

Cross-cultural Component of Trigger Warnings in Higher Education

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Current studies in the educational domain reveal increasing interest in the relationship between cultural peculiarities and educational practices. The paper examines the notion of “trigger warning” and connects the necessity of the implementation of this practice with cultural features. The research questions being the influence of cultural peculiarities on education practices, the paper presents analyses of cultural and educational perspectives. As the paper hypothesizes that the need for trigger warning implementation is culturally specific, the practical part of the research includes a survey. Having identified the notion of “trigger warnings”, the paper explores trigger warnings as part of existing pedagogical practices in the USA and China. Despite common interest among students and instructors, no universities and colleges have officially included trigger warnings into syllabi or class content. The analyzed universities include the Ivy League and The C9 League, as these universities are believed to be prestigious in these countries. The pedagogical and cross-cultural perspectives include analyses of several theoretical approaches such as inclusive classroom [5], bell hooks’ social and educational theory [3], Hofstede’s cultural framework [1,2] and GLOBE’s dimension theory [4]. The theoretical framework presented in the paper ensures bilateral analysis of trigger warnings as an educational practice. The survey is designed to examine whether the need for trigger warnings is culturally specific or not. The survey includes a text with potentially triggering content, a multiple-choice task and a questionnaire on personal experience. The survey respondents are Russian and Chinese master’s students. Preliminary results of the research demonstrate that the need for trigger warnings is culturally specific. Being similar in collectivistic and power distance scores, both Russian and Chinese students do not need trigger warnings in the studying process. The paper emphasizes that trigger warnings still remain a relatively new topic for research. The need for the implementation of this practice requires cultural awareness, which is essential in the current multicultural learning environment.

References

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