



MOBILIAN JARGON IN THE LANGUAGE AREA OF SOUTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA

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0. On previous occasions, I have proposed that Mobilian Jargon, a Muskogean-based pidgin of central southeastern North America, had originated in pre-Columbian times and served as a major contact medium among alloglossic groups of the Mississippian Complex, i.e. a network of socioculturally similar complex chiefdoms in the Mississippi river valley. My arguments in support of this hypothesis have been:

- a distinctive Muskogean and possibly even Gulf grammatical pattern as evident in the word order of X/OsV (with the lower-case *s* representing a pronominal instead of nominal subject);
- the pidgin's attested use in a diversity of native interlingual contexts beyond trade and with little or no functional restrictions, pointing to an extended indigenous history without depending on the input of Europeans or Africans;
- the area's great sociolinguistic diversity, surpassed in North America only by native California and the Pacific Northwest;
- archaeological evidence for widely shared traditions, regular peer-polity interactions, and extensive long-distance trade within southeastern North America and beyond, suggesting regional sociocultural diffusion; and
- Mobilian Jargon's geographic distribution, quite closely overlapping with that of the central Mississippian Complex.

The hypothesis of Mobilian Jargon's pre-Columbian origin evidently is the answer to an often ignored but significant enigma -- the Southeastern Indians' great linguistic diversity in the context of area-wide sociocultural uniformity. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the pidgin also appears to mirror the sociopolitically rather fragile twin and multiple towns in pre-Columbian chiefdoms of southeastern North America (see Drechsel 1984, 1994).

However convincing, these arguments do not *prove* Mobilian Jargon's pre-Columbian existence, not even in combination. There remains supplementary, ideally stronger evidence to be found for demonstrating this hypothesis conclusively. One way to evaluate it further is by expanding research beyond the pidgin's basic structure and functions and by contrasting its pattern with *areal* features of (preferably unrelated) Southeastern Indian languages -- in the assumption that shared highly marked patterns came about only from long-term, fairly intensive interlingual contact (such as via a common medium) extending across various unrelated languages and over several centuries with roots in pre-Columbian times.

The present essay examines this argument by comparing Southeastern Indian languages with Mobilian Jargon for common areal linguistic features at all major levels of grammar, and explores its potential role in the diffusion of regional linguistic traits. Exploratory in nature, the following discussion also addresses some methodological and theoretical issues related to such comparative research and to the history of Southeastern Indian languages.

1. A major source of areal linguistic data for Native American languages of North America including those of the Southeast has been Joel Sherzer's *An Areal-Typological Study of American Indian Languages North of Mexico* (1976), supplemented by more recent observations (see especially Nicklas 1994). The following tables reveal various features that Mobilian Jargon shared with Southeastern Indian languages, and include several unmarked ones and -- in parentheses -- shared *absent* or *negative* features plus any relevant contrastive information:

Phonology

<i>Southeastern Indian Languages</i> (Sherzer 1976:203-210):	<i>Mobilian Jargon</i> :
1-1-1 vowel system in Muskogean, probably a family trait, and a 2-1 vowel system in Timucua, which with the three-vowel system of Muskogean and considerable variation is an areal trait of the Muskogean-Timucua region (in contrast to five-vowel systems in Chitimacha, Atakapa, Natchez, Siouan, and Tuscarora, six-vowel systems in Yuchi and Cherokee, and a seven-vowel system in Tunica <i>versus</i> absent four-vowel systems and absent mid and high central vowels) ¹	1-1-1 vowel system with considerable allophonic variation
Nasalized vowels in Muskogean, Yuchi, Siouan, and Iroquoian, a family trait of Muskogean, Siouan, and Iroquoian and apparently a central areal trait of the Southeast ² (plus some predictable voiceless vowels in Iroquoian languages <i>versus</i> absent phonemic pitch)	Nasalized vowels, original to the area, but perhaps reinforced by French
One series of voiceless stops in Biloxi, Timucua, and Gulf isolates except Chitimacha and one series of voiceless stops plus b in Muskogean except Muskogee, an areal trait of the Gulf-Timucua region (in contrast to a voiceless-voiced two-stop series in Iroquoian, Ofo, and Catawba, a voiceless-glottalized two-stop series in Chitimacha, and a voiceless-voiced-glottalized three-stop series in Yuchi <i>versus</i> absent four-stop series)	One series of voiceless stops plus b, with insufficient evidence for the phonology of the Muskogee-based variety of Mobilian Jargon known as the <i>lingua franca</i> Creek
Labial stop order in all Southeastern Indian languages other than Iroquoian; dental stop and 'k' orders in all Southeastern Indian languages (plus c/ç in Chitimacha and Yuchi and k ^w in Natchez and Timucua <i>versus</i> absent t, t̥, ɟ, and q ^w)	Labial and dental stop and 'k' orders
One series of voiceless fricatives in all Southeastern Indian languages except Yuchi and Ofo, a central areal trait of the Southeast and probably a family trait of Gulf and Iroquoian (in contrast to a voiceless-voiced fricative series in Ofo and a voiceless-glottalized fricative series in Yuchi <i>versus</i> absent series of voiceless-voiced-glottalized fricatives and pharyngeal fricatives)	One series of voiceless fricatives

Phonology (continued)

<i>Southeastern Indian Languages (Sherzer 1976:203-210):</i>	<i>Mobilian Jargon:</i>
Labial or bilabial fricatives in Muskogean, Timucua, Yuchi, Ofo, Biloxi, and Tuscarora, a family trait in Muskogean, a central areal trait of the Southeast, and probably the result of contact with Muskogean in Timucua, Yuchi, Ofo, Biloxi, and Tuscarora	f
s/ʃ opposition in Choctaw (but in no other Muskogean language), Tunica, Chitimacha, Ofo, Biloxi, Yuchi, and Catawba, a regional areal trait of the Southeast	s/ʃ opposition in the Mobilian Jargon of at least Choctaw and various European speakers
h, a whole areal trait of the Southeast (plus θ in Tuscarora, x in Biloxi, Tutelo, Yuchi, and Tuscarora <i>versus</i> absent δ, z, x ^w , ɣ, ɣ ^w , γ, γ ^w , and h ^w)	h
l in Muskogean and all Gulf isolates except Chitimacha, Timucua, Yuchi, Ofo, and Cherokee, a central areal trait of the Southeast and probably a family trait of Gulf	l
ɬ in all Muskogean languages, Atakapa, Yuchi, and Cherokee, a family trait of Muskogean, a Muskogean-centered regional areal trait of the Southeast, and probably the result of contact in Yuchi (plus tɬ and tɬ in Cherokee, l' and ɬ' in Yuchi <i>versus</i> absent tɬ', lʷ, and ɬʷ)	ɬ, with alternate, less marked articulations such as the clusters of ʃl and sl in the speech of Europeans
Nasals (plus n in Atakapa, voiceless nasals in Natchez, Cherokee, and Tuscarora, and glottalized nasals in Yuchi <i>versus</i> absent nʷ)	m and n
r in Tunica, Timucua, Tuscarora, and Catawba and voiceless r in Tuscarora and Catawba, regional areal traits of the Tuscarora-Catawba region and /r opposition in Tunica and Timucua <i>versus</i> glottalized r	r attested only single words of Tunica or French origin

In addition, Muskogean, Natchez, and Tunica shared the retroflexion of sibilants, also adopted by Quapaw (Dhegiha Siouan) as well as other indigenous languages along the Mississippi River as far north as Kickapoo (Algonquian; see Rankin 1988:644) and attested in Mobilian Jargon.

Syllable Patterns

<i>Southeastern Indian Languages:</i>	<i>Mobilian Jargon:</i>
sa, ʃa, and la and their occurrence in combination or reduplication among several related and unrelated Southeastern Indian languages, as evident especially for GOOSE: Choctaw ʃalaktak, Alabama and Koasati salakla, Muskogee sasv'kwv or [sa:sákwa], Cherokee sasa, Yuchi ʃalala, Natchez la:lak, Tunica lálakki, and Tonkawa xilik (Ballard 1985 following Haas 1953:229 and 1956:65).	ʃalaktak
ya referring to the semantic domain of 'mouth' and mouth-related phenomena such as 'lips, teeth, tongue, language; to eat, to speak, to sing,' evident in many native languages of North America and especially those of the Southeast including Choctaw, Alabama, Muskogee, Atakapa, Chitimacha, Tunica, Biloxi, Ofo, Osage, Catawba, and Yuchi (Crawford 1975:271-276), all of whom other than the Catawba spoke Mobilian Jargon	Single instances such as yaya 'to cry, to weep' (< Choctaw ya:ya) and yam(m)a 'Mobilian Jargon' (< Choctaw/Chickasaw yamma- 'that')

William L. Ballard (1985:339-340) further noted that "Cher[okee] and Cr[ee]k are more similar than Cr[ee]k is to its kin Choc[taw] and Koas[ati], which, in turn, looks like Yuchi, Tunica, and Tonkawa." Other examples illustrate similar syllable correspondences among various Southeastern Indian languages, including Catawba and Shawnee. Ballard has interpreted such syllable correspondences as an area-wide form of sound symbolism related to images of birds (especially goose and eagle), lizards, snakes, rattling, and possibly the moon, which he has associated with the pre-Columbian Southern Cult or Mississippian Complex.

Morphology

<i>Southeastern Indian Languages</i> (Sherzer 1976:210-215)	<i>Mobilian Jargon:</i>
(Overtly marked nominal case system in Muskogean [except Apalachee], Tunica, and Biloxi, a Muskogean-centered regional areal trait)	Cases determined by word order
Independent possessive pronouns in Chitimacha (preposed to nouns) and Atakapa (in contrast to mostly prefixed possessive pronouns in Muskogean, Tunica, Yuchi, Siouan [for inalienable nouns in Biloxi, Ofo, and Catawba], and Iroquoian, a family trait of Siouan, Iroquoian, and a central areal trait of the Southeast in contrast to suffixed possessive pronouns for alienable nouns in Ofo, Biloxi, and Catawba)	Independent possessive pronouns, preceding nouns
(Plurality marked in pronouns of probably all languages of the Southeast, apparently a family trait of all language families and an areal trait of the whole area)	Number evident from the context
(Overtly marked nominal plural in languages of the Southeast)	A noun's number evident from the context; if necessary, plural marked by <i>law</i> 'many, much' or a number following the noun
Nominal incorporation in Muskogean, Natchez, and Cherokee	Vestiges of non-productive noun incorporation (?)
Prefixes of subject person markers in Muskogean (in most paradigms and for most persons), Natchez, Siouan, Yuchi, and Cherokee, a family trait in Muskogean and other Gulf languages, Siouan, and Iroquoian and a central areal trait of the Southeast (in contrast to suffixes of subject person markers for some persons in some paradigms in Muskogean, Chitimacha, Atakapa, and for active verbs in Tunica, a Gulf-centered regional areal trait of the Southeast and perhaps a Gulf-centered family trait <i>versus</i> the absence of subject person markers as exclusively independent pronouns)	Independent subject personal pronouns, preceding the verb
Tense-aspect suffixes in all languages of the Southeast, a whole areal trait and probably a family trait of all language families of the Southeast (in contrast to some tense-aspect prefixes in Cherokee and Tuscarora)	Independent past-tense marker <i>taha</i> , following the verb

According to Robert L. Rankin (1988:642), Siouan languages of the Ohio and the central Mississippi river valleys, Algonquian, and Muskogean languages further share a quinary counting systems for the numerals 'six' to 'ten,' which was also in use in Mobilian Jargon.

Syntax

<i>Southeastern Indian Languages</i> (Nicklas 1979):	<i>Mobilian Jargon</i> :
Predominant word order of SOV, with main verbs preceding auxiliaries and relative clauses following the modified noun	OsV with main verbs preceding auxiliaries and relative clauses following the modified noun
Dominant order of noun, adjective, and numeral with the demonstrative taking either initial or final position; postpositions	Order of noun, adjective, and numeral with the demonstrative occupying initial position; postpositions
Negation by prefixes, suffixes, a combination of both, or postposed adverbs	Negation by suffix

T. Dale Nicklas (1979:46) has interpreted the numerous similarities among other indigenous languages of the area, especially between Gulf and Siouan, as evidence for a lengthy pre-European association among each other. Notably, the languages of southeastern North America that do not fully conform to these and other patterns are Cherokee (Iroquoian) and Tutelo (Siouan), which also were outside of Mobilian Jargon's attested geographic range. Yet perhaps most significantly, the characteristic word order of OsV in Mobilian Jargon mirrors grammatical patterns of not only Muskogean languages, but also Biloxi (Nicklas 1991:535 and Rankin 1986:81-82[n.1]), other Mississippi Valley Siouan languages and Yuchi (Nicklas in this volume), and apparently Caddoan languages (Wallace Chafe, personal communication). Similarly, Pamela Munro (1993:376) has recently come to consider the pronominal agreement system of active verbs in Muskogean languages as an areal feature of the Southeast shared by Tunica, local Siouan languages, and even Cherokee, which in cases preceded by a direct or indirect object again matches the characteristic semantactic pattern of Mobilian Jargon.

On the other hand, a comparison of Mobilian Jargon with areal-historical traits of various Southeastern Indian languages reveals several conspicuous differences, evident especially at the morphological level and due to the fundamental grammatical differences between Mobilian Jargon and its source languages. The comparative material at our disposal indicates that the pidgin lacked the following major grammatical functions or categories: distinction of alienable-inalienable possession; reduplication of nominal stems as distributives and plurals; masculine-feminine gender distinctions in nouns or pronouns; inclusive-exclusive plural and dual pronouns; visible-invisible distinction in demonstratives; locative suffixes in nouns; reduplication of verbal stems signifying distribution, repetition, etc.; evidential and locative-directional markers (see Sherzer 1976:211-215). Nor did Mobilian Jargon employ positional verbs such as 'to sit', 'to stand', and 'to lie' as auxiliaries of location and continued action (Rankin 1977, Watkins 1976). The pidgin further showed no evidence of the following features: pluralization by pronominal affixes rather than suppletion, either with a combination of prefixes and suffixes as among languages of the Atlantic coast (including Algonquian) and Siouan languages or with contiguous affixes as among languages farther west; verbal prefixes for the associative, the reciprocal, and the dative cases; the element -ki- in the numeral 'five'; the distinction of four basic motion verbs (including not only direction, but also motion in transit and arrival); gender differences in discourse (men's and women's speech); or the first-person inclusive (Nicklas 1979). Also absent in recordings of Mobilian Jargon are nominative versus oblique markings in noun phrases, verb stem suppletion for number, and switch-reference marking for conjoint sentences (see Rankin 1986:80-84 and

1988:642-645). Primarily morphological in nature, these differences are hardly surprising in light of the fact that Mobilian Jargon was a genuine pidgin with a reduced, highly analytic morphosyntactic structure; as such, it simply discouraged expression of many grammatical distinctions available in Southeastern Indian languages, or did so in a different fashion.

2. In sum, a comparison of Mobilian Jargon with Southeastern Indian areal-historical traits yields several common linguistic characteristics and structural correspondences, especially at the level of phonology:

- whole areal traits: *h*; labial and dental stop and 'k' orders (except labials missing in Iroquoian); tense-aspect verbal suffixes (corresponding to the past-tense marker *taha* following the verb), and possibly the *sa/ʒa/la* and *ya* correspondences;
- central areal traits: nasalized vowels; *s/ʃ* opposition; retroflexion of sibilants; one series of voiceless fricatives including *f*; *l*; prefixation of verbal subject markers (corresponding to independent subject personal pronouns preceding the verb in Mobilian Jargon); and
- regional traits: 1-1-1 vowel system (with the difference that Mobilian Jargon permitted considerably greater variation including occasional mid- central vowels); one series of voiceless stops plus *b*; and *ʃ*.

Mobilian Jargon further exhibited a correspondence with a possible Gulf trait of independent possessive pronouns, proposed to nouns in Chitimacha and Atakapa, and a change from suffixation to prefixation for ownership pronominals as in Muskogean and much of Siouan, although both affixed them as well. The pidgin may even have displayed vestiges of non-productive noun incorporation comparable to Muskogean, Natchez, and Cherokee. Moreover, Mobilian Jargon and many Southeastern Indian languages shared the same basic word orders with respect to the following sentence parts: noun, adjective, numeral, and demonstrative; noun and modifying relative clause; verbs and auxiliaries; and negation by postposed suffix or adverb. If OsV in Mobilian Jargon derived from SOV in Muskogean and perhaps other Gulf languages, there also existed a close, if less obvious relationship between these two word orders. Characteristically, all of these shared similarities are Muskogean or even Gulf in nature, and none reflects any conspicuous non-Gulf features or other "exotic" influences.

Whereas some distinctive areal features among Southeastern Indian languages are obviously due to common origin (by contact-influenced retention), others are the result of linguistic diffusion. Sherzer (1976:217) concluded that Biloxi, Ofo, Yuchi, Timucua, and Tuscarora developed labial or bilabial fricatives as a result of contact with Muskogean languages, just as the development of Yuchi *ʃ* was likely due to contact with neighboring Southeastern Indians, presumably also Muskogean. While James M. Crawford (1975) made no attempt to explain the wide spread of *ya* in terms of language contact, Ballard (1985) has construed the *sa/ʒa/la* complex of syllable correspondences as evidence of language contact, of which the core would again have been Muskogean languages. Nicklas (1979) similarly recognized areal influences among the various Southeastern languages, although mostly without specifying the direction of influence. Rankin (1986;1988:644-645) has attributed the development of some grammatical features in Biloxi, Quapaw, and other Siouan languages (such as sibilant retroflexion) to contact with Muskogean and possibly other Gulf languages. In an abstract to an unpublished paper, Rankin

(1980:45) has even considered Mobilian Jargon as prime source for sibilant retroflexion among Southeastern Indian languages. In examining linguistic provinces within southeastern North America, Nicklas (1994) has similarly recognized Muskogean and other Gulf Indians as major players in their interactions with other groups. Significantly, he has presented the Choctaw and the Muskogee at the opposite ends of a Muskogean dialect continuum, in face-to-face contact with non-Muskogean.

3. The present discussion reflects some inadvertent limitations, related in part to areal research of Southeastern Indian languages and in part to Mobilian Jargon's nature as a pidgin.

For one, the above comparison includes several unmarked features and -- in parentheses -- shared *absent* or *negative* traits plus any relevant contrastive information, none of which makes a reliable or promising indicator of language contact. By excluding Caddoan and Southern Algonquian languages, Sherzer (1976:202) also espoused a narrower definition of southeastern North America than has been customary (see Crawford 1975 and Haas 1971, 1973) or than seems advisable in light of Mobilian Jargon's geographic extension into the neighboring areas of Caddoans, Siouans, and likely Algonquians (such as those of southern Illinois and the wandering Shawnee). Regrettably, one cannot simply remedy this shortcoming by including comparative information from Sherzer's chapters on the neighboring areas of the Plains and the Northeast (see Sherzer 1976:168-201) due to a focus on different areal features specific to each area and due to the rather cursory nature of attestations for wider regional ties. In examining the relationship of Caddo to its eastern neighbors, Wallace Chafe (1983:245) has confirmed that "the influence of Muskogean languages on Caddo (or vice versa) is a subject still to be explored." Similarly, the areal relationships between Muskogean languages on the one hand and Algonquian and Siouan on the other still deserve closer attention. Areal research has left unresolved until today what Regna Darnell and Joel Sherzer (1971:27) have described as an apparent enigma between regular sound correspondences of Southeastern Indian languages with Algonquian and their grammatical similarities to Siouan. With a growing body of areal features, Sherzer's survey thus is in need of systematic updating in light of newly gathered data, recent analyses, and probably redefined geographic areas -- a major task that may eventually suggest some significant revisions. The present inventory also appears overly conservative in view of a growing body of archaeological evidence for large native populations and greater sociopolitical integration in the form of paramount chiefdoms among pre-Columbian Southeastern Indians, pointing to extensive interlingual contact beyond incidental instances of bi- and multilingualism (see Sherzer 1976:252-253). In terms of its communicative patterns, the Southeast has come to resemble more closely the greater Northwest Coast, including the Plateau with its extended network of interlingual contacts (see Sherzer 1976:229-237) than the Northeast or the Plains as suggested by Sherzer (1976:253).

Examining areal features shared by Southeastern Indian languages and Mobilian Jargon further requires a clear understanding of the latter's sociolinguistic nature. As a pidgin, it was a *second* language with little morphological "machinery" such as inflection or affixation; by all available indications, it never became the *first* language of a community by the process of creolization. As far as is evident from historical attestations in comparison with modern recordings, Mobilian Jargon however had a stable grammar with word order serving as the prime grammatical

principle; without a regular sentence pattern, speakers would indeed have had little common ground upon which they could rely for communication in multilingual contexts and diverse functions. However, the pidgin showed some variation in pronunciation, and did even more so in the lexicon, both due to second-language interference from the speakers' *first* languages. For instance, speakers of Choctaw retained *s* and *ʃ* as distinct phonemes, which Eastern Muskogean did not recognize as such. Similarly, speakers without the dental or lateral fricative *ʃ* pronounced it as clusters of an alveolar or palatal fricative plus *l* or possibly even as *ʃ*. Overall, the variation in pronunciation was greater between speakers of Muskogean and non-Muskogean languages than among the first with their fairly similar phonologies. In comparison to the phonology, the lexicon of Mobilian Jargon exhibited even fewer structural constraints, and its speakers borrowed words quite freely from their own and occasionally other languages, as is evident from various historical records (including an anonymous vocabulary of some 750 entries and modern evidence). For instance, Choctaw Indians had a substantially higher vocabulary of Western Muskogean origin in their Mobilian Jargon speech than Coushatta, Alabama, or speakers of non-Muskogean languages. The pidgin thus had multiple entries for many glosses, reflecting to some extent the diversity of *first* languages spoken within its geographic range. References to various non-Muskogean speakers (including Gulf isolates, Mississippi Valley Siouans, Caddoans, Apache, numerous linguistically unidentified Southeastern Indian groups, and possibly Algonquians) suggest even greater variation in Mobilian Jargon's phonology and lexicon than indicated in historical or modern records. This observation together with the fact of a shared underlying Muskogean-based grammar and a widely overlapping geographic range with Muskogean at the center justifies the claim that the *lingua franca* Creek was no more than an eastern variety of Mobilian Jargon or, alternatively, Mobilian Jargon a western variety of the *lingua franca* Creek (see Drechsel 1983). It is not by accident that Nicklas (1994:9) has described both Choctaw and Creek as "the most innovative" among Muskogean languages and in terms of "simplifications of the type one might expect from the absorption of other [non-Muskogean] peoples" at the opposite ends of the Muskogean dialect continuum.

Whether one assumes a conservative or less restrictive view about Mobilian Jargon's linguistic variation, its phonology and lexicon do not make highly reliable domains for the proposed examination of shared long-term areal features. As a morphophonological feature, the syllabic pattern of Southeastern Indian languages, matched by only a few attested examples in Mobilian Jargon, appears to provide no better evidence. Conceivably, the pidgin once had a quite different phonological, syllabic, and lexical composition, which then does not need to have reflected areal features of Southeastern Indian languages in the same fashion as indicated in recent attestations. Following this reasoning, similarities could be due to the fact that recordings for both areal features and Mobilian Jargon applied to speakers with the same or similar linguistic backgrounds and did not include a truly representative variety of the pre-Columbian speech communities. In other words, phonological features of Mobilian Jargon carry little time depth for historical reconstruction because of its very nature as a *contact* medium, and do not exhibit the same reliability as sound correspondences in cognates as demonstrated by the comparative method of historical linguistics for related languages. The vocabulary of Mobilian Jargon proves to be no more reliable evidence of historical depth because of its fairly easy replacement by partial relexification, characteristic of so many pidgins.

The more promising domain for examining historical ties between areal features of Southeastern Indian languages and Mobilian Jargon appears to be syntax in the assumption that it exhibited a fairly stable pattern for communicative efficiency as indeed indicated by all available information. With OsV and semantactic variability at a minimum, Mobilian Jargon reveals a basic word order widely shared by the area's native languages (Muskogean, Gulf isolates, Mississippi Valley Siouan, and Caddoan), as follow-up discussion to Nicklas' recent presentation (see Nicklas in this volume) has confirmed -- apparently to some participants' surprise. These morphosyntactic similarities crosscut several language families, and are sufficiently marked to exclude explanations in terms of either universality, common origin, or accidental similarity. Yet strengthening this argument requires further and better comparative areal data at the sentence level. Until today, much Americanist linguistic research has focused on the phonology and morphology of indigenous languages, and correspondingly few comparative data are available on their syntax, much less on semantic or sociolinguistic aspects (see Sherzer 1976:13). This finding applies especially to Southeastern Indian languages, whose study has followed a well-established diversificationist tradition in contrast to research on Northwest Coast and California languages with its greater attention to linguistic convergence and a stembush model.

At this time, areal-historical research cannot fully determine the proportion of "diffusional cumulation" in relation to "archaic residue" (Swadesh 1951) among Southeastern Indian languages without better comparative data or carefully defined criteria for the identification of processes of language change. Nor can such research currently rely on means by which to measure time depth, much less to resolve the question of Mobilian Jargon's pre- or post-Columbian origin. But areal features of Southeastern Indian languages are sufficiently solid to demonstrate widespread crosslingual influences among related and unrelated languages, as evident especially in the case of extended OsV. A morphosyntactic feature of possibly substantial age, OsV mirrored the basic sentence pattern of Mobilian Jargon, and may indeed prove to be the first reliable hint for its pre-Columbian origin.

NOTES

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¹Since his earlier reconstruction of a three-vowel system for Timucua, Julian Granberry (1993:xxii,64) has reconstituted five vowels, which thus removes the language from a possible areal affiliation with Muskogean for this feature. There are probably other items in Sherzer's list of areal-typological features that need up-dating or revision in light of findings gained during the past two decades -- a major task for the enterprising.

²Goffrey Kimball (personal communication) considers nasalized vowels in Muskogean languages as independent developments rather than as a family trait, and rejects them as a central areal trait of the Southeast.

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