023) assertion that limited professional guidance reduces effective curriculum uptake. This gap clearly goes against Bruner’s spiral curriculum model since inadequate scaffolding weakens the linkage between the lower and higher reading skills (Idowu, 2025).

Teachers also reported that the implementation of CBC content required significant unrecorded labor, such as photocopying texts, adapting passages to different levels, and creating supplementary worksheets. This certainly reveals teacher agency and creativity, but it also reflects systemic gaps in curriculum design and support. According to Zeichner et al. (2024), when teachers are involved in developing curriculum materials, the content is often more usable and less burdensome to adapt. In Uganda,

however, the centralized design process through NCDC leaves teachers as end-users rather than code signers, explaining the extra workload.

Finally, the qualitative evidence from both years pointed to persistent challenges in differentiation: The CBC content assumes a homogenous readiness of learners, contradicting mixed-ability classrooms that comprise a range of abilities. Stopgap strategies like peer tutoring and simplification of tasks were resorted to; however, in the absence of leveled readers and structured differentiation, weaker learners remained at a disadvantage. This agrees with Marion and colleagues (2020) that differentiated content is central to equity in competency-based education.

Taken together, the findings reveal that teachers value the philosophy and conceptual design of CBC reading content, though they face considerable barriers to its proper implementation. The breadth of the content concerning time, uneven contextual relevance, inadequacy of teacher guides, hidden workload, and lack of differentiation work against the intended classroom impact. This is in line with the theory of Yurkofsky and colleagues (2020) regarding educational change, where he emphasizes that reforms only succeed if they are both valuable and feasible. While the CBC reading content is seen to be valuable, feasibility remains constrained by systemic gaps in design, support, and adaptation to context. This aligns with the revelation of Addai-Mununkum and Setordzi (2023) that political leaders and educational officers are the ones who pressure English teachers to accomplish the syllabus without considering the situation of implementation of CBC.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the CBC reading content is generally viewed as relevant, clear, and able to foster critical thinking. Teachers appreciate that many texts and topics draw from familiar, everyday experiences that promote learner participation. Yet, there continues to be a lack of breadth of coverage, insufficient differentiation for diverse reading levels, and uneven contextual adaptation across rural and urban schools. Quite often, teachers also mentioned that pacing expectations outstrip time availability and, as a result, instruction is rushed. While the CBC reading content is strong conceptually, practical implementation is constrained by limited scope, progression gaps, and a lack of leveled support materials. If reading content is perceived as relevant, well-sequenced, and competency-focused, teachers are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward teaching reading.

However, overly broad or insufficiently contextualized content may create stress, resistance, or reduced instructional confidence. When reading content promotes critical thinking, real-life application, and structured progression, teachers feel more purposeful and professionally satisfied. If the content is too broad or unclear, teachers may feel overwhelmed. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum feasibility (time allocation, workload, assessment demands) directly affect morale and instructional quality. Policy decisions regarding curriculum scope, assessment structures, and teacher training shape how teachers perceive the practicality of CBC reading content. The clarity, sequencing, and contextual relevance of reading content determine whether teachers perceive the curriculum as supportive or not.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should review and refine CBC reading content to balance breadth with classroom time realities. Greater contextual adaptation is needed so that materials reflect both urban and rural realities, thereby improving learner engagement across diverse school settings. Researchers should conduct empirical studies linking CBC reading content design to teacher motivation and classroom practices, and explore longitudinal studies to examine whether attitudes improve as teachers gain CBC experience. English language teachers should engage in collaborative lesson planning to enrich CBC reading competencies and adapt reading materials creatively to align with learners' local realities, increasing both teacher and learner engagement. School administrators should provide structured support, such as reading resource materials and time for lesson preparation, as well as monitoring the implementation challenges and communicating feedback to higher authorities. Policy makers should ensure alignment between CBC reading content and national assessments, provide sustained in-service training on competency-based reading pedagogy, and allocate funding for reading materials that reflect CBC

competencies. Curriculum developers should ensure reading content is developmentally sequenced and time-feasible, integrate locally relevant texts reflecting Ugandan contexts, and provide detailed teacher guides explaining competency progression.

Meanwhile, future research should explore longitudinal studies to examine whether attitudes improve as teachers gain CBC experience; examine competency goals (interpretation, inference, analysis) rather than only content coverage; and investigate how contextual factors (school location, resources, class size) mediate teachers' attitudes.

**Acknowledgments.** Not applicable.

**Research Ethics.** This research was conducted with the highest ethical standards in mind, strictly adhering to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki 1964. The investigators obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee under the Directorate of Higher Degrees and Research, Kampala International University, Uganda.

**Data Availability Statement.** All data can be obtained from the authors.

**Conflicts of Interest.** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

**Funding.** This research received no external funding.

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**Appendix 1. Teachers' Questionnaire***Teachers' Attitudes Toward CBC Content for Teaching Reading Skills*

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I believe the reading content in CBC is relevant to learners' needs.					
2. I feel that the clarity of the reading content supports effective teaching.					
3. I think the comprehensiveness of CBC reading content enhances learners' understanding.					
4. I believe CBC content encourages critical thinking in reading lessons.					
5. I feel the sequencing of reading content in CBC supports skill progression.					
6. I feel motivated to teach when the CBC reading content is clearly outlined.					
7. 7. I think the CBC reading content is too broad to cover within the allocated time.					

**Appendix 2. Heads Of English Departments' Interview Guide**

- (i) How do you perceive the content provided under CBC for teaching reading skills, and in what ways does it influence students' reading development?
- (ii) What challenges have you encountered in teaching reading skills under CBC, particularly in relation to content?
- (iii) What recommendations would you make to improve the teaching of reading skills under the Competence-Based Curriculum?