

## Ofo-Biloxi Sound Correspondences

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John R. Swanton, who rediscovered spoken Ofo in 1908, when it was thought to have been extinct since 1784, found that he was able to record Ofo with somewhat fewer [phonemic] symbols than Dorsey had previously used for recording Biloxi; notably differing from Biloxi is the Ofo *-Ch-* sequence. "Probably the consonants followed by *h*, which is here very distinct, correspond to the aspirated consonants of other Siouan dialects."<sup>1</sup>

On a close reading of the author's Bulletin 47, I find that he nowhere places the Ofo and Biloxi in a sub-group by themselves; indeed, in looking for the nearest relatives to these two languages, Swanton even mentions distant western kin of the Biloxi (p. 10), but for more intimate relationship the eastern Siouan tribes in general are indicated, which makes Biloxi and Ofo fall incidentally in one large eastern group rather than rest exclusively in a small southeastern group (p. 12). Later papers by the same authority ("New Light . . ." 1923, "Early History . . ." 1936) show more interest in the extreme divergency of Catawba than in placing Biloxi and Ofo more closely with themselves or with other Siouan dialects.

Two factors would naturally make one hesitate in ascribing Biloxi and Ofo to one genetically homogeneous group. A rapid survey of the two vocabularies shows that only a fraction of the words known are cognate—contrast this with the Hidatsa-Crow group, where a good sampling shows almost all words to be cognate. Secondly, the Ofo, alias Offagoula, alias Mosopelea, were supposed to be in the Ohio Valley in early times, going south to become neighbors of the Biloxi only after the 17th century.

As to the first factor, a large fraction of non-cognate words in Ofo and Biloxi suggests close, perhaps recent, cultural contacts with Muskogean speaking tribes; this can be demonstrated only after a large body of pan-Siouan and pan-Muskogean words are collected. As to the second factor, if comparative work can show Ofo-Biloxi to be a genetic sub-group of Siouan, historical evidence for early Siouan occupancy of the Ohio Valley will need to be interpreted as including both members of the group, with the Biloxi preceding the Ofo south rather than remaining in the south to be joined by the Ofo; comparative work for demonstrating a genetic sub-group must ultimately include all related languages, but a study limited to the two languages directly involved can provide a tentative hypothesis.

The correspondences which follow would seem to indicate that the Ofo and Biloxi at one time spoke a single language which changed in

<sup>1</sup> 1. p. 4.

both Ofo and Biloxi, but rather more in the latter; that is to say, Ofo appears to be the more archaic language of this group.

Examples are from the Dorsey-Swanton Bulletin 47; one example for each correspondence is cited, together with a parenthetic number indicating the total number of correspondences found. Only the more obvious cognates were counted by me.

1. *p* : *p*(15) and *ph* : *p*(12). Ofo *itce'pe*, Bil. *ayepi*, *aye'wi* 'door, window'; Ofo *aphe'ti*, *aphi'ti*, Bil. *pe'ti*, *peti'*, *pet* 'fire'.

2. *m* : *m*(8). In all examples except one, the Biloxi cognate lacks the initial vowel of the Ofo form; the remaining example reverses this relationship of initial vowel. Ofo *ama'w*, Bil. *ma*, *mani* 'turkey'; Ofo *ma'hi*, Bil. *imahi'w* 'to paddle'. Other labials (*w*, *b*) may perhaps be regarded as phonetic variants of the phonemes *p*, *ph*, *m*. Swanton says (Bull. 47, p. 2), Bil. "b occurs only once, in a proper name." The phonemic status of Ofo *b* is doubtful. According to the printed orthography, Ofo *b* corresponds to Bil. *w* twice (as does Ofo *m* and *p*), to Bil. *p* once.

3. *t* : *t*(17), *d*(16) and *th* : *t*(9), *d*(1). Ofo *to'pa*, Bil. *topa'* 'four'; Ofo *te*, *ti*, Bil. *de* 'to go'; Ofo *the*, *twe*, Bil. *ti*, *tedi* (with medial *t*) 'to die'; Ofo *athi'*, Bil. *adi* 'father'. Ofo *t* and *th* also correspond to Bil. *n*(3), *tc*(2), *ts*(1), *xy*(1), *y*(1) possibly reflecting Biloxi phonology rather than regular correspondence (parallel to the development of Hidatsa *t* and *p* from *r* and *w* in final position, for example). The phonemic status of Ofo *d* is in question; correspondences with Bil. (3) are as for Ofo *t*.

4. *te* : *tc*(12), *t*(3), *d*(2) and *tch* : *tc*(6), *t*(1). Ofo *ile'tci'*, *ile'tci*, Bil. *yetci'* 'tongue'; Ofo *itca(tho')pka*, Bil. *itapka* 'pestel'; Ofo *itco'ti*, Bil. *do'di* 'throat'; Ofo *tchi'pi*, Bil. *teiwí*, *tei'wiyaw* 'intestines'; Ofo *itcho'hi*, Bil. *tohi*, *to'hü* 'green, unripe'.

5. *te* : *y*(11). Ofo *tea'maki*, Bil. *yamaki'* 'mosquito'.

6. *k* : *k*(22) and *kh* : *k*(5). Ofo *atce'ki*, Bil. *yek*, *ye'ki*, *ayeki* 'corn'; Ofo *akhu*, *ku*, Bil. *ku* 'to give'.

7. *l* : *n*(4), *d*(2), *y*(cp. 'tongue,' under 4, above). Ofo *le'yi*, Bil. *niye* 'to fly'; Ofo *li'tchi*, Bil. *ditei'* 'to dance'.

8. *n* : *n*(20). Ofo *ano'*, Bil. *anan'* '(north), winter'. An instance is found of *n* : *t* (but cp. the reverse, 3, above). In two cases a nasalized vowel in Ofo implies a nasal consonant in Biloxi (but all records of Siouan dialects are a little ambiguous in distinguishing between nasalized vowels and vowels juxtaposed to nasal consonants).

9. *y* : *n*(2), *y*(cp. 'to fly', 7, above). Ofo *iya'ti*, Bil. *na(ha)ti'*, *na(ha')di*, *na(ha')ti* (with medial *t*, *d*, and fortis *t*, apparently free alternates) 'canoe'.

10. *f* : *s*(9) and *fh* : *s*(9). Ofo *atcu'fi*, Bil. *yusi*, *ayusi'* 'ashes'; Ofo *fhi*, Bil. *si* 'yellow'.

11. *s* : *s*(5) and *sh* or *c* : *x*(9). Ofo *akon'si*, Bil. *kan'xi'* 'bee'; Ofo *amashu'-pka*, Bil. *maxon-tka'* 'palmetto'. Is Ofo *sh* phonemically distinct from *c*? Cp. Ofo *aco'co*, Bil. *xoxo'* 'to cough'.

12. *h* : *h*(25). Cp. above under 2, 'to paddle', under 4, 'green'.

13. *i* : *i* not nasalized in either dialect (60; see examples above); nasalized in Bil. but not in Ofo (8); in Ofo but not in Bil. (1); in both

dialects (5). Ofo *ifha*, Bil. *insu*, *insu'di* 'tooth'; Ofo *inthe'*, Bil. *ite'*, *te* 'forehead'; Ofo *intu*, Bil. *inti'*, *indi'*, *indiyān* 'egg'.

14. *i* : *e* (6). Ofo *on'yi*, Bil. *ane'*, *anedi'* 'louse'.

15. *i* : *a* (8). cp. 'door, window', 1, above.

16. *e* : *i* (7). Ofo *a'mife*, Bil. *mis'* 'to sneeze'.

17. *e* : *e* (32). See examples above.

18. *a* : *a* not nasalized in either dialect (51; see examples above); nasalized in Ofo but not in Bil. (6; see 'turkey', 2, above, where a nasal consonant is found in the alternate form); nasalized in both dialects (5). Ofo *kifan'*, Bil. *ksan'*, *ksa'ni* 'five'.

19. *a* : *u* (3). Cp. 'tooth', 13, above.

20. *o* : *o* not nasalized in either dialect (13; see examples above). In general, when Ofo *o* is not nasalized, the Bil. correspondence is *o* (but cp. *o* : *an* in 'north, winter', 8, above); and conversely, when Ofo *o* is nasalized, the Bil. correspondences are *a* or *u* rather than *o*.

21. *on* : *an* (8; cp. 'bee', 11, above), *a* (4). Ofo *mon'he*, *i'to mon'he* 'to whoop (like Indians in old times)' possibly corresponding only to the Bil. forms in *m-*, if these are distinct from forms in *w-*, namely, *wahe*, *wahe'di* 'to cry out (as from pain)' and *mahedi'* 'to halloo, whoop; to cry as the diving duck'.

22. *on* : *un* (3), *u* (3). Ofo *onni*, *oni'*, Bil. *wni'* 'mother'; Ofo *okho'nki*, Bil. *okuki* 'to fish' (vowel-*n* is equated to nasalized vowel for practical intention; see 8, above).

23. *u* : *u* not nasalized in either dialect (8; see 'ashes', 10, above). In general, when both dialects show *u* nasalization is not recorded.

24. *u* : *o* (8; see 'palmetto', 11, above). When Ofo *u* corresponds to Bil. *o*, one or the other vowel is nasalized.

25. *u* : *i* (2; see 'egg', 13, above).

26. *V-* : zero-, and *-V* : -zero. Numerous instances show Ofo words beginning in *a-* and Bil. words, without initial vowel, beginning in consonants (e.g., 'turkey', 'palmetto', 2 and 11, above); with equal frequency, Ofo words in *i-* correspond to Bil. words in consonant without initial vowel (e.g., 'tongue', 'green, unripe', 4, above); also, Ofo words in final *-i* frequently correspond to Bil. words in final consonant, without final vowel: *anfhe'pi*, Bil. *sep*, *ase'p*, *asepi* 'ax'. This example shows what is possibly true for all initial and final vocalic loss, namely that the Bil. word appears to lack corresponding vowels only in certain forms. An instance where an Ofo word lacks initial vowel recorded for Bil. is also found (see 'paddle', 2, above).

Loss of original vowel between consonants, resulting in consonant clusters, is evident in both dialects; here again, however, vocalic loss in Bil. is general, in Ofo specialized.

27. CVC : CC(18), with Ofo *V* representing all vowels, most commonly *o* (5), *a* (5), *i* (4). Ofo *asho'pi* 'to drink', Bil. *oxpa'* 'to devour, eat up, drink up'; Ofo *on'fana*, Bil. *ansna'*, *ansuna'* 'duck'; for *V* representing Ofo *i*, see 'five', 18, above.

28. CC : CVC(3). Ofo *phe*, Bil. *pehe'*, *apehe* 'to pound'; Ofo *a'she*, Bil. *xehe'* 'to sit'. The cluster, consonant-*h*, already noted by Swanton as an Ofo peculiarity, may represent in origin a *CVh* sequence, with *V* lost in syncope; *-Ch-* is then doubtless extended analogically.

29. CC : CC(22). Some instances where clusters (e.g., *-sk-*) are found in both dialects will reflect a Primitive Siouan cluster; other instances will reflect an old syncope when other dialects are brought into comparison with Biloxi and Ofo. And one may also expect that Bil. and Ofo preserve some vowels lost in other dialects; thus, CVC (sibilant-*e-p*) in both Bil. and Ofo ('ax', 26, above) corresponds to CC (*-θp-*) in Osage: (*mo<sup>n</sup>-hi<sup>n</sup>-*)-*θpe* 'ax'.

#### Literature Cited

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