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Language Relativity in Legacy Literature: A Systematic Review in Multiple Languages

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Abstract: Since the Olympic Agenda 2020, legacy has been widely used as a justification for hosting the Olympic Games, through which sustainable development can be achieved for both events and host cities. To date, no universal definition of legacy has been established, which presents challenges for legacy-related international knowledge transfer among host cities. To address this gap, a multilingual systematic review of the literature regarding the concept of legacy was conducted in French, Japanese, Chinese, and English. Using English literature as a baseline, points of convergence and divergence among the languages were identified. While all four languages value the concept of legacy as an important facet of mega-events, significant differences were found within each language. This finding highlights the importance of strategies that align different cultures when promoting sustainable development of some global movements such as the Olympic legacy. Sport management is replete with international topics, such as international events and sport for development, and each topic is studied simultaneously in several languages and with potentially differing frameworks and perspectives. Thus, literature reviews that examine the English literature, exclusively, are innately limited in scope. The development of partnerships and resources that facilitate cross-lingual and cross-cultural consultation and collaboration is an important research agenda. More research is needed on knowledge translation across languages.

Keywords: Olympic Games; sustainable development; legacy; linguistic relativism



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1. Introduction

The Olympic Games (hereafter Olympics) are the largest sporting event on earth and the most international in terms of viewership, participation, and hosting. Given the size of the event and types of competition held, host cities of the Olympics spend millions of public tax dollars on planning and delivering the Games [1–3]. For example, the estimated cost of hosting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics was \$15.4 billion, 43.5% of which came from tax revenue [4]. Due to the one-year postponement of the event due to COVID-19, the government of Japan had to contribute an additional \$1.4 billion to the operating budget of the event [4]. Frequently cited justifications for the lavish expenditures associated with Olympics include claims that these events produce sustainable, positive, and lasting legacies, such as economic growth, better social justice and welfare conditions in the host country, and improved international relations [5–8]. According to the Olympic Agenda 2020 [9], cities bidding for rights to host the Olympics are mandated to include legacy plans as part of the bid process [3,6,10,11]. In the English literature, Preuss's definition of legacy is widely accepted: that legacy represents all planned and unplanned long-term impacts on cities, either positive or negative, from hosting a sport event [12–14]. By emphasizing the importance of legacy, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) aims to make the

Olympic hosting experience more strategic and sustainable; hence, the outcomes can be shared and transmitted among host cities [9].

From the perspective of cultural studies, because of their history, high visibility, and mission, the Olympics are not merely an event for sporting competitions but are also a platform for host countries to exhibit their cultures to the world [15,16]. For example, the opening and closing ceremonies in each Olympics feature cultural elements of the host country [17]. Legacy acts as an important element that leverages the localized cultures during and after event hosting to deliver positive benefits to the host communities [18]. Since the modern Olympics began in 1896, the Games have been held in 25 countries with 17 different official languages [9,19–21]. Each time, legacy was defined and interpreted based on host countries' interests. Aligning legacy plans to the local culture is critical to the successful delivery of legacy.

Although legacy is ubiquitously cited to justify the high expenses on event hosting, to date, no universal definition of legacy exists [3,12,22]. The linguistic and cultural diversity among the host countries has presented challenges for knowledge transfer and comparison between host cities [19–21]. Without a shared definition, a comparison of bidding and hosting records is difficult [3,12,14], resulting in missed opportunities to learn from the experiences of past host cities. For instance, between the 2010 Vancouver and 2014 Sochi Olympics, organizers struggled to translate official sustainability documents from English to Russian, which hindered the Organizing Committee's capacity to understand valuable information that may have aided Sochi's sustainability efforts in 2014 [20]. Being aware of the issue, the IOC once attempted to write a common definition of legacy at a congress titled "The Legacy of The Olympic Games: 1984–2000" in 2002. This attempt was unsuccessful because the participants determined that the concept had too many conflicting meanings and, in some cases, legacy was not the most culturally appropriate term or concept [23,24].

Nearly twenty years after the IOC's initial attempt, in the present manuscript we aim to revisit the linguistic and cultural differences of legacy conceptualizations. This will be achieved by using a new method for finding common ground among Olympic host cities: a multi-lingual systematic literature review. For this method, a systematic literature review procedure [25] is applied to multiple different languages simultaneously, and then comparisons are drawn between the results of each language. Continued research of this topic is important because—despite the persistence of legacy rhetoric in the Olympic hosting practice of sustainability—many divergent conceptualizations have been advanced with few explanations of the discrepancies or methods to move past divergent perspectives.

The purpose of this article is to review the extant literature on Olympic legacies in four languages, namely French, Japanese, Chinese, and English, to identify points of consistency and divergence in the ways the term legacy is used. These four languages were selected because they are the official languages used by the host countries of many Olympics in the last 20 years, including the 2000 Sydney (English), 2008 Beijing (Chinese), 2010 Vancouver (English/French), 2012 London (English), and 2020 Tokyo (Japanese) Olympics, as well as those to be held in the next decade, including in Beijing in 2022 (Chinese), Paris in 2024 (French), and Los Angeles in 2028 (English). Hence, a focus on these four languages enables an understanding of how Olympic legacies have been defined in this specific time period. Based on the findings, a discussion is advanced on the potential of writing a universal definition of legacy, and the appropriateness of such a universal definition. It will contribute to future research on how Olympic legacies and some other global movements, such as sport for development, can be transmitted among countries with different languages and cultures, which will optimize the effect of event legacy on sustainability globally.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Legacies

The term legacy emphasizes "accumulated capital of the past arriving in the present" (p. 2067) and carrying over to the future [26]. Event legacy emerged as a concept in the late 20th century in response to the increased size and cost of hosting [11]. Though

inconsistently defined, in the context of sport events, legacies generally refer to the planned and unplanned impacts and outcomes of hosting an event [14,27]. Host-city officials bid on events for the promise of benefits for the host city, to garner local support for the event, and to use the influx of funding for the event to advance city-development goals [22]. Legacies are often used to justify the significant investments in Olympic hosting [27]. By the 2012 London Olympics, legacy was included in bid documents and discussed before, during, and after the event [28,29]. For London in 2012, legacy was seen as the capacity of the city to leverage the event to achieve continued economic growth by taking advantage of the associated infrastructure improvements and enhanced community spirit of the Olympics [30].

In the English sport-management literature, several scholars, such as Chalip, have called for a switch to using “leveraging” instead of “legacy” [1]. While the two terms are similar and related, there is a distinct difference between them: leveraging is an action, strategy, or a series of actions and strategies [1,31], and legacy is an outcome, be it positive or negative, tangible or intangible, planned or unplanned [12,13,22]. The concept of leveraging is active, while legacy is passive [1]. As the term legacy has been adopted by the IOC since the 1990s and used internationally for far longer than leveraging, in the current review we examined the linguistic relativity of the term legacy.

Theoretical and empirical research has been conducted to investigate the impacts of event legacy on host cities and countries [12,32–34], as well as the strategic planning of event legacy [28,35,36]. However, there is no consensus on a universal definition or conceptualization of event legacy, except for the aspect of the long-lasting outcomes of sport events [3,22,30,37,38]. For example, the IOC defines legacy as “all the tangible and intangible long-term benefits initiated or accelerated by the hosting of the Olympic Games/sport events for people, cities/territories and the Olympic Movement” [39] (p. 10). In contrast, Preuss offered a broader definition of event legacy: “all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible and tangible structures created through a sport event that remain longer than the event itself” [13] (p. 211).

Three reasons have been cited for the failure to produce a universally accepted definition of legacy: (a) differences in the perspectives of practitioners and academics [12,14,40], (b) the inconsistent use of shared terminology [3,22,41], and (c) language differences [41]. First, the inconsistent definitions of legacy can be partially attributed to differences in the perspectives of practitioners and academics, as event practitioners are more likely to embrace positive outcomes while consciously or unconsciously ignoring negative ones as legacies [42]. In a 2018 study, Orr and Jarvis [14] empirically supported this practitioner–academic difference by showing that event legacies identified by the key stakeholders of the 2015 Toronto Pan Am Games, such as organizers, city officials, volunteers, and athletes, were entirely positive, including new sport infrastructures, increased sport awareness, and inspiration.

A second issue causing the inconsistent definitions of legacy is the different objectives and contexts in the research [36,38]. Some scholars regard legacy as specific outcomes generated by sport events (e.g., physical, financial, social), while others view it as impacts on an overall environment, or understand it as physical structures built or renovated for a sport event [3,27,43,44]. These various interpretations have led to legacy being conceptualized as multi-dimensional, its five dimensions being: (1) bestowed/planned, (2) tangible/intangible, (3) short-term/long-term, (4) positive/negative, and (5) local/global [13,30,37,38]. Table 1 provides detailed descriptions of each dimension.

Table 1. Descriptions of the five dimensions of legacy, adapted from Preuss and Thomson et al.'s work [13,38].

| Dimension | Definition |
|----------------------|--|
| Planned/Bestowed | The degree to which a legacy is planned (coordinated, intended, managed) or bestowed (automatic, accidental, unmanaged). |
| Tangible/Intangible | The degree to which a legacy is tangible (perceptible, measurable, definite) or intangible (invisible, vague, abstract). |
| Short-term/Long-term | The duration and timing of a legacy can be short (brief, definitive lifespan, typically ending shortly after the event, less than one year) or long-term (at least a year, to permanence). |
| Positive/Negative | A legacy can be positive (good outcomes, positive impacts) or negative (detrimental or damaging outcomes, harmful impacts). |
| Local/Global | The territorial scope of a legacy can be local (contained or limited to the host city, host region) or global (extending beyond the host city into the international sphere). |

The linguistic differences among Olympic host countries present the third challenge to finding a universal definition of event legacy [19,41]. For example, Cashman [19] highlighted the challenges of translating legacy from English to other languages, such as French (i.e., *héritage*) and German (i.e., *inheritance*), due to inconsistent terminology. As event legacy represents a complex phenomenon and a concept in its academic infancy [22], the terms for legacy have not yet been comprehensively compared across languages.

2.2. Legacies and Linguistic Relativism

Of these three challenges, the differences between practitioners and academics and inconsistent use of shared terminology within the English literature have been researched [22]. However, the third challenge, linguistic and cultural differences, is yet to have been empirically explored. The Olympics are global events, hosted by different countries every two years. For example, between 2000 and 2028, the event was (and will be) hosted in countries with nine different official languages (i.e., English, Greek, Italian, Chinese, French, Russian, Portuguese, Korean, and Japanese), which highlights the diversity of the languages used by the past and future Olympics. The Olympics are planned and managed, in large part, by local organizing committees that operate primarily in the host-country's official language [20]. As such, host countries form legacy plans based on their unique needs and culture, and legacy documents are written in the language of the hosting country [39]. Therefore, comparing and understanding the linguistic differences in conceptualizations of legacy is an important task for advancing collaboration between host countries, information sharing, and knowledge translation. Further, understanding linguistic differences could bring us closer to a universal definition of legacy. Linguistic relativism [45] offers a unique lens through which to explore linguistic differences in legacy conceptualizations.

Linguistic relativism was initially advanced as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in the late 1920s [46], suggesting that people use language as a specific tool to describe and name things in reality. In particular, Whorf argued that "all observers not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistics are similar" [42] (p. 214). Hence, linguistic relativism assumes that the language in which a person communicates determines the way they perceive, understand, and categorize their experiences and the world around them [47,48]. A second assumption of linguistic relativism argued that, for newcomers, language is acquired and hence the way they describe the reality is based on some presupposed norms, such as culture [42,45]. Within this perspective, people using two different languages may have different interpretations and descriptions toward the same object which derive from their specific culture. This perspective has been borne out in several anthropological [45,48,49], translation [50–52], and language learning studies [53,54] through the years, and results are consistent: language does, indeed, influence thought

and, in turn, attitudes and behaviors [45]. Studying the linguistic relativity of Olympic legacy is valuable because the Olympics represent the epitome of cultures of both the IOC and host countries [15]. The different descriptions of legacy in languages that exist between two host countries, as well as between a given host country and the IOC, imply the diversity in culture that form those languages. Hence, in order to unify the legacy definition, it is imperative to understand the linguistic relativity of how legacy is described in different languages.

For the discipline of sport management, and especially those topics concerned with international or global phenomena where multiple languages may be involved, such as legacy work, linguistic relativism suggests that each specific language has a unique understanding of the concept. Before finding a universal definition of legacy, we must understand the diverse conceptualizations of the term enshrined in each of the relevant languages. As such, the following two research questions emerge:

RQ 1: How does academic literature, in different languages, define legacy?

RQ 2: How do these definitions compare?

3. Methods

3.1. Scope of the Study

Given resource and access constraints, a full review of the legacy literature in every language of countries that have hosted mega-events was beyond the scope of this study. As such, four languages—English, Chinese, French, and Japanese—were purposefully selected based on their accessibility to the researchers and prevalent use by Olympic host countries. Specifically, these are the languages of the host countries of several recent Olympics, namely the 2008 Beijing (Chinese), 2010 Vancouver (English/French), 2012 London (English) and 2020 Tokyo (Japanese) Games, as well as the host countries of four upcoming Olympics between 2022 and 2028: Beijing in 2022 (Chinese); Paris in 2024 (French); and Los Angeles in 2028 (English).

Furthermore, as the most influential mega-events in the world, the Olympics attract attentions from both scholars and practitioners. Besides the academic publications on this topic, there are a number of non-academic publications, such as magazines and newspapers articles, which discuss the Olympics. However, the current review has only focused on academic publications because the purpose of this study is to identify and compare the *definitions* and *conceptualizations* of the term Olympic legacy in four languages, which is less likely to be the focus of the non-academic articles. Additionally, unlike academic publications, articles in non-academic sources do not go through a peer-review process or refer to the prior understanding of the concept. Hence even when these sources present the definition and conceptualization of legacy, they could be highly influenced by authors' subjective viewpoints and opinions. These issues led us to include only academic publications in the current review.

3.2. Systematic Literature Review Process

Following the two research questions, four bilingual researchers, comprising four different linguistic backgrounds (i.e., French, Japanese, Chinese, and English), conducted a multi-lingual, systematic literature review to identify academic publications that meet our search criteria for the two research questions [25]. Overall, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were applied to perform this systematic review. The PRISMA contains four major stages: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion [55].

First, the broadest and most relevant electronic databases were identified in each language: EBSCOhost and SportDISCUS, for English; HAL and PERSÉE, for French; CNKI, for Chinese; and CiNii, for Japanese. The database search was supplemented by searching other relevant articles using Google Scholar. Second, in line with other recent work on event legacy [3,18], we identified the equivalent terms for legacy in each language (e.g., *legs* and *héritage* in French, レガシー in Japanese, and 遗产 in Chinese) through consultations

with peer academics in each language. Then, we collected peer-reviewed articles, doctoral dissertations, and book chapters whose titles or abstracts included a keyword search of legacy or its foreign-language equivalent, published between 1991 and 2019. We chose the starting point for searching as early as 1991 because, compared with the English literature, publications in the other three languages are relatively limited. The year 1991 is the earliest for which we could find publications from all languages. Starting from 1991 also ensured sufficient research materials for analysis. Key-words searching identified a total of 1155 academic publications, including 134 in French, 177 in Japanese, 463 in Chinese, and 381 in English (See Figure 1).

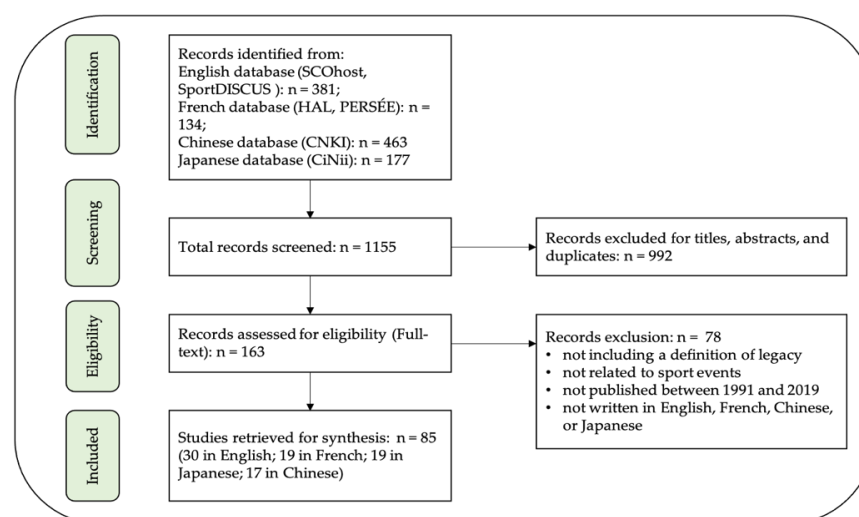


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram for studies on legacies related to sport mega-events, written in French, Japanese, Chinese, and English, between 1991–2019.

In the screening stage, duplicates, conference abstracts or reports, and irrelevant topics were excluded. This screening resulted in the retention of 163 articles to be assessed for eligibility. In the eligibility stage, the 163 articles were assessed for relevance to the study based on four criteria for inclusion: (1) full text articles relating to sport events; (2) a clear definition of legacy, (3) articles published between 1991 and 2019; and (4) articles published in one of the four selected languages. Due to the language specificity, full text reviews in each specified language were performed by those authors knowledgeable of the corresponding language. For instance, the author with a Japanese linguistic background reviewed and assessed the Japanese articles, based on the inclusion criteria agreed by the research team. Then, each author translated key information into English from the articles reviewed. The translations were double-checked by external experts with Chinese, Japanese, and French language backgrounds. All the records were then synthesized into one spreadsheet. Any disagreements were discussed and resolved by all authors. Consequently, 85 articles that met the inclusion criteria were retained after this process. Specifically, for the review of the English literature, 30 articles were included for analysis. Of these 30 articles, 14 came from Thomson et al.’s systematic review [38] and a further 16 that offered new, different, or expanded conceptualizations were retained. For publications in the other three languages, the articles that provided a definition of and explicit reference to legacy relating to sport events were included. Based on the inclusion criteria, we retained 19 articles in French, 19 in Japanese, and 17 in Chinese for analysis (See Figure 1).

3.3. Analysis

For each article, we first identified how the author(s) of the article defined the term legacy, and then closely reviewed the content of the identified definitions to understand their meanings. Next, to answer RQ 1, the definitions were assessed based

on the five dimensions of legacy identified in the English literature [3,13,22,38]: (a) bestowed/planned, (b) tangible/intangible, (c) short-term/long-term, (d) positive/negative, and (e) local/global (see Table A1 in the Appendix A for further details). The goal of this analysis was to assess the definition of legacy for reference to or acknowledgement of each of the five dimensions. Subsequently, to answer RQ2, the findings of the initial analysis were used to compare the legacy concept between languages and to understand which articles identified both poles of each dimension (e.g., the bestowed and planned poles for the bestowed/planned dimension), identified one pole for each dimension, or ignored the dimension entirely.

4. Findings

4.1. RQ1: How Does Academic Literature in Different Languages Define Legacy?

The findings from each reviewed article are presented in the Appendix A (Table A1). Each language we studied uses multiple terms for legacy and has their own unique definitions. Further, in each language setting, Preuss's dimensions of legacy are applied differently.

The within-language inconsistencies begin with the use of multiple terms to denote legacy. In French, for example, the terms are *légs* [56–58] and *héritage* [59]: *légs* is an adopted term from English that is used to denote event legacies specifically, whereas, *héritage* can be literally translated to heritage, which, like its English counterpart, can be broadly applied to cultural, historical, or infrastructural references of a location, a person, or an event. Three of the non-English languages studied applied multiple terms to the legacy concept, and authors did not have a universal definition of legacy, even within each language. Beyond terminology, intra-language inconsistencies exist in the definitions: in the Chinese literature, some scholars defined legacy by its cultural and spiritual attributes [60–62], emphasizing its intangible aspect. Others adopted the definition of the IOC, which encompasses both tangible (e.g., Olympic stadiums and Olympic medals) and intangible (e.g., people's attitude to sport) outcomes after hosting the Olympics [63,64]. The language summaries below further detail the findings for each literature.

4.1.1. French

Table A1 shows the 19 articles in French retained for this review. The French literature was diverse, which is unsurprising given the widespread use of the language across Western Europe, Canada, and parts of Africa. For instance, one notable difference in the definitions and descriptions of legacy in the French literature is that French Canadian authors include intangible legacies and Europeans do not [27,56,65]. However, the French literature was also quite narrow in its conceptualization of legacy compared with the English. French articles often failed to precisely define the concept, opting instead to provide lengthy descriptions of the concept as it relates to planning, urban development, policy, sport development, or other topics [27,56,66]. Frequently, the French articles referenced the IOC's definition [23,27,67,68], which identifies only the planned, positive, tangible/intangible, long-term, and local poles.

4.1.2. Japanese

The 19 Japanese articles retained for analysis are listed in Table A1. Most Japanese articles were published after 2012. Japan's Olympic hosting commitment for Tokyo 2020 was decided in 2013; hence, the literature focused primarily on reviewing the legacies of past sport events, such as the 2012 London Olympic Games and the 2012 FIFA World Cups, and using this information to discuss the potential legacies of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics [69–72]. Additionally, although some authors defined legacy in their own way, most articles referenced the IOC's definition and discussion of the legacy concept [29,73]. This means that legacies were conceptualized by positive, long-term, tangible and intangible poles. Few studies acknowledged planning and local/global dimensions. Overall, the Japanese literature provided the narrowest scope of legacy conceptualization of the four languages,

in the sense that it identified the fewest dimensions of legacy as identified by Preuss and Thomson et al. [13,38].

4.1.3. Chinese

As shown in Table A1, a total of 17 Chinese articles were analyzed. The number of publications was smaller compared to the other three languages, and most of the articles were published around 2008, when the 2008 Beijing Olympics were held. The limited number of publications is understandable because Beijing 2008 was the first Olympiad in China. Most Chinese studies comprehensively discussed the development of Olympic legacies following the direction of the Olympic Charter [61,63,64], whereas others focused on the empirical outcomes of the 2008 Beijing Games [60,62,74,75]. There are two prevalent conceptualizations of Olympic legacy in the Chinese literature: (a) directly adopting the definition of legacy from the IOC Olympic Charter, namely planned, positive, tangible/intangible, and long-term; and (b) combining the IOC's definition with ancient philosophies unique to China, such as Confucianism and Taoism [61,62,76,77], that emphasize moral development and harmony. The integrated conceptualization is planned, positive, intangible, long-term, and local. Overall, the Chinese conceptualization of legacy is consistent with the country's traditional philosophical orientation.

4.2. RQ2: How Do the Languages Compare?

The key findings of our comparative analysis for RQ2 revealed that the four languages placed similarly high value on legacies, and the concept of legacy has been used universally across the four languages, though with different terms and meanings. The five dimensions of legacy identified in English literature [13,38] were not presented, or applied, in the same ways in other languages. These five dimensions, as previously discussed, are: (a) planned or bestowed, (b) tangible or intangible, (c) short-term or long-term, (d) local or global, and (e) positive or negative (see Table 1 for further descriptions) [13,38].

Figure 2 shows the fraction of studies in each language that identified at least one pole of each dimension. For example, an article that defined legacy as strictly positive would be counted as one study identifying the positive and negative dimension. Importantly, all five dimensions of legacy appeared in all publications reviewed, meaning at least one article in each language identified or conceptualized one of the poles of each dimension. Specifically, the comparison showed that the English literature had the widest scope for conceptualizing legacy and identified multiple dimensions. The Japanese literature appeared to have the narrowest scope in all dimensions when conceptualizing legacy. Both the French and Chinese literature placed greater emphasis than the English literature on the local/global dimension when discussing the legacy of hosting sport events.

Figure 3 depicts the fraction of studies in each language that identified both poles of each dimension. For instance, if the study defined legacy as both positive and negative, it was counted as one study identifying the positive and negative dimension. If the study identified only positive legacies and not the negative, it was not included in this spider diagram. The findings presented in Figure 3 reveal some of the more nuanced differences within and across languages, as the full scope of each country's conceptualization of legacy is represented. To be specific, the scope of legacy conceptualization in English literature is still the widest in Figure 3. It is very similar to that shown in Figure 2, except for the dimension of local/global. The scope means that most studies written in English adopted the same conceptualization of legacy as bestowed/planned, tangible/intangible, short-term/long-term, and positive/negative. Within the perspectives of the literature from the other three languages, especially those in Chinese and French, the scopes of legacy changed significantly from those shown in Figure 2. These changes mean that, although the Chinese, French, and Japanese scholars covered all dimensions when conceptualizing legacy, they might have adopted only one pole for each dimension. The Chinese literature presented the narrowest scope among the four examined languages.



Figure 2. Percentage of articles in each language that identified each dimension of legacy (i.e., the article mentioned at least one pole).

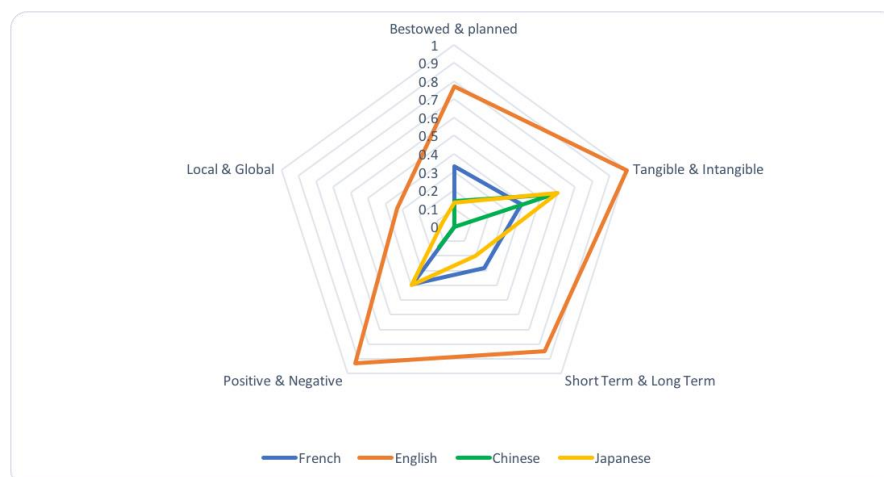


Figure 3. Percentage of articles in each language that identify both poles of each dimension of legacy (e.g., tangible AND intangible).

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussion of the Findings

In the current study, a multi-lingual systematic literature review was conducted to examine the linguistic and cultural differences of Olympic legacy definitions and conceptualizations. Academic publications in English, French, Japanese, and Chinese were included in this review because these four languages represent the official languages that were most used by Olympic host cities in the 30-year period of study (2000–2030). This review found that when defining the Olympic legacy, the literature in these four languages often referred to the IOC's definition. Meanwhile, each language maintained its own unique definition of legacy that is localized or internalized to suit the cultural particularities of each country. These findings answer the first research question concerning how academic literature in different languages defines legacy.

With respect to the second research question, the differences in the definitions led to incongruous conceptualizations of legacy. The findings indicated that while the literature in all four languages commonly included all five dimensions of legacy, their understandings of each dimension differed significantly. For instance, the English literature identified two poles for each of the five dimensions (e.g., legacies can be both positive and negative, both tangible and intangible); however, the French, Japanese, and Chinese literatures

defined legacies as positive, long-term, and local, excluding or ignoring their opposite poles. Moreover, while the other literature included both tangible and intangible poles of legacy, most Chinese literature only adopted the intangible pole. These findings were consistent with the assumptions of linguistic relativity and previous research on concepts being understood differently across languages [47,48] in that each language studied has distinct conceptualizations of the same concept. In-depth discussions of how the term legacy is understood and interpreted in specific linguistic and cultural background were provided in the following sections.

Beijing, in 2008, held the first Olympics for China, so the Chinese scholarship on Olympic legacy is in its infancy. It is unsurprising that the Chinese conceptualization bears some resemblance to the IOC's definition, with one major difference: rather than placing a joint focus on tangible and intangible legacies, the Chinese literature emphasizes cultural and psychological (i.e., intangible) legacies. There are several reasons for the emphasis on intangible legacy. China, as the largest developing country, was eager to impress the world with a distinctive Olympic experience [74,76,77]. As most previous Olympics had been hosted in Western countries, China sought to highlight and add an Eastern cultural perspective to the Olympic Movement [64,76], which enriched its cultural connotation. To this end, the host committee for the 2008 Beijing Games was guided by the vision of humanism [63,74]. The inclusion of humanism resulted from the influences of ancient philosophies, such as Confucianism and Taoism, on the Chinese language and culture [60,74]. These influences are referred to as “Ren” (i.e., people-oriented) and “He” (i.e., harmony, integration, and inclusion), summarizing the ancient knowledge of the interaction between human and nature [74,78]. Generally speaking, both terms point to the notion that people adapt to nature by improving themselves, which is consistent with the spirit of the Olympics [79].

Regarding the perspective of linguistic relativity, in Chinese literature, the term legacy could refer to tangible (e.g., money) and intangible (e.g., knowledge, virtue) things that are valuable and left for posterity. Still, because hosting the Olympics in Beijing in 2008 represented an unprecedented, shared experience for the country, the Olympic legacy was viewed primarily as an intangible benefit. The event generated a great sense of pride among Chinese people. Consequently, it is understandable that the intangible legacies of cultural and psychological benefits emerged as more important than tangible legacies in the Chinese literature.

Given that French is one of the official languages of the IOC, and the headquarters of the IOC is in a French-speaking country (Switzerland), documentation of event legacy and IOC discussions of the topic are readily available to French researchers [39]. This accessibility explains the similarity between French legacy literature and the IOC's conceptualization of legacy. Interestingly, there were differences in the definitions of legacy between research carried out in Europe and that performed in Canada, such that Canadian authors included intangible legacies and Europeans did not [23,26,36,53,59,67]. One possible explanation is the greater proximity to and interaction with English speakers among Canadian French researchers (which explains the translation of legacies to *légs*, rather than *héritage*) and Canada's recent hosting experience in Vancouver, 2010, which left a well-promoted and accessible legacy portfolio, ripe for research [36,40]. Comparatively, the last time France hosted a Games was 1992, while Switzerland hosted a Games twice in the first half of the 20th century. Thus, French scholars in Western Europe have had limited experience of a Games in their own countries, so legacies have not been a salient point of research. It is possible that the French literature from both Western Europe and Canada will continue to expand the definition and conceptualization of legacy as the 2024 Paris Olympics approach.

Similar to the French literature, many Japanese studies also referenced the IOC's definition of legacy. From the perspective of language relativity, this trend is understandable. Two defining characteristics of the Japanese language were ambiguity and indirectness [69,72,73]. These characteristics reflect the value placed on harmony and cohesion, which the Japanese tend to favor over individuality [80]. Based on these characteristics,

the way in which legacy has been defined and conceptualized represents an attempt to maintain the existing standards set by the IOC's definition and to facilitate cooperation. Moreover, prior to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the last Olympics were held in Japan over 20 years ago (i.e., the Tokyo 1964; Nagano 1998). Hence, Olympic legacy did not receive much interest until recently, due to Tokyo's role as host in 2020. Given the recent increase in the number of papers, hosting the 2020 Tokyo Games may enlarge and deepen the conceptualization of legacy in future Japanese work. It might be valuable to re-examine legacy definitions in the Japanese literature after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This work adds to the ever-growing body of research on legacies [3,13,22,38] by offering a tool that allows researchers and practitioners of different languages to determine their country's variance to the baseline (English) definition of legacy and the conceptualizations expressed in French, Chinese, and Japanese. Knowing the variance between languages, future research on the legacies of various sport events and diverse topics in sport management will be clearer and more nuanced.

A theoretical implication of this work is the importance of considering the linguistic relativity of legacy when studying the concept [50,53], which is an international phenomenon. The variance in the definitions of legacy found in this study reflects the linguistic and cultural particularities of the languages in which they are written [45]. Specifically, although Preuss's [13] conceptualization widely covers the dimensions of legacy discussed in all four languages, their understandings of each dimension are different. For example, the Chinese, French, and Japanese literature seldom considered the unplanned, negative, and long-term poles as parts of their conceptualizations of legacy. Therefore, a potentially important question arises as to whether researchers can appropriately discuss an event's legacy without following the conceptualization established within the language of the host country. This is especially important given that most current research on Olympic legacies is happening internationally, mostly conducted by authors in North America, the UK, and Australia, where English is the primary language [12,22]. As a result, English definitions of legacy are frequently cited, despite the phenomenon being studied in other linguistic contexts, such as after the 2008 Beijing, 2014 Sochi, and 2018 PyeongChang Olympics [6,12,20,81]. Hence, some culturally and linguistically specific details may be ignored. We suggest that it is time to adopt more holistic theories, such as the theory of linguistic relativity [50,53,54], to foster a universal understanding of what legacy is and how it occurs.

Second, our research theoretically and methodologically offers a unique lens through which to understand the international and diverse features of the applied field of sport management. To our knowledge, ours was the first attempt to apply the Sapir–Whorf theory of linguistic relativity [46–48] to sport management. Methodologically, multilingual literature reviews enable the exploration of linguistic variance between languages. The methodology presented herein has the potential to be applied to global topics in sport management, such as sport for development [82–86] and fan experience [87–89]. It is important to note that multilingual literature reviews require researchers to have direct access (i.e., personal knowledge of multiple languages) or indirect access (i.e., translation services) to other languages, which can be a significant barrier. Thus, collaborative efforts between scholars who speak different languages are a promising avenue for multilingual research, and translation services can serve as a proxy for direct multilingual partnerships.

As a practical implication, we offer a tool, the multilingual literature review method, allowing practitioners, such as IOC members and national host committees, to transfer knowledge between host countries. Knowledge transfer between previous host countries has likely failed because each host community has different cultural and political systems. Knowledge should be contextualized with the languages, values and objectives of the host community [3,90]. The comparative method of baselining one language and comparing other languages using characteristics of the first allows for systematic comparison between

languages. This practice could be used by practitioners to identify variances between languages, easing knowledge translation among Olympic host committees. Further, this practice allows for clearer evaluation of legacies across several events.

6. Limitations and Conclusions

In this review, only peer-reviewed journal articles and dissertations were analyzed. Although these materials have provided rich information regarding how legacies have been defined in different languages, reviewing practitioner documents, such as event bids and reports, may reveal aspects of legacy definitions and conceptualizations that are not yet included in academic literature. Previous work in the English literature established differences between practitioner and academic conceptualizations of legacy [14,40], so it can be assumed similar differences exist in other languages. Future research might use document analysis to review practitioner documents in Japanese, French, and Chinese to further advance discussion of the linguistic relativity of conceptualizing event legacy in these languages.

Another limitation is that this literature review only retained publications which included legacy in titles or abstracts and provided a specific definition in the main body. It is inevitable that some relevant studies were excluded as a result of this search procedure. For example, some articles discussed legacy of sport events through the paper but the term legacy was included in neither the title nor the abstract [18]. These articles would not have been retained for this review. Moreover, although some publications formed their titles and abstracts with legacy, the definition or conceptualization was not specifically discussed in the body, and therefore those articles were excluded as well. While the authors were aware of the limitation, decisions were made to not expand the scope. The purpose of this literature review has been to compare and contrast the definition of legacy within academic articles published in four different languages. Applying these restricted criteria can help to assure the conceptual consistency between the four languages.

Finally, this review focused on mega-event contexts, primarily the Olympics. Future research might reproduce the study and extend analyses to include conceptualizations and discussions of legacy in broader contexts, including small and medium events, recurring events, and so on. Further and importantly, the Olympics have been hosted in countries with 17 different languages, and, as such, this study could be replicated in future with other Olympic host-country languages such as Russian for 2014 Sochi and Portuguese for 2016 Rio Olympics, as well as Korean for 2018 Pyeong Chang and Italian for 2026 Milano-Cortina Winter Olympics.

In sum, this study applied the perspective of linguistic relativity to a multi-lingual literature review of legacies across four languages [46–48]. Articles on event legacy were collected through database searches in English, French, Chinese, and Japanese to identify how the literature in each language defined legacy and to compare definitions between languages. All four languages uniformly recognize the concept of event legacy and stress its importance, but inconsistencies were found both within languages and between languages regarding definitions of the concept. The methodology utilized in this study could be deployed for studies of other topics in sport management to further explore how linguistic relativity shapes sport management globally.

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Appendix A

Table A1. The summary of the conceptualization of legacy in the literature of four languages.

| Citation | Context of Study | Bestowed/ Planned | Tangible/ Intangible | Short-Term/ Long-Term | Positive/ Negative | Local/ Global |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| French | | | | | | |
| Augustin, 2008 [66] | (multiple) Olympics | Planned | N/A | N/A | N/A | Local |
| Barandier, 2014 [91] | Rio 2016 Olympics, World Cup Brazil 2014 | Planned | Tangible | N/A | Both | Local |
| Barget & Gouget, 2010 [56] | Rugby World Cup 2007 France | N/A | N/A | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Billard, 2006 [92] | Sydney 2000 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | N/A | Both | Local |
| Bautès & Gonçalves, 2014 [93] | Rio 2016 Olympics | Planned | Both | Both | Positive | Local |
| Castilho, 2016 [65] | 2014 FIFA World Cup | Planned | Both | N/A | Positive | Local |
| Dalle-Vendove, 2015 [94] | 2010 FIFA World Cup | Both | Both | Both | Both | Local |
| Dansera & Mela, 2006 [95] | Turin Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Both | Positive | Local |
| Dussier & Machemehl, 2014 [67] | Paris 2008 Olympics bid | Planned | Tangible | Both | Positive | Local |
| Frappat, 1991 [68] | Grenoble 1968 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2007 [96] | Two sport events in Lille and Genoa | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Henry, 2005 [59] | Athens 2004 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Machemehl & Robène, 2014 [97] | Olympics hosting processes | N/A | N/A | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Marsac, 2012 [98] | Olympic canoe-kayak slalom venues | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Raymond-Lalande, 2015 [57] | Urban development through sport events | Both | Both | Both | Positive | Local |
| Rolt, 2011 [99] | Montreal 1976 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Roult & Lefebvre, 2010 [100] | (multiple) Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Roult, et al., 2014 [101] | Montreal 1976 Olympics | Both | Tangible | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Villeneuve, 2013 [58] | Canada Games, Sherbrooke QC 2013 | Both | Both | Both | Positive | Local |
| Japanese | | | | | | |
| Abe, 2013 [102] | National Sport Festival | Planned | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Arai, 2012 [103] | Youth Olympics | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Aramaki, 2013 [69] | 2012 summer Olympics bid | Planned | Both | Long-term | Both | N/A |
| Aramaki, 2016 [104] | Tokyo 1964 and 2020 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Both | N/A |
| Ebishima, 2016 [105] | London 2012 Olympics | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Hayashi, 2016 [70] | London 2012 and Tokyo 2020 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | N/A |
| Ishizaka, 2007 [106] | Tokyo 1964 Olympics | N/A | N/A | Long-term | Both | N/A |
| Kameyama, 2017 [107] | Tokyo 2020 Olympics | Both | Both | N/A | Both | N/A |
| Kaneko, 2018 [108] | London 2012 Olympics | N/A | Both | N/A | Positive | N/A |
| Kaneko, 2014 [29] | London 2012 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Masumoto & Homma, 2014 [109] | Evaluation process of OGI | N/A | Both | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Nakamura, 2015 [110] | Nagano Olympic Games | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Nakamura & Suzuki, 2017 [111] | Tokyo 2020 Olympics | Both | Both | N/A | Both | N/A |
| Nishihara & Sato, 2004 [71] | FIFA 2002 World Cup | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Nishiki & Ueno, 2015 [72] | Rugby World Cup 2011 | Both | Both | Both | Positive | Local |
| Okada, 2019 [112] | Sydney 2000 Olympic Games | Both | Both | Both | Positive | N/A |
| Oshima, 2016 [73] | Tokyo 2020 Olympics | N/A | Both | Long-term | N/A | Local |
| Saeki, 2015 [113] | Tokyo 2020 Olympics | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Sekimoto & Kimura, 2010 [114] | National Sport Festival | N/A | N/A | N/A | Positive | Local |
| Chinese | | | | | | |
| Dai, 2008 [63] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Guo & Qiao, 2016 [75] | Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Hou, 2009 [115] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | N/A | Positive | Local |
| Hu et al., 2019 [116] | Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Kong & Li, 2005 [117] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Lin & Chen, 2012 [60] | Not specified | N/A | Tangible | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Lin et al., 2011 [74] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Both | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Ma et al., 2007 [77] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | N/A | N/A | Long-term | Positive | Global |
| Shao, 2011 [62] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Sun, 2001 [118] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Both | Both | Long-term | N/A | N/A |
| Sun & Liu, 2009 [78] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Tangible | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Tan, 2002 [61] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Intangible | N/A | Positive | Local |
| Wang, 2010 [119] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Wang & Sun, 2019 [120] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Xu & Yan., 2019 [121] | Multiple Olympics | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Zhao, 2010 [64] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Both | Long-term | Both | Local |
| Zhao & Liu, 2009 [76] | Beijing 2008 Olympics | Planned | Intangible | Long-term | Positive | Local |

Table A1. Cont.

| Citation | Context of Study | Bestowed/ Planned | Tangible/ Intangible | Short-Term/ Long-Term | Positive/ Negative | Local/ Global |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| English | | | | | | |
| Chapellet, 2012 [27] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Dickson, 2011 [122] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Dickson et al., 2010 [123] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Homma & Masumoto 2013 [124] | Olympics | Both | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Koenigstorfer et al., 2019 [12] | mega-events (generally) | N/A | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Li & McCabe, 2013 [125] | mega-events (generally) | N/A | Both | Both | Both | Local |
| Llewellyn et al., 2015 [126] | LA 1984 Olympics | Both | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Pavoni, 2015 [127] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Perry et al., 2012 [128] | 2010 FIFA World Cup | Planned | Both | Long-term | Positive | Local |
| Preuss, 2015 [37] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Preuss, 2019 [3] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Sant et al., 2013 [40] | Vancouver 2010 Olympics | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Thomson et al., 2019 [22] | mega-events (generally) | Both | Both | Both | Both | Both |
| Veitch, 2013 [129] | America's Cup | Both | Both | Both | Both | Local |
| Weed, 2014 [130] | London 2012 Olympics | Both | Both | Both | Both | N/A |
| Westerbeek, 2009 [131] | Amsterdam Olympics bid | Planned | Both | Both | Both | Local |

Note. The English literature published before 2010 is not listed in the table because the dimensionalities have been already identified in Thomson et al.'s literature review [34].

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