



## Materials Review

**Film:** *Los Mayas de Yucatán*. Babbitt Film Specialties. (P. O. Box 10, Park Forest, Illinois 60466), 1970. (16 mm, color, Spanish narration, 16 minutes; intermediate Spanish, history, archeology, anthropology courses conducted in Spanish; teacher guide with script and tape of narration, supplementary readings, complete testing program, discussion questions, and suggested themes for reports; sale \$225, rental \$12.50 per week.)

Both ancient and modern aspects of Mayan life in Yucatán are surveyed. Prehispanic culture is studied at the ruins of Palenque, Chichén Itzá and several other sites. Shows accomplishments of the early civilizations, how they lived, worshipped and played. In the life of the modern Mayan, we see the workers' attitude and pride in their work. In addition to artesans producing pottery and baskets, there is a sequence on the henequen industry from growing and cutting in the fields to processing in the factory and loading on ships in the harbor. The views of Mérida show the architecture of the important buildings on the main plaza, middle class homes, and children playing. There are also scenes in smaller towns and a country bull fight.

The photography is excellent with both long shots and close views. Clear Spanish narration is enhanced by appropriate background music. Since the film is produced by an experienced teacher who has traveled extensively with students in Spanish-speaking countries, the subject matter and treatment has appeal for students.

This is more than a film on Mayan culture, it is a complete visual teaching unit. The teacher-guide with script, supplementary readings, tape with narration, and testing program (all suitable for reproduction) are sent one month in advance of booking or are included with purchase, thus permitting teachers to prepare students for understanding the Spanish narration and for appreciating Mayan art and culture. Studying the script in advance, as a reading and listening exercise, allows use of the film earlier than would otherwise be possible. We find it appropriate for second-year high school classes and appreciate being able to duplicate the script, since our program needs additional reading and culture at the early levels. The nine short supplementary readings included give background on the history and legends of the ancient civilizations of Yucatán. These are more appropriate for advanced levels — third-year high school or beyond — since there are no marginal notes or translations.

There are fifty-five questions based on the content of the film, as well as about thirty suggested topics for reports based on the supplementary readings and the bibliography references included. A test of twenty-five matching items is included. All the material accompanying the film is on 8½ by 11-inch sheets, suitable for mass reproduction.

The teacher guide offers suggestions for use at different levels and for different purposes. I've found success with a study of the script first as a reading exercise in the second-year classes. Following this, I've had students listen to the tape, follow the script, and practice pronunciation. Then they answered questions using the script as a guide. Finally, after seeing the film they were able to talk about it in Spanish. Advanced levels need less preparation before viewing. They can listen to the tape and follow the script and be prepared to understand the film.

Students feel a sense of accomplishment in understanding a film narrated in Spanish.

*Teresa Klinger*

*Book Review: Kelly, Leo. La Clé du Français. New York, New York: Macmillan Company, 1970. pp 532. \$7.95*

*La Clé du Français* is a first-year foreign language textbook designed specifically for the teaching of French to American college students.

The basic textbook of 23 lessons and 3 review lessons is supplemented by tapes for each lesson with listening comprehension exercises, a student workbook containing written exercises for each lesson, and an instructor's manual which has the author's introduction, lesson plans, and suggestions for testing. To analyze the effectiveness of this textbook and its supplementary materials, it is necessary to carefully examine various pedagogical elements inherent to foreign-language teaching from the point of view of both the student and the teacher.

The book's attractive cover is a brilliant blue which serves as a background for deep purple etchings of the cathedral of Nôtre-Dame, a French bicyclist, and a gendarme ticketing an illegally parked Renault. The text's title, which appropriately means "The Key to French", is printed in bright lime green. End papers are enhanced by color photographs depicting typical scenes of French life. These, although somewhat dated, provide a view of various elements of French life and its distinct culture, and provide a ready reference for the teacher. However, these same eight color pictures are repeated in black and white in the body of the text. This reviewer finds this technique a rather deceptive publication ruse, for it gives the impression that there are more illustrations than actually exist. One attractive visual stimulus is the use of "Peanuts" cartoons to illustrate the struc-

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ture and grammar of certain lessons. However, from the teacher's standpoint, they have the drawback of not being culturally stimulating — Charlie Brown and his playmates will always be perfect examples of all-American kids.

The teacher, however, must judge Kelly's textbook on other bases. In the introduction to the instructor's manual, Kelly explains his pedagogical orientation. Being neither a purist of the cognition school, nor the behaviorist school, Kelly definitely leans toward an eclectic approach. He combines audio-lingual exercises and techniques with a sequenced presentation of structure and explanation of grammar. In this integrated method, he emphasizes listening and speaking skills, but concentrates mainly upon a monostructural presentation with each lesson forming a building block towards the next. Kelly states in his introduction: "the presentation of structure should be sequenced to begin with a simple pattern which can be modified gradually to yield the various structures commonly taught in a beginning course." An examination of the textbook reveals evidence both consistent and inconsistent with Kelly's theory.

The first six lessons introduce basic sounds and structure. The first lesson is devoted to pronunciation of vowels and certain vowel combinations, as well as presentations of the alphabet and of common French expressions. There is no pre-reading period, and the students are expected to read and write from the very beginning. This first lesson establishes a solid foundation of basic, yet essential French sounds and spellings, a definite asset in teaching any foreign language.

The next five lessons are devoted to the teaching of basic structure. For the most part, no inductive thinking is required of the student. All generalizations of grammar are thoroughly explained in English before the student completes the appropriate exercises. There are ample exercises, both oral and written, which illustrate, reinforce and combine previously learned grammar. The majority of the pattern drills stress repetition, substitution, and transformation.

Kelly's format during these first critical lessons might possibly lead to a fair amount of *ennui*. There is too much concentration upon traditional grammar presentation and diverse structural elements. For example, the third lesson introduces the following material: substantives and their use in the sentence, the indefinite article, the definite article, verbs beginning with a vowel, the irregular verbs *avoir* and *être*, the direct object, the indirect object and its complements, forms of possession, the differences between *parler* and *parler de*, and the one and only dialog during these first six lessons, which, incidentally cover more than 100 pages. There is a lack of free re-

sponse drills and a superfluous number of structure drills which can lead to overlearning and boredom. The author frequently inserts direct translation exercises — another traditional setback.

A confusing factor for the student is the lack of any precise vocabulary list of new words in the early lessons. To discover the meaning of a word, the student must turn back to the page where it was first introduced (which may be at any point during the lesson). Kelly has used many unusual and atypical French names throughout the text, such as *Herve*, *Loic*, and *Thierry*.

Lessons 7-16 are a definite improvement over the first six. Most begin with a "Peanuts" cartoon, and all have an introduction seeded with dialog about college students or university life, and each has a *lexique* of new vocabulary. The heavy concentration of grammar still persists but more emphasis is placed upon speaking skills. Unfortunately, the dialogs themselves are usually too long to require memorization.

Lessons 17-23 each begin with an interesting and lively reading selection in the target language dealing with some aspect of French life, followed by a *lexique* and a questionnaire, which encourage free and independent expression. By this stage, the exercises and drills are more complicated, but less repetitious. The vocabulary and idioms generally consist of words which are high-frequency items. At the end of the year-long course, the student should have a minimum working knowledge of around 2000 words.

Linguistically speaking, the 20-minute tapes which accompany the textbook are quite good. The speakers sound native, and their voices are clear, precise, and accurate. Each tape begins with a short popular song, and the directions (sometimes given in English, sometimes in French) are always exact. Frequently, the dialogs contain related background sounds which enhance and augment the element of reality. For example, a dialog taking place in a nightclub will have subtle background sounds of people talking and music playing.

The major fault of the tapes is their gross disorderliness. Many exercises or parts of exercises are completely omitted. Sometimes the examples in an exercise are read across, sometimes down, sometimes the middle of the exercise is at the end. One of the most unfortunate defects is the fact that the dialog tapes leave no space for student repetition. On the whole, one has the impression that the author of the textbook and the recorder of the tapes should have been in closer collaboration.

The student workbook provides supplementary writing and comprehension exercises for each lesson of the text. It reinforces material already learned, although it sometimes has a tendency to stress grammatical over logical context which produces awkward, heavy

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sentences. The workbook does have the advantage of perforated pages which can be torn out and handed in for correction.

The instructor's manual contains such useful items as individual lesson plans, sample tests, comments about teaching techniques, and the answer key to the taped exercises.

All things considered, *La Cle' du Français* offers many attractions. Ideally, after completing the course, the student should thoroughly know the four basic skills, with a standard roughly equivalent to at least two years of high-school French.

Although many segments could have been improved, an alert and clever teacher can avoid falling into certain pitfalls. For example, various audio-visual methods can be used to enliven the seemingly endless structure drills and grammar lessons. When using this textbook, the teacher plays a crucial role in determining whether the class will be stagnant and unmotivated or stimulating and creative.

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