



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

**BARBARA JENNI**

BA (University of Victoria, 2011)

**“Self-Narrative Following Acquired Brain Injury: An Exploration of  
Linguistic, Subjective, and Other Associated Factors”**

Department of Linguistics

Monday, April 10, 2017

1:00 P.M.

Clearihue Building

Room C214

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Li-Shih Huang, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Susan Tasker, Department of Psychology, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Deborah Begoray, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Afzal Suleman, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UVic

## **Abstract**

The re-creation of a holistic narrative that integrates the pre- and post-injury self is integral to recovery following acquired brain injury (ABI). However, individuals may struggle with deficits in linguistic skills required for narrative, along with reduced functioning, feelings of grief, difficulties with cognition, and other communicative challenges. This mixed-methods study analyzed data gathered from six non-aphasic adult participants with ABI during semi-structured interviews and through assessments. Thematic analyses showed that individuals experience a change in their sense of self pre vs. post-injury, reflected in their self-narratives, and that even clinically undiagnosed changes in speech, language, and communication are impactful. Results from linguistic analysis and assessments suggest a relationship among a person's cognitive capacity, his/her sense of loss, and pre- vs. post-injury narrative of self speech rates. Participants spoke comparatively slower about their post-injury self, with those participants with higher feelings of loss showing a reduction in their speech rates comparatively more.