

# *Social vs Academic Language*

## *Social Language*

*Simpler language  
shorter sentences, simpler vocabulary and grammar*

*Usually face-to-face,  
small number of people, informal settings*

*Precise understanding is seldom required*

*Usually simpler familiar topics  
(movies, friends, daily life)*

*Get many clues from expressions, gestures, social context  
Many opportunities to clarify-  
Look puzzled, ask questions, etc.*

## *Academic Language*

*Technical vocabulary  
written material has longer sentences and more complex  
grammar*

*Often lecture-style communication or reading a textbook;  
little situational context*

*Precise understanding and precise description/explanation is  
required; higher-order thinking*

*New and more difficult to understand topics, knowledge is  
often abstract, cognitively complex, student often has less  
background knowledge to build on*

*Fewer clues, most clues are language clues such as further  
explanation- more difficult to clarify*