Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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“Language Brokering Frequency, Feelings and Autonomy Support:
Disentangling the Language Brokering Experience within Chinese Immigrant Families”

Department of Psychology

Wednesday, January 11, 2017
10:00AM
David Turpin Building
Room A136

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Catherine Costigan, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Ulrich Mueller, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Zheng Wu, Department of Sociology, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Benjamin Giguère, Department of Psychology, University of Guelph

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Leslie Butt, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

As families immigrate to a new country, adolescents often acculturate and learn the host-language more quickly than do their parents. As a result, many adolescents engage in language brokering (i.e., providing translation, interpretation, and communication mediation assistance) for their immigrant parents. This study aimed to disentangle the nature of multiple dimensions of language brokering within a community sample of 152 Chinese immigrant families residing in Western Canada. Specifically, I examined language brokering frequency as well as positive and negative feelings about language brokering as distinct constructs to better understand how they relate to one another and with adjustment. Applying self-determination theory, I also considered the role of autonomy-supportive contexts in moderating links between the various language brokering constructs and adjustment, with the expectation that language brokering would present less risk to adjustment in contexts high in autonomy support. A higher frequency of language brokering for both mothers and fathers predicted more intense feelings. Further, language brokering feelings were more predictive of adjustment than frequency. There was little evidence that brokering feelings moderated relations between language brokering frequency and adjustment. However, there was evidence that the absence of autonomy-supportive contexts was a risk for poorer adjustment, and that environments rich in autonomy support have the potential to mitigate risks associated with language brokering. The results are discussed with respect to unique adolescent experiences language brokering for mothers versus fathers, which further highlight the complex relations between language brokering and adjustment.