The power of imagined target communities on EFL literacy practice:
A sociocultural perspective

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Inspired by the notion of imagined community (Norton, 2013) and
critical literacy (Bishop, 2014) with regard to language learning
and identity construction, this study intended to challenge the
fixed identities and roles that learners often play in the skills-
based learning environment by creating a problem-based learning
community. Forty advanced EFL (English as a foreign language)
learners were engaged in the discursive processes of reading-to-
write and writing-to-read to create multimodal texts for an
imagined target audience that was identified by learners
themselves. Weekly reflection entries, in-progress group
discussion, questionnaires, individual reflection papers, and
final written products were analysed, based on the socio-cultural
model proposed by Gee (2010). The research aimed to understand how
a different worldview, multimodal semiotics, and scaffolding in
literacy activities co-constructed and reinvented new reader-
writer identities and (re-)shaped contents and ideas for their
target audiences. The discussion will centre on important
implications for the power of imagination and critical literacy
education, and for multimodal literacy practice for reading-
writing with specific purposes.