

Progress and Prospects of Chinese Sports Oral History Research

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Abstract**Review Article**

Using the literature method and the logical analysis method, we propose the problems in the development of sports oral history research in China, and conclude that the theoretical development of sports oral history research is insufficient, and the practice of oral history is not standardised; we should accelerate the construction of the theory of sports oral history, master the interview techniques of sports oral history, and highlight the industrial significance and dissemination value of sports oral history in order to promote the development of sports oral history research. At present, the development of sports oral history is in the initial stage of development, and there are still some problems and dilemmas. Facing up to these problems and actively seeking solutions can make the rapid development of Chinese sports oral history go up to a new stage.

Keywords: Oral history, oral history of sport, kinesiology.

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1. Conceptual studies on oral history

1.1 Oral history

At present, the oral history method has gradually formed a promising research method and field in the domestic academic community, and its multiple values have been recognised by the academic community. Oral history is simply the history of oral narration. There are many expressions in the academic circles for the definition of oral history, and there are several representative ones, for example, Li Baoliang mentioned in "The Rise of Modern Oral History and the Essentials of Research" that if the connotation of oral history can be defined as "the history narrated by the person who has experienced it", then not only the results of the one-question-one-answer type of oral accounts belong to the oral history, but also the person who has written his own personal experiences with his own pen. writings such as memoirs, biographies, etc. also belong to oral history 3. Wang Yuying in Oral History. Wang Yuying in "Oral History: Why and What" mentions that a mature oral history should make use of oral history materials, investigation records, and interviews 4. Oral history is the researcher's interpretation of oral history. Oral history is the researcher's processing, organisation, study and enhancement of oral history materials, not a simple restoration of interviews, and there should be footnotes (intellectual descriptions of people, events, bibliographies, etc.), marginal notes (corrections or doubts to the main account, or additions to other

documents), and endnotes (editorial comments, illustrations, or appendices, references, etc.). Zuo Yuhe, in "Hot Spots and Discipline Construction: Oral History Research in China in Recent Years," suggests that the concept of oral history has the connotation of collecting and applying oral historical materials to reproduce a certain stage or aspect of the process of historical development 5. Oral history is limited to providing a variety of research materials. Oral history is limited to providing various materials for studying history, while oral history focuses on interpreting history in its own unique way. Therefore, oral history is a study of the life of an interviewee or a related event based on the researcher's interviews with the interviewee's oral history materials, combined with the documentary information, and after certain auditing of the historical records, it is the processing, organisation and enhancement of the oral history materials, rather than the restoration of the interview materials.

In summary, there is a dispute between Chinese and foreign scholars about the definition of oral history, mainly about whether oral history has been processed with raw materials. This paper argues that oral history should be defined as "history narrated by those who have experienced it".

1.2 Overview of oral history of sport

Since the 1980s, the compilation of China's Sports History Series has begun to make extensive use of sports oral history as a means of collecting and organising materials. Since the 21st century, the study of sports oral history in China has attracted increasing attention and emphasis, and has resulted in a series of academic achievements. In terms of table tennis, there is "Me and the "National Ball" - Xu Yinsheng's Oral History", Xu Yinsheng; In terms of martial arts, there are "Collective Memory of the Development of Martial Arts in New China: An Oral History Study", Zhao Guangsheng; The Hidden Voice: An Oral History Study of Martial Artists, Dai Guobin; in terms of sports media, there are mainly Sports Media Characters: An Oral History of Sports News Dissemination in New China, by Xue Wenting and others. With the implementation of a series of national and provincial topics mentioned above, the study of sports oral historiography in China has gradually become known to the majority of sports researchers. However, compared with the two disciplines of music oral history and literature oral history, relatively little work has been done to collect sports oral history. Similarly, in the early 1970s, Ziegler, an American philosopher of sport, first introduced the study of oral history to the study of sport history. In the early stages of research, oral history was simply a way of collecting and organising information for the compilation of sports history. As the superiority of the oral history research method became more and more prominent, scholars such as "Identity Presentation and Recognition: Oral History Examination of Sports Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors" and "Exploration of the Knife Dance under the Perspective of Oral History" conducted a lot of academic research on it. However, this method is mostly used in the study of ethnic traditional sports, and there are not many research results in other fields. Compared with humanities and social sciences such as anthropology, sociology and ethnology, the application of oral history method in sports research is still in the stage of continuous exploration. The most important feature of sports oral historiography is the reproduction of action scenes, so that participants and eyewitnesses of

an event can restore the original appearance of the action in their memories. The cultural message it conveys is not just the sport itself, but as a kind of sportsmanship that permeates all aspects of social life, not only having a great impact on global communication in the fields of politics, economy and culture, but also inspiring people from all walks of life to strive for something, and serving as an inspiration. "Oral history, doing, is what really matters. If you just go for it, you can always find your own methods and approaches, even if you don't have theories or signposts." But sports oral history is never just "oral, interviews", it has a certain working method and norms.

2. Current status of domestic sports oral history research

Firstly, in terms of the number of literature, the number of related literature is only 4 since 2011 and has reached 214 by 2022 9. Secondly, in terms of the journals in which the papers were published, Journal of Beijing Institute of Physical Education, Journal of Nanjing Institute of Physical Education, Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical Education, Journal of Shanghai University of Physical Education. Among these journals, the number of journals in Beijing Institute of Physical Education and Nanjing Institute of Physical Education is the highest, reaching three respectively. According to the bibliographic method, the research on oral history of sports in China can be divided into three stages: the first stage (2009-2016): the early integration of sports and oral history. There are 29 articles in the whole text, which is about 22%. This is a long process without much progress, and the results are more scattered. It is a kind of preliminary exploration of sport in oral history; Phase 2 (2017-2018): the embryonic period. During this two-year period, 25 papers were published, or 19 per cent of the total. The number of papers in this period is small, but the chronology is relatively concentrated; Phase 3 (2019-2021): the primary development period. During this period, 79 papers were published, accounting for 59% of the total number of papers. As shown in Figure 1.

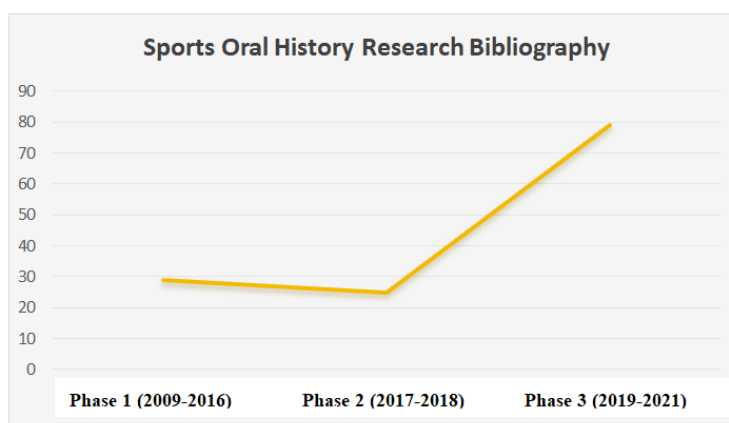


Figure 1: Bibliography of oral history research in sport

In the last three years, research on oral history in sport has grown rapidly and is emerging as a new field of study. The studies in this period mainly include the integration of oral history with school physical education teachers, theoretical studies of oral history, and oral history studies on various topics 10. Starting from 2010-2023, the annual average number of publications on oral history of sport in China has increased year by year, and a relatively stable research scale has been formed. Research institutions, mainly specialised sports colleges, have become the main force to promote the research of sports oral history in China, including Guo Yucheng, Zhao Guangsheng, Li Shoupei, Summer, Guo Invention, etc. However, on the whole, the connection between research institutions and authors of theses is relatively sparse, and there are fewer instances of mutual exchanges, and the level of synergy still needs to be further improved, and there is still horizontal collaboration between some research institutions and researchers insufficient, inconsistent views and other deep-rooted problems 11. The level of synergy needs to be further improved.

Oral history is an "imported" discipline that was first adopted by various disciplines such as anthropology, history and sociology. From the available literature, Chen Wei's *Wushu Cultural Inheritance since Modern Times* (2010) included oral history in the study of wushu culture for the first time, followed by Zhao Guangsheng's *Study on Oral History of Wushu Artists* (2022), and Dai Guobin's *Collective Memory of the Development of New China's Wushu: An Oral History Study* (2016). With the development of oral historiography, research on oral history of sports has also gradually increased 12. In general, at present, China's research on sports oral history is still in the basic research stage, or it is only used as a means of collecting information, although there have been some theoretical discourses, but it has not yet formed a systematic system. In addition, there are few studies on the combination of sports oral history and communication studies.

3. Value and significance of oral history of sport

Oral history of sports has its unique value compared with general sports history. 1) Oral history of sports can make the historical materials of sports more abundant and vivid 7. Sports oral history can broaden the sources of historical information, and sports oral history can not only interview sports celebrities, but also let more sports people participate in the historical narrative, which can reveal the reality of some sports events and provide some historical details, which greatly enrich the historical materials. 2) Sports oral history is an important research method that can be widely used in sports research; in the research of sports history, sports oral history is a kind of historical method with "life temperature". In the study of sports history, sports oral history is a kind of historical material with "living temperature", which provides sports historians with more

vivid and diversified historical materials to better record and restore history. In the field of sports training, for example, research on the training methods of championship coaches can learn about their coaching careers, coaching philosophy and methods from oral history interviews; research on tactical evolution, such as the tactical evolution of Chinese men's basketball centres, and interviews with men's basketball centres and head coaches from various countries in the history will be the most vivid materials for research. 3) Oral history of sports is an important way of building sports culture; For the inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese national sports, sports oral history can also play a great role in the excavation and collation of sports intangible cultural heritage, through the recording of traditional Chinese national sports and sports non-hereditary bearers' oral history can greatly strengthen the collation and research and promotion of the inheritance of excellent national sports, folk sports and folklore sports. 4) Sports oral history is an Oral history of sports is an excellent source of material; oral history of sports will unearth more sports stories by recording personal memories, which embody Chinese spirit, Chinese wisdom, Chinese energy and Chinese power. Sports oral history records the memories of Chinese sports people, writes the life stories of Chinese sports people, and reflects the extraordinary development path of Chinese sports, so sports oral history will become an excellent source of material for China's story. However, there are still many problems in the oral history of sports in China, such as: how to guarantee the credibility of oral history, lack of professional talents and institutions, insufficient research funding, insufficient research content and depth, etc 8. Chinese sportsmen and women have experienced many historic moments of national competitive sports in all aspects, and their life memories are a valuable treasure of our national competitive sports. The collection of Chinese oral history materials and the construction of a Chinese oral history database are not only the "eternity" of traditional Chinese sports, but also the promotion of the Chinese sports spirit, which is a strong guarantee for the sports power of our country. Therefore, it is necessary to study the oral history of sports in China.

4. Problems with oral history research

Firstly, it suffers from an inherent lack of theory and is seriously lagging behind 6. Although oral history has been introduced to mainland China from the West and appeared in China since the 1980s, Chinese oral history research has mainly focused on the introduction of Western oral history theory, and there have been a large number of Western oral history research results that have been translated into Chinese, Thompson's *Voices of the Past - Oral History* and Donald Ritchie's *Let's All Do Oral History*, as well as treatises by Chinese scholars such as *Dialogue with History - The Theory and Practice of Oral History* and *Theory and Practice of Chinese Oral History*. *Dialogue with History-Theory and Practice of*

Oral History and Theory and Practice of Oral History in China, etc. However, this achievement cannot hide the weakness and backwardness of oral history research in Mainland China. The current research on oral history in Mainland China lacks original research results and has not formed a relatively complete theory and methodology of oral history, and there are even ambiguities and disputes about the basic concepts, nature, and disciplinary affiliation of oral history, not to mention raising oral history to the level of disciplinary construction;

Secondly, oral history research lacks the necessary depth, and there is a lack of professional research teams. Generally speaking, the history of oral history in China is still in the initial stage of collecting and organising "oral historical materials", and is still far from the research level of "oral historiography". Its main characteristics are: more sensual experience, but less in-depth analysis; most of them are fragmented, and few are systematic. On the other hand, the impetus for the development of oral history does not come from academia, but from external forces, such as publishing houses, magazines, television stations and other media, which makes Chinese oral history show a "hot" appearance under the appearance of "hot". It is the strong operation from external forces, such as publishers, magazines, TV stations and other media, that makes Chinese oral history present a "hot" situation under the "hot" appearance.

Finally, there is a lack of working norms for the practice of oral history. A major factor in the rapid development of oral history in the United States is that it has not only set up a national oral history organisation and its branches in various places, but also formulated the Principles and Standards of the American Oral History Association, as well as a variety of Sample Legal Authorisations, which provide a unified working code and legal guidelines for contemporary oral history work. However, current oral history research in China is fragmented and decentralised, lacking not only a set of standardised norms, procedures and work processes for oral history interviewing, publishing and research, but also training in the relevant knowledge and basic techniques of oral history. Establishing a set of standards is a prerequisite and guarantee for good oral history research. The Chinese Oral History Research Association, established in 2004, is currently working on the formulation of a relevant constitution, by-laws and working rules, which will be submitted to the Council for consideration after consulting with relevant experts, with a view to providing a model for China's oral history work and a practical guide for the practical work of oral history.

5. Prospect of Domestic Sports Oral History Research

5.1 Promote the diversification of the main body of oral history work in sport; nowadays, with the

popularity and digitisation of audio and video equipment, everyone can pick up a tape recorder and a camera, and become a recorder of oral history, recording the oral history of their own interest.

5.2 Highlight the industrial significance and dissemination value of sports oral history; the selected topics of sports oral history should be chosen to have profound historical significance, practical significance, important academic value or significant social benefits in the development of Chinese sports, so as to fully reflect the value and social benefits of sports oral history.

5.3 Paying attention to the accumulation of professional information in the early stage of sports oral history work and realising the truthful arrangement and complete preservation of sports oral history materials; firstly, making full use of literature, archives, network resources and other sources of information to collect and familiarize with the relevant background and knowledge of the selected topic as much as possible. Secondly, after understanding the background and knowledge of the selected topic, the preparatory work enters the stage of searching and determining the interviewees; after the interviews are finished, the transcripts should be compiled as soon as possible, and after the oral history materials are compiled, the final archive preservation and collection work enters the final archive preservation and collection work.

5.4 Accelerate the theoretical construction of sports oral history as well as mastering the skills of sports oral history interview; to develop the discipline of oral history, we should first start from two aspects, one is to establish the theoretical system of oral history, and the other is the operation standard and way of oral history; sports oral history material should be written in different ways for the interviewed object and the interviewer.

In recent years, although sports oral history has made great progress in practice, along with the continuous development of national sports, in the construction of a strong sports country, sports oral history project has a broad space for development, and has a broad application prospect in practice, at the same time, it is also necessary to carry out the construction of theory. Theory guides practice, and practice generates new experiences, which in turn promotes theoretical innovation. Only in this way, in the solid practical operation and in-depth theoretical research complement each other and promote each other, in order to make the oral history of sports along a normal track forward, healthy development, and constantly towards maturity.

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