Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

TESS NOLAN

BA (University of Utah, 2014)

“A Phonetic Investigation of Vowel Variation in Lekwungen”

Department of Linguistics

Wednesday, April 26, 2017
2:00 P.M.
David Turpin Building
Room A137

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Sonya Bird, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:
Dr. Timothy Montler, Technical Communication, University of North Texas

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. John Taylor, Department of Biology, UVic

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

This thesis conducted the first acoustic analysis on Lekwungen (aka Songhees, Songish) (Central Salish). It studied the acoustic correlates of stress on vowels and the effects of consonantal coarticulatory effects on vowel quality. The goals of the thesis were to provide useful and usable materials and information to Lekwungan language revitalisation efforts and to provide an acoustic study of Lekwungan vowels to expand knowledge of Salishan languages and linguistics.

Duration, mean pitch, and mean amplitude were measured on vowels in various stress environments. Findings showed that there is a three-way contrast between vowels in terms of duration and only a two-way contrast in terms of pitch and amplitude.

F1, F2, and F3 were measured at vowel onset (5%), midpoint (50%), and offset (95%), as well as a mean (5%-95%), in CVC sequences for four vowels: /i/, /e/, /a/, and /ə/. Out of five places of articulation of consonants in Lekwungen (alveolar, palatal, labio-velar, uvular, glottal), uvular and glottal had the most persistent effects on F1, F2, and F3 of all vowels. Of the vowels, unstressed /ə/ was the most persistently affected by all consonants. Several effects on perception were also preliminarily documented, but future work is needed to see how persistence in acoustic effects is correlated with perception.

This thesis provides information and useful tips to help learners and teachers in writing and perceiving Lekwungen and for learners learning Lekwungen pronunciation, as a part of language revitalisation efforts. It also contributes to the growing body of acoustic phonetic work on Salishan languages, especially on vowels.