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This article both responds and contributes to the ongoing dialogue about the linguistic data contributing to the chronologies of the Middle Woodland period in both the Northeast and Middle Atlantic areas. The author is critical of Luckenbach, Clark, and Levy's (1987) article, particularly their glottochronological dates, and the fact that two disparate homelands were identified, one based on archaeological grounds, the other on linguistic grounds (p. 211).

Fiedel states that, based upon his glottochronological analysis, there may have been two waves of Proto-Algonquian expansion from a homeland north of Ontario. The first occurred between ca. 600-200 B.C., with the Micmac language being so removed from the rest of the languages that it might be a remnant outlier from this first wave (p.213). The second expansion may have occurred ca. A.D. 600, based upon both glottochronological and archaeological data (p. 218-219). At that date, the Eastern Algonquian languages were still similar enough to allow for the "extensive social interactions of a widely dispersed, yet initially homogenous Algonquian linguistic community" (p. 220). There is much archaeological evidence of this extensive trade network during the Middle Woodland period. Fiedel also states that the Late Woodland decline of this long-distance exchange is due to advent of horticulture and stationary populations. This societal shift led to linguistic divergence and the subsequent disruption of the extensive social network (p. 220). Historic sources from the 17th and 18th centuries stated that neighboring Algonquian groups had difficulty communicating between one another. Fiedel also suggests that the axis of Algonquian expansion ran northwest-southwest, rather than north-south (p. 214).

The author also examines the chronology of the Iroquoian expansion based upon linguistic and archaeological evidence. In the historic period, the Iroquois effectively separated the Central and Eastern Algonquians. Glottochronology indicates that the northern Iroquois languages diverge between A.D. 550 and 900 (p. 221), in the same temporal range as the Algonquian expansion. This raises several questions about the relationship between the Proto-Algonquian and Proto-Iroquois movements, the answers to which are not addressed in the paper. However, it is clear that at some point, the Iroquois did contribute to the physical, and thus linguistic, separation between the Central and Eastern Algonquians.