The Use of Trigger Warning in Teaching English Literature in the Iraqi English Departments

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ABSTRACT

The utilization of trigger warnings in teaching Western literary texts within English classes is a subject of debate, with some advocating for their importance and others questioning their usefulness. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the significance of employing trigger warnings within Iraqi English departments. This will be achieved through the administration of a questionnaire to students regarding their experiences with the literary texts they study. The results of the questionnaire will shed light on whether the use of trigger warnings, whether in oral or written form or integrated into the teacher's approach to introducing the subject, holds significance. Ultimately, the findings of this study aim to enhance the teaching of literature and foster more academically respectful environments for Eastern, predominantly Muslim students. By understanding the impact of trigger warnings, educators can better tailor their teaching methods to accommodate the diverse backgrounds and sensitivities of their students.

Keywords: Abnormal psychology, Iraqi English departments, teaching English literature, trigger warning.

1. INTRODUCTION

A trigger warning serves as a forewarning preceding the exposure to potentially distressing content, such as graphic references to subjects like sexual abuse, self-harm, violence, and eating disorders, often presented in various forms such as images, videos, audio clips, or text. In academic settings, instructors employ these warnings to allow students to psychologically prepare for such content or to opt out of engaging with it (Filipovic, 2014).

Advocates of trigger warnings argue that certain curricula can adversely affect students' mental health and academic performance, particularly those who have experienced related traumas in their lives. These students may not yet be emotionally prepared to confront personal traumas in an academic context and may choose to avoid them until they have the necessary resources or support in place. Conversely, other students may be prepared to confront their traumas through academic texts but could benefit from advanced notice of sensitive subjects to mentally prepare for discussion. From this perspective, trigger warnings empower students to take control of their learning and demonstrate that instructors prioritize their well-being (Freeman, 2014).

The widespread use of trigger warnings in universities by many professors is beneficial in alerting college students to potentially triggering content. Such warnings are utilized in books, videos, films, and by teachers to caution individuals, especially those with post-traumatic experiences, about potentially distressing material. While some professors argue against trigger warnings, citing concerns about limiting academic freedom, others support their use, albeit in a more restricted manner or only when deemed necessary.

Previous studies have shown that students often respond emotionally to literary texts, experiencing negative feelings triggered by reminders of past traumas such as violence, rape, or adultery. Therefore, providing trigger warnings to students with post-traumatic stress is deemed highly important. The

aim of this study is to investigate the significance of using trigger warnings within Iraqi English departments, considering the potential impact on students' well-being and academic engagement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In academic institutions worldwide, students are increasingly vocal about how certain literary works can trigger feelings of distress. For instance, novels like Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" and F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" are cited as potentially triggering suicidal thoughts or harmful domestic violence reflections. Even classical texts aren't exempt; at Columbia University, activists have raised concerns about Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and its vivid depictions of rape potentially causing distress among students (Furedi, 2015, pp. 1–5).

Recognizing these concerns, Kate Manne, a professor, advocates for the use of trigger warnings, particularly for students experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder. Trigger warnings serve to notify students about potentially distressing content in their course materials or before specific readings. The intention isn't to discourage students from engaging with these texts but rather to allow those who may be sensitive to such topics to prepare themselves mentally and regulate their emotional responses. Given the evidence that some students have experienced trauma, whether from sexual assaults or other forms of violence or abuse, the use of trigger warnings becomes crucial in creating a supportive learning environment (Manne, 2015, p. 5).

In response to concerns about issuing trigger warnings for potentially distressing content such as murder, rape, incest, genocide, and betrayal, a teacher expressed skepticism, suggesting that doing so might impede productive class discussions. However, students pushed back, emphasizing the importance of mitigating the shock that some pupils may experience when encountering such material. They underscored the necessity of trigger warnings by sharing personal experiences, highlighting the impact such content can have on individuals. Consequently, the teacher was prompted to reconsider their stance on the use of trigger warnings (Mazie, 2015, pp. 10–12).

According to a report by NPR (National Public Radio) on university teachers who employ trigger warnings in their classes, approximately half of these professors do so not in response to student or administrative requests but rather to navigate difficult material (NPR, 2016). The report also investigated awareness of trigger warnings among instructors, revealing that 86% of teachers are familiar with the concept, while 56% have heard about them, and only 1.8% have actively sought information about their usage. A teacher at a university in North Carolina shared their experience, stating, "*I had students break down reading novels depicting sexual assault and incest in my gender studies*" in response to the findings of the report (NPR, 2016, p. 6).

Another example is Lauren Griffith who is a teacher that uses trigger warnings in her class, but she said that it should be used in limited way because she does not want to keep students away from learning new experience (NPR, 2016, pp. 1–6). The National Coalition against Censorship conducted a questionnaire with university professors to see their opinions about using trigger warnings and the advantages and disadvantages of using it. Some instructors are using it in their Class, they think it is highly significant to warn students who have post traumatic pressure trouble, and to make them feel respectful and comfortable in the class. On the other hand, teachers stated that using this term in class will reduce students' freedom of learning new experiences and it is opposed to academic freedom (NCAC, 2015, pp. 2–17).

At University of Waikato in New Zealand, some psychologists conducted a study with a group of experiments to see how using trigger warnings help. There were about 1,400 college students and online participants who received trigger warnings and who had experience about some of issues mentioned in these books. It warns them about videos and texts that might trigger their emotions like domestic abuse and murder and then it measured how confused they felt, how parasitical ideas they had and how much cancel thinking about the matter. It found out that those students who read the texts or watch the videos felt worse. It figured out that 89% experienced at least one traumatic event. On the other hand, the study showed that students should read the texts without caution to learn new experiences and to overcome their fear of confrontations. Therefore, instead of leaving the subject they must confront it (Ma, 2024, para. 5).

2.1. The Use of Trigger Warnings

Trigger warnings are alerts utilized to caution individuals about content in books, videos, films, or other media that could potentially trigger negative emotional responses. As Beverly *et al.* (2018) describe, trigger warnings can be verbal statements or written notices that provide advance notice of material that may be distressing. These warnings aim to protect individuals who have past psychological trauma or phobias from encountering content that could exacerbate their emotional distress.

According to a report by NPR (National Public Radio) involving university professors, approximately half of professors utilize trigger warnings in their teaching, often independently rather than in response to specific requests. The report revealed that 86% of teachers are aware of trigger warnings, with 56% having learned about them from colleagues who have used them and only 1.8% actively implementing them. Interestingly, only 3.4% of students have requested the use of trigger warnings (NPR, 2016, p. 5).

Topics such as sexual assault, murder, rape, and violence are commonly cited as requiring trigger warnings due to their potentially distressing nature. A teacher at the University of North Carolina recounted an instance where students experienced emotional breakdowns while reading novels depicting sexual assault and incest in a gender studies course. Lauren Griffith, another teacher who employs trigger warnings in her classes, advocates for their limited use to prevent students from being deterred from engaging in new experiences. This suggests a balance between providing necessary warnings for potentially triggering material while also allowing students the opportunity to confront and learn from challenging subject matter (NPR, 2016, p. 6).

Another study about using trigger warnings is conducted by NCAC (National Coalition against Censorship). It is about why trigger warnings are important for the students who have post-traumatic disorders. This study showed that college students have been asked to use trigger warnings in class when studying sensitive texts. Thus, the results show that not too many institutions have a right to use trigger warning but there are a huge number of students who demand to us it. Many but not all teachers have faith that using trigger warning will influence Academic liberty. Some professors proved that trigger warning students about the content is not trigger warnings, but it is just like informing them about the kind of content and what is talking about. Finally, the study discovered that the use or not using of trigger warnings must be left to the professors to decide, not for departments heads, deans, or managements because that might create a kind of concern to them especially to none-tenured or dependent faculty (NCAC, 2015, pp. 2–17).

Another study that applied in the university of Waikato in New Zealand, it made experiment to see if students triggered by negative text, it figured out that some students who have post-traumatic disorder are not triggered by the texts or felt worst (Ma, 2024, para. 5).

In 2018, a study is conducted at university of Michigan where a group of researchers found that negative feelings are raised when students read an article without cation but at the same time it might make them avoid reading certain topics when giving a warning about specific subject as (domestic violence). On the other hand, McNally says, it is useful to trigger students about their previous experience because it can make them overcome their disturbing feelings that they have.

In 2015, Kate Manne; an assistant professor of philosophy at Cornell University, stated that using trigger warnings is a Central to students who have "post-traumatic disorder". Even though that college is a place to aspects of different thoughts, it is not reasonable to make students suffer in the class. Hence, the benefits of trigger warning is not to keep students away from the study material but to control their feelings (Manne, 2015, p. 1).

Instated of make traumatized students away from the classroom, it is important to make it more effective and comfortable for the whole class and that not only for those students who have psychological disorders, but also to make the process of teaching more effective and successful. This is the responsibility of the professors to give their students a chance to understand the material and help them. Meredith Minister says that reading the subject at the last minutes before giving them the homework is to see what might trigger them or cannot understand it easily, and to ask them if they have any problem with the subject. Finally, she says trigger warnings are not to exempt students from the material but to make them ready for it. Professors can then proactively address these concerns by providing trigger warnings and offering additional support as needed (Minister, 2018).

These studies highlight the complex nature of trigger warnings and their potential effects on students' emotional responses and engagement with sensitive material. Further research is needed to better understand the nuances of trigger warnings and their impact on student well-being and academic performance.

It is important to note that trigger warnings are not meant to exempt students from engaging with the material; rather, they serve to prepare students for what they will encounter and enable them to approach it in a way that is manageable for them. By implementing trigger warnings and adopting proactive teaching strategies, professors can contribute to a more inclusive and successful learning experience for all students.

2.2. Abnormal Psychology

In general, psychology means the study of individuals' behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Meanwhile, abnormal psychology is the study of unusual behaviors that a person performs. Abnormal psychology refers to "biological, psychological cultural, social, familial, and even political issues,"

which explains why psychological illness is hardly triggered by a single influential issue but is created from the interaction among them (Durand & Barlow, 2012, p. 70).

In essence, psychology is the exploration of human behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Abnormal psychology delves into behaviors that deviate from the norm, encompassing various factors like biological, psychological, cultural, social, familial, and political influences. This interdisciplinary approach suggests that psychological disorders are often a result of the interplay among these factors rather than a singular cause.

Two predominant theories regarding abnormality causation are somatogenic and psychogenic theories. The former posits biological origins for abnormality, attributing it to physical disorders or diseases affecting the brain. For instance, damage to specific brain regions may lead to socially inappropriate behaviors. In contrast, psychogenic theory implicates psychological issues as the root cause, such as weak conscience, according to Freud, resulting in problematic public interactions (Thomson & Boyd, 2023, para. 2).

Psychological disorders manifest as patterns of behavior or symptoms impacting various facets of life. Examples include body dysmorphia, mood disorders like depression, anxiety disorders such as social anxiety, and neurocognitive disorders like dementia. These disorders are characterized by deviations from societal norms and can lead to significant impairments in daily functioning.

In summary, abnormal psychology investigates behaviors and mental processes that diverge from societal norms, encompassing a range of psychological disorders and mental illnesses. Behavioral and cognitive perspectives provide insights into individuals' experiences and thought processes affected by abnormality (Thomson & Boyd, 2023, para. 2).

A psychological disorder is also defined as "patterns of behavior or psychological symptoms that impact multiple areas of life" (Cherry, 2020, p. 4). There are many types of psychological disorders, such as body disorders, mood illnesses such as depression, anxiety ailments such as social complaint and horror disorder, neurocognitive illness as confusion, and personality condition as a doubtful personality disorder (Cherry, 2020, pp. 1–4). Another definition of it is the study of human behavior that differs from the norm in insignificant ways (National University, n.d.). It studies the reasons and appearances of habits, behaviors, thoughts, or basic efforts that are different from others and natural outcomes in major damages in life.

In those days, clinical psychologists tried to condense the significance of many aspects of psychological situations that were considered abnormal. They focus on whether an individual's thoughts and performance are based on suffering and social issues. Clinical psychologists strive to comprehend the complexities of abnormal psychological conditions, focusing on whether individuals' thoughts and behaviors cause distress and social dysfunction. Several criteria aid in identifying abnormality, including deviation from statistical norms, personal distress, and impairment in functioning. Conditions like phobias, psychosis, and developmental delays exemplify abnormalities that can induce significant distress and impairment (BestValueSchools.com, 2022, para. 1–4).

However, abnormal psychology is defined as the study of people's abnormal behaviors, whether psychological disorders or mental illnesses. Behavioral aspects focus on the person's experience, while cognitive aspects focus on the effects of the incomplete thinking process.

There are different causes of abnormal psychology: (1) Biology and genetics, (2) psychodynamics and the parent-child relationship, (3) attachment and security, (4) learned behavior, (5) distorted thinking, and (6) integrative models.

Some symptoms for certain types of abnormal psychological disorders can be given as follows:

1) Schizophrenia: A living nightmare,
2) Anxiety disorders: Fear taking over,
3) Eating disorders: Bulimia and anorexia,
4) Substance use disorders: Abuse and dependence,
5) Personality disorders: A way of being.

Thus, personality disorders can be characterized by persistent patterns of behavior that stem from an individual's inherent personality structure. Unlike physical illnesses, where individuals typically recognize the need for treatment and understand that the condition is temporary, those with personality disorders often perceive their behaviors as normal and may believe that everyone shares similar traits. These disorders are typically enduring and have been present over a significant period of time, indicating that they are not new behaviors for the individual.

Various factors contribute to the development of personality disorders, including genetic and biological influences as well as psychological factors. Research by Bradbury *et al.* (2000) suggests that these disorders arise from a complex interplay of genetic predispositions, biological vulnerabilities, and psychological experiences. This multifaceted understanding underscores the complexity of personality

disorders and highlights the importance of comprehensive approaches to diagnosis and treatment (Bradbury *et al.*, 2000, pp. 964–980).

3. Reading Western Literary Texts

This section explores the impact of Eastern culture and society on Iraqi students studying English language and literature, particularly concerning their experiences with Western literary texts that may contain elements viewed negatively from their perspective. Steven Maize, a political science professor at Bard High School Early College, argued for the necessity of open discourse in college classrooms without the use of trigger warnings (Mazie, 2015). However, some students advocated for trigger warnings to address the trauma certain texts may evoke, stressing that these warnings are not excuses to avoid class but rather tools to help students prepare emotionally and engage more effectively with course material (Mazie, 2015, pp. 10–12).

At universities like the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Michigan, Bryn Mawr College, and Oberlin College, students have pushed for trigger warnings to accommodate those who have experienced trauma related to topics like rape and war, allowing them to make informed decisions about their readiness to engage with such content. For instance, at Columbia University, a student expressed difficulty in reading an ancient Roman poem due to its triggering effect on her past experience of rape, despite the instructor's focus on the poem's linguistic beauty. This highlights the importance of creating a safe and supportive learning environment where all students can participate comfortably.

The Multicultural Affairs Board (MAAB) of Literature and Humanities makes three suggestions to Faculty to use trigger warnings in classes. They propose creating unnamed communication and facilitation channels that caused students to botch out "identity-based disagreements" with their teachers. And they recommended a "training program for all professors, including faculty, graduate instructors, which will enable them to constructively facilitate conversations that embrace all identities." Hence, if one of these students has had harmful experience and cannot response to certain kind of texts, they have the support of their teachers to face these problems, but this choice at the same time will limit the liberal education. "College students should expect to be challenged, intellectually, personally, emotionally." They must feel free to express a topic and that is a sense of "safe space" that all instructors try to support, but not a space of thoughts that make students aggressive for example but that space where everyone feels relaxed discovering a meaningful text together with consideration and appreciation.

Ultimately, colleges should foster an environment where students feel both challenged and supported in their intellectual exploration. This entails creating a safe space for open discussion and discovery while respecting individual experiences and sensitivities. The goal is not to stifle intellectual debate but to cultivate an atmosphere of mutual understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives. Hence, if one of these students has had a harmful experience and cannot respond to certain kinds of texts, they have the support of their teachers to face these problems, but this choice at the same time will limit liberal education. "College students should expect to be challenged, intellectually, personally, emotionally." They must feel free to express a topic, and that is a sense of "safe space" that all instructors try to support, but not a space of thoughts that make students aggressive, for example, but that space where everyone feels relaxed discovering a meaningful text together with consideration and appreciation.

4. Analysis of Literary Texts and Their Effects on Students

4.1. Hamlet's Melancholy

The study of Shakespeare's play "Hamlet" within Iraqi English departments presents an opportunity to explore the potential impact of literary texts on students. "Hamlet" is a tragedy that delves into various themes such as the purpose of existence, madness, murder, betrayal, and melancholy. Of particular interest is the examination of how Hamlet's melancholy affects students as they engage with the text.

In the book "All for Nothing," the author depicts the numerous negative impacts Hamlet experiences throughout the play. Friedrich Nietzsche, in his work "The Birth of Tragedy," draws parallels between Hamlet and the character of Dionysus. Both characters delve into the essence of existence, gaining knowledge but ultimately feeling powerless to change the eternal nature of reality. They view the world as chaotic and absurd.

His resentment towards Ophelia and Gertrude, as expressed in his disdain for leaving a "heaven-kissing hill" for the "rank sweat of an unseamed bed," reflects his disappointment in love and disillusionment with the world.

Hamlet's melancholy is also compared to the character of Brutus. Hamlet says, "conscious does make cowards of us all (3.1.82) and "use every man after his desert, and who shall escape whipping?" (2.2.529.530). He revealed his unconscious sense of guilt. Then, Hamlet wants to escape punishment according to his merit. Thus, the whole ideas above that Freud made from Oedipus complex, hysteria, mourning, he found out that Hamlet as melancholic character particularly when he says, "My melancholy" (2.2.601). Hamlet's enmity to Ophelia and Gertrude who charged of leaving "A heaven¨Ckissing hill" (3.4.59) for "the rank sweat of un seamed bed" (3.4.92). In these quotes a sense of disappointment of lover who came to experience the world as nothing but only "a four of a pestilent congregation of vapors" (2.2.302–303), what Nietzsche calls Hamlet's sense of disgust. If hamlet's melancholy is privileged, it is insofar as it is focused not only the bitter melancholy of disappointed lover but metaphysical melancholy of scholar. So above all, the philosophers wanted to say that Hamlet suffered from melancholy and that was proved in the text.

Nietzsche identifies Hamlet's existential disgust, describing the world as "a foul congregation of vapors." Hamlet's melancholy thus encompasses both the bitterness of a jilted lover and the profound existential despair of a scholar.

In conclusion, the philosophical interpretations of Hamlet's melancholy underscore his profound psychological complexity. Through his words and actions, Hamlet emerges as a figure burdened by inner conflict and existential anguish, contributing to the enduring fascination with his character and the timeless relevance of Shakespeare's tragedy (Honeycutt, 2015, pp. 15–42).

Reid (1974) brings attention to Hamlet's melancholia and its potential impact on students, highlighting its often-overlooked significance. He challenges the notion that Hamlet's mental state is merely a characteristic of a literary hero, arguing instead that it is indicative of a deeper psychological disorder. Reid's thesis posits that Hamlet's melancholia serves as a driving force throughout the play, ultimately leading to his triumph in the end (Reid, 1974, pp. 378–400).

According to Reid, Hamlet's actions, including the killings of Polonius and Claudius, as well as the death of his mother, serve as evidence of his melancholic state. These actions, which may be seen as tragic or morally ambiguous, are interpreted by Reid as manifestations of Hamlet's struggle with his inner demons and his quest for liberation from the burdens of his father's legacy.

4.2. *Effects of Parents' Problems on their Children*

"Sons and Lovers," a novel studied in Iraqi English departments, exemplifies the impact of parental issues on their children. The Morel family depicted in the novel grapples with significant social problems caused by their parents, particularly the father, Walter, and the mother, Gertrude.

Walter Morel, a coal miner from the lower working class, is portrayed as an inadequate father and husband who spends much of his time drinking at the pub. In contrast, Gertrude is an educated and religious woman from the middle class, but she exhibits controlling behavior, particularly towards her sons. William, the eldest son, leaves the family after securing a job abroad, where he falls in love with Lily. Paul, the second son, is characterized as pale and quiet, struggling under his mother's control. His life is marked by unfulfilled love interests due to his unresolved Oedipus complex.

Through the Morel family's experiences, "Sons and Lovers" explores themes of class, family dynamics, and the psychological impact of parental behavior on children. The novel serves as a poignant reflection on the complexities of familial relationships and the lasting effects of parental influence on their offspring. The ongoing struggle between the parents and the mother's possessiveness created a detrimental environment for their children in "Sons and Lovers." Gertrude Morel's dissatisfaction with her husband's lower-class background led her to focus her affection and attention on her sons, particularly William and Paul (Lawrence, 1999, p. 5).

Gertrude's love for her sons manifested in overprotective and controlling behavior. When Walter, the father, attempted to cut William's hair, Gertrude intervened fiercely, displaying a form of domestic violence that may resonate with students who have experienced similar situations. This incident highlights the toxic dynamic within the family and the impact of parental conflict on children (Lawrence, 1999, p. 17).

Gertrude's jealousy towards her sons' potential partners amplifies the dysfunctional dynamics within the family in "Sons and Lovers." When William expresses his intention to marry, Gertrude's refusal is rooted in her possessiveness and fear of losing her sons. This refusal underscores Gertrude's unhealthy attachment to her sons, wherein she views their romantic interests as threats to her maternal authority and emotional fulfillment. William's subsequent death from pneumonia is depicted as a consequence of the inner conflict between his desires and his mother's control. The tension between William's longing for independence and Gertrude's stifling influence culminates tragically, highlighting the destructive

impact of their strained relationship. William's demise serves as a poignant reminder of the toll that parental possessiveness can exact on children's autonomy and well-being. Through William's fate, "Sons and Lovers" poignantly illustrates the tragic consequences of familial dysfunction and the complexities of maternal love gone awry. Gertrude's inability to reconcile her own emotional needs with those of her sons ultimately leads to heartache and loss, underscoring the enduring themes of sacrifice and longing within the novel (Lawrence, 1999, p. 163).

Paul, the remaining son in "Sons and Lovers," becomes entangled in his mother's emotional grasp following William's death. When Paul falls in love with Miriam, Gertrude's disapproval stems from her fear of relinquishing her control over her son. Her negative comments about Miriam expose her distrust and disdain for anyone who poses a threat to her influence over Paul. Through Paul's romantic endeavors, "Sons and Lovers" delves into the damaging repercussions of parental possessiveness and domestic discord on children's emotional well-being and relationships. Accordingly, Paul did what his mother asked him to do. After that, he knew married woman called Carla, he loved her and felt she could make him happy but later, he recognized he could not marry her, so he made her come back to her husband. As a result, Paul felt he did not need any relationship with women, and he just had male friendships in his life and that led him to feel that men satisfied more than women (as he resembled in the writer life). There is a hint of homosexual relationship with Baxter (Carla's husband). Here, one can figure out that the bad connection between the parents ruin their kids' life (Bachtarzi, 2010, pp. 12–49).

A lot of contemporary critics of Sons and Lovers are concerned with the mother/son's relationship than a novel as a literary text. What concern them is that the novel resembles Freudian oedipal hypothesis, which could be found in the relationship of the mother Gertrud and her son Paul, and it is reflected in the author's life (D. H. Lawrence). The relationship between the son and the mother was more likely the incestuous abuse. The cause of this painful problem is the based culture of mothers in general and mothers with sons in a especial way, which caused now social culture phenomena. Many critics found that mother-blaming is the center of global writing for both this novel and the life of Lawrence. Overall, contemporary critics approach "Sons and Lovers" with a critical lens, scrutinizing its portrayal of the mother-son relationship and its implications for broader cultural discourse. By examining the novel in relation to Freudian theory and Lawrence's personal experiences, these critics seek to uncover deeper layers of meaning and challenge prevailing narratives surrounding family dynamics and gender roles (Arcana, 1989, pp. 137–151).

In "Sons and Lovers," D. H. Lawrence delves deeply into the complex dynamics between the mother, Mrs. Morel, and her son, Paul, as well as his romantic relationships. Lawrence highlights the intense conflict Paul faces as he grapples with his desires for psychological fulfillment and romantic intimacy, all within the framework of his intricate relationship with his mother. "She was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing" (p. 261). Mrs. Morel's love for Paul surpasses conventional bounds, fulfilling not just his emotional needs but also his deeper, more concealed desires. As Paul becomes increasingly aware of the profound hold his mother has over him, he recognizes her as the central figure in his life, the "only supreme thing" to him. This realization underscores the depth of their bond and the extent to which Paul is ensnared by his attachment to his mother, "I never shall meet the right woman while you live" (p. 427). Despite Paul's attempts to form meaningful relationships with other women, such as Miriam or Clara, he finds them lacking satisfaction as he struggles to reconcile his desires with his devotion to his mother. Mrs. Morel reinforces Paul's belief that he has not yet encountered the right woman, further perpetuating his sense of dependence on her, "It's what men won't let you do. They won't let you get near to them... You can't come out of yourself, you can't" (p. 441). Following Mrs. Morel's death, Paul experiences a profound shift in their relationship dynamics. He revisits her, observing her peaceful appearance akin to that of a young girl dreaming of love. This imagery symbolizes the transformation of their relationship, suggesting a transition from the traditional mother-son dynamic to one characterized by a deeper, more intimate connection, "She was young again" (p. 485). Despite Mrs. Morel's passing, Paul's relationship with his father remains fraught with tension, and domestic violence continues between them. This ongoing conflict underscores the enduring impact of Paul's complex relationship with his mother on his familial interactions and personal development. In essence, "Sons and Lovers" offers a poignant exploration of familial bonds, desire, and the complexities of human relationships, illustrating the profound influence of maternal love and the challenges inherent in navigating one's desires within the context of familial expectations (Nadel, 1979, pp. 234–236).

5. METHOD

The participants in this study consisted of students and teachers from Iraqi English departments in Najaf. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants. A total of 20 students and 20

teachers participated in the study. This study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the data collection and analysis process.

A questionnaire was developed to gather data on participants' experiences with negative aspects of literary texts, their opinions on trigger warnings, and their perceptions of the necessity of using trigger warnings in teaching Western literature. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions to quantify responses and open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights.

The questionnaire was distributed to students and teachers in Iraqi English departments in Najaf. Participants were provided with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Quantitative data collected from closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize participants' responses. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses.

The method outlined above was used to investigate participants' experiences and opinions regarding trigger warnings in Iraqi English departments. The data collected through the questionnaire provided valuable insights into the necessity and potential impact of using trigger warnings in teaching Western literature.

6. RESULTS

Table I reflects the findings of the study, in which teachers and students in the Iraqi English departments in Najaf answer questions about the necessity of using trigger warnings.

TABLE I: PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF TRIGGER WARNINGS IN IRAQI ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS IN NAJAF

	Questionnaire items	Agreement		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Do you agree with using trigger warnings? (students)	18	90%	2	10%
2.	Teachers who use trigger warnings (teachers)	6	20%	14	60%
3.	Feeling the necessity of using trigger warnings (teachers)	8	40%	12	60%
4.	Students complaining about negative feelings when they study literary texts (students)	12	60%	8	40%
5.	Do you think there is another solution if you don't agree? (students)	8	40%	12	60%
6.	If trigger warnings limit academic freedom (teachers)	4	20%	16	80 %
7.	Do you think that *Wuthering Heights* has a kind of domestic violence? (students)	17	85%	3	15%
8.	Do you think that the *Scarlet Letter* has an immoral aspect? (students)	14	70%	6	30%
9.	Do you think that there are negative emotions when reading *Dr. Faustus*? (students)	15	75%	5	25 %
10.	Do you think that there are negative aspects in Hamlet's play? (students)	14	70%	6	30%
	With using or not using trigger warning	10.2	52%	9.8	48%

It appears that there is general support among students for the use of trigger warnings in literary classes, indicating a recognition of the potential benefits of being prepared for potentially distressing material. On the other hand, teachers seem to have a nuanced approach, acknowledging the importance of alerting students to potentially triggering content while also emphasizing the need to present the subject matter in a respectful and sensitive manner. Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of trigger warnings in Iraqi English departments could hold significance in promoting a supportive and considerate learning environment for students engaging with Western literature.

6.1. Agreement with Using Trigger Warnings (Students)

The responses from students regarding their agreement with using trigger warnings would provide insight into their perception of the necessity and effectiveness of such warnings in the academic context. Responses indicating agreement might suggest that students recognize the potential benefits of trigger warnings in preparing them for potentially distressing material.

6.2. *Teachers' Usage of Trigger Warnings (Teachers)*

Teachers who use trigger warnings can provide valuable insights into their motivations and practices regarding the use of trigger warnings in their classrooms. Their responses can shed light on their understanding of students' needs and their approach to creating a supportive learning environment.

6.3. *Feeling the Necessity of Using Trigger Warnings (Teachers)*

Teachers' feelings about the necessity of using trigger warnings can reveal their perspectives on the relevance and effectiveness of trigger warnings in addressing students' potential negative reactions to sensitive material. Their responses can highlight whether they perceive trigger warnings as essential tools for promoting student well-being and engagement.

6.4. *Students' Complaints about Negative Feelings when Studying Literary Texts (Students)*

Students' complaints about experiencing negative feelings when studying literary texts can provide direct feedback on the emotional impact of course materials. Their responses can indicate whether they believe trigger warnings could help mitigate these negative effects and enhance their learning experiences.

6.5. *Exploring Alternative Solutions (Students)*

Students' suggestions for alternative solutions when they do not agree with using trigger warnings can offer valuable insights into their preferences and needs. Their responses may suggest alternative strategies for addressing potential triggers in the classroom environment.

6.6. *Limitation of Academic Freedom (Teachers)*

Teachers' perspectives on whether trigger warnings limit academic freedom can reveal tensions between the desire to create a supportive learning environment and concerns about censorship or restricting academic discourse. Their responses can highlight broader debates surrounding academic freedom and pedagogical practices.

6.7. *Perception of Domestic Violence in Wuthering Heights (Students)*

Students' perceptions of domestic violence in Wuthering Heights can provide an indication of their awareness of sensitive themes in literature and their readiness to engage critically with such topics. Their responses may reflect their understanding of the complexities of domestic violence as portrayed in the novel.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper presents a balanced view of the controversy surrounding the use of trigger warnings in Iraqi English departments. It acknowledges that while there may be disagreement among professors about their use, the experiences and concerns of students regarding the negative aspects of literary texts cannot be ignored. Citing studies that highlight the psychological impact of such content on students effectively demonstrates the importance of implementing trigger warnings to protect their well-being. Furthermore, it discusses the two sides of the issue, recognizing both the advantages and disadvantages of using trigger warnings. This shows a comprehensive understanding of the topic and allows for a nuanced analysis of its implications. The conclusion emphasizes the significance of trigger warnings in facilitating a supportive and respectful learning environment for students. By preparing them emotionally without detracting from their engagement with the material, trigger warnings can help mitigate potential negative effects while allowing for meaningful academic exploration. Overall, my paper effectively addresses the complexities surrounding the use of trigger warnings in Iraqi English departments and provides a thoughtful consideration of their impact on student well-being and academic engagement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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