Research approval with the
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

What you need to know RIGHT NOW
(before you even think about starting research)

The IRB oversees all
HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Know whether you need to get approval from the IRB with these three words:

HUMAN:
• People, not animals, etc. (There are other procedures for lab animals, though)
• There are some special procedures for research involving children or other vulnerable populations (ask the IRB for details)

SUBJECTS:
• You interact with them (in any way, such as asking them questions)
  OR
• You access private information (such as academic or medical records)
  [This includes accessing private data from the research of others.]

RESEARCH:
• Any sharing of results academically (publications, conferences, theses, etc.)
• Yes! It DOES include pilot studies, unless the results from those pilot studies are NEVER reported and are just to test your methodology for yourself.
• Exceptions: NOT required for classes (including term papers), but only if you never use the data or results from your project outside of the classroom. Likewise, non-academic activities (conversations with friends, making a youtube video) are not considered research. (But don't use it in research!)
• Different procedures use different forms for different levels of risk. Most Linguistics research falls under “no more than minimal risk” and is “exempt” with a short application. (But even “exempt” studies need approval!)

If these three conditions apply to your project, then you must get approval BEFORE you begin (even finding subjects). You won't get retroactive approval.

If you change anything not covered on your initial application you must submit a revision before you implement those changes!

VISIT http://irb.illinois.edu/

Students can't submit to the IRB. Work with a faculty “Primary Investigator”.
Step 1: do the training (see the website); Step 2: submit the application.

If you have any questions, you should ask before you begin your project. Almost all researchers in Linguistics will at some point do experimental work.