Academic Vs. Non-Academic Language

I really not need writing class because since time I come to United State all my friend speak language. Until now everyone understand me and I dont’ need study language.

I don’t know Vietnam language. I speak only English. I have no communication problem with my friend in dorm. My English teacher in high school key person to teach me.
What about this?

My teacher explained to me how important the book was for the student and persuaded me to read many books. I got an A in English throughout high school and I never take ESL. I agree that some students need class, but you have not made the correct decision to put me in English class. Please do not make me lose face. I have confident in English.

• When using social, or informal, English in daily conversation, it’s possible to communicate by using slang and without a grammatically correct way.

• You can be understood without using:
  – articles
  – prepositions
  – sophisticated vocabulary
  – pronoun reference

Note: Read more about the difference between social and academic language at Colorín Colorado.
Academic language is more formal and has more specific vocabulary than everyday language. It is also much less common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Language</th>
<th>Academic Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>repetition of words</td>
<td>variety of words, more sophisticated vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentences start with “or” “and” and “but”</td>
<td>sentences start with transition words, such as “however,” “moreover,” and “in addition”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slang: “guy,” “cool,” and “awesome”</td>
<td>No slang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common ‘MISTAKES’ to Avoid

• Chatty
• Colloquial
• Informal
• Obscure
• Dense

4 Important Aspects

• Choice of Words
• Grammar
• Signposting
• Hedging
Choice of Words

Rule - 1: Avoid Idiom or Colloquialism

Her paper made a tremendous contribution to the field.

Her paper made a major contribution to the field.
The community managed to **scratch a living** from the poor soil.

The community managed to **survive** by farming the poor soil.

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The settlers **became** ill after drinking polluted water.

The settlers **got** ill after drinking polluted water.
The study participants reported that they got better after the first course of treatment.

Rule - 1: Avoid Idiom or Colloquialism

The study participants reported that their health improved after the first course of treatment.

Rule - 2: Avoid Double Verbs

Doris Lessing got the Nobel Prize in 2007.

Doris Lessing was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2007.
### Rule -2: Avoid Double Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Less Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The proposal for regional representation was <strong>turned down</strong>.</td>
<td>The proposal for regional representation was <strong>rejected</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Less Academic</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Scientists <strong>investigating</strong> the production of biofuels using non-food crops.</td>
<td>Scientists are <strong>looking into</strong> the production of biofuels using non-food crops.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rule -2: Avoid Double Verbs

Biofuels based on non-grain crops have the potential to **reduce** food prices.

Biofuels based on non-grain crops have the potential to **bring** food prices **down**.

Less Academic
The government banned smoking in public places in 2007. Since then, fewer people have been admitted to hospital for smoking-related diseases. The ban on smoking in public places in 2007 has led to a fall in hospital admissions for smoking-related diseases.
The unexpected decline in species that had previously thrived in the area was attributed to a sharp rise in temperature.

Avoid Negative Forms

• There isn’t any evidence in support of this claim.
• The new study does not support the initial findings.
• There isn’t much research on this topic.

• There is no evidence in support of this claim.
• The new study supports few of the initial findings.
• There is little research on this topic.
Neither qualitative interviews nor focus groups are likely to give you easily quantifiable, factual or objective data.

As can be seen from the data, two-thirds of respondents are satisfied with the current provision.

The data show that two-thirds of respondents are satisfied with the current provision.
Use Signpost

- The aim of this study is to ....
- The purpose of this thesis is to....
- This essay argues that ....
- The main questions addressed in this paper are ....
- This essay critically examines....

- The above discussion raises some interesting questions.
- This paper begins by .... It will then go on to .... Finally, ....
- This chapter reviews the literature ....
- In conclusion, ....
Some more examples

• **Listing:**
  first(ly), ... / second(ly), ... / finally, ...

• **Indicating addition or similarity:**
  also, ... / besides, ... / in addition, ... / furthermore, ... / as well / similarly, ...

• **Indicating contrast:**
  however, ... / nevertheless, ... / on the other hand, ...

Some more examples

• **Giving a reason:**
  for this reason, ... / because ... / because of ... / due to ...

• **Indicating result:**
  therefore, ... / thus, ... / as a result, ... / consequently, ...

• **Reformulating an idea:**
  in other words, ... / to put it simply, ... / that is ...

• **Exemplifying:**
  for example, ... / for instance, ... / to exemplify, ...
Water shortages trigger conflict between nations.

Water shortages may trigger conflict between nations.
**Hedging**

- The fire was *probably* caused by a fault in the engine temperature gauge.
- The fire *could* have been caused by a fault in the engine temperature gauge.

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**Hedging Tools**

- **Modal auxiliary verbs:** can, could, may, might, should, would
- **Other modal verbs:** appear, look, seem, tend
Hedging Tools

• **Probability adjectives:**
  likely, possible, probable, unlikely

• **Probability adverbs:**
  perhaps, possibly, probably, presumably

• **Frequency adverbs:**
  generally, occasionally, often, seldom, usually

Sources

• http://www.ncl.ac.uk/
• http://www.colorincolorado.org/