

HOW DENNY LEARNED ENGLISH

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Successful language learning, first or second, involves a lot of hard work. It is a myth that one learns her first language in the same manner that water removes itself from the backs of ducks. One simply doesn't become a good speaker, auder, reader, or--especially--writer of a language unless one puts a great deal of effort into it.

This paper describes the linguistic odyssey of what I consider to be an optimally successful second language learner. The subject, Denny, was born in Barrio Kamanggaan, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Republic of the Philippines on the 30th of August 1954. He arrived in Hawaii on 23 September 1967 at age 13. Denny's native language is Ilokano, one of the major languages of the Philippines.

Denny's control of English today may be characterized as near-native, although I am a little hesitant to use that term because it is a difficult one to define. Does Denny sound like a native speaker of English? The answer to that question is a function of who is doing the listening. If it is a linguistically naive listener, the answer is yes. If it is someone with my training, the answer is a qualified no. For example, upon careful listening one can detect that Denny's voiceless stop series is not as forcefully aspirated as mine is. Occasionally, his schwa will have a slightly lower articulation than mine in selected items. Other-

wise, Denny's phonological system reflects native English speech.

In other aspects of language, Denny is on a par with educated native speakers of English. Indeed, he is better than many in that he understands the following register: "After detailed analysis Muller found that the homologous chromosome carrying the normal allele for Beaded also carried a gene that was lethal in homozygous condition, i.e., le, but which was not an allele of Beaded." Much of the previous sentence would be little understood by a majority of native English speakers and this is why I argue that Denny is "better" than some native speakers. Now it may be that in some cultural nuances found in reading, Denny may have some difficulty in understanding, but this does not set him apart from the rest of us who read. Thus, not even a native speaker can be said to have mastered all of her language simply because it is an impossible task.

Denny's written English is native in that he shares the same problems that any writer does with composing a clearly stated thesis, developing it with appropriate arguments, and so on. In sum, his written English is indistinguishable from that of an educated native writer in that there is nothing foreign in it that would label it as non-native.

Denny's listening comprehension parallels that of a native speaker of English. Moreover, his native language is not a source of interference with his comprehension of spoken English of a variety of registers, although it did at one time.

Controlling a language with native proficiency involves more than knowing its syntax, phonology, and some of its lexicon. One must become proficient in the use of the whole host of sociolinguistic rules

of speaking, sensitivity to register, understanding and use of humor, etc. Once more, Denny demonstrates native speaker control. He understands jokes, both clean and off-color, and is himself capable of producing a high level of humor. All of these linguistic and social abilities are indicative of his grasp not only of the English language but of the culture in which that language is used.

The syntax Denny uses in certain speech registers occasionally exhibits a few non-standard forms which he learned from his Hawaii Creole English speaking classmates and playmates. These are possibly fossilized forms which are not reflective of his native Ilokano and cannot be considered interference errors in that they are standard in Hawaii Creole English. I am reluctant to label them fossils in the classical Selinkerian sense because there is some evidence they are slowly disappearing from his speech. An example: When asking someone if they like a particular food item, he will (sometimes) say, "You like 'em?" where standard English would use, "(Do) you like it?"

Before sketching Denny's early educational background, let me describe his present situation. He graduated from the University of Hawaii with a bachelor of science degree in biology in 1979, enrolled in a pre-medical program designed for Pacific Islanders, Hawaiians and other minority group students who have shown potential, but who were not directly acceptable into medical school for one reason or another. ^{second} He successfully completed this program and is now a first-year medical student in the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Now to a consideration of Denny's early education. To gain an appreciation of what Denny has accomplished, one has to understand

something about education in the Philippines. Specifically, one must look at the different regions of the Philippines and what transpires there in terms of schooling. It is one thing to find someone who has had her education in Manila in good schools and who subsequently demonstrates near-native control of English as a consequence of that schooling. It is quite another thing to discover someone like Denny who comes from a very small place in the northernmost tip of the Philippines and who has achieved what he has in terms of second language competence. Denny's hometown is in a poor area where most of the people are farmers. Although Denny's parents were a little better off financially than their neighbors in that they owned some land, his father still found it advantageous to come to Hawaii, secure employment as a plantation worker and establish a home for his family. Denny was 10 years old before he ever saw his father. He came home from school one day to discover a strange man sitting in the house. His mother told him that the man was his father, whereupon he ran out of the house, frightened, and emotionally upset. This episode may seem slightly bizarre to those who are not familiar with the history of Hawaii and the life of its plantation workers, but this type of episode was common. The father would sire a family in the Philippines, come to Hawaii, work for 15 to 20 years, and eventually save up enough money to bring his family here.

Before Denny entered the first grade in Laoag, he learned to 'read' Spanish and Ilokano. There was a lady in his neighborhood who took it upon herself to teach the local kids how to read, or better, to decode these languages. The kids would read aloud and the lady would correct their oral renditions. Because this activity is remembered by Denny as

a pleasurable one, it may have instilled a love of reading in Denny at an early age. Learning to decode Spanish and Ilokano in this play school environment undoubtedly helped him learn that print and speech are in some way related.

Denny's early schooling didn't differ significantly from that of thousands of other Filipinos. His teachers were non-native speakers of English with varying degrees of proficiency in that language. While Denny's instruction in elementary school was conducted primarily in English--of which he understood only a few words and phrases when he began school--he reports that the teachers did use Ilokano in the classroom from time to time. Although Denny has some difficulty in recalling exactly what went on in those early days, he does remember several things from his later elementary school which clearly are significant with respect to his second language acquisition. For example, during the English composition class, the students did considerable copying of stories from the blackboard. While this particular activity may not be regarded as effective composition teaching, it was English and I have a suspicion that this great amount of copying of standard written English had an impact. Denny has related to me that there is considerable emphasis on good handwriting in Philippine schools and so one wonders if the main objective of these classes was the learning of English or the teaching of good handwriting. Whatever the purpose, the end result in Denny's case was the learning of good handwriting and quite possibly some language.

Another language-related activity which Denny took part in was the playing of Scrabble. In a provincial town like Laoag, Scrabble

games were almost non-existent. Denny claims that he had the only set in town, a present from his sister who was studying in Manila where such things are available. He played Scrabble with his older cousin; he played it a lot; moreover, he became skilled at it. Indeed, I can attest to his ability at the game in that I haven't succeeded in ever beating him. Scrabble involves several linguistic abilities: spelling (Denny is an excellent speller); knowledge of vocabulary (his is extensive); skill in playing games--strategies, if you will. I am convinced that Scrabble had a positive effect on Denny's language acquisition because he put to active use lexical items that he had learned in school, or through reading, and thus reinforced their deposition in his long-term memory. This is important because you will remember that his only exposure to English of any consequence was school related; English was not used in the home to any extent.

Because textbooks are both expensive and in short supply in the Philippines, students do a great deal of copying of lesson material from the blackboard in effect producing their own textbooks. An inspection of the notebooks that Denny brought with him to the United States from Laoag, reveals a series of questions with their answers which he had copied from the blackboard. Once the students had copied the material, they were expected to go home, study it and commit it to memory. Later, the students were quizzed on the content with no short answers tolerated. Everything from the copying aspect, to the memorization of the material, and to the final recitation was done in English. Thus, Denny was learning subject matter through the medium of English and was learning English simultaneously.

Were there other activities in the Philippines that we can link to Denny's success as a second language learner? On weekends Denny and five or six other kids in his neighborhood would join together and play school, but, significantly, this was serious play. Because they lacked textbooks, the kids had to study from their hand-written notes. Then, with one of them taking the role of teacher, there would be question-and-answer sessions on the material with math and science being the subject matter most often discussed. Because he was considered by his peers to be brighter than they, Denny very often took the part of the teacher.

We now turn to Denny's experiences in Hawaii. Denny's family and neighbors lived in plantation housing in Waipahu where many of Hawaii's Filipinos live and which was, in those days, basically a plantation town. There were other ethnic groups living in Waipahu as well, most of whom were plantation workers and their families. The English spoken by the residents of Waipahu, by and large, was one or more varieties of Hawaii Creole.

From age 13 on, Denny lived in a predominantly non-standard English-speaking community where his playmates in and out of school spoke one or more varieties of Hawaii Creole English. This was coupled with the language Denny spoke at home, Ilokano. The Standard English sample to which Denny was exposed was the one he heard from his teachers in school (and from some of his classmates) which differs somewhat from that which obtains in other parts of the United States. The dialect of his teachers, for the most part, is an outgrowth of Hawaii Creole English and carries vestiges of that variety. In addition, Denny heard English on the radio and in the movies. There was no television at home for

several years after Denny arrived in Hawaii.

Denny landed in Hawaii a month late for the beginning of the school year and was put in the 7th grade. He reports no significant adjustment problems. At this point in his linguistic development, he was little different from the other Filipino immigrants of his age, at least on the surface. He had the classic /p/:/f/: confusion problem so that his pronunciation of fork and pork were the same. While he had difficulty in understanding a lot of the English spoken around him, he had the distinct advantage of knowing how to read English fairly well.

Waipahu Intermediate School had no special English program for immigrant children like Denny. It was a case of the good(?) old American sink-or-swim tradition in operation. There were only a couple of other kids from the Philippines in the school and Denny chose not to socialize with them. Instead, he socialized with kids of other ethnic backgrounds, in particular with one local Japanese boy. This schoolmate was very supportive, walked home with him after school, and Denny feels that this companionship and friendliness were crucial to his adjustment to life in Hawaii. I asked Denny what he would have liked to have had in the way of special help and training when he arrived and he replied that a cultural orientation program would have been very welcome. His opinion of current English-as-a-second-language programs in the schools of Hawaii, as he understands them, programs which have as their avowed purpose the academic and cultural adjustment of kids like Denny, is that they are grossly inadequate.

At the time Denny came to Hawaii, classes in the intermediate schools were apportioned into 12 sections which purportedly represented

levels of achievement or intelligence. Section 1 was the elite group and membership in it carried considerable prestige. Section 12, in contrast, was reserved for the underachievers. Denny was placed in Section 5 on the basis of his grades from the Philippines. Denny has always excelled in mathematics and his good grades in that discipline probably influenced his placement. One could also speculate that his mathematical skill, his puzzle-solving ability, has had something to do with his success in learning a second language to the extent that he has. Has he looked upon English as a puzzle to solve?

When Denny advanced to the 8th grade he was promoted to Section 3, and then when he entered the 9th grade he was placed in Section 2. Being placed in Section 2 upset him because he felt he belonged in Section 1. In multi-ethnic Hawaii, which is often held up to the world as a place where many different races live together in harmony, where the melting pot bubbles along merrily without boiling over, Denny felt resentment because he hadn't been placed in the top section. Was he kept out of Section 1 because of his ethnic background? He isn't completely sure that this was the real reason, but traditionally Filipinos in Hawaii were sugar plantation workers, maids, busboys, janitors, and performers of other menial tasks. Given that he was a Filipino, Denny was probably lucky he made it past Section 3!

When Denny began the 9th grade, the schools abolished the practice of assigning the students to different sections. About this time, some other things happened to Denny which had an effect on his later life. He learned, for example, that Filipino immigrants are considered dumb. This came as something of a surprise to him because he had never

thought of himself as dumb--after all, he had considerable evidence to the contrary. He recalls an incident in a spelling bee that reflects how a seemingly minor incident can have a profound affect on kid's emotions. I pointed out earlier that Denny is an excellent speller and excelled in spelling bees in his native Philippines. He remembers vividly being eliminated from a spelling bee his first year in Hawaii because he could not spell the word caution. He thought the word being asked for was cushion. If Denny had heard the word caution pronounced in his native Philippines, he would have had no difficulty with it. However, hearing the word said by a native speaker of English with a slightly different phonological system caused interference. Thus, he was penalized not for having an inadequate knowledge of English spelling, but for not yet being able to cope completely with a different dialect of English.

Turning to Denny's reaction to his high school studies we find that he was interested in math and science; had little interest in social studies, and a similar reaction to English literature, interestingly enough. Because he was an avid reader, it is tempting to speculate that it was the choice of books--books which were chosen by the teacher rather than by the students or at least in some kind of a cooperative venture between teacher and students that was the source of his disinterest. Finally, he found the study of grammar enjoyable as well as his business courses. He took Spanish in the 10th and 11th grades, receiving A's in both courses. It would be interesting to know how much the borrowed Spanish vocabulary in his native Ilokano helped him in his learning of Spanish.

There was something else operating in his high school which had a profound bearing on his success in school and his later educational achievements at the college level. And this something was the interest taken in him by two of his teachers. The first was an English teacher

of Chinese extraction who took an active interest in bilingual kids. Denny took several courses from her and in his senior year was selected to be her student aide. His selection was a source of pride: Here was an immigrant, chosen over native-speakers of English to be the student aide to an English teacher. His duties included typing, correcting examination papers, responsibility for conducting essay-type examinations, and on one memorable occasion when the teacher took ill, being asked to take over the class. Denny took several quarters of work from her, courses which included one on vocabulary building and another on speed reading. Besides these language-related activities, Denny received additional help from this teacher, help which may have been of more significance than the assistance she gave him with language. She talked in detail to him about college and what was involved in going there, stressing the importance of Standard English to him for success. However, he feels that he had already made the decision to opt for the use of Standard English rather than taking what would have been the easy route--using some form of the Hawaii Creole English. From a sociological perspective, this is not the easiest thing to do because it involves the use of a lect which may curry disfavor from one's peers. It takes a clever person to walk the linguistic tight-rope and operate successfully with both peers and superiors. At this critical period of his life, Denny was in control of three lects: The classroom lect (Standard Hawaii English), the playground lect (a mixture of Standard Hawaii English and Hawaii Creole English), and his sports-after-school lect (Hawaii Creole English).

Another teacher influenced Denny during his high school tenure.

This was an advisor who went out of her way "to help me get into the university and to give information on scholarships." As a result of her encouragement, Denny was able to win a scholarship which later helped him during his beginning years at the university.

Sports played an important role in Denny's language acquisition, especially in the Hawaiian setting. Denny knows a lot about sports in general and is very knowledgeable about four sports in particular: football, basketball, baseball, and tennis. Denny had little knowledge about any of these sports, except baseball, before he came to the United States. Besides being an avid sports fan and an active participant in sports, Denny was a prodigious reader of sports books. Besides his academic interest in sports, Denny was--as mentioned--an active participant, playing a lot of soft-ball and baseball. In addition, he studied the rule books of the games of his interest so that he came to know their rules in great detail. Thus, sports provided support for his language learning in three aspects: the socialization process attendant with participation in sports, the reading of novels, biographies, etc., with a sports theme which furnished a rich sample of vocabulary and syntax, and careful study of rule books which provided information in another register.

Clearly there is a lesson here for language teachers when it comes to making recommendations for the selection of reading materials for non-native speakers of English. Interest on the part of the reader is obviously the foremost criterion. I am not discounting the necessity for having to read material that is not necessarily of burning interest to a particular individual--that's part of life--but that kind of

required reading can come after or accompany a healthy dose of high-interest level reading. The point is to get students excited about reading before requiring them to read essential material of less than high personal interest.

Before looking at Denny's college years, there are a few other incidents which are important to relate. One of these was his reaction to a social studies class which had numerous bright kids in it. Denny recalls being apprehensive in this class because of the competition, but he felt that this class afforded him considerable help because it forced him to compete aggressively. One wonders why he competed rather than giving up as so many immigrants have. Part of the answer stems from the fact that Denny wanted to prove that he was not imbued with plantation mentality, that a Filipino could make it, that he wanted something a little better, or perhaps a great deal better, than his parents, his two brothers (both of whom were college graduates from small colleges in the Philippines), and his sister, a graduate nurse.

Denny reports that there was very little pressure from his parents for him to succeed in school. His siblings were considerably older and had other responsibilities so there was little input from them. That is, there was no particular urging from them for him to excel in school, either from an academic or language point of view. They were all native speakers of Ilokano so there was no problem of communication among them. Parenthetically, none of Denny's siblings speak Standard English, although his sister comes fairly close. Until he reached the 11th grade, no teacher gave him any out-of-the-ordinary encouragement, but as mentioned earlier, Denny had already made up his mind to succeed, to become a

speaker of Standard English.

Denny was a very successful student in his native Philippines. He was salutatorian in Grades 1 through 6 in the Philippines--where such things are taken very seriously--and he insists that he should have been his class valedictorian, but a girl who wasn't his scholastic equal, got the nod. Why? Her father owned the land on which the school was built and politics had its way. Having had a successful academic life before coming to Hawaii, it seems only natural that he should want to continue along the same lines.

Denny graduated from Waipahu High School ranking 7th out of 800 in the graduating class. One other Filipino immigrant ranked with him among the top 10 in the class.

What happened to Denny's language after he got to college? He reports that during his first year, his pocket dictionary was his constant companion, but by his junior year he had stopped carrying it. Thus we have an indication of the amount of time it took him to gain real confidence in his use of English. During his freshman year he did not associate with other Filipinos at the university. Moreover, he avoided the use of his native language on the campus. This is common behavior among Filipino immigrants as well as those Filipinos who were born in Hawaii, but who have heard Ilokano, or another Philippine language, from their family and neighbors since birth.

During Denny's sophomore year in college he joined the Fil-Am Club, most of whose members are Americans of Filipino extraction; some born in the Philippines, others in the United States. While the organization is primarily a cultural club, it also is active in various community

projects. By joining the Fil-Am Club, Denny became acquainted with other Filipino students and thus, in a sense, became re-Filipinoized. It was at this point that he realized that there was no reason for him not to speak his native language on those occasions when it was appropriate to do so.

During Denny's sophomore year he made a decision which would have a rather far-reaching effect on his language acquisition. He returned to the Philippines, took courses at the University of the Philippines, and considered trying for medical school there. For the reader unfamiliar with education in the Philippines, the University of the Philippines is a quality school. The faculty is comprised, for the most part, of scholars who have studied at the best universities in the United States and elsewhere. Acceptancy^e by the University of the Philippines is almost exclusively restricted to valedictorians and salutatorians of Philippine high schools. Moreover, enrollment is restricted and competition is keen for the available vacancies. Denny, as a transfer student from the University of Hawaii, considers himself lucky to have been accepted.

Besides studying regular courses at the University of the Philippines, Denny became involved in sports and was the catcher for the university baseball team. One of the most interesting things to this observer is that Denny feels strongly that his year at the University of the Philippines had a positive influence on his overall language proficiency. Instruction at the University of the Philippines is almost exclusively in English, but this is the same linguistic situation which obtains in the United States, so there is nothing inherently novel here. However, the quality of the English of Denny's fellow students in the Philippines

was better than that he had been exposed to in his junior and senior high school and quite possibly the same could be said for the English he heard in the college dormitories in Hawaii. It is a matter of pride and prestige for a student at the University of the Philippines to speak English well, something which is sometimes, if not often, lacking in the environment in which he grew up in Hawaii. In addition, there was a strong competitive factor: The students at the University of the Philippines are very bright and Denny had to hustle academically to keep up with them. Another factor is that many of the students spoke a Philippine language other than Ilokano. Accordingly, it was a necessity for him to communicate with them in English. By virtue of his having come from the United States (even though by way of Laoag City), Denny was expected to speak Standard English. When he returned to Hawaii after his year in the Philippines, he reports that he was somewhat shocked by the poor quality of the English he heard. He had, in a sense, forgotten the varieties of English commonly spoken in Hawaii and which he had used for many years.

By now the reader must be asking himself the identical questions I asked myself when I talked to Denny about his language learning. How did he accomplish what he did? He was given no pronunciation lessons even though he arrived in the United States speaking heavily accented English. Other than being teased by his peers about his accent (which conceivably motivated him to change his pronunciation), there was no organized attempt at correcting his speech. Given who his peer group ^{were} were and the type of English they spoke (Hawaii Creole English), it was only the Filipino character of his pronunciation that was subject to

ridicule.

There is one incident which occurred that bears reporting here: Denny wanted to take typing. In his school, a course in speech was prerequisite to typing, although the reason for this is not clear. As a requirement of the speech course, Denny elected to tell the story of Johnny Appleseed. At this point, Denny was still manifesting many phonological errors. After his rendition, the teacher told him that he had many problems but offered him no help. In fact, Denny sensed quite definitely that the teacher took pleasure in ridiculing him. Denny resented this teacher's unseemly behavior and held a grudge against him for years. One could speculate that the end result of this stupidity on the part of an insensitive teacher was a positive affect on Denny's English. It also brings to mind students made of less stern stuff than Denny who would have sustained serious damage by such unthinking treatment.

What other events occurred that had an effect on his language learning? One factor is worthy of speculation, although I admit that I would be hard-pressed to define how much influence it had on Denny's ultimate competence in English. Denny claims that the Spanish that he took in high school and the German he studied in college had a positive effect on his English. I am going to call the phenomenon 'grammar sensitization' or perhaps 'grammar consciousness.' His claim is that at the time he was taking German in college and studying its syntax, he became sensitive to English grammar and began to monitor and/or edit his English syntax. Recall, too, that prior to this, Denny was doing a lot of reading and was also playing language games like Scrabble.

Moreover, he was doing something else which I think helped him. Denny was attending carefully to language use in the environment and by this I mean that he paid close attention to the language of television commercials as evidenced by his repeating phrases from them in his conversation, usually in a joking way. Thus, he was purposefully and constantly attending to language even if it was inane television chatter.

If/does he this with television commercials even today, he must have been doing the same monitoring with other types of ambient language over the years.

For a period during his high school and college days, Denny engaged in a type of silent rehearsal, especially in class. Before he would answer a teacher's question he would compose the answer in his head, sometimes jotting down key words and phrases as a memory jogger. His purpose was to avoid making mistakes when he spoke. Let me quote him on rehearsal: "Before I'd answer I'd write out the answer in my mind, rehearse it, and then say it. I didn't want to be caught not speaking fluently and well. Other kids would pop off and I didn't like their poor use of language. To help myself answer questions I would sometimes jot down key words so that I wouldn't forget what I had rehearsed." By rehearsing he sometimes missed an opportunity to answer, but when he did have the opportunity he was reasonably assured of being correct in his speech. How widespread this silent rehearsal practice is among second language learners is not known to my knowledge, but I would guess that it used by a fair percentage. Perhaps it is something which should be encouraged.

Shortly after I became acquainted with Denny, I had occasion to

read a short essay of his. I complimented him on it, saying that in some respects it was better written than some of the work that my graduate students turn in. He responded by saying, "Well, it should be. I wrote six drafts of it." Again, clear evidence of monitoring and editing of language on his part.

Denny feels that the first two years of his college work was not overly challenging. However, when he got into biology, college work became much more interesting. Prior to this, school was essentially uninteresting for him, still he persevered. Why? Denny answers that best himself: "I wanted to get out of the plantation. I had potential and I sensed it. While my parents had told me that if I did well I wouldn't have to suffer as they did with long hours and hard work, still they didn't put any pressure on me. I wasn't rewarded with money for good grades or anything like that. Taking home a report card with straight A's on it was nothing to them. I guess that they were proud of me in their way, but they never showed it. Nobody pushed me, really. And there wasn't any pressure from my parents." To my query as to the overriding reason that he has been successful in his language learning whereas many of his peers from practically identical linguistic and social backgrounds have not, Denny gave a succinct and straightforward answer: "I worked at it."

In summary, it is apparent that Denny took full advantage of the opportunities available to him to learn the standard language, opportunities that were also available to his less successful peers. The reason for Denny's success can be attributed to motivation--at least that would seem to be the reason that most observers would suggest.

But a more important question needs asking: Would other equally highly-motivated individuals have achieved the same level of linguistic competence as Denny? Was there something else operating that made him a success where others failed? Perhaps--and I am only speculating--there was a little something extra operating in Denny's case. Was it Denny's intelligence? Was it Denny's interest in science which led him to view English as a puzzle to be solved? Was it the two teachers in high school who took particular pains to help him at what conceivably might have been a crucial time? Was it Denny's interest in language per se that did the trick? Did Denny's taking of Spanish in high school and German in college and the subsequent, what I have called sensitization, to grammar have an important impact? Is the fact that Filipinos are skillful at and enjoy indulging in verbal play within their native language as well as in their second exert an influence?

Is Denny's success the result of a melding of all these factors, each in its own way contributing to the totality of his achievements? Or was there one or more that constituted the crucial element which set Denny apart from his peers?

Unlike so many other second language learners, Denny shows little evidence of fossilization except possibly in certain aspects of his phonology, and a few remnants from his Hawaii Creole English dialect. In the relatively short time that I have known him there have been observable changes in his language and thus I can only conclude that he is still working at refining his English.

Finally, recall what was said about Denny's mimickry. He is a good mimic and he apes material from television. He tucks these bits of

language away somewhere in his right hemisphere and then retrieves them at the appropriate time for use as his own. Has Denny been attending to all forms of language over the years in the same way and making the same kinds of applications? If this one factor in Denny's corpus of strategies is paramount to his success, is it something which we can foster the development of in all second language learners? Some students seem to wear linguistic blinders and attend only to the English in their lesson books rather than seizing upon the opportunities for language learning that are available to them in their environment. In a sense, they are blind to language-in-use as a powerful source of learning. Is there some way we can remove those blinders and thus help them become successful language learners such as Denny has been?

(If you have the answer, my address is c/o the Department of English as a Second Language, University of Hawaii.)