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*Sinopse:*

This dissertation is aimed at the teaching of critical reading in English to foreign language students. Accordingly it analyses familiarity or distance as well as interest in topics in the light of reader-text interaction. Previous research based on the product of reading has revealed that in first language excess or lack of familiarity with the contents of texts has a negative influence in their evaluation thus hindering critical reading. Our experiment which presents subject informants (foreign language learners) with texts of different degrees of familiarity and interest elicits data by

means of an introspective technique, the think aloud while reading a text. This technique served best for the verbalization of the learners' reading processes. Qualitative as well as a quantitative analysis of the subjects' reading processes are further compared to their anticipation of content (data of a title study task) and to their product of reading. This experiment led us to posit the existence of an optimal degree of familiarity or distance, namely, a medium degree (for foreign language reading) which avoids dominance or submission from the readers' part and thus best permits interpretation and evaluation. Both aspects are imperative in critical reading which is central to a critical education.