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VARIABILITY OF ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL VOCABULARY IN THE UNITED STATES

The educational vocabulary of the United States represents a complex and multifaceted linguistic system that reflects the country's historical development, cultural values, and educational philosophy. Such units are fixed in specialized dictionaries in particular [1; 2]. The lexical system of American education includes both internationally standardized terms and purely American expressions that have no equivalents in other varieties of English.

The terminology of U.S. school education encompasses general English units, internationally unified terms that belong to the sphere of education (including those used in the International Baccalaureate and the International Standard Classification of Education), and specifically American units rooted in the nation's educational tradition. American school education terminology is highly structured and transparent. Terms such as *K-12* designate the range of primary and secondary education in the United States, covering all years from kindergarten to the twelfth grade. Within this framework, numerous specialized terms have been developed to describe distinctive educational institutions and approaches. For example, *a magnet school refers to a school that emphasizes a particular academic field or curriculum*, designed to attract students from diverse districts. Another example, *looping*, describes the practice of assigning the same teacher to the same group of students for more than one academic year, thus promoting continuity in learning and instruction.

Some terms reflect cultural and pedagogical concepts that are characteristic of the American educational context. The notion of *grit*, for instance, represents persistence, resilience, and character strength associated with the concept of a *growth mindset*. This concept became widely adopted in U.S. education policy and practice, emphasizing the importance of

perseverance and continuous self-improvement as predictors of academic success [3, p. 288].

In the sphere of higher education, the vocabulary system demonstrates the same balance between general English terminology and nationally specific expressions. One of the most recognizable features of this system is the classification of students by year of study through the traditional sequence of *freshman*, *sophomore*, *junior*, and *senior*. These designations symbolize the hierarchical structure of undergraduate education and are widely used across the United States.

Certain universities, such as the University of Virginia, intentionally maintain alternative terminology to preserve historical traditions. In this institution, the founder Thomas Jefferson rejected the term *senior*, which implied the end of learning, in favor of *fourth-year student*. This practice reflects Jefferson's belief that education is a lifelong process [3, p. 112]. Consequently, the University of Virginia continues to use *first-year*, *second-year*, *third-year*, and *fourth-year student* to refer to undergraduates. This example demonstrates how educational terminology can be influenced by philosophical and historical factors that embody institutional identity.

The American higher education system also includes numerous terms that define its distinctive institutional structure. The term *community college* refers to two-year public institutions that provide academic, technical, or vocational education and often serve as bridges to four-year universities. Another widely used term, *for-profit higher education*, designates private institutions operating on a commercial basis. Additionally, *commencement* denotes the formal graduation ceremony at which students receive degrees or diplomas – a term with strong cultural connotations in the United States, symbolizing achievement and transition.

Many terms function as university-specific markers of identity. For instance, at the University of Virginia, the campus is referred to as *grounds*, and students living on the Lawn are called *lawnie*. These lexical items reflect traditions that are deeply embedded in the historical and cultural context of particular academic institutions. Similarly, expressions such as *Z* at Harvard University or *twice off track* at Arizona State University represent local linguistic innovations tied to the academic culture and administrative practices of individual universities.

Overall, the system of educational terminology in the United States demonstrates a dynamic interaction between standardization and cultural specificity. It mirrors both global educational processes and uniquely American social and institutional realities. The coexistence of internationally recognized terminology with nationally and locally bound units highlights the multidimensional character of the U.S. educational lexicon.

References

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3. Spring J. American Education. New York : McGraw-Hill Education, 2017. 320 p.