

**Frame-Shifting and Conceptual Blending in Critical Cultural Self-Reflection:
A Cognitive Linguistic Study of *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* and Readers' Reports**

Yuanyuan He
Peking University

This study is focused on frame-shifting and conceptual blending involved in the development of undergraduates' critical cultural self-reflection through reading *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* (hereinafter referred to as *the Nacirema*). Written by Horace M. Miner, the article describes the Nacirema, an allegedly little-known tribe living in North America and the curious rituals performed by them. Actually, *the Nacirema* is a hilarious parody of an anthropological study: what is satirized is the typical modern ideal of personal hygiene and medical practices as are represented by the American, Nacirema spelt backwards. Class assignments and examination papers from a total of 22 Chinese undergraduates of Peking University were collected and analyzed in detail. Those students were asked to report their reflection on the learning experience of reading *the Nacirema* after attending an Intercultural Communication course. Definitions of frames, frame elements and lexical units developed by FrameNet Project, which is based on Frame Semantics (Fillmore, 1982, 1985), were used in this study to determine frames evoked in one paragraph of *the Nacirema*. Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier, 1997; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002) was used to explicate the construction and integration of mental spaces which facilitate the process of frame-shifting. The results of the study were the following: (1) thorough interpretation of the paragraph under discussion requires a conceptual shifting from Rite FRAME to Dentistry FRAME; (2) frame-shifting depends on analogical mappings across mental spaces via Generic Space; (3) all students in this study reported their attitudes, judgments and action intentions related to frame elements of Rite and Dentistry; (4) apposition of Rite and Dentistry in Blended Space plays a crucial role in the emergence of critical cultural self-reflection. Explanations and discussions of these results are offered. In view of this study, the author proposes that (1) human capacity for frame-shifting and conceptual blending lays the cognitive foundations for the attainment of critical cultural self-reflection; (2) socio-culturally determined elements of Affect, Judgment and Action Intention should be recruited into the constitution of a frame.

References

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