HYPERCORRECTION AMONG NATIVE SPEAKERS OF BIDAYUH BIATAH WHEN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Hypercorrection has been described as a sociolinguistic phenomenon where linguistic overcompensation occurs from the over-application of a perceived rule of language usage prescription. This paper reports a study investigating hypercorrection among younger and older native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah when speaking English. The qualitative study data were collected from eight native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah: four younger participants aged 23 years old and four older participants aged 55 to 69 years old. Hypercorrection was analysed by categorising them into phonological, syntactical, and morphological hypercorrection within the environments in which they occurred. Results showed that participants used all three categories of hypercorrections, with phonological hypercorrection occurring the most, followed by morphological hypercorrection and syntactical hypercorrection. However, the younger participants demonstrated hypercorrection less frequently than the older ones. The tendency to hypercorrect phonologically suggests that younger and older participants prioritised sound correctness when speaking in English, which they considered a prestigious language. This sociolinguistic insight can inform pedagogical practices.

Keywords: hypercorrection; Bidayuh Biatah; speaking English; prestigious language

Introduction

Hypercorrection is speakers' inherent and unconscious tendency to miss grammatical usage marks to correct some non-standard forms, then accidentally apply them to other forms that are not necessary (Labov, 1966). Beebe (2009) characterised

hypercorrection as overgeneralised phonological correctness that the speakers perceived as authentic. Eckman et al. (2013) recognised hypercorrection as a technical term to describe a linguistic form extending beyond its prescribed usage, periodically resulting in speech production errors. They suggested that this occurrence is due to a stylistic shift in language use when a speaker of one variety attempts to imitate a more prestigious form of the language by overusing grammatical rules, exceeding the target variety's frequency norm.

In the context of second language acquisition (SLA), Eckman et al. (2013) identified three main arguments related to hypercorrection: that hypercorrection is a crosslinguistic influence, that it is equivalent to overgeneralisation, and that it occurs when a speaker tries to emulate a prestigious language variety.

Recurring patterns in previous studies suggest that age factors influence hypercorrection frequency (Sepasdar & Soori, 2014) and education level (Hubers et al., 2020). A study conducted among Dutch students of different age groups has shown that their tendency to hypercorrect increased proportionally with age and education level (Hubers et al., 2020). It was also observed that hypercorrection tends to happen among speakers who are learning a language that is deemed more prestigious, such as a standard form versus a more colloquial form within English (Menner, 1973), within Spanish (De Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana, 2013), and Dutch (Hubers et al., 2020). Hypercorrection can also occur between a language that is deemed more prestigious and a local language such as English by Korean speakers (Eckman et al., 2013), English by Slovak speakers (Metruk, 2018), and English by Kuwaiti speakers (Akbar et al., 2013).

Previous research on hypercorrection was mainly within the context of a monolingual country, from the presumed lower prestige variety against the standard variety of the same language (De Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana, 2013; Janda & Auger, 1992; Menner, 1973; Metruk, 2018). Labov's (1973) seminal study on hypercorrection was also observed within a monolingual context of English spoken by different social classes against "standard" English.

Research on hypercorrection within multilingual contexts and using different languages is scarce. Hence, the present study aimed to investigate the occurrence of hypercorrection among younger and older native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah when speaking in English.

Bidayuh

Bidayuh is one of the major indigenous groups in Sarawak, a Malaysian state located on the island of Borneo. According to Nais (as cited in Dealwis, 2010), the Bidayuh language has 29 distinct sub-dialects that are usually not mutually intelligible. These dialects can be grouped under four major Bidayuh language varieties, namely, Serian (Bukar-Sadong), Biatah, Bau (Singai-Jagoi), and Salako-Rara (Rensch et al., 2012). Figure 1 shows a map of Kuching, Sarawak, where most Bidayuh people are located. In the map, the distribution of the Bidayuh dialects is illustrated along with their geo-linguistic areas. While originating from the same root language, these four primary language varieties are not mutually intelligible (Rensch et al., 2012).

Figure 1

Map of Kuching, Sarawak, Where the Majority of Bidayuh People are Located

(Note: Inset: Map of Southeast Asia. Showing Sarawak in Malaysia, shown in context with neighbouring countries. Main map: The western end of Sarawak. The coloured areas show the location of the four major language varieties of Bidayuh (from Rensch et al., 2012)

The participants in this study were speakers of the Biatah variety, found mainly in the Kuching district (central) comprising the Siburan-Penrissen-Padawan areas. Penrissen, in the upper central part, has slightly different phonological features than Siburan and Padawan (Kroeger, 1996; Rensch et al., 2012). In the context of the current study, there is an absence of the /ʧ/ and /l/ phonemes in the Bidayuh Biatah language variety, along with the absence of other phonemes not associated with Austronesian languages like /z/, /ʒ/, /f/ and /v/ (Rensch et al., 2012). The /s/ phonemes, specifically in the Penrissen language variety, in varying degrees for different speakers, have a tendency to be aspirated in regular speech, especially in the coda (end) of words, producing a sound close to the /ʃ/ phoneme (Kroeger, 1996).

To accommodate the absence of some phonemes, some Bidayuh Biatah speakers produce the /ʧ/ sound as /ʃ/ or /s/, and the absence of /l/is usually produced as /r/. As for the syntax of Bidayuh, the word order is subject-verb-object (SVO) and does not include position-specific object/subject words as in English. Similarly, within

the context of this study, there are no in-word morphological past-tense signifiers and in-word plural signifiers in Bidayuh, which other words would usually signify to indicate past tense and reduplication to indicate pluralisation (Rensch et al., 2012).

Generally, the Bidayuh tend to be multilingual as they learn Malay and English in school (Kayad & Ting, 2021; Norahim, 2010). English, taught in schools and recognised as the second official language, is crucial for communication in Malaysia (Azmi, 2013). The status of English as an educational and commercial language would force speakers to attempt speaking as closely as they can to the perceived "correct speech" by modulating their natural speech pattern to conform to it. In a study investigating accent preferences by English learners in America by Scales et al. (2006), it was observed that more than half (62%) of the 37 participants aim to sound more like a native speaker, resulting in more effort to sound "correct", or in this case, American. Thus, it is assumed that the manifestation of phonological hypercorrection among Bidayuh Biatah when speaking in English will increase as they try to emulate English phonological features.

The specific objectives of this study are to identify, categorise and analyse the occurrences of hypercorrection among younger and older groups of Bidayuh Biatah when speaking English.

Literature Review

Previous studies have established the role of stratification in the production of hypercorrection. Stratification is the process of arranging people into classes or social strata. This role was evident in a seminal study on English speakers in New York City by Labov (1973), where lower-middle-class workers tend to over-produce words as rhotic (in which R is pronounced before a consonant and at the end of words). Words such as "hard" were being pronounced as /ha:rd/ instead of /ha:d/, and words like *far* were pronounced as /fa:r/ instead of /fa:/ when speakers are attempting to sound more formal despite the rhotic R being typically absent in their regular speech. Labov (1973) suggested that the rhotic R was an attempt at emulating the pronunciation of upper-middle-class speakers by the lower-middle-class speakers. This subsequently caused the lower-middle class speakers to apply rhotic pronunciation on erroneous circumstances such as adding /r/ at the end of words without them, rendering words such as "idea" mistakenly pronounced as "*idear*". Stratification seems to be an underlying factor in SLA as well, where some language (typically English) acts as a prestige language (Eckman et al., 2013), and it is observed that second language (L2) learners tend to hypercorrect when using the L2 (Akbar et al., 2021; Janda & Auger, 1992; Melisova, 2020). However, less attention is given to the age gap or age difference, which could provide varying variables and factors (Bakar, 2016; Melisova, 2020; Metruk, 2018).

Some studies have indicated that age influences the tendency to hypercorrect, in which the higher the age, the higher the tendency to hypercorrect. This is mainly due to older speakers utilising more language learning strategies than younger speakers (Chen, 2014; Sepasdar & Soori, 2014), thus regulating their speech more frequently to sound more "correct". This is also illustrated in a study by Hubers et al. (2020), where it was recorded that there is a higher tendency for older Dutch

students to hypercorrect in their written production compared to the younger students, where they overutilise a deemed "prestigious" older Dutch word form albeit erroneously. Furthermore, hypercorrection is usually studied in European languages such as English (Menner, 1973), French (Janda & Auger, 1992), Spanish (De Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana, 2013), and Slovak (Metruk, 2018) and observed within the context of a monolingual country. This study explores the phenomenon in Malaysia, a multicultural and multilingual country, where English is considered an important educational and commercial language.

In the Malaysian context, Blust (1983) provided anecdotal evidence of the phoneme /f/ in Malay, which is usually limited to loanwords mainly from the Arabic language and replaced with /p/ in ordinary speech, for example, in *fikir* (standard speech) and *pikir* (colloquial), which means "to think." Blust (1983) observed that Malay English speakers" speech was hypercorrected in conformity with the presumed model that /f/ is the more standard and correct form, producing words like "*frostitute*." Zheng and Wang (2022) observed the hypercorrection production of Malaysian mallgoers when asked by English-speaking foreigners in malls associated with different prestige levels. Three malls were stratified, with Pavillion KL being rated as the most prestigious, NU Sentral rated as moderately prestigious, and Sungei Wang Plaza rated as the lowest. At these locations, mallgoers were asked questions that elicited the /th/ sound response, such as asking on which floor a specific shop is – eliciting a response such as "The third/fourth floor." It was concluded that the higher a department store is ranked, the more frequently the salespeople hypercorrect. However, the study lacked specificity, targeting Malaysian speakers regardless of their first language and the primary language they use daily. Therefore, the source or influence of their hypercorrection cannot be identified based on the features of their native languages.

Accent also plays a role in the tendency to hypercorrect. An accent is defined as the noticeable underlying sound pattern of a native language beneath a second language (Derwing et al., 2008). Speakers of English as a second language, such as the Bidayuh participants in the current study, may be influenced by their native language accent. They might add or deduct certain sound features to sound as close to their ideal "correct" English as possible. Speakers of a second language often desire to sound as close as a native speaker of their target language (Scales et al., 2006), and this could explain the prevalence of phonological hypercorrection and studies focusing on phonological hypercorrection (Akbar et al., 2012; Melisova, 2020; Metruk, 2018).

Methodology

To investigate the occurrence of hypercorrection among younger and older native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah when speaking English, this study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, incorporating open-ended interviews. An open-ended interview in this study is flexible and does not use predetermined sets of questions with fixed response categories. Instead, the questions are designed to be broad and exploratory, allowing the interviewee to provide unrestricted responses. This approach was necessary in this study to detect and collect naturalistic speech and to

avoid "yes and no" answers that could limit the speech production necessary to collect data on the use of hypercorrection by Bidayuh Biatah speakers when speaking in English. The speech production was then recorded after consent was given from the interviewee/participants. The data collected from this study are presented categorically, providing descriptions and characteristics of the recurring hypercorrection.

Participants

The selection criteria for younger participants were based on Abi-Esber et al. (2018), where "younger participants" are categorised within the age range of 18 – 29. Abi-Esber et al. (2018) suggested that initiating the age range at 18 will ensure that the participants are of the legal age for being interviewed and, thereby, capable of providing informed consent to participate in the research.

The older participants were chosen based on the adapted criteria suggested by Chambers and Trudgill's (1980) NORM/F participant selection method. NORM/F means non-mobile, older, rural, and male/female. Non-mobile refers to participants who have not moved to another area and do not speak other languages. However, to fit the objectives of this study, since hypercorrection occurs as a second language learning error, the non-mobile aspect was altered so that the participants must be able to speak in a second language – English with conversational fluency.

In addition, the participants were educated in Bidayuh, having completed at least a Form 5 education level, which is the final assessment for Secondary Schools in Malaysia. The participants were four younger speakers (all aged 23) and four older speakers (aged 55-69) who were native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah from the Penrissen area. Table 1 shows the participants' educational backgrounds and professions, all of whom have acquired formal education and learned English as a subject in school. English, a language the participants use extensively, is further reinforced and maintained through their daily use either professionally, academically, and/or socially.

Table 1
Educational Background and Profession of Participants

No	Older participants			Younger participants		
	Age	Highest education level	Profession	Age	Highest education level	Profession
1	69	Form 5 - Secondary school	Retired police officer	23	Bachelor's degree	Unemployed/ student
2	64	Bachelor's degree	Retired secondary	23	Bachelor's degree	Unemployed/ student

			school teacher			
3	58	Form 5 - Secondary school	Housewife	23	Form 6 - Secondary school	Health Inspector
4	55	Bachelor's degree	Primary school teacher	23	Form 5 - Secondary school	Sales assistant

Instruments

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used to elicit speech production from each participant who was interviewed individually. After the interview, the participant was asked to read a list of phrases below:

1. Fluency session.
2. Frequent shipment.
3. Cruel decision.
4. Fearful shepherd.
5. Precious career.
6. Shady sewer.
7. Scrap loaf.
8. Crown jewel.
9. Thread pack.
10. We plan.
11. Trapped duck.
12. Flare gun.

The list of 12 phrases was adapted from Melisova (2020) on the features and phonological characteristics of the French language. The phrases used for this study were selected to correspond with the existing phonological features of Bidayuh Biatah. There are four main phonological characteristics of Bidayuh Biatah (Penrissen variant): The aspirated sibilant [ʃ] when pronouncing /s/, the diphthongisation of /o/ and /e/ into /uə/ and /iə/ respectively, the loss of initial vowels and the loss of high vowels in initial syllables (Kroeger, 1996; Rensch et al., 2012). Suppose hypercorrection occurs among Bidayuh speakers when speaking English. In that case, it is hypothesised that they will overcompensate by reducing [ʃ] sounds and diphthongs, especially /uə/ and /iə/, and inadvertently adding vowels in front of words and initial syllables. The words chosen in the word list featured sounds that will gauge if the participants hypercorrect.

Data Collection

The data were extracted based on Labov's (1966) definition of hypercorrection as well as the categorisation of hypercorrection, namely, phonological hypercorrection

(Labov, 1973), syntactical hypercorrection (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), and morphological hypercorrection (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Kroeger's (1996) phonological characteristics of the Bidayuh Biatah were used to prepare for the expected hypercorrection occurrences. Next, fieldwork was arranged before the visit to set up a mutually agreed-upon appointment date.

The participants, selected by relative recommendations and fulfilling the participant selection criteria, were required to provide written and verbal consent when agreeing to be recorded. Melisova's (2020) method for recording spontaneous and casual conversations was employed. These conversations were conducted in English, focussing on comfortable and familiar topics such as personal interests to encourage conversation and engagement. The casual conversations were limited to 30 minutes or less. Additionally, the participants were asked to read a list of phrases that covered other possible instances of hypercorrection in English by Bidayuh Biatah speakers. The session commenced once both the researcher and the participants were ready.

The phonological hypercorrections were identified using Labov's (1973) study, in which a pronunciation deemed more prestigious is attempted to be emulated but is overproduced, exceeding the natural usage. In this study, Kroeger's (1996) phonological characteristics of Bidayuh Biatah speakers were used to make an educational guess on expected and possible hypercorrections Bidayuh Biatah participants will make when speaking in English.

Syntactical hypercorrections were identified using Huddleston and Pullum's (2005) understanding of hypercorrection in English grammar, where a grammatical sequence or a syntactical arrangement that is considered more proper, prestigious, or correct is used exceeding the prescribed usage. Similar syntactical hypercorrections that occur in the discourse of Bidayuh Biatah participants were identified using this understanding.

Linguistic morphology refers to the cognitive word-formation system where words, their internal structure, and how they form are studied (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Morphology studies the structure of words and constituents of words, such as root words, prefixes, and suffixes. In this study, morphological hypercorrection will be identified using the understanding of Aronoff and Fudeman (2011) on morphology to identify hypercorrection in using constituents by Bidayuh Biatah speakers when speaking English, such as the incorrect usage of the prefix "un-" in erroneous word combination like "*uncorrect*".

Data collected were categorised into types of hypercorrection, environment, examples of occurrence, and transcriptions based on the participants' pronunciation. Hypercorrections recorded in this study were all sourced from phonological data (uttered speech) but can be categorised into different types. Hypercorrected productions that stem from the over-generalisation of "correct" sounds were grouped under phonological hypercorrection. Those resulting from the over-generalisation of "correct" grammar were categorised under syntactical hypercorrection, and those stemming from the generalisation of "correct" affixes were categorised under morphological hypercorrection. In the present study, "environment" refers to the specific sound contexts in which these hypercorrected forms occur. The frequency of

hypercorrection in the findings was extracted from the transcripts of both the speech in the interview sessions and the reading of the list.

Results and Discussion

The results showed that participants used all three categories of hypercorrections. Table 2 presents the types and frequency of hypercorrections among older participants in this study.

Table 2
Hypercorrection Among Older Bidayuh Biatah Participants When Speaking English

Hypercorrection type	Environment		Example	Transcriptions (Participants' pronunciation)	(%)
Phonological hypercorrection	/ʃ/ or /sh/ reduction		Crochet, session, shipment, she, should, fish, sugar, pensioner, function, pronunciation, traditional, shoot, English	/krəʊseɪ/, /sɛsən/, /sɪpmənt/, /siː/ /sʊd/ /fɪs/, /sʊgə/, /pɛnsənə/, /fʌŋksən/, /proˈnʌnsɪˈeɪsən/, /trəˈdɪsənəl/, /suːt/, /ɪŋglɪs/	40.6
	/uə/ diphthong reduction		Sewer, fluent, fluency, tour	/shuː/, /fluːnt/, /fluːnsi/, /toː/	12.5
	/iə/ diphthong reduction		Vietnam, fearful, nearby	/vɛtnʌm/, /fəɪfʊl/, /nərbʌɪ/	9.4
	Vowel addition	Front of word			
		Initial syllable	Scrap, crown, thread, flare	/səkrap/, /kəraʊn/, /θərɛd/, /fəlɛː/	12.5

	/dʒ/ to /ʒ/	Vegetable	/vɛʒɪtəbəl/, /vɛʒtəbəl/	3.1
	/dʒ/ to /ʒh/	Language, age, vegetable	/laŋweʒh/, /eɪʒh/, /vɛʒhtəbəl/	9.4
Syntactical hypercorrection	Swapping of object-positioned pronouns into subject-positioned pronouns.	"They divide it among my siblings and I."		3.1
Morphological hypercorrection	/s/ addition at the end of verbs (verb-agreement)	"I loves", "Which one is looks beautiful", "I takes medication"		9.4
Total (%)				100

The identification and categorisation of data in Table 2 show that all three types of hypercorrections prescribed in this study, namely, phonological hypercorrection (Labov, 1973), syntactical hypercorrection (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), and morphological hypercorrection (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011) are present in the speech of Bidayuh Biatah participants when speaking English. The most prominent type of hypercorrection that Bidayuh participants made in this study is phonological hypercorrections, which occurred in seven different environments, with over 28 occurrences noted.

For older participants, the most frequently hypercorrected phonological form is the reduction of /ʃ/ or /sh/ with 13 occurrences (40.6%). The least hypercorrected type is syntactical hypercorrection, occurring only once (3.1%) in the form of object-positioned pronouns being swapped into subject-positioned pronouns. This is followed by morphological hypercorrection that occurs three times (9.4%) in the form of /s/ addition at the end of verbs (verb agreement).

Hubers et al. (2020) discussed that hypercorrection is more prevalent among educated speakers. Because of that, it can be plausibly hypothesised that the data show a scarcity of syntactical and morphological hypercorrection due to the participants' sufficiently educated backgrounds in speaking English, thus causing fewer grammatical hypercorrections.

However, the justification for the abundance of phonological hypercorrections is based on the accent of the Bidayuh Biatah speakers when speaking in English. According to Derwing et al. (2008), accent is one of the most notable and intrinsic aspects of speech, ubiquitous to all non-native speakers of English. Scales et al. (2006) also noted that more than half (62%) of English language

learners aim to sound more like a native speaker, resulting in more effort to sound "correct," which consequently will increase the manifestation of phonological hypercorrection among Bidayuh Biatah English speakers when they try to emulate English phonological features.

In attempting to suppress their naturally occurring phonological system, participants may inadvertently hypercorrect English words, especially in the phonological sense. The bulk of phonological hypercorrection comprised /ʃ/ or /sh/ reduction (40.6%). It can be theorised that this is caused by the frequency of the /sh/ sound in the Bidayuh language (Penrissen variant). It is also expected to occur due to this being the phonological feature that is most notable in the language when observed by non-Bidayuh speakers. A participant mentioned that they are aware of the /sh/ pronunciation that could seep into their English speech, and this consciousness of this negative transfer would plausibly cause the hypercorrected reduction of /sh/ to an /s/ to be more frequently made when they try to speak English as close as their ideal of an English speech standard is.

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of hypercorrection occurrences between older and younger participants.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of Hypercorrection Occurrences Between Older and Younger Participants

Older participants		Types of hypercorrections	Younger participants	
No. of occurrences	Percentage (%)		No. of occurrences	Percentage (%)
28	87.5	Phonological hypercorrection	6	75
1	3.1	Syntactical hypercorrection	1	12.5
3	9.4	Morphological hypercorrection	1	12.5
32	100	Total	8	100

The diphthong reduction from the data is not as prevalent as the /sh/ reduction, but it is not rare either. The /uə/ diphthong reduction occurred four times (12.5%) in the speech of the older participants. The word "sewer" /suːə/ was pronounced as /shuː/, presenting both the reduction of /uə/ (hypercorrection) and the aspiration of the /s/ sound into /sh/ (negative transfer). Similarly, words like "fluent" and "fluency" are noticeably reduced to "flunt" /fluːnt/ and "fluncy" /fluːnsi/, with the /u/ sound just slightly dragged into two syllables. In the same manner that the /u/ sound was just slightly dragged into two syllables, the /o/ sound in "tour" was

also slightly dragged into two syllables while abandoning the diphthong /uə/ sound altogether.

The /ɪə/ reduction also occurred three times (9.4%) in words like "Vietnam," "fearful," and "nearby" – effectively deducted their /ɪə/ diphthongs into /vɛtnʌm/, /fəɪfʊl/, and /nərbʌɪ/. According to Kroeger (1996), the Bidayuh Biatah speakers, specifically the Penrissen variant, tend to diphthongise their /e/ and /o/ into /iə/ and /uə/, respectively. As previously mentioned, to emulate the English sound systems as "correctly" as possible, they have inadvertently reduced their diphthongs almost entirely, even in English words that would require them.

We initially anticipated that some participants would overcompensate/hypercorrect by reducing [ʃ] sounds and diphthongs, especially /uə/ and /iə/, and adding vowels in front of words and initial syllables based on Kroeger's (1996) phonological features of Bidayuh Biatah. However, the final results showed no vowel addition in front of words was recorded for younger and older participants. In contrast, vowel addition on the initial syllable occurred several times, especially in one-syllable words.

Vowel addition in initial syllables occurred four times (12.5%), and all in one-syllable words with consonant clusters. Those four words include "scrap", "crown", "thread", and "flare" pronounced as /səkrap/, /kəraʊn/, /θərɛd/, and /fəlɛ:/. Each word has received a vowel addition in its first syllable, [ə]. This corresponds precisely with the features of Bidayuh Biatah phonology discussed by Kroeger (1996) who spoke of the tendency of Bidayuh speakers to lose high vowels in initial syllables compared with their dialectal counterparts. This naturally occurring dialectal phenomenon is suppressed to reduce accent and "non-standard" features and then accidentally used counterintuitively by adding vowels in initial syllables.

However, it is worth noting that, similar to the slight elongation of the /u/ sound into two syllables in the diphthong-reduced word "fluent" (pronounced as /flu:nt/ by the older participants), the addition of a vowel in the initial syllable could also be attributed to the linguistic rhythm of the Bidayuh language. Rensch (2006) stated that Bidayuh stem words are typically disyllabic, which means the "melody" of the language follows a two-syllable pattern, making one-syllable words to be forcibly stretched out into two syllables to match the underlying "rhythm" of the language.

Next, some /ʤ/ sounds in English words are reduced to a /ʒ/ or a /ʒh/ sound. This result was not initially expected since no previous reports were made. However, words like "language" /laŋwɪʤ/ and "age" /eɪʤ/ were repeatedly pronounced as /laŋwɛʒh/ and /eɪʒh/ by all the participants. The word "language" (and the /ʤ/ being reduced to a /ʒh/) is used by all the participants multiple times during the interview when introducing themselves and talking about the language they spoke. Interestingly, the /ʒ/ sound does not exist naturally in the Bidayuh language. The /ʤ/ sound, however, is common. It is plausible to deduce that to sound "less accented", the participants tried to utilise more foreign sounds [ʒ] and reduce common, naturally occurring sounds [ʤ] in their speech because of hypercorrection.

The syntactical hypercorrection during the interview is the generalisation of object-positioned pronouns into subject-positioned pronouns, for example, the swapping of "I" and "me". In the sentence "they divide it among my siblings and I", the informant generalised "I" as a more "correct" form in opposition to "me." In the

sentence, "they" is the subject, making the first-person pronoun a sentence object. In another varying sentence, "my siblings and I" would only be correct if "I" is a sentence subject like "My siblings and I went to the market".

Morphological hypercorrection observed in this study is the generalisation of verb agreement (addition of /s/ at the end of verbs). The data for this is "I loves", "Which one is looks beautiful", and "I takes medication". Adding/s/ after a verb is quite a prominent occurrence, even before the interview recording begins. The absence of a verb agreement system similar to English in the Bidayuh language can cause difficulties using it correctly. De Sifontes and Rojas-Lizana (2013) elicited that hypergeneralisation of grammar rules is a typical intra-lingual strategy students employ to learn a non-native foreign language. This causes non-native speakers to overgeneralise the usage of verb agreement by adding /s/ to the end of verbs, even when they are faulty.

The types and frequency of hypercorrections among younger participants are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Hypercorrection Among Younger Bidayuh Biatah Participants When Speaking English

Hypercorrection type	Environment	Example	Transcriptions (Participants' pronunciation)	(%)
Phonological hypercorrection	/ʃ/ or /sh/ reduction	English	/ɪŋglɪs/	12.5
	/zh/ or /ʒ/ reduction	usually	/juːsʊəli/	12.5
	/uə/ diphthong reduction	cruel	/krʊːl/	12.5
	Vowel addition: Initial syllable	scrap, crown	/səkrap/, /kəraʊn/	25.0
	/ʤ/ to /ʒh/	language	/laŋweʒh/	12.5
Syntactical hypercorrection	using past tense for the perfect present	"I like to play an action-packed video game or a shooting game…because it gave me an adrenaline rush."		12.5

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Morphological hypercorrection	"Bidayuh people usually prepared it mixed with fermented durian soup"		12.5
	Total		100

The recorded data for younger participants show some discrepancy against the data for older participants, with only eight overall occurrences. However, phonological hypercorrections are still the most hypercorrected form for most of the younger participants, with six occurrences (75%), followed by one occurrence for syntactical hypercorrection (12.5%) and one occurrence for morphological (12.5%) hypercorrection (Table 3).

Similar to their older counterparts, it can be deduced that phonological correctness played an essential role in their speech production. Consequently, this influenced the participants to manipulate their sound production to sound as close to native speakers as possible (Scales et al., 2006), leading to hypercorrection, as evident in most of the data, which consists of phonological hypercorrections. In the instance of /zh/ or /ʒ/ reduction into an /s/ sound, the researcher postulates that very much like the older participants, they are aware of the aspirated sibilant /sh/ sound that is prevalent in their native language, thus, trying to suppress them. As an aspirated sibilant, the /zh/ sound can be seen similarly reduced and hypercorrected. While there are clearly fewer occurrences of hypercorrection by the younger participants, there is still a considerable amount of direct negative transfer in the pronunciation of the /s/ and /c/ or /t͡ʃ/ sounds into their more familiar /sh/ sound. Instances of this can be found in words such as "watch", "social", "perception", "used", and "session", which were pronounced as /wɒʃ/, /ʃəʊʃəl/, /pəʃɛpʃən/, /juːʃd/, and /ʃɛʃən/.

Only one instance of diphthong reduction was observed in the speech of the younger participants, specifically the /uə/ diphthong reduction for the word "cruel," which was pronounced as /krʊːl/ by two of the younger participants. Interestingly, in contrast with the data from the older participants, the /u/ sound was not slightly dragged into two syllables. However, the vowel addition in initial syllables still occurred in words like "scrap" and "crown" (/səkrap/ and /kəraʊn/).

As mentioned in the discussion for the older participants, the /dʒ/ to /ʒh/ sounds in the pronunciation of the word "language" as /laŋweʒh/ were used repeatedly, albeit the /ʒh/ was absent in the Bidayuh language. It can again be presumed that to sound "less accented", the participants tried to integrate the more foreign /ʒ/ sound in their speech even when it was incorrect.

Both syntactical and morphological hypercorrection exhibited similar patterns in which words were used in the past tense when they should have been in the present tense. For syntactical hypercorrection, the past-tense form "gave" was used in the sentence "I like to play an action-packed video game or a shooting game … because it gave me an adrenaline rush" instead of the present "gives." The occurrences of morphological hypercorrection similarly employed the past-tense

signifier -ed even when the sentences are in the present, such as in the sentence "Bidayuh people usually prepared it mixed with fermented durian soup". It is worth noting that in the Bidayuh language, there are no in-word/morphological past-tense signifiers. Therefore, it is plausible for Bidayuh speakers of English to generalise the -ed signifier as an intra-lingual hypergeneralisation of grammar strategy.

To sum up, there is an apparent contrast in the number of hypercorrection occurrences between older and younger participants, in which younger participants generally hypercorrect less. However, phonological hypercorrection is the most frequent type in both groups.

Conclusion

In investigating the occurrence of hypercorrection among younger and older native speakers of Bidayuh Biatah when speaking English, the study has identified, categorised, and analysed three types of hypercorrections: phonological hypercorrection, syntactical hypercorrection, and morphological hypercorrection. It then can be concluded that both younger and older Bidayuh Biatah hypercorrect phonologically the most when speaking English. The findings suggest that they prioritised accent, which caused them to attempt to add or deduct sound features to sound as close as their ideal of the "correct" English. This will subsequently cause them to hypercorrect. Older educated Bidayuh Biatah participants of English tend to hypercorrect more than younger educated Bidayuh participants of English. The hypercorrected features observed in this study do not exist naturally in the participants' native language and thus cannot be a crosslinguistic influence. On the other hand, over-generalisation and emulating a target language feature due to a perceived prestige are evident in the findings of this study. As the study was done on a limited scale and gathered data only from the Siburan-Penrissen area, future studies could increase the sample to include speakers of other varieties of Bidayuh and gender.

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