



# A Comparative Study on English Dialogues from Second Language Learners' Perspective: English Textbooks in Taiwan

vs.

## American Situation Comedies

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# Background

Students' low motivation to learn English

Overburden & limitation - exams



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# Purpose of Study

Searching for more intriguing English materials

Increasing learners' motivation

Expanding students' vocabulary and sharpening their listening skill



intro

## Textbook *Touchstone* V.S

### *Friends* Sitcom *Friends*

- An American situation comedy
- Popular around the world for decades

### *Touchstone*

- Published by prestigious Cambridge Univ. Press
- A major English textbook adopted at universities in Taiwan



# Research Framework

Observing students' responses toward *Touchstone* (English textbook) and *Friends* (Sitcom) via interviews

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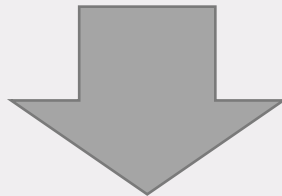
Textbook

# Research Steps

Let the students read a paragraph, and then ask them what it is about.



Give the students a test.



Let the students read the paragraph by themselves, and then after the audio CD.

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Sitcom

# Research Steps

Show them a short film without sound, guessing what happens.



Give students the same test.



Turn the volume on, and ask them to mark the part where canned laughter appears.



Let students choose a line and imitate the actor/actress's reactions.

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# Research Result

Getting rough ideas: Textbook  $\approx$  Sitcom

Reading test result: Textbook  $<$  Sitcom

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# Sitcom

- audio-visual explanations of English words
- vivid examples of conversation (with tones, facial expressions, and body language), further demonstrating delicate details of English
- expressions in various situations for learners to grasp ways of language application

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1

**Learning  
Efficiency**



2

**Application**



3

**Values**



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# Learning Efficiency

English Textbook (*Touchstone*):

- Grammatical correlation between the contents of each unit

American Sitcom (*Friends*):

- Dramatic correlation between each episode

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# Application

## English Textbook (*Touchstone*):

- Characters: weak
- Conversations: monotonous and inauthentic
- Description of culture: superficial
- Topics: Not quite popular

## American Sitcom (*Friends*):

- Characters: lively
- Conversations: diverse and authentic
- Description of culture: vivid
- Topics: popular

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# Values

English Textbook (*Touchstone*):

- Focusing on knowledge input rather than cultivation of reflection

American Sitcom (*Friends*):

- Disclosing varied perspectives

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# In Touchstone

## Formal and Informal

**Advantage**

**Disadvantage**

**Sentences strictly follow grammar rules to help students learn.**

**Students barely learn colloquial speech from the textbook.**

Alicia It's Mom's birthday on the first. Remember? She's going to be 50!

Dave Oh, that's right. What are you going to get her?

Alicia I'm going to buy her something special, like a necklace. Then it's Mom and Dad's anniversary on the tenth.

Dave Right. We usually give them something.

Alicia We? You mean, I do! Let's, um, send them some flowers.

Dave OK. Then it's my birthday on the twenty-third.

Alicia Yeah, I know. I'm going to get you the same thing you got me – nothing!



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# In Friends

## Formal and Informal

Disadvantage

Vulgar and bawdy words  
not censored

Advantage

Colorful and engaging  
conversations



Phoebe: Oh hey you **guys**, I couldn't get a reservation for the night of my birthday, so we have to do dinner Thursday night instead. (美國口語)

Joey: Thursday? But that's Halloween.

Phoebe: So?

Joey: So spooky, that's all.

Ross: So, so, is Mike coming to dinner?

Phoebe: No! It's my first birthday with a boyfriend, and he has to work. **Ugh**, I get mad at him, but I think it's a little too soon to show my true colors. (口語，語助詞)

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# In Touchstone

## Vocabulary Learning Effect

Advantage

Its exercises help students memorize vocabulary.

Disadvantage




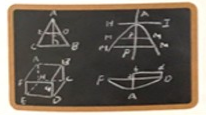


Too many exercises may overburden students.

3 Building vocabulary

A 2.18 Listen and say the subjects. Circle your three favorite subjects. Tell a partner.

algebra economics band orchestra choir geometry drama physics gymnastics art  
history geography track chemistry dance calculus biology literature computer studies

Word Bank B Put the subjects above into the categories below. Can you think of other subjects?

<b>social studies</b>  economics	<b>music</b> 	<b>science</b> 
<b>mathematics</b> 	<b>physical education (P.E.)</b> 	<b>other subjects</b> 

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# In Friends

## Vocabulary Learning Effect

### Advantage

### Disadvantage

Its characters' expressions and interactions demonstrate the usage of vocabulary.

Words could be too colloquial or informal to be grasped by learners quickly.



Monica: Hi. Uh, my friend here was taking down our Christmas lights, and and she fell off the balcony and may have broken her foot or or ankle or something.

Nurse: My God. You still have your Christmas lights up?

Nurse: Fill this out and bring it back to me.

Monica: Okay, ooh, alright. Name, address... **Are you currently on any medication?** (與一般正式用法 take medicines 一樣的意思)

Rachel: No, oh, wait. Yes, **Blistex**.(一種醫用潤唇膏)

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# In Touchstone Learning Concentration

Advantage

systematic and well-organized for students

Disadvantage

Monotonous, not enticing students to learn

Lesson B Things to remember

1 Building vocabulary

Page 68, Lesson B, Exercise 1A

A 3.05 Listen and say the words. What else do you see in the picture? Make a list. Can you think of any other things you need when you travel? Compare with a partner.

a bathing suit  
sandals  
a towel  
a hair dryer  
a brush  
sunscreen  
toothbrush  
toothpaste  
a razor  
insect repellent  
a tent  
a sleeping bag  
a first-aid kit  
a pair of scissors  
pajamas  
a flashlight  
batteries  
shampoo  
soap  
makeup

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# In Friends

## Learning Concentration

### Advantage

The humorous conversations increase students' motivation to learn.

### Disadvantage

Staring at the screen for a long time could cause poor eyesight.



Woman: It's okay, it's okay, I'm here, and I'm here. Sorry I'm late, okay, here I am. Who's the new tense girl?

Teacher: She's your partner.

Woman: **Hi. I'm Monica.**

Monica: **Oh. Monica! ...Hi. I'm Mo- ...nana.** (她在舞蹈课上捉到了盗用她信用卡的“假莫妮卡。”)

Woman: (Fake Monica) Montana?

Monica: Yeah. It's Dutch.

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# HUMOR (*Touchstone*)



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# HUMOR (*Friends*)



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# CULTURE (*Touchstone*)

Word sort **A** What do people do on these special days? Find two expressions from the box for each event. What else do people do? Add ideas.

blow out candles on a cake  
exchange rings  
give someone chocolates  
get a degree or diploma

go out for a romantic dinner  
go to see fireworks  
go trick-or-treating  
have a reception

✓ shout "Happy New Year"  
sing "Happy Birthday"  
wear a cap and gown  
wear a costume



**1** New Year's Eve

shout "Happy New Year"

go to see fireworks



**2** Valentine's Day

give someone chocolates

go out for a romantic dinner



**3** birthday

blow out candles on a cake

sing "Happy Birthday"



**4** graduation day

get a degree or diploma

wear a cap and gown



**5** Halloween

wear a costume

go trick-or-treating



**6** wedding day

exchange rings

have a reception



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# CULTURE (*Friends*)

Halloween



Thanksgiving



Christmas



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# Conclusion





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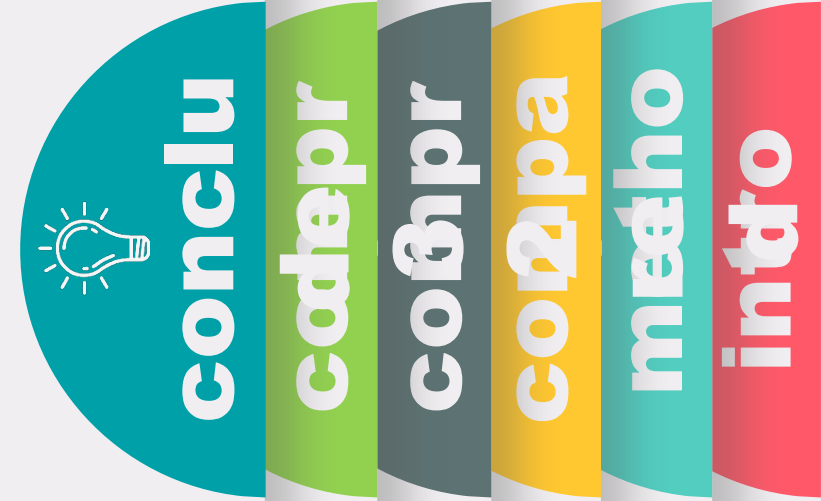


# SITCOM

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TEXTBOOK	SITCOM
Organization	Attraction
Explanation	Demonstration

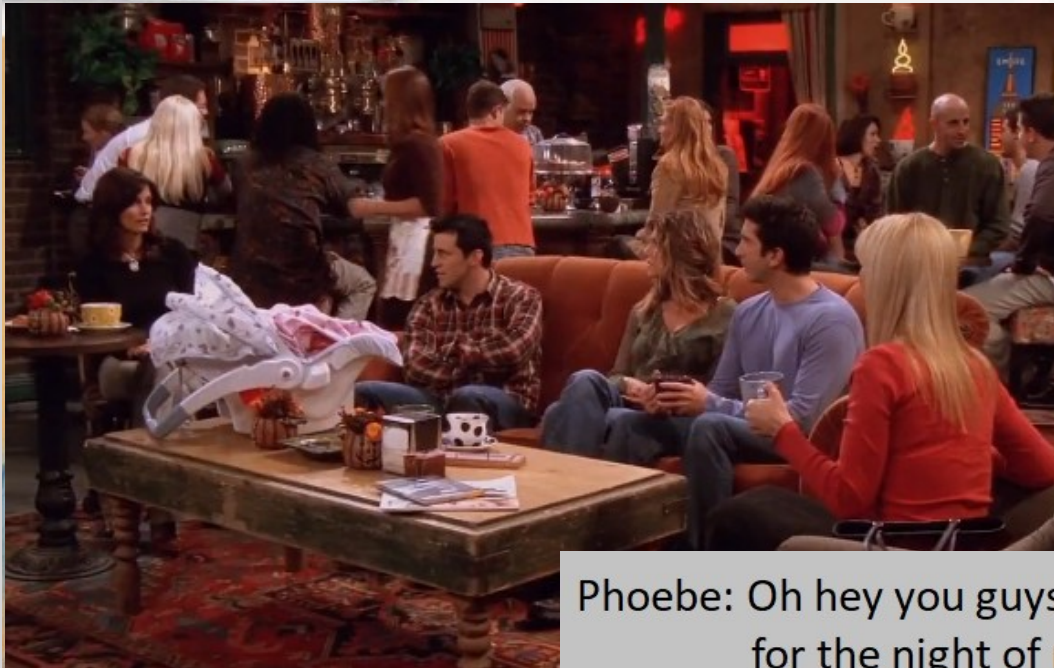




# Suggestion

## Lesson A

## Birthdays



### Months

January	May	September
February	June	October
March	July	November
April	August	December

### Days of the month

1st	first	17th	seventeenth
2nd	second	18th	eighteenth
3rd	third	19th	nineteenth
4th	fourth	20th	twentieth
5th	fifth	21st	twenty-first
6th	sixth	22nd	twenty-second
7th	seventh	23rd	twenty-third
8th	eighth	24th	twenty-fourth
9th	ninth	25th	twenty-fifth
10th	tenth	26th	twenty-sixth
11th	eleventh	27th	twenty-seventh

Phoebe: Oh hey you guys, I couldn't get a reservation for the night of my birthday, so we have to do dinner Thursday night instead.

Joey: Thursday? But that's Halloween.

Phoebe: So?

Joey: So spooky, that's all.

Ross: So, so, is Mike coming to dinner?

Phoebe: No! It's my first birthday with a boyfriend, and he has to work. Ugh, I get mad at him, but I think it's a little too soon to show my true colors.



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## Some inappropriate contents



**Thanks  
for  
listening.**

