

Vassar College

Digital Window @ Vassar

Senior Capstone Projects

2019

Terminology in American dragon boat: a linguistic investigation

Matthew ??? Alain Au
Vassar College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone

Recommended Citation

Alain Au, Matthew ???, "Terminology in American dragon boat: a linguistic investigation" (2019). *Senior Capstone Projects*. 953.

https://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone/953

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Window @ Vassar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Window @ Vassar. For more information, please contact library_thesis@vassar.edu.

Terminology in American Dragon Boat:
A Linguistic Investigation

Matthew Alain Au 區智強
Independent Program
Vassar College
May 2019

Senior Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Independent Program.

Adviser, Hua Hsu

Adviser, Thomas Porcello

Abstract

Dragon boat racing, practiced today by over 50 million people across the globe, is the world's fastest-growing watersport. The sport first came to the United States in the 1980s, and has since exploded in popularity. Recreational teams exist in numerous states, and while these athletes' zeal for dragon boat may be similar, the jargon they employ on the water often differs. In this thesis, I will examine the roots of dragon boat terminology in the United States, and why and how these variances exist, focusing on three possible avenues for the transmission of these terms: the traditional Chinese/Hongkonger roots of dragon boat, rowing and its great history in the United States, and Olympic sprint canoe/kayak's recent surge in popularity. As this thesis is unprecedented in its non-physiological dragon boat focus, original research was necessary; this research was conducted with a diverse group of American dragon boat athletes through interviews and a survey.

Keywords: *dragon boat, paddle, canoe, sports, jargon, terminology*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Chapter 1: My Dragon Boat Story	5
Chapter 2: History of Dragon Boat	11
Chapter 3: Cultural Context: China & Hong Kong	14
Chapter 4: Research Methods: Interviews & Survey	17
Chapter 5: Influences from Rowing	21
Chapter 6: Influences from Canoe/Kayak	24
Conclusion	27
References Cited	29
Appendix	31

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the support and enthusiasm of my mother, father, and sister, who have always supported my study of linguistics and passion for dragon boat. I write this in honor and memory of my beloved grandmother, Hing Au, originally from Hong Kong, who passed away in November 2014.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the entire United States dragon boat community for helping me tremendously with my research. This project would simply not have been possible without all of you. As this is one of the first academic dragon boat-related papers not centered on health and fitness, I feel I must represent our community well, and hope I am doing so. Paddles up!

Many thanks to Professors Hua Hsu and Thomas Porcello, my trusty advisors, without whom I would not be finishing this thesis.

I also recognize and acknowledge here the countless Native American tribes on whose ancestral lands and waters we dragon boaters often train, paddle, and race, such as the Cherokee in Georgia, the Lenape in New Jersey, the Muwekma Ohlone in California, and the Timucua in Florida.

Chapter 1

My Dragon Boat Story

When I tell new colleagues or acquaintances that, “I do dragon boat,” their immediate response is almost always, “is that like rowing?” Though I am never offended, this reply does irk me slightly. What many here in the United States do not know is the long history and ancient traditional roots the sport has in Chinese and Hongkonger culture; in my culture. Ironically enough, though, parts of modern American dragon boat racing may actually come directly from rowing.

I first started dragon boat in the spring of 2012. My father, a first-generation Chinese-American born and raised in Queens, paddled with a now-defunct dragon boat team in Flushing called Rebels around the time I was born, in the mid-1990s, then raced on and off with various other teams in Queens; after a few years, though, he quit altogether.

After we moved to New Jersey in the early 2000s and he retired in 2012, he decided to pick up dragon boat again and asked if I wanted to go with him to an open dragon boat practice with the only team in the area, New Jersey Team Dragons. As I was a homework-swamped high school freshman who much preferred computers to physical activity, I responded almost verbatim: “I’ll go, but you know I’m not going to like it; it’s exercise and stuff.” Though I played some basketball and baseball growing up, I was decidedly *not* athletic, even in the slightest. I went to that practice with my father somewhat begrudgingly, but little did I know going to Lake Parsippany for that first

dragon boat session would have a lasting effect on me and create a lifelong passion for the sport.

During my subsequent high school and college years, I moved my way up the team's totem pole from a weak and lowly rookie in the back of the boat to lead stroker, in charge of feeling/reading the boat, and setting and changing the rate as needed during a race. Today, with seven years of experience on NJ Team Dragons, my father and I are considered veterans, and have both held leadership positions on the team.

Hong Kong

In January 2018, my junior year of college, I flew to Asia. It was my first time traveling outside the Western hemisphere, and I was studying for a semester at the University of Hong Kong. Though I was there mainly to study, another one of the reasons I chose Hong Kong was the grand dragon boat culture; after all, it is the birthplace and global hub of the sport. The dragon boat racing community there differs markedly from its American cousin; there are essentially two dragon boat circuits: the expatriates' and the locals'.

Expatriate teams are sometimes corporate teams, but are more typically recreational teams composed of predominantly white expatriates who race almost exclusively against other expatriate teams. A very famous example of an expatriate team is Victoria Recreation Club, or VRC, known to some in Hong Kong as the "beasts of the island." The VRC Paddle Team was created by Britons in 1993 during the British

occupation of Hong Kong and is renowned today for its high number of paddlers who make the Great Britain national team (“About the Team”).

Local teams, which have even longer histories, have been formed for years by fishermen villages, and as dragon boat runs in their veins, the competition is fierce. Fishermen teams are usually named for and identified by where they come from; the most feared and famous team from Hong Kong Island is called South Eagle, where the living legend and “grandfather of dragon boat,” Uncle Mei, is from. Not just any team can choose to race in this he local circuit, though; as expected, only fishermen teams are allowed.

Just a few weeks after I had settled into life at HKU and started paddling with, then ultimately quit, the university dragon boat team, I found and officially joined an English-speaking recreational dragon boat team in southern Hong Kong called Buzz Dragon 霸士龍, composed of approximately half expatriates (mostly white, of course) and half locals. Buzz was a very unique team, particularly in its positionality between the two race circuits. We competed in the normal expatriate races, as to be expected, but because of connections some of our teammates had to fishermen teams and the fact that half of our members were Hong Kong locals and spoke Cantonese (including me), our team had the honor of racing in both the fishermen and expatriate circuits.

Even for someone like myself, who had been paddling for many years, watching and competing in fisherman races for the first time was the most incredible part of my entire Hong Kong dragon boat experience. Those races were especially meaningful because in contrast to most dragon boat races in the West, competition was not

everything; who won and who lost was not nearly as important as general merriment, camaraderie, and tradition. In the West, none of the traditional Hong Konger fishermen ceremonies, rituals, or superstitions are performed before/after a race; the sport has become sterile and almost history-less. It was incredibly eye-opening for me to learn about, experience, and take part in the roots of the sport that ties me so directly to my cultural heritage, as my family is from Hong Kong.

As a linguistics student, I particularly enjoyed hearing the different terms that Buzz used, and the Cantonese words that fishermen teams uttered during race day. Buzz, as aforementioned, was a special team; three people on the coach/captain staff paddled on the British national team, while the other coaches and captains were primarily from Hong Kong. Furthermore, the fishermen cultural component of the sport meant that we Cantonese-speakers often conversed in the boat in Cantonese. This made for a sui generis linguistic environment in which languages and dialects intersected and interacted regularly.

Team USA

In July 2018, two months after I returned to the United States from Hong Kong, I drove to Philadelphia tried out for the International Canoe Federation-affiliated US national team that would race at the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships in September 2018 at Lake Lanier, Georgia, USA. I had been training hard, spending as much time on the water and on the paddling erg as I could; a few weeks after tryouts, I heard back: I had made the team. Though this was the International Canoe Federation

world championship and not the significantly more prestigious and competitive world championships sanctioned by the International Dragon Boat Federation (see Appendix A1), I was proud and ecstatic nonetheless.

After another month of training at home and one week into my senior year of college, I flew to Georgia for the ICF World Championships. The team was 100-some-odd people strong, and hailed mostly from Texas and Florida. I knew only two people, with whom I had raced in Philadelphia in years past. We practiced for three days, then raced for four. After competing against other nations present, such as Canada, Germany, the Philippines, and Switzerland, Team USA won the Nations' Cup, as well as multiple gold, silver, and bronze medals; I personally took home one gold and two bronze medals.

It was during those eight days I spend in Georgia that I realized just how linguistically diverse our country's dragon boat community is; I both steered and paddled on Team USA, and as a steerer, I had to give commands to the crew. I found that I had to change the terms I typically used and say the terms that our coaches used, because the crew responded better to those words, logically. For example, I usually say "hold water" to make paddlers slow down the boat; while steering for Team USA, however, I switched to the phrase "check it down," which was a command I had never previously heard.

Diversity and Difference

My experience of paddling with people from across the United States and the world showed me that dragon boat is a sport with many diverse participants, especially

linguistically. Those participants are all unique, and the ways in which they/we do the sport differs. It is because of these differences that I initially embarked on this journey to explore why linguistic differences often exist between different dragon boat teams here in the United States, and from where these variances stem. This was most apparent to me when, as aforementioned, I had to change my own language and jargon when racing on the US national team.

Note: some sections of this thesis are purely background/relevant information about dragon boat because it is not very well-known in the United States. As this is one of the first academic dragon boat-related papers that does not focus on anatomy, physiology, or fitness, as most published dragon boat-related papers do, I feel I must provide the reader with any and all relevant background information relating to dragon boat and watersports in general. For those readers with dragon boat experience, you may find it efficient to skip various expositional sections of this thesis.

Chapter 2

History of Dragon Boat

The contemporary advent and global spread of dragon boat racing as we know it today began in 1976, when the Hong Kong Tourist Association (now Tourist Board) held an international dragon boat festival, the first of its kind, to promote Hong Kong culture (“History”). Those legendary races, known today as the Hong Kong International Races, marked the modern era of dragon boat sport. The HKIR also facilitated the spread of the sport of dragon boat across the world after teams from around the world came to Hong Kong, competed in the races, returned home, and founded dragon boat clubs/national dragon boat federations.

In 1991, after the Hong Kong International Races had been running as the unofficial world championships of the sport for fifteen years, twelve countries came together and founded the International Dragon Boat Federation, headquartered in Hong Kong. These founding members, including such countries as China, Italy, Norway, Singapore, and the Philippines, officially declared the IDBF the “the world governing body of dragon boat sport” (“History,” see Appendix A1 for additional information regarding the global role of the IDBF).

Though the United States was also represented as a founding member of the IDBF through the American Dragon Boat Federation of Iowa, the official domestic governing body for the sport as it is known today was not formed until 1997, as the United States Dragon Boat Federation. The federation was created by combining the ADBA of Iowa and the United States Dragon Boat Association of Philadelphia (“Our Story”). The

USDBAP, now the Philadelphia Dragon Boat Association, is famous as the nation's oldest dragon boat club.

Dragon Boat Today

Today, dragon boat is practiced by over 50 million people across the globe, in such disparate countries as France, India, Qatar, South Africa, and Ukraine. As of 2019, seventy-four nations are members of the IDBF. The IDBF brings the international community together through biennial World Dragon Boat Racing Championships, biennial Club Crew World Championships, and ad hoc World Cups.

The WDBRC, which occurs every odd-numbered year, brings the best paddlers of every country against each other; in many cases, members of these national teams are individually cherry-picked, in the same manner that Olympic athletes are often chosen (“Calendar - International Dragon Boat Events”). For example, as aforementioned, the United States national team is composed of disparate athletes from all over the fifty states, who have not necessarily raced together previously (“About Us - Team USA”). These WDBRC, also called the World Nations Dragon Boat Championships, represent the absolute highest level of the sport (again, see Appendix A1 for context), and, similarly to sports in the Olympic Program, world records on flatwater are generally only considered when raced at these high-level international events.

The IDBF-sanctioned Club Crew World Championships (CCWC) is an international competition between the best full teams of every member state against others (“Calendar - International Dragon Boat Events”). This differs from the WDBRC in

that pre-existing teams from each country compete, rather than a best-of-the-best team of individuals. CCWC teams *do* often contain national-level paddlers, as well, but do not necessarily.

These IDBF events, while important, do not capture and encompass all of the global dragon boat community, though. Especially in China and Hong Kong, the birthplaces of the sport, countless athletes paddle not for international glory and fame but for tradition.

Chapter 3

Cultural Context: China & Hong Kong

First and foremost, dragon boat is a Chinese sport. The IDBF explains the origins of the sport as such: “In ancient China, the dragon boat was used...as a way of appeasing the rain gods. Later, Qu Yuan, the great warrior poet, committed suicide in the river Mi Lo, as a protest against political corruption of the day. To commemorate this sacrifice, the people began to organize dragon boat races in his memory” (“History & Culture”). Those traditional races, now called the Duanwu Festival, are celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month of the traditional Chinese calendar, hence the festival’s other name: the Double Fifth Festival, which was declared a national holiday in 2008 (Kilpatrick).

Because of these Chinese origins, there are often large contingents of athletes on American dragon boat teams who are ethnically Chinese or Hongkongers. Unfortunately, there are no resources that provide official, exact statistics on the ethnic breakdown of the American dragon boat community; it is merely a well-known fact that many American dragon boaters are Asian-American. Furthermore, as with many people of color in the United States, a significant number of these Asian-American dragon boaters are first- or second-generation immigrants. In fact, according to the Pew Research Center, “in 2005, most Asians in the United States (58%) were foreign born” (22). In the following sections, the cultural context of the Chinese/Hongkonger diaspora and its role in shaping the landscape of dragon boat in the United States will be considered. However, because no literature exists on exactly which dragon boat terms may or may not come from China

and Hong Kong, this chapter focuses on the overarching concept of loanwords and borrowing, and language contact.

Translation and interpretation from Mandarin or Cantonese to American English will not be discussed, though it may be a viable route of investigation; unfortunately, resources to carry out this line of research are not available to the author at present.

Chinese-Americans

Immigration from China to the United States has exploded since the 1980s; the Chinese immigrant population has increased more than six-fold, and stands today as the third-largest foreign-born group in the country (Batalova and Zong). As of 2015, the three cities with the largest Chinese immigrant populations were New York City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, all three of which happen to be hubs of dragon boat sport (Batalova and Zong).

It is unlikely that Chinese immigrants have brought over the terminology they used to describe dragon boat in China, though. This is because the sport is performed in China while using the Mandarin language, and not English. Still, the cropping up of premier dragon boat teams in areas of many Chinese-Americans is more than coincidental; however, that does appear to be where the correlation ends.

Hongkonger-Americans

Though some immigrants from Hong Kong do still come today, the huge wave of Hongkongers moving to the United States occurred in the years leading up to the 1997

handover of Hong Kong back to China from Great Britain. Alvin So writes that these immigrants were fearful of communist China infringing upon their political freedoms, economic lifestyles, and physical assets after the handover, so many Hongkongers emigrated to obtain foreign passports (So).

It is possible that Hong Kongers in the United States, unlike their Chinese counterparts above, may have brought over their dragon boat terminology, as many of them spoke English before leaving Hong Kong. Furthermore, the usage of Hong Kong English, especially as a result of the British occupation of the territory, is rife. According to Kingsley Bolton, Hong Kong English exists and is live and well. In his 2006 paper entitled, “Hong Kong English, China English and World English,” Franky Kai-Cheung Poon references Bolton’s famous 2002 article; in fact, countless articles and papers explicate and tout the power and fluidity of Hong Kong English.

The most relevant point to extract from this section is that while there is no literature, evidence, or research in the area of carrying Hong Kong dragon boat terms over to the United States, it is very plausible. That being said, there are no overlaps, as far as I know, between Hongkonger dragon boat commands and American ones, save “let it run.”

Chapter 4

Research Methods

Original research was conducted for this thesis in the form of audio-only interviews and a simple survey. As the focus of this project is dragon boat in the United States, only those who have done the sport domestically were used for this research. Participants were either chosen by the author or were in the author's extended dragon boat community.

This chapter will explain the methods used by the author to conduct research and the results of the survey. The interviews, as well as interpretations of the survey, will be incorporated into the following chapters.

Interviews

Individual phone interviews were conducted with a diverse group of American dragon boaters; location varied from Philadelphia and rural Pennsylvania to California and Florida, and paddling experience varied from six to thirty years. Five open-ended questions were asked to each interviewee:

1. How long have you been dragonboating?
2. What teams have you paddled on and where?
3. Do you say "let it run?" Why? Do you know of any other way to say "let it run," and if so, do you know where you might hear that other phrase being used?
4. If you were visiting Australia (or any other anglophone country), and you were drumming a boat, what would you yell to make the boat stop moving, and why?

Do you think it is more common/universal, and would you use that even if it is not what your home team uses?

5. What do you call the person who stands in the back of the boat and controls the direction of the boat?

The questions were carefully crafted so as not to favor one saying over another and bias any answers.

Interviewees were chosen for their varying levels of experience with dragon boat and their willingness to participate.

Survey Method

A short online survey was distributed through social media channels and word-of-mouth to the American dragon boat community. The survey contained three questions with multiple-choice answers and a write-in option. It is very important to note that as the survey was distributed through the author's connections in the dragon boat world, respondents likely hail mostly from the locations of the author's connections, namely, the east coast, Florida, Texas, Georgia, and California. However, respondents likely vary significantly in age and dragon boat experience; the author's connections range from eighteen years of age to seventy, and from one year of experience to nearly forty.

The three questions had multiple-choice answers. The questions were:

1. What do you call the person who controls the boat's direction of movement?

2. What would you say to tell paddlers to stop paddling?
3. What would you say to paddlers to make the boat slow down and/or stop?

The survey was completed by 264 respondents. Below are the responses:

What do you call the person who controls the boat's direction of movement?

268 responses

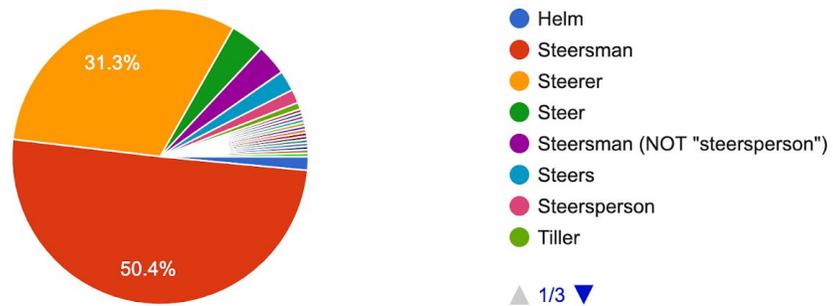


Figure 1

What would you say to tell paddlers to stop paddling?

268 responses

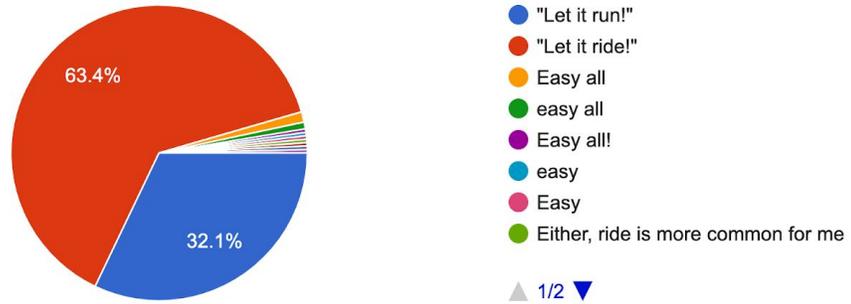


Figure 2

What would you say to paddlers to make the boat slow down and/or stop?

268 responses

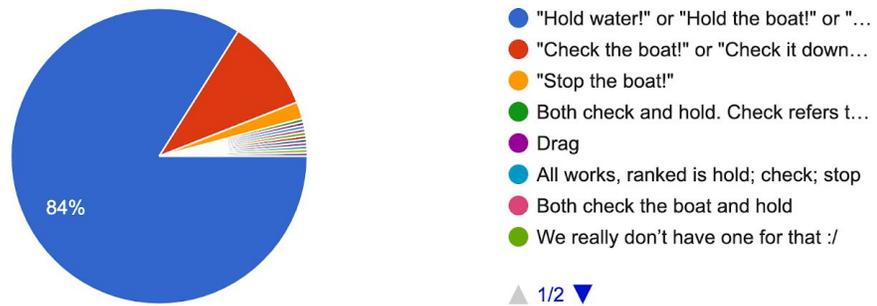


Figure 3

Chapter 5

Influences from Rowing

This chapter will explore whether the sports of rowing in the United States have affected terminology used in dragon boat. To this end, I look at interviews of American athletes, as well as online rowing resources.

History of Rowing in the United States

In the United States, rowing is arguably the most recognizable, most popular, and most historical watersport, and it has a grand history. Rowing shells have glided on American waters for many years; the nation's first rowing club was the Detroit Rowing Club, founded in 1839. The first amateur sport organization in the country was a rowing club, founded in 1858 as the Schuylkill Navy in Philadelphia, and the first domestic governing body for a sport was for rowing, founded in 1872 as the National Association for Amateur Oarsmen, and later changed to the United States Rowing Association.

The United States also has a very strong Olympic record in rowing events; in particular, the women's eight is a record-setting powerhouse in the international rowing arena. Dubbed a "rowing dynasty" in many news articles, Louis Bien writes about the US women's eight at the 2016 Games in Rio:

"...the boat won its third consecutive gold medal in the event Saturday and 11th consecutive world title. That level of team dominance is nearly unprecedented at the international level. Only the Soviet hockey team that won

14 straight titles from 1963 to 1976 has a more impressive streak. Among American teams, there is no corollary.”

American Rowing and Dragon Boat

Terminology used in rowing differs greatly from dragon boat terms, especially as the two sports differ greatly themselves. A principal distinction between rowing and dragon boat (and paddling in general) is the direction of movement; by definition, rowers face away from direction of movement and paddlers face toward it. Furthermore, the implements used in both sports function differently; rowing oars are attached to the boat and act as a fulcrum, while paddles are maneuvered entirely by the paddler’s hands.

That being said, there are some overlaps. The most obvious, which exist in almost all watersports, are boat directions/parts: port, starboard, bow, and stern. However, there are, in fact, some other more specific terms that are the exact same in the two sports, such as “stroke/stroker” and “engine room.”

According to USRowing’s online list of rowing terms, “stroke” (as a position in the boat) is defined as the rower who “sets the rhythm for the boat; others behind him must follow his cadence.” This is also, by definition, the rower sitting closest to the stern of the boat. In dragon boat, the “strokes” or “strokers” are the “first two paddlers in the front seats who set the pace for team,” as explained on the website of the Hawaii Dragon Boat Festival. This is just one example of a word from rowing that found its way into the American dragon boat scene.

The term “engine room” in rowing is widely used to mean the rowers in the middle seats of an eight-person boat. In dragon boat, that same term is used to describe those paddlers who sit in the middle of the boat; in fact, the Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival’s website defines the “engine room” simply as “the middle eight paddlers” (“Team Structure”). This is another example of a borrowed rowing word in dragon boat.

This is likely due to rowing and dragon boat’s historical interactions in Philadelphia. Philadelphia’s famous “Boathouse Row” has been a stronghold of rowing for decades, and according to many interviewees (and common American dragon boat knowledge), it was where the first dragon boat Team USA was recruited. One interviewee paddled on the second-ever US national team sent to the HKIR in 1984, and noted that the team was comprised mostly of college and Olympic swimmers, runners, and rowers. Furthermore, the first coach of that Team USA was a rowing coach; a current coach and legend of the USDBF’s Team USA is Bob McNamara, who, according to one interviewee, was a rower for many years.

The rowing and dragon boat overlap is plain to see, and its origins are clear. In the following chapter, sprint canoe and kayak will be considered as a possible avenue of transmission.

Chapter 6

Influences from Sprint Canoe & Kayak

Sprint canoe (also called flatwater racing) is another relatively widely-practiced watersport, and is comprised of two disciplines: sprint canoe and sprint kayak. These disciplines are practiced on flatwater, and have proliferated throughout much of the world; sprint canoeists can be found in countries as diverse as China, Ireland, Mexico, Russia, and Senegal (“Canoe Sprint”).

One of the reasons behind the wide reach of sprint canoe and kayak in particular is their inclusion in the Summer Olympic Games, and their support/governance by the highly-structured International Canoe Federation, the global governing body.

Other types of canoesports exist and are also widely-practiced, such as whitewater slalom and marathon, but as dragon boat is primarily a sprint watersport on flatwater, this section will focus only on Olympic sprint canoe and kayak.

Olympic Sprint Canoe/Kayak

Canoe first debuted at the 1924 Paris Olympics as a demonstration sport, and became a full medal sport at the 1936 Games in Berlin. Women first competed in the sprint kayak discipline at the 1948 London Games, and as of 2018, still cannot race in the sprint canoe discipline (see Appendix A2).

Races today are contested over 200-meter, 500-meter, and 1000-meter distances, but historically, Olympic races have reached even 10000-meter lengths.

American Canoe/Kayak

In the United States, few canoe/kayak clubs exist. The American governing body for canoeing, including Olympic-style sprint canoe/kayak, is the American Canoe Association, founded in August 1880 in Lake George, New York. Today, the ACA is comprised of over 30,000 members and more than 300 clubs and affiliates. The ACA only recently took control of Olympic canoe sprint (but does not unilaterally govern dragon boat; see Appendix A1), becoming the official national governing body in late 2017 (“History of the ACA”).

According to the ACA, the states with the most sprint canoe/kayak clubs are California, with five clubs, and Washington, also with five clubs (“Sprint Paddling Clubs”). That being said, the strongholds of the sport, that is to say the most popular clubs with the highest-performing members, are the San Diego Canoe Kayak Team, Washington Canoe Club (the oldest canoe club in the country and located in Washington, DC) and Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club (in Georgia). These teams consistently churn out high-performance paddlers who have gone on to compete at the national, international, and Olympic levels in their disciplines; Ian Ross of the Washington Canoe Club is one of the most well-known American sprint canoeist in the canoe discipline contemporarily, having competed at multiple ICF World Championships and World Cups (“Ian Ross”). Perhaps the most legendary American Olympic canoeist of all-time, however, is Frank Havens, who passed away in July 2018 (“Frank Havens”); as of 2019, his gold medal and world record-setting time in the 10,000-meter singles canoe event at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki still stands as the only American Olympic Gold Medal in a C1 event,

though the 10000-meter event was struck from the Olympic Program in the 1960s (Walsh).

American Sprint Canoe and Dragon Boat

The sprint canoe and dragon boat communities in the United States today do not mix as often as one might expect, especially not with the dragon boat stronghold that is the Philadelphia Dragon Boat Association. As such, it is not likely that any terms from the unpopular but established sport of sprint canoe have been carried over. Moreover, upon interviewing a sprint kayaker, it was revealed that there is no common jargon between the two sports.

Conclusion

Dragon boat racing is the fastest-growing watersport in the world, and as with every sport, variations in terminology exist. The United States, which already has a significant established dragon boat population (and a singular international record with countless gold medals at multiple world championships), is certainly no exception. As we have seen, different terms are already being used.

The research conducted for this thesis suggests that many dragon boat commands and terms come from rowing. This is likely a result of the historically large rowing culture in Philadelphia, the rowing coach who coached the very first American dragon boat teams at the HKIR in 1983, and the current long-time USDBF Team USA coach who rowed years ago.

Research and analysis have shown that no significant common phrases are shared by Olympic sprint canoe and dragon boat, and as such, it is very likely that sprint canoe did not affect dragon boat jargon in the United States.

This all implies that teams utilize different jargon because of the team's history, likely tied to the first watersport of their coach, which is primarily rowing. Of course, exceptions exist, and these exceptions may be explained by sprint canoe; it is entirely possible that a sprint canoe club creates a dragon boat program, and creates its own lexicon of dragon boat commands using sprint canoe as a foundation. This is entirely possible, and could explain why different teams use differing terms.

Further research is necessary to fully and completely understand how and why dragon boat terminology changes; a viable and possible avenue for transmission not

discussed in this thesis is translation/interpretation from Mandarin or Cantonese, languages used in the birthplaces and global hubs of the sport.

References Cited

- “About the Team.” *VRC Paddle Club*, vrcpaddleclub.com.
- “About Us - Team USA.” *United States Dragon Boat Federation*,
www.usdbf.org/about_us/team_usa.
- Batalova, Jeanne, and Jie Zong. “Chinese Immigrants in the United States” *Migration Policy Institute*, 29 September 2017.
- Bien, Louis. “The U.S. women’s rowing 8 is one of the greatest sports team dynasties in the history of the world.” *SBNation*, 13 August 2016, www.sbnation.com/2016/8/13/12464972/team-usa-womens-rowing-8-dynasty-rio-olympics-gold-medal.
- Bolton, Kingsley. “Chinese Englishes: from Canton jargon to global English.” Blackwell, 2002.
- “Calendar - International Dragon Boat Events.” *International Dragon Boat Federation*,
www.dragonboat.sport/world.
- “Canoe Sprint.” *International Olympic Committee*, www.olympic.org/canoe-sprint.
- “Frank Havens.” *Team USA*, www.teamusa.org/usa-canoe-kayak/athletes/Frank-Havens.
- “Glossary of Rowing Terms.” *USRowing*, www.usrowing.org/glossary-of-rowing-terms.
- “History of the ACA.” *American Canoe Association*, www.americancanoe.org/page/history.
- “History & Culture.” *International Dragon Boat Federation*,
www.dragonboat.sport/history.
- “Ian Ross.” *Team USA*, United States Olympic Committee, www.teamusa.org/usa-canoe-kayak/athletes/Ian-Ross.

Kilpatrick, Ryan. "The Dragon Boat Festival Has Nothing to do With Dragons. Here are Four Things to Know." *Time*, 30 May 2017, time.com/4797048/dragon-boat-festival-duanwu-tuen-ng.

"Mission and Vision." *GAISF*, www.gaisf.sport/mission-and-vision/.

"Our Story." *United States Dragon Boat Federation*, usdbf.org/about_us/our_story.

Palmer, Paul. "Women's canoe added to 2020 Olympics, opening doors for female athletes." *CBC*, 23 June 2017, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/women-canoe-2020-olympics-tokyo-1.4175083.

Poon, Franky Kai-Cheung. "Hong Kong English, China English and World English." *English Today*, iss. 86, vol. 22, no. 2 (April 2006).

"The Rise of Asian Americans." *Pew Research Center*, 4 April 2013,

"Rowing Quick Facts." *USRowing*, www.usrowing.org/rowing-quick-facts/.

So, Alvin. "Hong Kong immigrants." *Immigration to the United States*, immigrationtounitedstates.org/556-hong-kong-immigrants.html

"Sprint Paddling Clubs." *American Canoe Association*, www.americancanoe.org/page/SprintClubs.

"Team Structure." *Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival*, www.lakesuperiordragons.com/teams/team-structure/.

Walsh, Lindsay. "Canoeing and Kayaking in the Olympics." *Mpora*, 26 July 2016, www.mpora.com/kayaking/canoeing-kayaking-olympics-complete-history-sport.

Appendix

Appendix A1: Global Governance of Dragon Boat and the IDBF vs. the ICF

In the dragon boat world today, a highly controversial conflict exists between the International Dragon Boat Federation and the International Canoe Federation over which organization should rightfully and officially govern the sport of dragon boat on the international level. The issue divides paddlers, and supporting one side typically means strongly opposing the other. The crux of the row lies in the Olympic Games; both federations believe they should govern the sport, and the legitimizing body to decide that is the International Olympic Committee.

The IDBF, founded in 1991, was declared the world governing body for the sport upon its founding. Today, it is a member of the Alliance of Independent Recognised Members of Sport under the Global Association of International Sports Federations, which “supports its Member federations [to] climb the ‘pyramid’ of Olympic sport” (“Mission and Vision”). Its membership currently number seventy-four countries, and its WDBRC are widely considered the highest point of dragon boat sport.

The ICF is the International Olympic Committee-recognized world governing body for all canoesports. In recent years, it has created a dragon boat program of its own in an effort to decrease the IDBF’s legitimacy. The ICF’s dragon boat world championship are widely discredited, and are primarily attended by European countries which also have strong sprint canoe/kayak programs, such as Russia and Germany. It is important to note that China, the birthplace of the sport, does not recognize the ICF’s authority over the dragon boat.

This issue trickles down to the national level, as well, and manifests itself in the United States specifically as the conflict between the United States Dragon Boat Federation and Dragon Boat-USA, under the American Canoe Association. The former aligns itself with the IDBF, while the latter competes under the ICF flag.

Appendix A2: Women in Olympic Canoe

The 1948 Olympics in London marked the first Games where women were allowed to race in a sprint canoe discipline, namely, sprint kayak. This occurred twelve years after the official Olympic debut of the sport in the 1936 Games. Since those historic 1948 Games, though, no change has been made to include female sprint canoeists in the canoe discipline, until today. In June 2017, the International Olympic Committee announced “that women's canoe events will be added to the 2020 Games,” referring to C1 sprint canoe (Palmer). This will be the first time in history that female sprint canoeists compete in the Olympic games.