IRB: From Fiend to Friend

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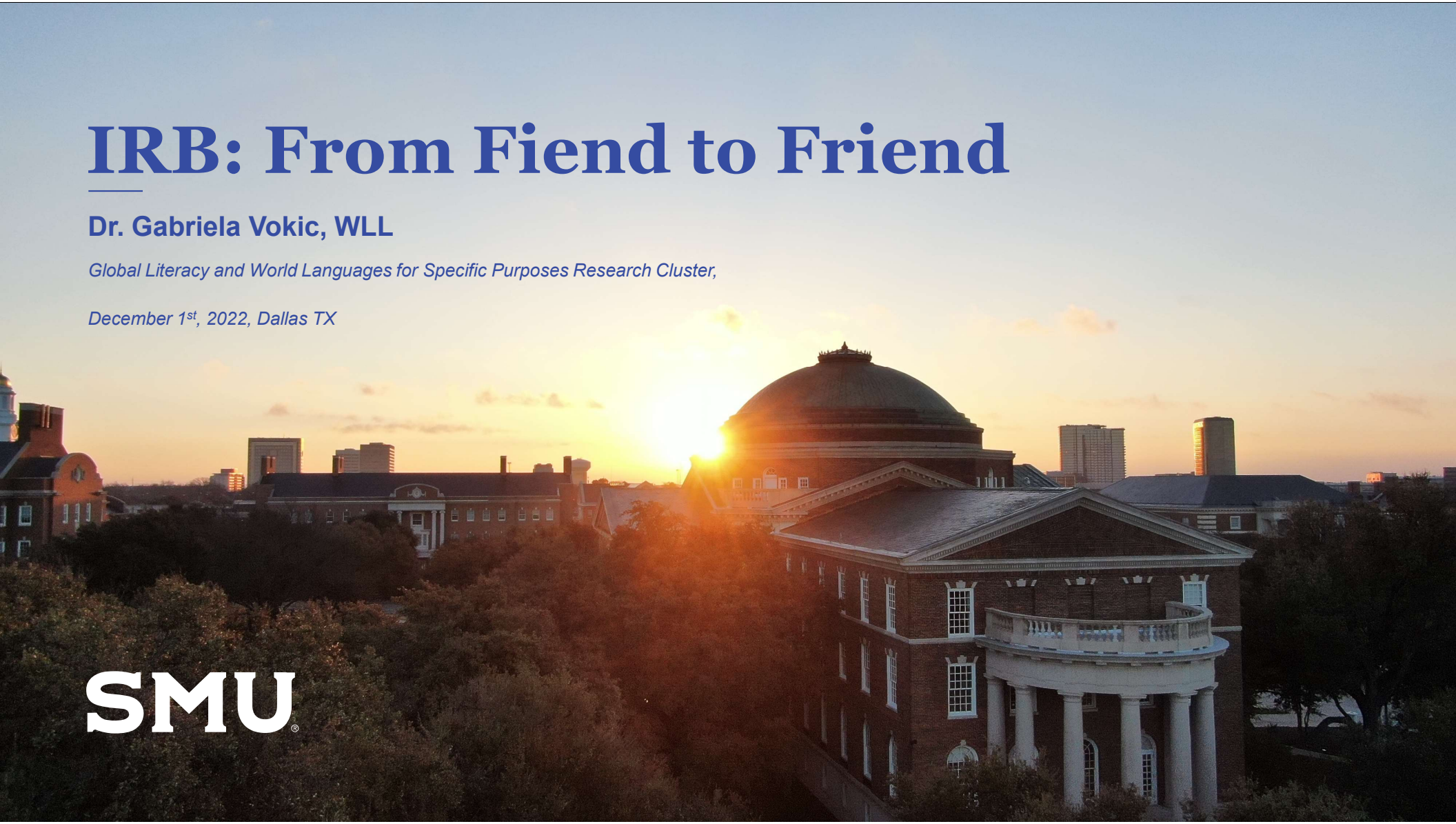

Professional Profile

Expertise:

» Phonetics and Phonology (sound systems of languages)
» Second Language Acquisition
» Heritage Language Acquisition

Type of research:

» Experimental
» Quantitative analyses
» Qualitative analyses (most recently)

Data Collection Set-Up:

» Native, non-native and heritage speakers of a variety of languages
» Sound-proof booth
» Recording equipment (digital recorder and head-mounted microphone)
» Computer-generated stimuli

IRB Definition and Purpose

» Stands for Institutional Review Board (also Human Subjects Committee)

» It is an administrative body established to protect the rights, welfare, and privacy of human subjects recruited to participate in research activities conducted under the auspices of the institution with which it is affiliated.

» The IRB is charged with the responsibility of reviewing, prior to its initiation, all research (whether funded or not) involving people.

» It has the authority to approve, exempt, disapprove, monitor, and require modifications in all research activities that fall within its jurisdiction.

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IRB Origins

» Created in response to the explosion of medical research that followed WW II

» Initially, primarily focused on biomedical research, even though regulation of social sciences was addressed from the beginning (though not very thorough)

» In the 1990s big push to oversee the work of researchers in the humanities and social sciences

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Who needs IRB review and approval?

» Projects that:

a) Meet the definition of research.

b) Involve human subjects, and

c) Include any interaction or intervention with human subjects or involve access to identifiable private information.

How does one get approval?

» Researchers possess appropriate knowledge of human subject protection.

» Risks to participants are minimized.

» Risks to participants are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to participants and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

» Selection of participants is fair and impartial.

» Informed consent is sought from each prospective participant and is appropriately documented, in accordance with federal regulations.

» Adequate safeguards are implemented to ensure the safety of the participants during the data collection.

» Participants' right to privacy and confidentiality is protected.

Types of Protocols

» Expedited Review: Only for research projects that are no more than minimal risk. Reviewed by the IRB Chair. Not synonymous with quick review.

» Exempt Review: Private investigator (project lead, PI) will be excused from complying with certain regulations (e.g. documentation of informed consent and continuing review on an annual basis) if no changes are made.

» Full Board Review: Typically involves biomedical research and research with vulnerable populations (e.g. prisoners, children).

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Fiend Turned Friend

- Initial resistance to prepping everything before-hand
- Extremely detail-oriented
  - Example: “words as triggers”; degree of risk clause in consent form
  - Solution: Familiarizing the participants with the stimuli ahead of the recording, the purpose of the study, the protocol >> lowering the affective filter
- Clear explanation of the purpose of the study + observer’s paradox + misconceptions about linguistics => adverse impact on the quality of linguistic data
  - Solution: a phrasing “balancing act” between terminology and popular knowledge; debriefing

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Fiend Turned Friend (Cont'd)

- Research at institutions without an IRB
  - Example: Collecting data in Serbia in the early 2000
- The consent form is extremely detailed and it's there to protect the participants, but the researcher as well.
  - Examples: failed recording > repeated recording; "participants" who don't qualify > clear requirements in recruitment ad, clear expectations in consent form
- More and more requirements, training and certifications are required over the years.
- The process of approval is typically lengthy (depends on individual institutions, the complexity of the project, etc.)

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Example: Rhotics in Heritage Spanish

» Consent form

Thank you!

Questions?