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African languages and Spanish among Equatoguineans in Madrid

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1. Introduction

This paper is part of a sociolinguistic study about the Equatoguinean immigrants in the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Spain. We are looking at a minimally visible group of Spanish speakers: in studies about the immigrant population in Spain, in studies about migrations in the Spanish-speaking world, and in studies about dialectology and sociolinguistics of the Spanish language in general (cf. Schlumpf 2016). One predominant aim of the current research project about Equatoguineans in Madrid is to improve the visibility of Equatorial Guinea as a legitimate and important part of the Spanish-speaking world, and of the Equatoguineans as Spanish speakers. Topics of special interest for the investigation are the dialect contact between Guinean and Peninsular Spanish, language ideologies, perception of linguistic phenomena, attitudes toward languages and dialects, and glottopolitical issues.

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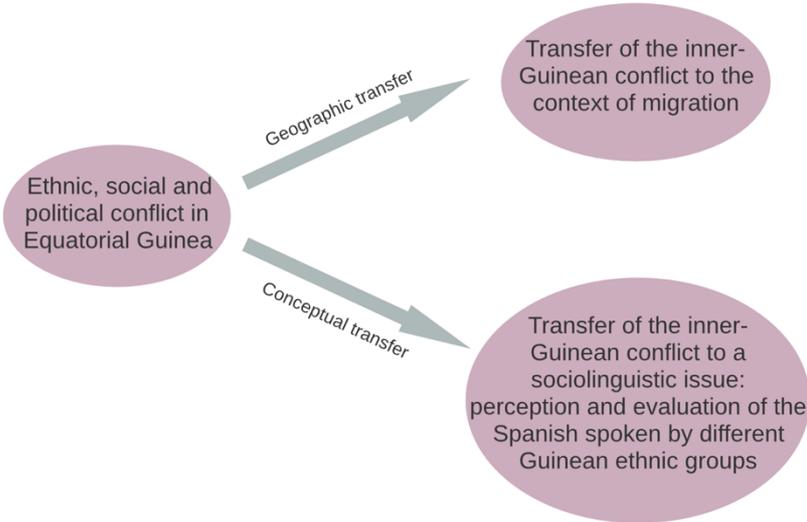
This article focuses on one particular topic: the use of the African languages Fang and Bubi among the Equatoguineans in Madrid. We will consider the preservation and/or the loss of these languages in the Spanish diaspora and the context in which they are used. What do the informants tell us about these issues? How do they explain the maintenance and/or the loss of the African languages? How are these languages viewed in the context of migration? Finally, when and how do the informants establish a connection between the use of the African languages and the Spanish spoken by the Equatoguineans?

We will see that most informants express a positive attitude toward the African languages. The most interesting point is that some informants, at the same time, mention explicitly that using African languages can also be a habit with negative consequences. In this context, we

will see how crucial it is to know the historical, political and sociocultural background of Equatorial Guinea. Therefore, we want to develop the hypothesis visualized in Graph 1. As we will explain in the next chapter, an ethnic, social and political conflict exists in the immigrants' country of origin, i.e. Equatorial Guinea. This conflict is transferred twice to the country of destination, i.e. Spain. On one hand, this migration entails a geographic transfer between the country of origin and the country of destination; on the other hand, we can also observe a conceptual transfer of the mentioned conflict, though it will influence the migrants' linguistic perception and their evaluation of the Spanish spoken by different Guinean ethnic groups. This conceptual transfer, interestingly, can be seen through interviewees' references to the African languages.

To elaborate on the mentioned hypothesis, this paper includes the following parts: After this introduction, we will deal with the sociohistorical context of this study, both with the migration of the Equatoguineans to Spain and their situation there, and with the linguistic situation and ethnic conflict between Bubi and Fang in Equatorial Guinea. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in this study and the informants on whose information it is based. Chapter 4 constitutes the core part of the article. There, we will describe the results of the analysis of the informants' linguistic attitudes toward the maintenance and values of the African languages Bubi and Fang in the diasporic context. At that point, we will see how the informants establish a connection between the use of the African languages and the Spanish spoken by different ethnic groups. The paper closes with some final remarks and conclusions.

Graph 1: Geographic and conceptual transfer of the conflict in Equatorial Guinea to the context of migration



2. Sociohistorical context

2.1. Equatoguineans in Spain

According to the most recent demographic statistics offered by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, INE [*National Institute of Statistics*], as of 1st January 2018, 22.869 persons born in Equatorial Guinea were living in Spain, of which 8.978 were registered in the Autonomous Community of Madrid (39,3%). Approximately half of the Equatoguineans living in Spain hold the Spanish nationality, and the proportion between women / men was about 63% / 37%. The demographic evolution since 2000 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic statistics of residents of Spain and Madrid who were born in Equatorial Guinea (data drawn from INE, 2018).

	Spain	Madrid
2018	22.869	8.978
2010	22.920	9.426
2000	10.841	4.964

The Equatoguinean community in Spain constitutes the biggest outside Equatorial Guinea (Aixelà 2012, 81). Riochí Sifá (2016, 94) explains this situation by referencing the cultural and linguistic affinity between the two countries and highlights the fact that Guinea was, until

50 years ago, a Spanish colony. The most numerous group of Equatoguineans in Spain lives in the capital, at least during their first years of residence. This is due to practical and administrative circumstances: In Madrid, new immigrants find a dense network of social and familial ties, which are of highest importance during their initial adaptation and integration process. Madrid also offers faster and easier access to documents that are needed to register in the country, such as the permit for stay. Finally, the Equatoguinean embassy and consulate are located in the capital, where the Equatoguinean citizens have to renew their passports (cf. Riochí Siafá 2016, 116-119).

Two additional characteristics of the Equatoguinean community in Spain are important. First, most Equatoguineans in Spain have already lived there for many years. In fact, it's difficult to find informants who have arrived during the last eight years. This seems to be related to the history of the migratory movements from Equatorial Guinea to Spain,¹ which peaked in the first years after the independence of Guinea, during the first Guinean dictatorship (1968-1979). During the 1950s, migration to Spain already existed, but in small numbers; most of the people emigrated at that time with the intention to study in Spain, some with a Spanish scholarship. Only in 1968 and 1969 did the massive emigration of thousands of Equatoguineans begin due to their need to escape the cruel repression and bloody violence under the regime of Francisco Macías Nguema. Some specialists estimate that about a quarter of the entire population of Guinea left the country (cf. Aixelà 2012, 84). The crucial factor that pushed the Equatoguineans toward exile in the 1970s was, thus, the political situation in their country. For the same reason, many Equatoguineans who were living outside Guinea when the dictatorship of Macías was established—in Spain, for example—couldn't return to their country of origin. These early Equatoguinean immigrants in Spain couldn't rely on social and familial networks, unlike later generations, and found themselves in a country with a dictatorial regime. Further, between January 1971 and October 1976, any news about Equatorial Guinea was classified as *materia reservada* (classified material) through the *Ley de Secretos Oficiales* (Law of Official Secrets) (cf. La Vanguardia 1976a and 1976b), a fact that rendered these early migrants entirely invisible and marginalized within the Spanish society. From the 1980s onward, the motives for exile from Equatorial Guinea are more diverse and include, among others, education (primarily young Guineans), family (reunion with relatives in Spain) and health (especially older people, who sometimes only spend short, but repeated

¹ Relevant information about the stages of the Equatoguinean emigration to Spain can be found in Aixelà (2012), Fons (2001) and Vi-Macomé (2006, 39-50).

periods in Spain). Economic reasons are more important in the 1990s, when many people of working age emigrated to Spain, intending to improve their income and settle. These migrants are part of what is known as “new immigration” in Spain: Spain becomes a receiving country for immigrants not only from Europe but also from other parts of the world, a result of the democratization process after the end of the Francoist dictatorship in 1975 and as a consequence of Spain’s entrance in the European Economic Community in 1986, among other reasons (cf. Pujol 2006, 206-208). Since 2000, the migratory movement between Equatorial Guinea and Spain has been changing again. Now, besides the continuing emigration from Africa to Europe, others are trying to return to their homeland. Some are attracted by new jobs created after the discovery of oil in Equatorial Guinea in the mid-1990s; others are forced to go back because of the economic crisis in Spain after 2007.

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A second, interesting characteristic of Equatoguineans in Spain is the weak internal cohesion in the community as a whole. This is a consequence of the ethnic division that can be found in the Equatoguinean society, especially between Bubi and Fang, the two principal ethnic groups. These cultural and linguistic differences between Bubi and Fang can even be recognized in the geographic distribution of Equatoguineans in Madrid: They tend to live in separate municipalities, close to others of the same ethnic background. The Bubi tend to live most often in the Southern municipalities of Fuenlabrada, Leganés, Parla and Getafe, whereas the Fang mostly live in Torrejón de Ardoz and Alcalá de Henares, as well as in Alcorcón, Móstoles and Humanes de Madrid. Few Equatoguineans live in the city of Madrid (about 913 in 2018—out of 8.978—according to the *Padrón Municipal de Habitantes [Register of Inhabitants]*).

2.2. Linguistic situation and ethnic conflict in Equatorial Guinea

As mentioned before, the ethnic divisions in Equatorial Guinea are especially observable in the conflict between the Fang, the major ethnic group of the country, and the Bubi, the biggest of the minority groups. In the following paragraphs, we will summarize this conflict, as well as the linguistic situation in Equatorial Guinea.

As Juan Riochí Siafá explains (2016, 29), the Bubi are the autochthonous inhabitants of the island of Bioko, formerly called the island of Fernando Poo, situated in the Gulf of Guinea about 30 kilometers from the African coast (see Map 1). Traditionally, the Bubi speak Bubi,

but nowadays most of them also speak Spanish and Pichi (cf. Granda 1984, 148-151). Pichi is an English-based pidgin that serves, particularly in Bioko, as *lingua franca* and is used, although in a slightly different way, in other African countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria and Ghana. In Río Muni, the continental part of Equatorial Guinea, Pichi is rarely used but most likely appears in Bata, especially between immigrants from Bioko island (see Granda 1984, 166-171; Yakpo 2010, 9-19; Yakpo 2013; Yakpo 2016). A fair number of Bubi also have limited knowledge of Fang, due to its contemporary predominance in all official contexts and the forced learning of Fang during the regime of Francisco Macías (1968-1979). In fact, during the last seven or eight years of the Macías regime, the use of Spanish was forbidden in all official situations as well as in private life, and the regime tried to implement Fang as the only national language. It was, though, an attempt in vain (cf. Granda 1984, 146; Lipski 2004, 118).

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held in Fang. Unlike the Bubi, the Fang people generally do not speak any other local African language.

Concerning the official status of African languages in Equatorial Guinea, none has any formal recognition or function despite being the first languages of the vast majority of the population. In the constitution of Equatorial Guinea, we can simply read that the “indigenous languages are recognized as an integral part of the national culture” (Yakpo 2016, 215-216). Besides Fang and Bubi, some minority Bantu languages are spoken along the continental coast of Guinea, known as Ndowé languages or *lenguas playeras [languages of the coast]* (Molina Martos 2006, 3). If we follow the classification of Lipski (1990), summarized in Molina Martos (2006, 3-4), in addition to the Bantu languages in Equatorial Guinea we can find two mixed languages: Pichi, already mentioned above, and Fhá d’Ambô, also known as Annobonese. Fhá d’Ambô is a Portuguese-based Creole spoken on the island of Annobón (cf., e.g., Granda 1984, 164-166, and Zamora Segorbe 2009). All these African languages coexist with three official European languages in situations of diglossia according to Ferguson (1959): first, Spanish, officialized again in 1982 and currently the language of the administration, public life, education, most of the press, etc., and *lingua franca* for communications between people of different ethnic groups. Second, French, co-official since 1998, used sparingly in inter- and intra-ethnic communication, promoted since 1998 by the French Cultural Centers of Malabo and Bata and through radio programs, and thanks to its international relevance and official status in the neighboring countries Gabon and Cameroon. Third, Portuguese, co-official since 2011. Neither French nor Portuguese is present in the official or public life of Equatorial Guinea, nor are they used as informal codes among the Equatoguineans (Yakpo 2016, 216). They more likely reflect the geopolitical, diplomatic and economic interests of the Equatoguinean regime (cf. Castillo Rodríguez and Morgenthaler García 2016, 18). In sum, we can say that the linguistic landscape of Equatorial Guinea reflects a situation of polyglossia similar to many other parts of the African continent; for example, in the Maghreb (cf., e.g., Fasla 2006).

Concerning the number of Spanish-speakers in Equatorial Guinea, Lipski (2004, 118-119) highlights the following figures: In Bioko and other urban areas of Río Muni, around 90% of the population is considered to know Spanish, whereas in the continental region and especially the remote parts, only around 60-70% speak Spanish. We can see, correspondingly, that Equatorial Guinea is situated between those African countries in which the language of

the ex-colonial power has been implemented most successfully. Nevertheless, in today's interactions between Equatoguineans who share a local language, they are more likely to use that language over Spanish, even in a formal context. Furthermore, there are almost no monolingual Spanish-speakers in Equatorial Guinea, and still only few Equatoguineans are native speakers of Spanish. It seems, however, that this might be changing nowadays, at least in urban spaces.

The conflict between Bubi and Fang seems to have started around 1956, when Bioko (then called Fernando Poo) and Río Muni gained the status of Spanish provinces (Bolekia Boleká 2003, 89-90). The conflict was incited by the Spanish colonial power. According to Bolekia Boleká (2003, 93), the Spanish governors and businessmen told the Bubi negative stories about the Fang (e.g., the Fang as savage and brutal invaders) and vice-versa (e.g., the Bubi as weak, lazy and inferior). During the process of independence, the conflict got worse. In fact, many Bubi never wanted nor accepted the independence of Equatorial Guinea in the way it was gained in 1968. They fought for a separate independence of Bioko island, because they wanted to have their own independence separated from the Fang. In fact, the Bubi had different visions and aspirations than the Fang, and their ambition was to become independent and self-sufficient from the continent. This way, they would have been able to control and govern the island and its natural resources (cf. Riochí Siafá 2016, 61). To work towards these goals, the Union of the Bubi (*Unión Bubi*) was created, but it was defeated in the first presidential elections of the country. With the victory of the first president of Equatorial Guinea, the Fang Francisco Macías Nguema (for the Spanish colonial power a rather unexpected and not particularly welcome victory), a strong repression against the Bubi was initiated almost immediately. Since then, the Bubi have been insulted, persecuted, assassinated and deprived of all civil, human and social rights (Riochí Siafá 2016, 62). Many leaders of the Bubi, especially those who had fought for a separate independence of Bioko, were killed during the regime of Macías (Bolekia Boleká 2003, 122). With the independence of Equatorial Guinea, a process called *fanguization* started (see, e.g., Aixelà 2013, 64-65). A large migration of Fang people to Malabo, situated on Bioko island, was promoted in order to foster their presence in the capital of the country, and all influential positions in the administration and the army are held by Fang—especially by people of the president's clan, Mongomo (cf. Granda 1984, 135-141 and 161-162). Hence, it's important to highlight that the beneficiaries of both Equatoguinean dictatorships since independence has not been the whole Fang tribe, but only a very small group of persons who find themselves close to the regime

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(cf. Aixelà 2013, 62-67). Another fact important to emphasize is that the ethnic differences and struggles were incited and abused, not by the general population but mostly by the highest ranks of the administration: first, by the Spanish colonial administration, and then even more by the two Equatoguinean dictatorships.

It was in the 1970s, during the first years of an independent Equatorial Guinea and during the establishment of the first Guinean dictatorship, that the first big wave of Equatoguinean people went to exile, both to other African countries and to Europe, especially to Spain. In total, it is estimated that almost 100.000 people emigrated between 1970 and the end of the 1990s (Aixelà 2012, 84). Many of them, despite their wish to go back to their home country, have never returned.

3. Methodology and informants

The research project about the Equatoguineans in Madrid is affiliated with the IN.MIGRA2-CM project, directed by professor Florentino Paredes García of the University of Alcalá, Spain, which aims at studying the sociolinguistic and communicative integration of the migrant population in the Autonomous Community of Madrid. The main research methodology is the creation of corpora of semi-directed interviews, composed of life stories (cf. Atkinson 2002; Sancho Pascual 2014, 117-121), conducted with immigrants of different countries of origin. The main topics of the interviews are the immigrants' arrival to Spain, the past in their country of origin, their adaptation to life in Madrid and differences to their own countries, their labor situation, their family and their expectations for the future. All the thematic modules of the interviews include linguistic and sociolinguistic questions. The interviews with the Equatoguinean informants last between 40 and 75 minutes. The interviews are recorded with a digital recorder Olympus WS-832, and the transcriptions follow the transcription system established for the PRESEEA project (*Proyecto para el Estudio Sociolingüístico del Español de España y de América [Project for the Sociolinguistic Study of Spanish in Spain and America]*) (cf. PRESEEA 2008). This guarantees the homogeneity and comparability of the linguistic material within a wide, international research community. The interviews are followed by a short, sociolinguistic questionnaire, which permits measurement of the linguistic attitudes of the Equatoguinean informants toward their own and the Madrilenian variety of Spanish, as well as toward their African languages. The linguistic

attitudes are of special relevance for our study because, apart from the attitudes toward languages, dialects and their speakers, they allow us to analyze social connotations and sentimental values linked with languages and dialects, as well as cultural norms and the social and ethnic identity of the speakers (cf. Moreno Fernández 2015, 177-180).

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This paper is based on a selection of ten sociolinguistic interviews that occurred in 2017 in Madrid: five with women, and five with men of Equatoguinean origin. This selection represents the first part that could be completed out of the final corpus of 24 interviews. The interviewees were contacted individually and then helped to find others. All the interviews were performed by the author of this paper, mostly in public spaces such as libraries or restaurants, and only in rare occasions at the informants' home or office. In most cases, the interviews were the first encounter between the interviewer and the informants.

The profiles of the ten selected informants are summarized in Table 2. The codes in the first column will be used in this article to identify the informants and give information about the sex (H = *hombre* [male], M = *mujer* [female]) and the ethnic affiliation (B = Bubi, F = Fang). Since the first contact with Equatoguineans in Madrid was through the Bubi community, this selection includes eight Bubi informants, but only two Fang informants; the final corpus of 24 interviews will be distributed equally between the two ethnic groups. Further, the table shows additional information about the selected interviewees, such as age, age at the arrival to Spain, time of residence in Madrid, education, mother tongue and other languages.

Table 2. Equatoguinean informants considered for this study

Code	Age	Age at arrival to Spain	Years of residence in Madrid	Education	Mother tongue	Other languages
HB_01	31	15	16	University	Spanish	Pichi, English
HB_02	34	22	8 [+ 4 years in Salamanca]	University	Bubi	Spanish, Pichi
HB_03	30	17	13	University	Bubi	Spanish, Pichi, Fang, English
HB_04	22	13	9	University [still student]	Spanish	Bubi [only passive knowledge]
MB_05	32	21	11	Professional	Spanish	Bubi
MB_06	41	25	16	Secondary	Bubi	Spanish, Pichi
MB_07	29	21	7 [+ 1 year in Barcelona]	Secondary	Bubi	Spanish, Pichi
MB_08	29	13	16	Secondary	Spanish	Bubi
HF_09	20	16	4	Professional	Fang	Spanish, French
MF_10	38	25	23	Secondary	Fang	Spanish, Pichi

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4.1. Positive attitudes toward the maintenance of the African languages in Spain

In this section, the attitudes of the Equatoguinean informants in Madrid toward their African languages, i.e. Bubi and Fang, and toward the Spanish spoken by different Equatoguinean ethnic groups are discussed. As we have already mentioned in the introduction of this paper, most comments about the use and the values of the African languages are highly positive. The key reasons through which informants explain the importance of their African languages, even in the migratory, predominantly Spanish-speaking context, are the following:

- a. The African languages represent a sign of identity and culture (HB_03, MF_10); they are their own, native languages (HB_02), while Spanish is a language imposed by the colonizer (HB_03); and they serve to tell their own stories and to see the world in a special way (HB_01).
- b. Two of the informants explain that, for them, Bubi is an important tie between themselves and their home country: When they hear someone speaking Bubi, they can remember things from their past in Equatorial Guinea and have the sensation of being there (MB_05); it feels like they are back in Guinea (HB_02).
- c. Many of the informants like to speak and hear Bubi, so they try to maintain it. Some of the informants are trying to (HB_01) or even have improved (MB_07) their knowledge of Bubi while living in Spain.
- d. The male Fang informant feels proud about his Fang because it is his mother tongue and the dominating language at home, which is why he wants to maintain it in Spain and practice it to prevent himself from forgetting (HF_09).
- e. The fifth reason is a practical one: The African languages allow for communication with relatives in Equatorial Guinea, especially with elder people (for example, grandparents) whose Spanish is not good or who do not speak it at all (e.g., MF_10). This is a relevant point not only for the immigrants themselves, but also for their children: Some of them can't communicate with their families in Guinea when they go there for visits and holidays, precisely because they don't know the corresponding African language of their ancestors.

According to these positive opinions of the Equatoguinean immigrants in Spain toward the use and conservation of the African languages even in the Spanish exile, the loss of these languages would entail loss of identity, loss of tradition and loss of cultural and communicative ties with their country of origin and their relatives in Guinea. The results of the sociolinguistic questionnaire show the same trend: Although almost all informants use the African languages less often since living in Spain, they don't feel less secure when speaking them; they feel sad about the (possible) loss of knowledge of these languages; and they emphasize their wish to pass on this knowledge to their children.

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If we have a short look at what the Equatoguinean informants say about their children (or their hypothetical children, if they don't have any), we can see that in all the interviews (and also in almost all the questionnaires), they declare that they would like their children to also speak Bubi or Fang, respectively. Even the informants who don't speak the language state the same. If they don't succeed in transmitting their African languages to the next generation, they consider it a failure. Nevertheless, they mention different facts that complicate the transmission of their languages. The most essential negative factors are the following:

- a. Mixed couples, even relations with other Africans, but not from Equatorial Guinea, like in the case of the female Fang informant (MF_10).
- b. Lack of time, a fact that is especially crucial for the women, who traditionally in the Equatoguinean culture raise and educate the children, but who have to work hard once in Spain in order to contribute to the family's income or even because they are the only one in the household who is working and has a regular income (e.g., MB_06).
- c. Lack of knowledge of the African language, a fact that makes transmitting to the children almost impossible (e.g., MB_05).

Turning to the contexts in which Equatoguineans in Madrid use their African languages, we can see that the Bubi, without any doubt, speak most often in Spanish, both inside and outside their homes. In some cases, Spanish is the predominating language in the Bubi families in Spain, several informants believe they speak Spanish better than Bubi, and Spanish has always been present and predominating in their families. On the other hand, some other Bubi—nevertheless the minority of the Bubi informants—declare that in Equatorial Guinea the dominating language in private contexts was Bubi and that they try to maintain this linguistic tradition in Spain as well. Mostly, it seems that the Bubi in Spain speak Bubi when

they meet other Bubi in family reunions, parties and events organized by cultural Bubi organizations (e.g., the *Asociación socio-cultural bubi* [*Socio-cultural Bubi Association*] in Fuenlabrada, Madrid). Another language that seems to be common in interactions between Bubi in Spain, especially between young people and in informal situations, is Pichi.

It might be interesting to consider the opinion of one Bubi informant (HB_03): He declares with sadness that in Spain he has to speak much more Spanish, but that he always tries to speak Bubi when he meets other Equatoguineans with the same ethnic background. In connection with this, the first negative element related to the use of the African languages appears in the interview:²

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- (1) HB_03: *con mis paisanos nunca hablamos español [...] de hecho / es algo que se nos critica porque .h: los de mi pueblo en concreto / eeh cuando nos encontramos en fiestas en cualquier evento donde hay más guineanos / solo hablamos bubi [...]*
el bubi .h: en en especial tiene un / problema mental a mi juicio / que se siente / inferior cuando habla el bubi [...]
en Guinea / como que la / etnia mayoritaria es la fang y en consecuencia es la que está en el gobierno / casi todo está en fang / además de en español / por lo tanto cuando hablas bubi se te mira raro / pues / ese esa tara .h está aquí también
 with my compatriots I never speak Spanish [...] in fact / this is something that others criticize because .h: precisely the people of my tribe / uuh when we are in parties in any other event where there are more Guineans / we only speak Bubi [...]
 the Bubi .h: especially has a / mental problem in my opinion / he feels / inferior when he speaks Bubi [...]
 in Guinea / as the / majority ethnic group are the Fang and in consequence they are in the government / almost everything is in Fang / in addition to Spanish / therefore when you speak Bubi others look at you in a strange way / so / this defect .h exists here too

In this passage we can see that the ethnic and political conflicts in Equatorial Guinea are still present within the Equatoguinean community in Spain, at least in the mind of the minority ethnic group, the Bubi.

² To a large extent, the transcriptions of the interviews follow the transcription system of PRESEEA – *Proyecto para el Estudio Sociolingüístico del Español de España y de América* [*Project for the Sociolinguistic Study of Spanish in Spain and America*] without tags, according to the guidelines of the project summarized in «Marcas y etiquetas mínimas obligatorias [Minimal compulsory marks and tags]» (PRESEEA 2008: 8). The simple oblique stroke indicates a short pause, and the double oblique stroke a longer pause; “h” represents an exhalation, “.h” a short inhalation, and “.h:” a longer inhalation.

Regarding the Fang, both Fang informants declare that Fang is their mother tongue and that they still use it in Spain, both inside and outside their homes, as often as possible. The female Fang informant (FM_10) even mentions that she can speak Fang in the Equatoguinean embassy in Madrid, a fact that clearly reflects the Fang predominance in all governmental Guinean institutions and the comparative disadvantage of the Bubi in all official Guinean contexts.

The same Fang informant (FM_10) mentions two additional, interesting points. She talks about some Spanish people who criticize the use of native languages among the immigrants, a fact that makes her speak more Spanish in order to avoid critical or even racist comments. And she adds that she sometimes tries to avoid her compatriots of her own ethnic group in order not to speak Fang, but rather to practice and improve her Spanish.

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4.2. Neutral attitudes toward the African languages

We can hardly find any neutral views on the maintenance or loss of the African languages in the Spanish exile in the ten selected interviews. One exception is the informant HB_02, who thinks it's possible to identify himself with the Bubi culture and feel Bubi, even without speaking the language. Therefore, it's not necessarily negative for him that his son neither speaks nor understands Bubi, because he is sure that his son can maintain the Bubi culture and traditions and can pass it on to his own children, even if he doesn't simultaneously transmit any specific linguistic knowledge. However, what is absolutely essential for this informant is that his son travels to Equatorial Guinea and learns about the Guinean culture and customs. This specific opinion shows that the attitude toward the African languages in the migratory context depends on how someone rates the importance of a language as part of the cultural legacy of a community. In fact, this same informant strongly defends the maintenance and transmission of the Bubi culture to the next generation, also or even especially in families outside of Guinea, and he is an activist in several cultural associations of Bubi in Madrid.

4.3. Negative attitudes toward the maintenance of the African languages in Spain

As we have already seen, the majority of the selected Equatoguinean informants have a positive attitude toward their African languages, both the Bubi and the Fang. They consider their native languages to be an integral part of their own culture and affirm their wish to maintain and, if possible, to pass on this linguistic knowledge of their own ethnic tribe to their

children, even if they already have been born and grew up in Spain. The informant HB_02, quoted in the previous paragraph, is an exception as he has a more neutral opinion about the local languages' importance in connection with the transmission of a cultural legacy. No negative attitudes directly related to an informant's own African language can be found in the interviews.

However, negative attitudes toward the African languages do occur, although in a slightly different context. This becomes highly relevant and interesting from a linguistic and ideological point of view. In fact, negative opinions about the African languages arise in connection with the Spanish spoken by the Equatoguinean people. It's in this specific context that we can reconstruct the hypothesis we explained in the beginning of this article: the postulated transfer of an inner-Guinean ethnic conflict, not only to the country of destination, i.e. Spain, but even to the interpretation and evaluation of the Spanish spoken by different Equatoguinean ethnic groups.

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First, we will have a look at what the Bubi informants tell us about the Spanish spoken by the Fang. Several of them comment on the fact that the Fang always speak their own language, both in Equatorial Guinea and in Spain, and that they, consequently, speak Spanish poorly, make mistakes and have an unpleasant and horrible Spanish. Interestingly, mainly women argue like this, as we can observe in the following interview extracts:

- (2) MB_07: *enseguida notas automáticamente que este es un fang [...] [por] el tono y lo hablan mal [...] no saben distinguir qué es / masculino qué es femenino .h: qué es plural singular [...] una un cuando quieren decir una cosa / que tiene que ser .h femenino lo dicen de como que masculi- o sea se nota automáticamente [...]*
no les interesa / hablar el español [...] es lo mismo con los fang
you recognize immediately that this is a Fang [...] [because] of his tone and they speak it poorly [...] they don't know to distinguish what is / masculine and what is feminine .h: what is plural singular [...] a a when they want to say one thing / that has to be .h feminine they say it as like masculi- thus you recognize it immediately [...]
they are not interested in / speaking Spanish [...] it's the same with the Fang
- (3) MB_05: *la realidad es que los bubis son los que mejor / hablamos el español [...]*

*[el español de los fang] no es igual al mío es más / se escucha más feo se escucha horroroso
 [...] lo hablan pero lo hablan mal [...] porque los fang / casi como que nunca les ha importado
 hablar español siempre como están en pueblos son de de de allí y siempre hablan fang*
 the reality is that we, the Bubi, are the ones who best / speak Spanish [...]
 [the Spanish of the Fang] isn't identical as my one it's more / it sounds nasty it sounds horrible
 [...] they speak it but they speak it poorly [...] because the Fang / almost as they have never
 been interested in speaking Spanish always as they are in villages they are from from from there
 and they always speak Fang

- (4) MB_08: *y el fang // también se nota el fang / se nota porque no saben hablar bien el español los
 fang [...] no saben hablar espa- español [...] hablan muy mal español [...] cometen errores a la
 hora de hablar a la hora de escribir y todo / y son los que están en Guinea en todo .h pero son
 los / son los que no no han estu[diado]*
 and the Fang // you also recognize the Fang / you recognize him because they don't know
 speaking Spanish well the Fang [...] they don't know speaking Spa- Spanish [...] they speak
 Spanish very badly [...] they make mistakes when they speak when they write and so on / and
 they are in everything in Guinea .h but they are the ones / they are the ones who haven't
 stud[ied]

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As we can see here, the use of the African language suddenly becomes a negative factor with (real or supposed?) negative consequences for the speaker's knowledge of Spanish, although only with regard to the other ethnic group—in this case, the dominant and majority one. This attitude reflects a predominantly monolingual ideology which stresses the importance of accuracy in the use of the standard variety—in this case, standard peninsular Spanish. We would like to emphasize again that mostly, though not only, female interviewees think badly about the Spanish spoken by the Fang. This is noteworthy because we can compare it with the fact that the general negative evaluation of the Equatoguinean Spanish also is a predominantly female view. It's mainly women who consider the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea to be poor when comparing different varieties of the Spanish language, whereas the male interviewees more often support the opinion that the Equatoguinean variety is a correct and formal Spanish, even compared to the Madrilenian Spanish, which is commonly considered a prestigious variety and linguistic model (see Schlumpf 2018, 16-17).

Going back to the inner-Guinean dialectal differences, it is interesting to quote again the informant HB_03, who spontaneously elaborates on different scales of Spanish proficiency that he observes in his country of origin:

- (5) HB_03: *pues / eeh en la isla / por ejemplo / .h: en Malabo se habla español h mmm del uno al diez mm cuatro y medio a lo mejor [...] acceptable / .h no bueno pero acceptable .h: en los pueblos eeh sobre todo los pueblos que están pegados a la capital / se contagiaron mm ese nivel / pero los que están más alejados .h: el español eh / se habla podríamos bajar a un tres pero se habla [...] en la parte continental / hay zonas donde no se habla español porque la gente no sabe hablar español*
- well / uuh on the island / for example / .h: in Malabo the people speak Spanish h mmm counting [on a scale of] one to ten mm four and a half perhaps [...] acceptable / .h not good but acceptable .h: in the villages uuuh first of all in villages next to the capital / they adapted mm to that level / but the ones who are farther away .h: the Spanish uh / they speak it we could go down until three but they speak it [...] in the continental part / there are some regions where they don't speak Spanish because the people don't know to speak it

According to this informant, it seems clear that the Equatoguineans of the island of Bioko are the ones who speak Spanish best, especially the residents of the capital, Malabo. The farther a region is from Malabo, the worse the local Spanish is. On the other end of the scale, there are the inhabitants of the continental area of the country, the traditional area of the Fang, where the people speak poor Spanish or don't speak it at all. However, in another part of the interview, the same informant concludes his considerations about the Equatoguinean Spanish with a quite pessimistic observation: He thinks that, in general, the people of Equatorial Guinea don't speak Spanish well, regardless of the ethnic question.

If we go on to look at what the informants think about the Spanish spoken by the Bubi, we see that most of them affirm that they speak a good Spanish and that they use their own language less often than the Fang. Even the Fang informant MF_10 says that the Bubi speak Spanish really well, and continues:

- (6) MF_10: *en Guinea lo que pasa es que no los guin- los fang / que somos nosotros creemos que somos más que bubis [...] que somos más más buena gente que tenemos somos más mejores que ellos*
- in Guinea what happens is that not the Guin- the Fang / that is us we think that we are more than Bubi [...] that we are more more better people that we have are more better than they are

Also in opinion of the young male Fang informant (HF_09), the Bubi speak Spanish better and more fluently than the Fang. And he adds a very interesting comment; he states that, actually, it's the Bubi who say that:

- (7) HF_09: *son ellos [...] en mi país ellos dicen que saben hablar más el español [...] que los fang [...] según ellos mismos dicen / y bueno tienen // diría yo un poquito de soltura [...] porque ellos como bueno / hablan más el español que nosotros*
they are [...] in my country they say that they know to speak more Spanish [...] than the Fang [...] according to what they say / and well they speak it // I would say a little bit more fluently [...] because they as well / they speak Spanish more often than we do

This informant explains that the Bubi speak Spanish fluently because they speak it more often than the Fang. He justifies this difference by alluding to the actual situation in Equatorial Guinea and to the process of the country's hispanization. Without any doubt, the hispanization and colonization of Equatorial Guinea was a long process with different phases (see, e.g., Bolekia Boleká 2003, 51-70; and Lipski 2004, 118). In general, we have to remember that the real colonization of the region by the Spaniards was initiated late, only after 1850, and was first limited to Fernando Poo (today Bioko). The island of Annobón was colonized after 1885, and the continental area of Río Muni only after 1900, once the territorial disputes with France had been solved. The Spanish even didn't reach the most remote areas of Río Muni until 1930. Later, during times of the Spanish dictatorship of Francisco Franco, the Francoist regime intensified its colonizing effort and pursued the colony's total *españolización* ["Spanization"], including language, religion and economy. In all these years, the principal glottopolitical agents in Equatorial Guinea were the missionaries, who were in control of the whole educational sector (cf. Castillo Rodríguez and Morgenthaler García 2016, 16-17). Altogether, the complex and diversified process of Guinea's hispanization may explain, at least from a diachronic perspective, the differences in the presence of the Spanish language in the different parts of the country.

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As we have seen, though, several informants establish a relation between the frequency of the use of African languages among the Equatoguineans, both in Guinea and in Spain, with their knowledge of Spanish. The Fang people, apparently, use their native language more frequently, a fact that is facilitated by the sociopolitical and cultural circumstances in contemporary Equatorial Guinea. Therefore, seemingly, they don't speak Spanish fluently. On the contrary, the Bubi use Spanish instead of their own language, leading to their strong

knowledge of this European language. Of course, it is interesting to compare these opinions with some other statements mentioned above: Although some Bubi criticize the frequent use of the Fang language among the Fang, they declare at the same time that they try to speak Bubi whenever possible, as their native language symbolizes an important part of their own culture.

Let's remember, also, one of the above-mentioned citations of the Bubi informant HB_03: He said that the Bubi feel ashamed of their own language, that they sometimes don't speak it for this reason, and that even others sometimes reproach them for speaking Bubi when they meet in events and cultural activities. It seems that we have to interpret this fact taking the conflicts in Equatorial Guinea into account. The Fang predominance in all spheres of life is obvious, as is the recognition and appreciation of their language and culture. The situation of the Bubi is totally different. The use of Bubi in any official context in Guinea can cause a disadvantage or even disdain and discrimination. The two languages that make professional success possible are Spanish and Fang. Consequently, a proficient use of Spanish can, in fact, be more important for the Bubi than for the Fang, because it at least opens a possibility to improve their situation, such as at school or work; this may explain, at least in part, why the Bubi (or some Bubi) work hard in order to speak Spanish fluently. On the opposite side, the Fang, who already enjoy many privileges because they speak the language of the ethnic group that holds all powerful positions in Equatorial Guinea, may not feel the same necessity to reach such a high proficiency at Spanish. All these facts, together with the repression that the Bubi have been suffering in Guinea since independence, produce a feeling of weakness, inferiority and fear among the Bubi community, and they even take this feeling with them to their new country.³

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³ See also Yolanda Aixelà (2012: 87): «La dispersión guineana que favoreció la desunión de la comunidad guineoecuatorial, se vio reforzada por un clima generalizado de desconfianza gestado en tiempos de Macías y que había hecho mella en una población temerosa de ser denunciada por sus compatriotas, preocupada por las represalias que las noticias de sus actitudes y actividades en situación migratoria pudieran ocasionar sobre sus familiares en Guinea. Esta tensa angustia se ha venido manifestando hasta la actualidad [The Guinean dispersion, which favored the disunion of the Equatoguinean community, was intensified due to the general climate of distrust produced in times of Macías; this affected the population and increased its fear of being reported by other compatriots and its worries about possible reprisals against relatives in Equatorial Guinea as a consequence of their attitudes and activities in the migratory context. This tense feeling of distress has been demonstrated until today]».

5. Conclusions

To conclude, we return to the initial hypothesis of this paper: An inner-Guinean ethnic, social and political conflict is not only transferred geographically to the migratory context, i.e. Spain, but also, on a more conceptual level, to the perception and evaluation that the Equatoguinean immigrants in Madrid show about the Spanish spoken by different ethnic groups. It seems to be a predominantly Bubi perspective, but the Fang also have accepted it, at least partly. We can combine this linguistic-ideological phenomenon with what authors like Rocío Caravedo call *mental space*. Mental spaces are images of the linguistic reality, based on both the life experiences of the speakers and the deep-rooted beliefs that have been passed on by others. Such mental spaces entail evaluations of linguistic varieties (the speaker's own variety and others), which do not always fit the linguistic reality (see Caravedo 2009, 174; Caravedo 2012, 7-8). In other words, the geographic and ethnic origin of a speaker can be part of a symbolic image that influences the perception that others may have of this speaker. This mental space involves positive and negative values, which have a significant role in the evaluation of the idiolect of a certain person.

Of course, it is vital to compare the comments about the better or worse Spanish of the Bubi or Fang with the linguistic reality. The perceptions and evaluations of the Equatoguinean informants who are part of this study are products of their individual mental spaces (or, perhaps, even the products of shared mental spaces of their ethnic group) and have to be contrasted with the linguistic proficiency in Spanish of both the Bubi and the Fang, not only in the Spanish exile, but also, if possible, in Equatorial Guinea itself. So far, we can only conclude, although provisionally, that in interviews conducted with the Equatoguinean immigrants in the Community of Madrid we cannot observe clear differences in the Spanish spoken by different informants that are directly linked to their ethnic origin. More likely, other factors seem to be decisive, such as the level of education, the profession, the familial background and the geographic region in which a person was born and passed his or her childhood, especially if an urban or a more rural area. The final corpus of 24 sociolinguistic interviews with Equatoguineans in Madrid will allow us to carry out more detailed linguistic analyses of the Spanish used by the informants. Further, it would be interesting to study the status of Equatoguinean Spanish and Equatoguinean African languages at school in Madrid (to complement investigations such as Broeder and Mijares 2003 or Martín Rojo 2003, which do not include Bubi and Fang), as well as the possible differences in sociolinguistic

integration of Equatoguinean Bubi and Fang immigrants in the Spanish society (following the framework of social integration described in Moreno Fernández 2009).

In any case, as far as we can conclude from the present study, in the spontaneous discourses of the interviewees, the “good” Spanish spoken by the Bubi (regardless of whether that’s objectively true) turns into a symbol of linguistic superiority, possibly to compensate for the feeling of political, ethnic and linguistic inferiority that characterizes the life of the Bubi in Equatorial Guinea. Definitively, it’s quite interesting, or maybe even paradoxical, that this idea of “speaking Spanish very well”, this “language imposed by the colonizer”, turns here into a highly positive and prestigious symbol and, for the Bubi, into a signal of distancing themselves from (or even having superiority over) the majority ethnic group, the “oppressor of nowadays”.

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