Read the following book review and notice the examples of positive and negative comment:

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| **CHRISTINE NUTTALL *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language***  **London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982, 232 pp.**  This book is a very comprehensive one. Its 235 pages cover the full range of topics relevant to the teacher of reading in a foreign language - and even the mature reader in a foreign language, if s/he knows enough English: reading process, purposes and speed, non-text information, word- and text-attack skills, questioning and other forms of exploitation, intensive and extensive reading programmes, including organizing a library, and the teacher as reader. The appendices contain texts, extracts from reading courses, addresses of publishers of graded ESL/EFL readers (why only British?), the vocabulary levels of these readers, and finally a bibliography. Numerous recipes for exercises and other training practice are provided. A detailed contents list compensates for the absence of an index.  The author uses a direct, teacher-friendly style, with lots of common sense. On the whole, theoretical aspects are simply and reasonable explained (often by clear illustrations), although it is not always evident how they lead to a concrete reading programme (pp. 1-19). Reading is viewed as a communicative act between a writer and a reader, with a focus on crucial reader strategies, such as flexibility of reading speed, and the use of non-text information so important to authentic text processing.  Whereas recent reading research pinpoints the importance of lexical and textual cues for comprehension, it is encouraging to see how much attention the author devotes to word- and text-attack skills (13 pages in Chapter 6 and 43 in Chapters 7 and 8). I especially appreciate the phonics section (p. 66) (which might he better named 'reading while listening'): the idea of throw-away vocabulary (as distinct from active and passive vocabularies): the suggestions for convincing students of the significance of lexical exercises for an efficient acquisition of reading skills: the concrete examples and exercises and other practical teaching suggestions which are abundant in these chapters, including the caveats against over-generalization of their effectiveness. Chapter 9 (twenty pages about questioning) is in direct line with the prominent role of questions in recent reading research. In particular, there is a very useful checklist (p. 134) to assess reliable and valid questions. Ore might even propose that the reader who knows how to ask the right questions understands a text very well. The author stresses, quite properly, that a reader should process a text not only intensively (Chapter 11), but also extensively (Chapter 12).  Of course, there are some shortcomings as well. What is lacking is a global model of reading in a foreign language and the role of the native language, based on experimental psycholinguistic research. Empirical evidence (for instance Freebody and Anderson 1983) seems to call for an interaction between all linguistic levels in reading, to the extent that when one processing route fails, others try to take over, but never replace it completely. This partial parallel interaction (see Ulijn l984a) corresponds to the skills literature which highlights characteristics of the reading skill such as hierarchy, anticipation (prediction), feedback, and automation (speed). They are dealt with piecemeal throughout the book, if at all: prediction on pp. 120 ff., feedback on p. 136 (both could be tested by the cloze procedure, pp. 28 and 148), and speed on pp. 33 ff. Word-attack skills could have been based on research such as Walker's (1981) ten-word identification strategies (cf. also Perkins and Brutten 1983). The author seems to emphasize scanning and skimming as reading styles. What about search, receptive and responsive reading?  Our major criticisms, however, are three-fold:  1 Unlike its title, the book is mainly EFL/ESL oriented. No examples from other languages are given. English-speaking professionals might he interested to read their specialist literature in other languages as well (approximately forty per cent of the world's scientific and technical literature is not written in English (Ulijn 1 984b)). What use could teachers of other languages make of this book? It is not clear to what extent the book is specific to foreign-language reading and to what extent native-language reading transfers to foreign-language reading (cf. Ulijn 1 984a).  2 The role of the textual level in reading might be overstressed. What is the importance of all kinds of discourse analysis for comprehension: are all exercises based on real problems (for whom?)? Speakers of romance and germanic languages will probably not have any problem with the rhetorical structure of English, unless it contrasts with their expectations based on their native language. (Some might be more useful for text production than for text reception.) The lexical level could also encompass interlingual contrasts which hamper comprehension, such as deceptive cognates. Vocabulary problems cannot be generalized from the basis of any native language to EFL-reading. It is very unlikely, for instance, that Dutch readers will have problems with superordinates or sub-technical words like *average, approximation, effect, combination,*or *determine,* even at the intermediate level.  3 The question is, how authentic should a text be (Chapter 3), and from which source: British or American? Do the appendices really meet readers' interests? From an ESP point of view. the integration with technical subject matters could he better, in particular towards the advanced level. The level of sophistication seems to be low for use in universities and industries in the developed countries, like those of non-English-speaking Western Europe.  To sum up, this book is thoroughly recommended to any teacher of EFL reading, despite its weak points. With some imagination, even native-language teachers of English, and teachers of other languages, could apply the plethora of exercises and suggestions to their own professional needs. The issues of authenticity of texts, textual analysis, and the role of the native language in foreign-language reading, as the)' are presented here, need to he based on more extensive experimental reading research (see also Ulijn 1982).  *Reviewed by* J. M. ULIJN  *Eindhoven University of Technology*  REFERENCES  Freebody, P. and R. C. Anderson. 1983. 'Effects of vocabulary difficulty, text cohesion and schema availability on reading comprehension.' *Reading Research Quarterly*18/3: 277-94.  Perkins, K. and S. R. Brutten. 1983. 'The effects of word frequency and contextual richness on ESL students' word identification abilities.' *Journal of Research on Reading* 6/2: 199-228.  Ulijn, J. M. 1982. 'Reading a foreign language for professional purposes: an outline for a course' in U. Jung (ed.). *Reading: A Symposium.* Oxford: Pergamon.  Ulijn, J. M. l984a. 'Reading for professional purposes: psycholinguistic evidence in a cross-linguistic perspective' in A. K. Pugh and J. M. Ulijn (eds.). *Reading For Professional Purposes: Studies in Native and Foreign Languages.* London: Heinemann.  Uijn. J. M. l984b. 'A present state of LSP reading research as reflected by a recent symposium' in J. M. Ulijn and A. K. Pugh (eds.). *Reading for Professional Purposes: Methods and Materials in Teaching Languages.* Louvain: Acco.  Walker, L. J. A. 1981 . 'Word-identification Strategies of Spanish-speaking College Students in Reading English as a Foreign Language.' Ph.D. Thesis. University of Texas at Austin. |