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## Students' Attitudes Toward Undertaking Writing Activities on Extensive Reading

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This study examines university students' attitudes toward second language (L2) writing that is implemented as a follow-up activity to extensive reading (ER). Sixteen students voluntarily participated in the study, and their written reflections were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to explore these students' attitudinal positionings toward the writing activity. The findings indicate that students not only displayed a favorable attitude toward the ER writing activity, but also appreciated its benefits and usefulness in the development of their writing skills and writing habits. The present study also suggests that well-integrated pedagogical practices can produce positive perceptions of L2 reading and writing among students, thus facilitating their engagement in the classroom activities.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, appraisal theory, attitude, reading-writing, ER activity

### Introduction

In 1964, Harold Palmer introduced the terminology of extensive reading (ER) as a way to define reading instruction that focuses on rapid and wide-ranging reading for both language learning and real-world purposes (such as reading for pleasure). A few decades later, Day and Bamford (1998, 2002) adopted the term and introduced it in a second language (L2) setting with the focus on developing not only better L2 learning, but also the affective dimensions of L2 reading (i.e., attitude and motivation toward reading in the target language). Since then, ER has been implemented in various L2 teaching and learning contexts and provided an ample amount of empirical evidence supporting the view that a large amount of L2 reading over an extended time improves students' reading ability and develops other areas of language, such as vocabulary, writing, and others (for overview, see Nakanishi, 2015). Unlike other reading approaches, ER encourages learners to pay attention to meaning rather than to language. Thus, it aims for their incidental learning from reading 'extensively' as oppose to deliberate learning with focus on form (Grabe, 2009).

To provide practical support for language teachers, recent ER studies have started to pay more attention to post-reading activities for ER (e.g., Park, 2016; Song & Sardegna, 2014; Suk, 2016). For example, Song and Sardegna (2014) argued that the inclusion of ‘enhanced extensive reading instruction’ (i.e., when ER is combined with post-reading activities) in their classes was more effective than conducting a ‘reading only’ class for Korean secondary school students. They found that students with additional communicative output activities had better gains in preposition learning than did those students who only read in class. This finding supports the use of many of teacher resource books for ER (e.g., Bamford & Day, 2004; Day, 2012; Day & Bamford, 1998; Jacobs & Farrell, 2012) that have been published to aid teachers with their ER implementations in their own classes. These books contain diverse ER follow-up activities that teachers can use for various pedagogical purposes in their classrooms.

However, despite the fact that the focus of ER is not only on developing language proficiency, but also on learner affect (Yamashita, 2015), based on our knowledge, studies in the field have not as yet focused on investigating students’ affective or emotional dimensions of ER follow-up activities. Having integrated ER writing into a course, we wanted to seek how our students (mostly East Asians from Korea and Japan) perceived their experiences. Could we inform other ER practitioners that college-level students in an English-for-Academic-Purposes (EAP) writing context viewed the ER writing assignments positively (i.e., ten-minute writing about a book that these students have been reading)? That is, was the ER writing assignment acceptable to students when it was included in an academic writing class? At a more practical level with respect to ER practices, what could be the future prospects for including ER writing assignments in EAP in general and EAP in writing classes in particular? To answer these questions, we focused on examining the students’ attitudinal positionings toward ER writing by drawing on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005; see the Method section below for more details) to gain an in-depth empirical understanding of how these students formulated their attitudes to evaluate their experiences and what implications their appraisals indeed have for the ER writing activity in general. According to Mori (2015), students in the EFL context usually do not have a strong intrinsic affection for L2 readings and have suggested teachers provide further extrinsic motivational factors to help these students read. The question then for the current study is whether students will achieve a positive attitude toward ER-writing activity in an EAP writing context, when most of these students are from East Asia countries, and further, what pedagogical implications can be drawn from studying their experiences and personal perspectives.

## Literature Review

### The Reading and Writing Connection

Reading and writing integration in L2 has been supported by L2 researchers and practitioners since the 1990s. Scholars have examined the relationship and claimed the two skills are interrelated (e.g., Belcher & Hirvela, 2001; Carson & Leki, 1993; Esmaili, 2002; Kroll, 1993; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Leki, 1993; see also however, Kirin, 2010). Hypotheses on the L1 reading-writing connection indeed laid further foundations for understanding the two literacies in L2 (Hirvela, 2004), but those explanations based on L1 learning were seen as insufficient to explain how the two literacies actually interact in an L2 (Grabe, 2001). In addition, the complex nature of the relationship of reading-writing (Hudson, 2007) as well as the various different settings where L2 is taught, such as for ESL and EFL (Grabe, 2001), made it difficult to determine whether the integration of the two skills could actually lead to L2 enhancement. Thus, few attempts to integrate these two skills were made; reading and writing skills were separately taught, dividing the former as a receptive skill and the latter as a productive skill (Parodi, 2007).

Despite a paucity of empirical evidence, one particular strand of research has continued to promote the

reciprocal interaction of reading and writing, as meaningful integration between the two literacies is crucial in promoting coordination between the two (Hirvela, 2004). Reading is a positive resource for building knowledge that is useful for writing, while writing reinforces that knowledge. The two skills share active meaning-making and interactive characteristics (Hirvela, 2004; Leki, 1993). In fact, by investigating 300 EFL middle school students' reading comprehension and scriptive writing performance after taking an year long reading-writing intervention, Lee and Schallert (2016) claimed that "individual can learn to read by writing as well as by reading and can learn to write by reading as well as by writing, as reading and writing involve some of the same subprocesses" (p. 143). Anderson and Briggs (2011) also argue that teaching students about the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing can accelerate their learning, especially struggling learners.

Several earlier studies—more specifically on ER and writing—provide further evidence for a close relationship between L2 students' reading and writing abilities. For example, Tudor and Hafiz (1989) found a positive influence of ER on students' writing readiness and accuracy. Tsang (1996) also showed that students who engaged in ER demonstrated increased descriptive writing ability in both content and language use. In line with these earlier results, Park (2016) recently reported that those students who engaged in ER for one academic semester achieved higher essay scores than those students in traditional classes in content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics (see also Mermelstein, 2015). The studies on reading and writing indeed show a strong link between the two skills.

## **ER and Affect**

In addition to the benefits of ER for L2 students' writing development, ER has been reported to have a positive influence on learner attitude or motivation toward reading as well. For example, Rodrigo, Greenberg, and Segal (2014) investigated how different reading interventions (ER vs. no-ER) affected low-literate adult reading patterns. Both groups' responses indicated that they had a very positive experience with reading; however, only the ER group showed positive and statistically significant development in their reading habits. Similarly, de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) qualitatively analyzed students' motivational changes over time, i.e., before, during, and after the ER treatment. Interviews and journal entries of nine Japanese students of English showed that their motivation to read was dynamic, and it changed due to various factors that included individual participant goals, self-regulation, and the availability of ER materials. Further still, in an attempt to expand the application of ER to academic settings, Macalister (2008) explored whether ER could be appropriately integrated into an EAP context for international college students. His classroom research showed that adult L2 students who spent 15 minutes on reading in class for 12 weeks not only ended up positively perceiving ER as a language learning method, but also in some cases, gained in their positive motivation toward reading in the target language. In line with Macalister's findings, Ro (2016) found that students in two different EAP contexts gained motivational enhancement during their ER experiences. His qualitative analysis showed that specific elements of teachers' practices (e.g., the types of different ER activities) as well as the inherent characteristics of ER (e.g., the usefulness and joyfulness of ER) influenced students' reading motivation and their amounts of reading.

Despite these benefits of ER for writing and reading motivation, few language classes have made a commitment to ER, mainly because of the lack of accessibility to reading resources (Grabe, 2009), time-related issues (Grabe, 2001), and persistent doubts about the effect of ER on adult students (Macalister, 2008). As Macalister noted, the "unspoken belief that extensive reading is most appropriately integrated into the elementary or junior secondary school teaching programs" (p. 249) may hinder teachers in other settings from implementing ER for older students.

## Gaps and Research Questions

Drawing on Macalister (2008) and Ro's (2016) ER study on reading attitudes and motivation in EAP contexts, we went further to investigate students' attitudes toward *ER writing assignments* in an EAP writing class with the goal to understand the reading and writing connection better and how we as teachers can better incorporate ER into an EAP writing class more meaningfully. Incorporation of writing has been not only highly recommended in ER classes (e.g., Day, 2012; Day & Bamford, 1998; Jacobs & Farrell, 2012), but also often has been used as a means to determine accountability for ER (e.g., Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Iwahori, 2008; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Robb & Susser, 1989; Takase, 2007)<sup>1</sup>. To our knowledge, however, despite the importance of the integration of writings in ER classes, most studies have not yet investigated students' attitudinal evaluations toward writing activity that relates to ER. To address this gap, we seek to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. What are students' attitudinal positionings toward ER writing activity in an EAP context?

RQ 2. How do these students reflect or evaluate that activity? In particular, how do they formulate their reflections with the use of appraisals? Also, what implications do their appraisals have for the ER writing activity?

## Methods

### The Context and the Participants

This classroom-based case study was conducted in an EAP writing class in a four-year university in the United States during 2015. In the study, 16 (11 females and 5 males) of 21 available students participated in this voluntary study. Most of the students were from East Asia, with most coming from Korea (31.3%) and Japan (31.3%). Their academic backgrounds were diverse, but most were majoring in social science.

This intermediate-level EAP writing course was designed to help international students develop writing skills for both personal and academic writing purposes, particularly focusing on writing fluency. The students had taken placement tests administered by the university and then placed into this intermediate level course based on their writing test results. Considering that most international students were required to take this course in their first semester at this university, the primary goal of the course was in improving not only academic writing skills, but also general L2 writing abilities for transitioning into an English-speaking academic community.

### Procedures

The writing class lasted about 75 minutes and was held twice a week for 16 weeks, thus totaling 40 contact hours in one semester. The writing classes normally include 20 minutes of free-writing activity at the beginning of each class. However, that time period was replaced by an in-class extensive reading activity in this writing class to promote integration of reading and writing: 15 minutes of reading in class and 5 minutes of discussion on the students' 10-minute ER writing assignments (half accomplished in student pairs and half as a full class).

The ER writing was provided as a homework assignment, and students were asked to write casually for 10 minutes on a book they were reading. Students were encouraged to use a timer to help them complete their 10-minute ER writing within the assigned time limit. This requirement led the students to write 24 (approximately

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the studies mentioned here used book reports to track students' readings.

240 minutes total) personalized writings on their own readings throughout the semester, accounting for 15 % of their overall grade for the class. The ER writing assignment was provided to the students in hardcopies in every class with different topics, with the goal of increasing the students' engagement with the books and facilitating their ER discussion in class.

The writing topics were chosen carefully to incorporate various genres that the students were reading each week (see Appendix A). The topics for ER writing included writing about the stories, the characters, the books and their language learning aspects, and the topics were presented in association with a variety of writing skills that the students could practice using these topics, such as summarizing, describing, analyzing, arguing, and simply being creative.

The remaining class time was dedicated to writing instruction that involved practicing different genres of writing, learning writing strategies, and exploring conventions. The second researcher, who had been teaching the same course more than a year, was the instructor for the class under observation here. The ER activities these students underwent were a part of her regular classroom procedure. As for the reading materials, approximately 250 books were available in the classroom library. The majority of these books were graded readers, ranging from Level Two to Level Six, and mostly published by Oxford, Cambridge, and Penguin. A wide range of topics, including both fiction and nonfiction, was available to meet the students' various interests. Students were also encouraged to bring their own books to class if they failed to find one in the classroom library that interested them.

## **Data Sources**

We asked the students to contribute to this study by writing a self-reflection paper on their ER experiences at the end of the semester. To reduce any overt intention in gathering the focused data, we carefully designed the prompt to concentrate on the students' reflections on their own experiences of ER in general. Students were encouraged to freely write about a) what they liked and disliked about ER, b) the usefulness of ER in learning English reading, speaking, listening, and writing, and c) their opinions about using ER and the ten-minute writing assignment for the purpose of learning English writing.

The focus of the reflection essay was more geared toward ER and its usefulness and not too much on actual ER writing. However, the ER writing component was included in the prompt, so that the students could notice and perhaps discuss it if they found it necessary. Applying one of the sections in Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework, Attitude, we focused on investigating different types of these students' lexical choices for expressing their attitudes, how these choices influenced their positions, the recipient (the teacher), and the evaluated target (ER writing).

## **Appraisal Theory as a Data Analytic Framework**

In this study, we used the Attitude section of the Appraisal Framework to investigate different types of students' semantic choices for expressing their attitudes (Martin & White, 2005). According to Martin and White (2005), the Appraisal Framework is a particular approach used to describe the linguistic mechanisms of evaluation. Building on Systemic Functional Linguistics (see, e.g., Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 1989, 2001), the Appraisal Framework explores the way language is used to evaluate and manage interpersonal positionings and relationships. Within this system of Appraisal, Attitude is concerned with utterances that convey either negative or positive assessments (see Martin & White, 2005; White, 2005 for further description). There are three general domains of the sub-system of Attitude in Appraisal theory: (a) Affect, an exploration of one's evaluation through emotion; (b) Judgment, an description of the sources of one's evaluation of people vis-à-vis social norms, i.e., ethics; and (c) Appreciation, an examination of one's evaluation of objects through the use of aesthetics and

social values.

Specifically, Affect concerns positive and negative emotional responses and dispositions that may be indicated through use of verbs of emotion (e.g., to **love**/to **hate**), adverbs (e.g., **happily/sadly**), adjectives of emotion (e.g., **happy/sad**), and nominalization (e.g., **joy/despair**). Judgment concerns language that directly or indirectly reflects on human behaviors and performance by criticizing them (e.g., you did a **bad** job) or praising (e.g., you did a **great** job), thereby condemning or applauding the behavior being considered. Finally under Appreciation come positive and negative assessments of objects or artifacts (a **boring** building), processes (e.g., a **terrifying** burst of lightening), and states of affairs (e.g., a **beautiful** sunset). It is important to note here that when emotional reactions (e.g., **bored**) are detached from any human experiencer of emotion and attached to the evaluated entity as a property that that entity intrinsically possesses (e.g., a **boring** building), that expression of emotion is considered as Appreciation rather than Affect. We drew upon these three categories of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation in the course of the analysis here.

The system includes both Attitude, which is expressed explicitly using attitudinal lexis and appraisal that is implied through the selection of ideational meanings. Under explicit Attitude, the evaluative/attitudinal words or combinations of words that overtly carry a positive or negative sense are examined (e.g., *I liked it* [an explicit positive affect]), while under implicit Attitude, those evaluative/attitudinal wordings that are not directly inscribed, but implicitly evoked in the interaction, are investigated (e.g., *reading became more fluent eventually* [implicit positive appreciation]).

## Data Analysis

The coding involved counting the number for the three semantic domains covering Affect (emotion), Judgment (ethics), and Appreciation (aesthetics and social values). To illustrate, “I can **enjoy** the books” (see Text E—indicated in the Result section below) is positive Affect, “I **can do** ER” (Text F) is positive Judgment, and “10 minute writing is **good** exercise” (Text A) is positive Appreciation. In addition to the explicit attitudinal lexis that directly evaluates the ER writing, implicit or more indirect inscription of discourses (e.g., 10 minutes writing **provided opportunity** to use grammar; Text B [Implicit Positive Appreciation]) is also recognized and analyzed. The analysis of these coded data provides a macro perspective on the ER writing patterns (see Figures 1 to 3 below). For a micro-perspective, we approached the data through a close study of the different ways in which meanings unfold in individual self-reflections, enabling closer attention to the formulation of both explicit and implicit linguistic choices.

For the qualitative analysis, we provide one excerpt for each case of appraisals as an illustration. Selection was randomly done when there was more than one of the same kinds of appraisal. For example, we provide one case of how students praised the usefulness of ER through explicit positive appreciation (Text A) out of the 23 cases as seen in Figure 3 below. While the quantitative analysis of coded data provided an overview of the attitudes of the students, the qualitative analysis of the data enabled us to gain insight into how appraisals were used by students in their self-reflections. By orienting our focus on the students’ different types of semantic choices for expressing one’s attitudes (see Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2006 for more information on how discourse semantics are investigated), the goal here is to make connections from patterns of students’ language choices in their self-reflections to the context above and beyond the text.

## Results and Discussion

Our initial focus here is to show the students’ general attitudes toward ER and introduce the thematic topics which emerged from their reflections before we deliver the quantitative overview of the students’ choices for

their attitudes toward ER writing, and then discuss students' specific uses of evaluative means in close text analysis. Five topics emerged from the coded data collected from the 16 self-reflections:

TABLE 1  
*Five Topics from Coded Data*

		<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
ER	ER for external benefits	115	1
	ER experience	53	–
Reading	Reading in general	3	–
	ER reading experience	3	6
Books	ER resources	5	2
	Book choice & contents	7	6
ER Writing		32	4
ER and Writing connections		6	–

More details about the sub-categories of each topic are summarized in Appendix B. In brief, the students in general expressed positive attitudes toward ER particularly with respect to its benefits for their language learning (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, and listening), affective dimensions (reading and writing motivation), and reading habit development.

Out of 243 instances of appraisals from the 16 self-reflections, 116 (48%) were on ER for external benefits, and only 1 was negative (ER's limited influence on grammar knowledge). This result is in line with many other ER studies that have shown how ER promotes positive affective dimensions toward reading (e.g., de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013; Judge, 2011; Kirchoff, 2013; Komiyama, 2009, 2013; Mori, 2002; Nishino, 2007; Ro, 2013, 2016; Takase, 2007). Although it makes sense that most of the comments were on ER and its usefulness considering the subtopics of the prompt, it still needs to be noted that all the students positioned themselves on the positive side for ER. In fact, 91% (221 out of 243) of the students' total evaluations were positive.

Ten students expressed some negative evaluations in their reflections that aligned with the moral obligations to respond to the prompt (the students were told to write the things that they 'disliked about ER'). As noted by Grabe (2001, 2009), most of these negative assessments were associated with a lack of book resources (5 out of the 18 negative appraisals) or time-related issues (6/18). Despite general doubts about implementing ER in EAP contexts, it was mostly the external factors that seemed to hinder students from completely enjoying ER, not that they had to read graded readers in an academic writing class. Further, even with the moral obligation to write 'dislikes' in their reflections, six of the students chose not to mention any negative details regarding their experience with ER. This result implicitly shows their positive stance toward ER.

### **Attitude Toward ER Writing: Quantitative Approach**

Thirteen out of 16 students commented on ER writing in their reflections (32 positive and 4 negative). There were 5 positive Affect comments (approximately 14%), 2 negative Affect comments (6%), 2 positive Judgment comments (6%), 25 positive Appreciation views (70%), and 2 negative Appreciation views (6%). Overall, the EAP students positively evaluated the use of ER writing in their academic writing class, and they mostly used Appreciation as the form to assess and show their opinion toward the writing assignment. This result seems plausible, as they were evaluating the assignment as a 'tool' for learning and developing English writing skills and also relating it to their own 'learning processes'. It is also important to note here that there were three students who did not orient toward reflecting their opinions about the activity, and this avoidance may have shown not only their disalignment with the teacher's agenda, but also their possible negative stance toward the target of evaluation, particularly considering the fact that these students responded to every other question but this one.

More specifically, three sub-topics regarding ER writing emerged from the 13 reflections: ER writing (a) in general (Figure 1; 7 positive and 2 negative); (b) writing topics (Figure 2; 2 positive and 2 negative); and (c) ER usefulness in language learning (Figure 3; positive 23). The outcome shows the distribution of instances of positive and negative attitudes within the students' reflections exhibiting pro and con positions on the implementation of the ER writing assignment.

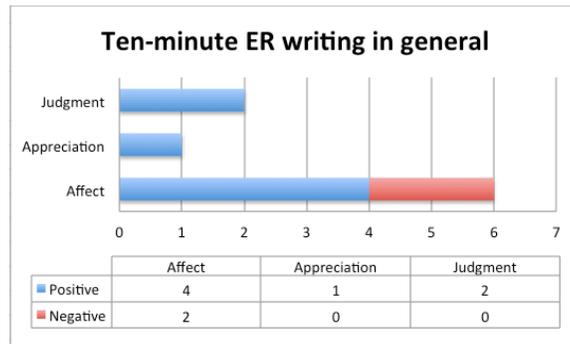


Figure 1. Attitudes toward the ER writing.

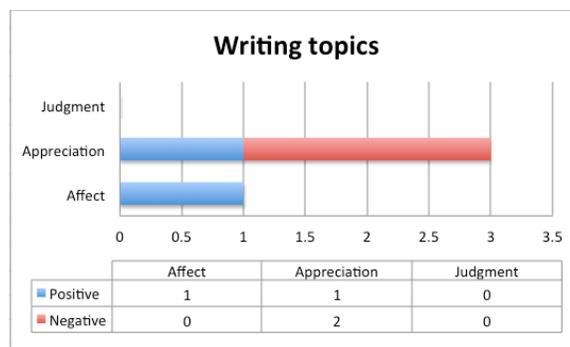


Figure 2. Attitudes toward the topics for ER writing.

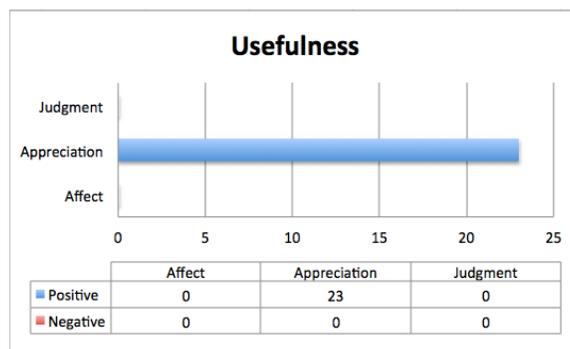


Figure 3. Attitudes toward the usefulness of ER writing.

The quantitative summary of the students' appraisals provided students' overall positive attitudinal positioning toward ER writing. Specifically, the students appreciated the activity for its usefulness in writing practice and

language learning (see the qualitative section below for more information). This outcome was meaningful, given that it shows us that the students valued (positive Appreciation and Judgment) and enjoyed (positive Affect) the activity process. The frequent positive Appreciation and relatively less use of Judgment here can also be considered positive, since it shows that the actual process of doing the writing activity was the focus, not the assessment of how the students behaved toward the activity. In other words, being in the moment and doing the activity for its usefulness was the apparent focus for these students. However, a few students did express their negative feelings toward the activity and its writing topics via (negative) Affect (Figure 1) or Appreciation (Figure 2). Although this is more closely analyzed below from a qualitative perspective, the students' negative evaluations of the activity and writing topics imply the need for possible intervention in the activity in an EAP context. To gain more in-depth empirical understanding of the students' attitudes toward the activity and its practical concerns in the EAP writing classroom context, the micro-level of how meanings unfold in the students' individual self-reflections are analyzed below.

### Attitude Toward ER Writing: Qualitative Approach

We analyzed each reflection closely by focusing on how the students' attitudes were formulated in the text in order to better understand their evaluative positioning regarding the ER activity. Two attitudinal stances were found after examining the individual 13 self-reflections: Praises and complaints. We begin with the praises.

#### Praise

A review of the data reveals that all but one student (S6<sup>2</sup>) showed at least one positive attitude toward the use of the activity in their classroom context. Most of the students used positive Appreciation to praise it for its usefulness, as indicated in Figure 3. To illustrate, Excerpt 1 represents how the students used Appreciation in evaluating the activity.

#### Excerpt 1

Text A (S1): Explicit Positive Appreciation

10 min writing is **good** exercise to organize and summarize my idea and the content of a paper in just short time.

Text B (S4): Implicit Positive Appreciation

10 minutes writing **provided opportunity** to use grammar that we studied in class. Sophisticated transitions, which became natural, added quality and color to my writings.

Both *good* (Text A) and *provided opportunity* (Text B) are instances of Attitude expressed as positive Appreciation. While S1 explicitly evaluated the activity for its usefulness in practicing organizing and summarizing ideas in short time, S4 implicitly praised it for its benefits for improving writing skills. These actions show not only their positive stances toward the activity, but also their understanding of how the writing activity can be beneficial for their learning.

Elsewhere in the data are instances of similar praise, but with different attitudinal formulations. For example, Excerpt 2 below shows the more complicated use of students' evaluative resources in constructing their positive attitudes toward the activity: A combination of Implicit and Explicit Appreciation as well as the use of Appreciation and Affect.

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<sup>2</sup> S indicates students, with numbers 1–16 being randomly assigned.

**Excerpt 2**

Text C (S7): Implicit and Explicit Positive Appreciation

ER activity is including writing about story and speaking about events in the story to my classmate so I have to **concentrate** on my reading more than usual. Writing and speaking what happened in the book are make my writing and speaking skill **better**. I sometimes feel that I am not good at explaining so it is **good** practice to organize the events in the book before I write and speak. This activity **helps** when I write framework for essay.

Text D (S8): Explicit Positive Affect and Appreciation

When I did the 10 minutes writing project, I feel **comfortable** to write because I do not need to think about the grammar and vocabulary. ... ((Omitted few sentences)) In all, I think the extensive reading and 10 minutes writing are **good** way to learn English writing, especially to the beginner of learning academic English writing.

Text E (S12): Explicit Positive Appreciation and Affect

I think the extensive reading and 10 min writing is very **good** for learning English writing. ... ((Omitted few sentences)) In addition, writing 10 minute was **not big burden** to me, so I can **enjoy** the books and writing many reviews of books.

Unlike Excerpt 1, cognitive (e.g., concentrate) and affective (e.g., comfortable and enjoy) dimensions of language learning are included when students were constructing their attitudes toward the activity in Excerpt 2. On the one hand, S7 implicitly evaluates the use of the activity by starting her reflection by describing what is required in doing ER (*writing about story and speaking about events*) and the need for her to engage in doing just that (*so I have to concentrate on my reading*), before explicitly and positively assessing the activity (... *make my writing and speaking skill better*). She undertakes this description to provide a rationale for and to support her assessment, thereby invoking the category of an expert or at least a reliable evaluator of the activity. In fact, she provides another account of why the activities helps her to write and speak better by framing herself as in need for such assistance (*I am not good at explaining so it is good practice to organize the events in the book*). Both S8 and S12, on the other hand, used Affect to express their positive feelings toward the activity in addition to their use of positive Appreciation: They both expressed the view that the activity was not a burden. Their formulations demonstrate that these students know the importance of affective dimensions when developing good writing habits (cf. Day & Bamford, 1998; Jacobs & Farrell, 2012).

The next attitude category was Judgment, which was used by the students to implicitly evaluate the ER writing. The instances in Excerpt 3 include Judgment in terms of positive self-efficacy (Text F; *I can do ER and 10-min writing constantly*) and positive engagement (Text G; *I started to write an English daily journal*).

**Excerpt 3**

Text F (S13): Explicit Positive Appreciation and Implicit Positive Judgment

I think ER and 10min writing is very **good** way to learn about English writing. I can't write paper every day, but I **can do** ER and 10min writing constantly. The reason why is that they don't take our time too much.

Text G (S16): Implicit Positive Judgment and Appreciation

3) Opinions about using ER &amp; 10min writing for the purpose of learning English writing:

I started to **write** English daily journal. So I will **keep doing** this even I go back to Korea. For me, these things are really big step to **improve** reading and writing skills of learning English.

The Judgments in these two cases indicate the students' positive change of self-writing attitude (S13) or behavior (S16), thereby implicitly praising the ER activity that stimulated the development of a writing habit. In

particular, as a response to the third sub-topic in the prompt (the one on ER writing), S16 showed not only her current engagement with the writing (thereby positively evaluating the ER activity that seems to have fostered her writing behavior), but also her willingness to continue writing in the future. In fact, Texts F and G both show that the ER writing facilitated the students' motivation and willingness to write for language learning purposes and develop learner autonomy, thus implicitly emphasizing its importance in the language learning classroom. In short, we were able to see these students' attitudinal positionings in their discursive practice of praising when evaluating the ER writing activity. We found evidence not only for students' individual reasons for liking the activity, but also for some of their claims regarding writing motivation development over time. Next, we examine how these students constructed their negative attitudinal stances toward the activity with a focus on the explicit (strong) and the implicit (weak) complaints.

### Complaints

As mentioned previously, only four negative evaluations (three students—S6, S9, and S14) toward the ER activity were found throughout the 13 self-reflections. Given that the prompt did not explicitly ask for negative evaluations toward the ER writing, it is perhaps not surprising to find relatively few instances of negative Attitude in the data. This evidence in fact magnifies the seriousness of the four complaints that were mentioned in the reflections; these students said what they had to say, not what they should say.

The use of the attitude category in the discursive practice of complaining in this study was straightforward: Students used explicit negative Affect when complaining about the activity in general (Excerpt 4) and implicit negative Appreciation when suggesting that the teacher come up with other forms or topics for the activity, thus complaining in a more subtle manner (Excerpt 5).

#### Excerpt 4

Text H (S6): Explicit Negative Affect

The one thing I **do not like** in extensive reading is to write 10 minutes writing.

Text I (S9): Explicit Negative Affect and Positive Appreciation

I **did not like** the writing part too much mainly because it was a bit **boring** sometimes. However I understand that this is writing course and this is **good** way to break the borders in writing and make it as a habit as well.

#### Excerpt 5

Text J (S6): Implicit Negative Appreciation

It is natural to write something after reading a book, because this is a writing course. However, the theme for this writing is sometimes **difficult** to write because everyone in our class reads different genre of books. If I improve this point, I want to **change** this writing activity from the style we are trying now into write just a summary what we read in a week or two days.

Text K (S14): Explicit Positive and Implicit Negative Appreciation

As I mentioned, ten minutes writing is another **good** tool for improving a writing skills. Summarizing a book content is **good** for putting events into chronologically order with emphasis on the particular events. From my point of view, it can **help** to better organize ideas, and write more natural way. Only thing I would **improve**, would be maybe some assignment or topics for writing.

Compared to Excerpt 5, the way in which the complaints are constructed in Excerpt 4 is more explicit (with more explicit word choices, such as *did not like* and *boring* instead of framing the complaints as *If I improve or one thing I would improve* as in Excerpt 5), thereby possibly carrying heavier weight. In fact, these two students

in Excerpt 4 (S6 and S9) were the ones who wrote relatively less in their ER writings than the others did during the semester. The main reasons for their negative evaluations were that the activity was either boring (S9, Text I) or difficult (S6, Text J). S6 even offered a possible solution to the problem. Instead of responding to the writing topics—which seem to have created the problem—she suggested that students write a summary of their books. This suggestion in fact functioned as an implicit negative attitude toward the writing topic, and also subtly complaining to the teacher who was supposed to be one of the readers of their reflections. Similarly, S14 also suggested a possible *improvement* in the writing topics (Text K) by taking an epistemic stance (cf. Heritage, 2012a; 2012b) as an experiencer over that issue. However, S9 and S14 still valued the activity for its language learning benefits, and there were two other students who showed positive attitudes toward the writing topics: S5 thought that the topics were interesting (Explicit positive affect), while S10 said that the topics helped him in practicing and developing his writing skills. These findings show that the students' evaluations of the writing topics could be very subjective. Even with these complaints, however, all students except S6 expressed a positive attitude toward the ER writing activity, particularly for its usefulness in developing target language skills.

## Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that students in general have a favorable attitude toward and recognized the benefits of ER writing. As shown in excerpts taken from these particular student reflections, these students, either explicitly or implicitly, not only expressed their enjoyment and comfort level towards the writing activity, but they also appreciated its usefulness for improving different aspects of their writing skills. Even those who found the ER writing either boring or difficult acknowledged its value in building their long-term writing habits. In this respect, the present study clearly demonstrates the pedagogical possibility of incorporating ER using writing tasks. It is, however, also important to note that these findings do not lend themselves to broad generalization due to their modest sample size. Moreover, because the context of this study was an EAP setting, applicability to other contexts such as EFL could be limited. Nonetheless, similar trends can possibly be projected when considering the majority of the students who participated in this study were from East Asian countries.

One of the implications we can suggest from these findings is the feasibility of implementing ER in an EAP setting. At first, it seemed that the idea of reading relatively easy materials might not be easily accepted in a tightly scheduled academic environment. However, as opposed to some skeptical views (see Grabe 2001, 2009; Macalister, 2008) and our initial concerns, these students did not exhibit any reluctance toward ER and the associated activity occurring in their EAP writing class; instead they rather found it enjoyable and still further appreciated its practicality in developing their writing habits and skills. Moreover, it is also worth noting that in-class ER time played a role in promoting a meaningful integration of reading and writing, which eventually led to the students' positive reactions to both ER and the writing activity.

This positive student perception of ER writing activity may answer another concern of the ER researchers' mentioned earlier in this paper, the pedagogical use of follow-up activities in the ER approach classroom. We believe that follow-up activities without too much accountability will not only promote ER per se, but also maximize its benefits when ER is well integrated with other pedagogical practices (see also Day & Bamford, 1998; Jacobs & Farrell, 2012; Suk, 2016). Most importantly, these student reflections clearly show that the combination of ER and ER writing is perceived as an ecological means of improving student writing ability, and is well aligned with the goals of this course on foundational academic ESL writing.

Grabe and Zhang's (2013) recent article argued for teachers promoting the integration of L2 reading and writing in an academic context, pointing out its usefulness in developing fluency, which is fundamental to

academic literacy. In support of their views and our findings on EAP students' positive attitudes toward the ER writing activity, we suggest using these writing activities in EAP writing classes as one useful way to integrate ER and writing closely, thereby facilitating student learning and their engagement in reading and writing in L2. The topics and/or forms for this ER writing, however, need to be more carefully designed, considering the students' negative comments and suggestions found in their reflections in this study. Providing options for students to choose either to respond to topics or write a summary might work better than only assigning them to answer a given prompt. Based on the findings of the present study, future research should investigate whether students' positive or negative attitudes are related to certain writing topics or writing genres, and whether different topics can produce different language use, both grammatically and pragmatically, by students in their ER writing efforts.

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## Appendix A

### Sample Writing Topics

<p><b>Summarizing:</b></p> <p>Summarize the story so far, including the main themes, events, and characters.</p>
<p><b>Predicting:</b></p> <p>Based on what you have read so far, can you guess what will happen next? You can briefly summarize the story first and then develop your ideas from there.</p>
<p><b>Describing:</b></p> <p>Choose characters in the book that you either liked or disliked, and explain why. You can describe their personality or behavior in relation to some events in the story. What was the most interesting/important event in the story? Please describe.</p>
<p><b>Analysing:</b></p> <p>Please choose one character in the story. Then, think of one gift that you want to give that character, and explain briefly why you have chosen that particular gift. What kinds of information did you learn from the book? Was it totally new to you? Or did you have some background knowledge about the topic? Describe one of the most important events in the story and explain how the main character dealt with or reacted to that specific incident. Did you find any interesting cultural information in the book? Is it different or similar to your culture?</p>
<p><b>Arguing:</b></p> <p>If you could give some advice/compliments/encouragement to one of the characters in the story, what would that be? Why? If you were to write a new book title, what would that be? Why? Has any of the characters made an important decision in the story? Do you support his or her decision? If YES, explain how that decision has affected the plot (<i>events of story</i>). If NO, what kinds of decision would you make if you were the character? If you could change any part of the story (events, characters, etc.), how would you like to change it? And why?</p>
<p><b>Creative Writing:</b></p> <p>Write new or different endings for the story. If you were the author, how would you end the story? Why? If you could create a character or a thing to make the story better or more interesting, who or what would that be? And why?</p>

## Appendix B

### Topics Emerged from Student Reflections

<b>a) ER</b>	
<i>ER for external benefits</i>	<i>ER experience</i>
ER (English skill, language improvement)	ER
ER (usefulness on reading and writing)	ER in classroom
ER (usefulness on reading)	ER (comfortable to read in English)
ER (usefulness on writing)	ER (entertaining and learning)
ER (usefulness on speaking)	ER as fun
ER (usefulness on listening)	ER as requirement
ER for vocabulary learning	ER freedom to change books
ER for reading opportunity	ER (easy)
ER discussion	ER for relaxing
ER for reading habit	ER (no pressure)
ER for understanding American culture	ER (easy to carry)
ER for writing motivation	ER (short length)
ER (grammar knowledge)	ER (appropriate amount of reading)
ER (guessing unknown words)	ER (out-of-class)
ER (feeling comfortable about writing)	
ER (feeling positive about reading)	
<b>b) Reading</b>	
<i>Reading in general</i>	<i>ER reading experience</i>
Reading	Reading a lot
Reading English books	Reading for two hours
	Reading for prolong time or for 90-120 pages a week
	Reading outside
	Silent reading in classroom
	Reading for learning foreign language
	Not enough time given for ER
<b>c) Books</b>	
<i>ER resources</i>	<i>Book choice &amp; contents</i>
Many kinds of books	Choosing an interesting book
Book resources	Graded readers (right level)
ER books in school library	Book contents
	Book recording form (keeping track of their reading)
	British English
<b>d) Ten-minute ER writing</b>	
Ten-minute writing in general	
Writing topics	
Useful for language learning	
<b>e) ER and writing connections</b>	
Useful for reading and writing	
Easiness	
Less time consuming (compared to other homework)	
Useful for conversation	