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This book contains a number of separate papers brought together in ten chapters. Most of the papers had appeared elsewhere and are reprinted.
here; some are original. The first chapter is about Martinet's principle of 'double articulation'. Chapters II-VIII are on phonology. Chapter IX is called "La hiérarchie des oppositions significatives", but deals with the notion of markedness in phonology and the opposition 'left-right'. Chapter X deals, quite inadequately, with some syntactic properties of sentences. At the end there is a complete list of Martinet's writings up to 1964.

It is not a very interesting book. Martinet's theoretical views are well-known, but no less inadequate for that. In Chapter I there is a glimpse of the Humboldtian notion of 'infinite use of finite means'. But the finite means are seen as morphemes and phonemes. There is no notion of a finite set of rules. In some vague way all facts of natural language are claimed to be explained by these elements and by his principle of 'double articulation', i.e., of two-levelled structure, a phonemic and a morphemic level. The notions about grammar are all implicit and are all clearly taxonomic (segmentation and classification). All recent work done in linguistic universals is ignored.

There are some glaring contradictions here and there. On p. 1, for example, animal sounds, insofar as they are communicative, are said to be unstructured, or not segmentable, as opposed to human linguistic sounds. In the same paragraph it is observed that the sounds of less familiar languages give the same impression of being 'unarticulated'. Yet 'articulation' is presented as the essential difference between human language and animal communication systems. And the possibility that animal sounds might only seem to be unstructured, due to the fact that we are very unfamiliar with them, is not discussed.

Although 'double articulation' is put forward as a, or the, defining characteristic of human language, one-level pictorial systems of representation are still said to be 'language' on p. 9 and p. 18, but not on p. 27.

On p. 11 linguistics is defined as "la science du langage". Yet on p. 33 we read: "Mais comme c'est la langue, plutôt que le langage, qui fait l'objet de la linguistique, il est justifié d'énoncer que les faits prosodiques sont moins foncièrement linguistiques que les signes et les phonèmes." ('But since langue, rather than langage, is the object of linguistics, one is justified in saying that prosodic facts are less fundamentally linguistic than signs and phonemes'.)

On pp. 33-34 the author has difficulties with prosodic facts in relation to his principle of 'double articulation', and proposes to forget about them: "Et, puisqu'en dernière analyse nous sommes à la recherche de ce qui caractérise constamment tout ce que nous désirons appeler une
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... it is normal that we should retain double articulation and discard the prosodic facts."

This is not only bad methodology, it also contradicts his own treatment of prosodic data, e.g., on p. 50 or pp. 140-61, where they are clearly treated as linguistic. On the whole, the theory is too vague, ill-defined and confused to be worthy of serious discussion.

The phonological part is mainly in the Prague tradition, but unoriginal and at times just wrong. One encounters statements like (p. 147): "L'accent est là pour toute autre chose, et s'il est, dans un mot donné, sur telle syllable et non sur telle autre, c'est simplement parce que l'enfant a appris à prononcer le mot ainsi." ('The accent is there for quite a different reason [i.e., than to distinguish one word from another], and if, in a given word, it falls on one syllable rather than on another, this is simply because the child has learned to pronounce the word that way."

If Martinet deserves credit for other, less theory-oriented, work he has done in the past, it looks as though he has used it all for his theoretical writings.

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This is a very solid piece of work. It provides the French reader with a largely adequate introduction to generative transformational grammar up to 1965 (Chomsky's Aspects has been taken into account, but not fully integrated).

The book has six chapters. Chapter I, entitled, perhaps slightly inappropriately "Introduction: Les tâches de la linguistique" ('Introduction: The Tasks of Linguistics'), deals with general theoretical notions, such as the concept of explanation in linguistics, competence and performance, sound and meaning, grammaticality, grammar as a finite set of rules, recursivity, creativity (as a technical term), structural description, general linguistic theory, universals of language, procedures of discovery, decision and evaluation. This chapter is largely based on pre-1965 literature, especially on Syntactic Structures.