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

of

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“My Time to Speak: Four Jamaican Boys’ Narratives on Jamaican Creole’s Influence on Their Identities, Gendered Practices, Perceptions and Attitudes Toward English Language Learning”

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Friday, July 3, 2020
9:00 am
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Kathy Sanford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Tim Anderson, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)
Dr. CindyAnn Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Claudia Mitchell, Department of Integrated Studies, McGill University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Helena Kadlec, Department of Psychology, UVic

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

This dissertation presents findings from a 3-month qualitative study that examined Jamaican Creole’s (JC) influence on four adolescent (14-17) working-class Jamaican boys’ identities, gendered practices, and evolving attitudes toward English language learning (ELL). It embraced a social constructivist approach anchored in narrative inquiries and case studies to document the complexities of the boys’ lived language experiences as dominant JC speakers in an inner-city high school. The data collected from the participants’ graphic novels, interviews, video diaries, and my observations revealed that JC significantly influenced the boys’ identities, gendered practices and attitudes toward SJE and ELL. First, the data show that the boys used JC extensively to engage their identities as Jamaicans and strong heterosexual boys, which granted them social and linguistic power among working-class men and boys in their communities. Further, it reveals that the boys exhibited positive attitudes toward Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and ELL when they engaged with supportive teachers who valued their linguistic resources and the reverse was true when they had teachers who demonstrated Anglo-centric ideologies. Lastly, the boys were agentive in their ELL performance and strongly believed they were accountable for their own success. This dissertation concludes that Jamaican schools need to develop more equitable language classrooms that successfully integrate JC-speaking students’ linguistic resources and engage them in practices that complement rather than oppress their authentic voices. I hope that this research will invite educators and curriculum developers to develop more diverse multiliterate and bilingual ELL practices that offer working-class JC-speaking youths more opportunities for success and facilitate a more critical examination of Anglo-centric language ideologies in schools that are suppressing students’ voices.

Key words: gender, ELL, identity, working-class, Jamaican schools, success, Jamaican Creole