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

of

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MA (University of Victoria, 2006)
BA (University of Victoria, 2004)

“The Phonological Representation and Distribution of
Vowels in SENĆOŦEN”

Department of Linguistics

Monday, January 8, 2018
1:00 P.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B021

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Marion Caldecott, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Member)
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Dr. Timothy Montler, Department of Linguistics, University of North Texas (Outside Member)

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Dr. Darin Flynn, School of Languages, University of Calgary

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Laura Arbour, Division of Medical Sciences, UVic

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

This dissertation provides the first comprehensive analysis of the phonology of vowels in SENĆOŦEN (Salish). Evidence from various phonological and phonetic processes and properties is brought together to support a proposal that there are three types of phonological vowels in SENĆOŦEN. Understanding the phonological representations and distributions of these three types of vowels contributes a unique perspective on how words are built in the language. The study contributes to linguistic theory by showing how the interplay between faithfulness to morphological form and markedness conditions on ideal surface prosodic shapes triggers a series of vowel processes, such as deletion, epenthesis, harmony and reduction, which make it difficult to trace back to the original morphological form. In taking steps towards unraveling the complicated interaction between morphology and phonology in the language and providing insights crucial to an understanding of the underlying forms of roots and suffixes, the dissertation contributes to pedagogy by making it easier for language learners to figure out for themselves how words are related to one another.

The dissertation is organized into seven chapters. The introduction provides an overview of the language situating it in the context of research on other Salish languages. Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical assumptions that are relied upon throughout the dissertation while also providing an overview of the morphological processes discussed throughout. Chapter 3 offers phonological evidence for the claim that there are three types of phonological vowels in SENĆOŦEN and argues that underlying full vowels have a mora and place features, that underlying schwa has a mora and no place features and that epenthetic schwa has neither. This chapter also argues that all unstressed vowels are, or become, non-moraic. Chapter 4 presents an acoustic analysis of vowel length and quality which supports the proposals laid out in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 lays out phonological evidence to support the proposal that syllables in SENĆOŦEN are basically simple and that the environments when they are not simple are highly constrained and predictable. In Chapter 6 patterns of zero-schwa alternations found in complex morphological structures are accounted for by appealing to Leonard's (2007) claim that SENĆOŦEN prefers bisyllabic feet aligned to the right-edge of words. Chapter 7 is a conclusion. Overall, this dissertation argues that patterns of vowel alternations in SENĆOŦEN have a systematicity which is governed by their underlying qualities and by prosodic wellformedness constraints on the surface structure of words.