

**Title:** Multilingual Identities in Refugee-background Students' Voices: Counter-stories from Poland

### **Abstract**

With the rise of an anti-refugee sentiment in Poland and worldwide, research on refugee-background students' (RBSs) identities and language identities tends to characterize RBSs from a deficit perspective rather than exploring their strengths, agency, and multilingual repertoires (Daniel, 2019). This study aimed to forefront voices of four Chechen RBSs in Poland and examine what their stories reveal about their identities and language identities. This qualitative study draws upon the constructs of RBS identity (Shapiro et al., 2018), language identity (Norton, 2000), and Refugee Critical Race Theory (RefugeeCrit) (Strekalova-Hughes et al., 2018), including counter-storytelling applied as a humanizing methodology (Paris & Winn, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Data sources included fieldnotes, interviews, language self-portraits, and *I Am From* poems. Findings demonstrated that RBSs' identities and language identities are multilayered, rich and in constant flux. Shaped by the dynamic interplay of majoritarian stories and counter-stories, participants constructed their identities through claiming, negotiating, and envisioning while in a constant process of becoming. Ultimately, work is necessary to oppose the essentialization of RBSs; to advocate for transformative policies and practices; and to pursue a more just world, wherein no human is considered illegal, and all individuals are respected and celebrated.

### **References**

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