

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains introduction. It consists of background, identification of problems, scope of the problems, research questions, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Language is a fundamental element for communication within society, acting as the medium through which individuals interact, share ideas, and convey meaning. As a system of communication, language is structured by specific rules that govern its use, which are passed down over generations. (Chomsky, 1965) argues that language is not just a collection of words but a highly structured system with syntactic rules that enable speakers to form an infinite number of sentences. These rules shape how words function in both oral and written forms, making language a flexible and essential tool for human interaction. The ability to use language effectively allows individuals to communicate abstract ideas, emotions, and complex information, playing a crucial role in social interaction and cultural development.

According to (Weinreich, 1953), language contact occurs when speakers of distinct languages interact, leading to linguistic borrowing, code-switching, or other forms of language influence. Related to morphology, morpheme takes the basic part in linguistics. Yule (2006) states that morpheme is the minimal unit of grammatical function, for example the word *restarted* in the sentence *the computer was restarted* consist of three morphemes. One minimal unit of meaning is start, another minimal unit of meaning is *re-* (meaning again), and a minimal unit of grammatical function is *-ed* (indicating past tense). Such morphemes are called bound morphemes, in the contrast to free morphemes, which do

occur on their own. They also use a rule of word-formation. Informally, word-formation forms and new words.

In linguistics, morphology is commonly defined as a study of word formation and its morphological process (Booij, 2019). The word is simplex and complex, and the structure or construction of the formation is a free and bound morpheme. The process, to mention some, is affixation, blending, acronym or abbreviation, clipping, and compounding (Denham & Lobeck, 2010). The simplex word is a free morpheme with its word-class or lexical category. A complex word is a word that is resulted from the process of morphology by the combination of free and bound morpheme altogether with its lexical and grammatical category. The free morpheme is root and base and/or lexeme, while the bound morpheme is the affix. The word class or lexical category is verb, noun, adjective, and adverb.

Semantic is one of the main branches of linguistic that studies the meaning of words. According to (Griffith, 2006:3), semantic is one of the two main branches of linguistic that study the meaning of a sentence or phrase. Semantic is also part of the structure of language related to the meaning of an expression or the structure of the meaning of a sentence.

Meanwhile, Morphosemantics is a combination of morphology and semantics, namely the study of the ins and outs of word forms and their changes as well as the function of these changes which have an impact on word meaning (Tafiati et al., 2022). Morphosemantics examines the relationship between the structure of words and their meaning. In morphosemantics, in addition to changing word building, it also has implications for changes in meaning resulting from morphological processes (Ghozali & Khoiriyatunnisa, 2021). The example is the word *unfriend*, formed from the prefix *un-* and the base word *friend*. In terms of form, the prefix only signals negation, but semantically it becomes the action of removing someone from a social-media friend list. From explanation above, it can be concluded that morphosemantics is a branch of linguistics that

studies the structure of words, the process of word formation, and the meaning of word.

Slang, as an informal and creative aspect of language, often integrates borrowed terms from other languages, especially in response to the influence of social media, music, and pop culture. It plays a crucial role in informal communication, particularly among younger generations, by fostering group identity, intimacy, and solidarity. Slang expressions, though short-lived and context-specific, demonstrate how borrowed elements can adapt to the cultural and linguistic norms of a recipient group. By using slang, individuals not only communicate more flexibly but also align with similar lifestyles and social trends (Eble, 2012). This flexibility enables younger generations to express emotions, attitudes, and identity more spontaneously and creatively, especially in digital spaces where language changes rapidly.

Digital slang used by Generation Alpha in Indonesia demonstrates morphosemantic characteristics that differ noticeably from those of older generations. Their slang tends to exhibit a higher degree of morphological simplification, with word formations that are shorter, more compressed, and strongly shaped by rapid digital interaction. Unlike Millennials and Generation Z whose slang often derives from music, films, or subcultural communities. Generation Alpha's expressions are heavily influenced by algorithm-driven platforms, viral trends, and fast-moving meme culture. Semantically, their slang carries meanings that are more fluid, context-dependent, and frequently tied to visual or multimodal elements such as emojis, memes, and short-video content, resulting in meanings that shift more rapidly than in previous generations. These features reflect the intense digital immersion of Generation Alpha whose linguistic creativity produces slang that is more dynamic, flexible, and visually oriented compared to the relatively stable and text-based slang of earlier generations.

Linguistic aspects that can change words through formation processes are generally related to morphological and semantic mechanisms operating within a speech community. In the context of digital slang, these processes often involve blending, clipping, affixation, and semantic shift, all of which contribute to the creation of new lexical forms and meanings. Such processes allow speakers particularly those in highly digitalized groups like Generation Alpha modify existing words, compress longer expressions, or repurpose familiar forms to convey new, socially relevant meanings. These linguistic mechanisms not only transform word structure but also reshape how meaning is interpreted in fast-paced online interactions. As a result, digital slang becomes a dynamic linguistic system where morphological innovation and semantic redefinition work together to reflect identity, creativity, and the communicative norms of contemporary digital culture.

The rise of digital platforms has added a new dimension to language contact. Unlike traditional face-to-face interactions, digital communication facilitates non-physical interactions where linguistic elements are rapidly exchanged. (Crystal, 2006) highlights how the internet has transformed language use by fostering new modes of communication that blur geographical and linguistic boundaries. This digital platform has become especially influential for Generation Alpha, the cohort born between 2010 and 2015, as they grow up in a world dominated by technology and social media (McCrindle & Fell, 2020). For this generation, social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are not just communication tools but spaces where they develop and negotiate their linguistic identities.

A unique aspect of morphosemantics in the digital slang of Generation Alpha shown in how word-formation processes interact with the fast-paced and socially interconnected nature of digital communication. Unlike traditional slang that develops gradually through face-to-face interaction, Generation Alpha's slang emerges and spreads rapidly through

online platforms, allowing new forms and meanings to appear almost instantly. Morphologically, their slang often consists of highly compressed forms and creative borrowings that do not always follow conventional linguistic patterns. Semantically, meaning is frequently shaped not by the internal structure of the word itself but by shared digital experiences, online trends, and the social identities constructed within virtual communities. This creates slang that is structurally simple but semantically dense, with meanings that depend on collective digital context rather than traditional linguistic cues. As a result, morphosemantic processes in Generation Alpha slang highlight a new form of linguistic creativity one where word formation and meaning are shaped by speed, interactivity, and the cultural dynamics of the digital age.

The influence of technology on Generation Alpha extends to their language use, including the adoption and adaptation of new vocabulary and communication styles. This generation is known for its ease with digital communication, including the frequent use of emojis, memes, and other digital vernacular that blend linguistic and visual elements. (McCrinkle, 2014: 18). highlight how Generation Alpha's interaction with technology fosters unique language practices and accelerates the incorporation of global and digital lexicon into everyday speech.

Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancements contributes to the fluidity and understanding of language among Generation Alpha. Their early exposure to diverse linguistic inputs, including global media and online content, facilitates the cross-cultural exchange of language elements, leading to innovative forms of communication. This dynamic environment underscores the importance of studying how Generation Alpha adapts and integrates new linguistic elements into their vernacular.

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of slang terms into digital slang among young generations has become increasingly prevalent. (Haryanto,

2016) notes that English has significantly influenced Indonesian youth, particularly through digital and popular culture. These terms are often integrated into local vernaculars, creating hybridized forms of communication that reflect both global and local identities. Moreover, linguistic adaptation is not merely a lexical process but also a socio-cultural one, as it mirrors the values, attitudes, and trends embraced by the younger generation (Sari and Nugroho, 2021).

In today's digital era, language is rapidly evolving through interactions on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. These platforms are not only spaces for entertainment but also powerful tools of linguistic exchange, particularly among young users. One of the most prominent phenomena in this digital landscape is the widespread use of English slang terms by Generation Alpha that born between 2010 and 2015. These terms are frequently adopted into everyday Indonesian conversations, forming a hybrid linguistic pattern influenced by global culture. Although their young age, many members of Generation Alpha are already active digital users, exposed daily to informal English expressions that they integrate into their social communication. This reflects a growing trend in language contact where language contact no longer requires physical interaction but can emerge entirely through online engagement.

The choice of this research title because there is a conceptual issue that has long remained unresolved that the need for a deeper explanation of how language develops among the youngest generation in the digital era. The digital slang used by Generation Alpha not only reflects linguistic creativity but also illustrates the social and technological changes that influence communication patterns and identity formation. This phenomenon requires a more systematic scientific understanding of how morphological and semantic processes operate within a highly dynamic digital context. Without adequate study, uncertainties will persist regarding the

mechanisms of word formation, meaning shifts, and linguistic adaptation that emerge in online interaction.

Therefore, examining these dynamics becomes essential to provide a clearer and more accurate picture of contemporary language evolution. The use of Rochelle Lieber's morphosemantic theory serves as a suitable analytical tool to examine how these English slang terms are morphologically structured and semantically shifted in a new linguistic environment. By investigating the digital slang used by generation alpha through this framework, this study seeks to reveal not only patterns of language adaptation but also the broader sociolinguistic implications.

## **1.2 Identification of Problem**

The identification of problems arising from this research involves recognizing challenges and gaps in understanding slang terms of generation alpha in Indonesia. Several key issues emerge:

1. **Sociolinguistic Implication:** Examining the sociolinguistic impact of slang on the language practices of the generation alpha.
2. **Morphosemantic Transformation:** Many of the slang terms undergo significant morphosemantic changes. It reflects the dynamic interplay between morphological processes and semantic reinterpretation, in line with Rochelle Lieber's morphosemantic theory.
3. **Semantic Shift and Transparency:** The study finds that while some slang terms retain their original meanings and others shift. This variation in semantic transparency highlights the cognitive and social factors influencing how meaning is reinterpreted.
4. **Adaptation of Slang:** This study examined how slang used by the generation alpha and then adapted to become everyday language in terms of morphology.

5. **Technological Influence:** This study will analyse the influence of digital technology and adaptation of foreign words. This study explores how social media in other digital environments function as a dissemination of slang among the generation alpha.

These problems demonstrate the need to explore slang terms as culturally and morphosemantically reshaped expressions. By focusing on Generation Alpha in Indonesia, the study provides insights into how digital media redefines the nature of language contact and word formation in a globalized, tech-driven linguistic environment.

### **1.3 Scope of Problems**

This study is limited to the analysis of English slang used by Generation Alpha (individuals born between 2010–2015) in Indonesia. The focus is on understanding the morphological and semantic processes involved in these terms by using Rochelle Lieber's morphosemantic theory as the primary analytical framework.

This research focusses to students of SMP Athirah and SMP 1 Pangkajene who actively engage with English-language digital content and have incorporated these slang terms into their daily speech. The study specifically addresses the morphosemantic aspects. It is concentrating on how the slang terms are formed morphologically such as through acronyms, clippings, or derivations and how their meanings shift semantically through metaphorical extensions, generalization, or specification. Additionally, the study explores how digital platforms function as a modern arena for language contact, contributing to the spread and adoption of English slang among Generation Alpha.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions of this research are as follows:

1. What are the forms of digital slangs used by Generation Alpha in Indonesia?
2. How are the digital slang used by Generation Alpha that integrated with morphosemantics?

### **1.5 Objectives of The Research**

The research objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyse the forms slang used by Generation Alpha in Indonesia.
2. To elaborate the slang used by Generation Alpha integrated with morphosemantics.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This reseach holds significance both in theoretical and practical domains, particularly in relation to the evolving use of slang among Generation Alpha in Indonesia. The significance of this research is outlined in two key areas:

#### **1. Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, this research contributes to the field of linguistics by providing a deeper understanding of how slang terms is morphologically and semantically adapted by Generation Alpha. Using Rochelle Lieber's morphosemantic framework, this study offers insights into the structure and meaning of slang terms that are adopted through digital exposure. It highlights how children creatively adopt, modify, and integrate foreign terms into their everyday language use. The study expands the discussion of morphological processes such as compounding, clipping, acronym formation, and semantic shifts, and contributes to a growing body of literature on language innovation in digital contexts. These findings may serve as a foundational reference for future research in morphosemantics,

digital linguistics, and the sociolinguistic development of younger generations.

## **2. Practical Significance**

Practically, the findings of this study are valuable for educators, linguists, content creators, and parents. For educators, understanding how children absorb and use slang may help develop more engaging language teaching strategies that are responsive to the linguistic realities of students. For linguists, this research provides data-driven insight into current trends language among youth in a globalized, internet-driven society. It also sheds light on how digital platforms function as a powerful medium for language contact and change. Meanwhile, parents and media regulators can benefit from understanding the types of language children encounter online and how it affects their communication patterns. Overall, this study can help stakeholders develop a more informed approach toward language development, education, and media regulation in the context of rapid technological and cultural change.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of previous studies, theoretical background and conceptual framework.

#### **2.1 Previous Studies**

Before initiating the study, it is crucial for the researcher to review existing literature relevant to the topic to gather information and ideas that will assist in formulating the foundational concepts of the research. Furthermore, the researcher has identified four previous studies that serve as references for developing and analysing the current research.

The first research was conducted by Oficiar (2019) entitled *Language of Homosexuality: A Morpho-Semantic Analysis*. The qualitative research ventured on revealing the reasons of using gay lingo in the academic community and analysing its unique linguistic features. In identifying the linguistic features of gay lingo, the researcher analysed the data taken from the informants from their simulation and list of gay words. These data were treated using morpho-semantic analysis: the Morphological Analysis revealed patterns of structural formations in gay words; the Semantic Analysis revealed the semantic processes on the meanings of gay words. The study employed the phenomenological design conducted in 3 College institutions in Tagum City. The participants of the study were the college students particularly the homosexuals. The investigation involved 28 gay participants, whose backgrounds were based on the school they attend to. The results of the study revealed ideas that concretized the reason of using gay lingo in the informants' respective schools. The following themes emerged during the interview: Learning Gay Lingo from Friends, Sex Talks, Making Gossips, Sexual Identity, and Sense of Security. On the analyses of linguistic features of gay lingo, it revealed the following: the Morphological Analysis revealed patterns of formation in gay words. These patterns of gay

lingo are as follows; clipping with affixation, variety formation, straight words derivation, popular words derivation, gay word affixation, foreign sounding, and gay word expressions. In the Semantic Analysis, it revealed the semantic processes on the meanings of gay words. These processes in their semantic formation are as follows; corporal derivation, mutual comprehension, and variety synonymy.

The second research entitled *A Morphological Analysis of Slang Words Used by Characters in Ralph Breaks the Internet Movie* by Tubagus et al (2021). The current study aimed to investigate the morphological processes of constructing slang words and its meaning of the found slang words used by the movie characters. This research used a descriptive qualitative method with content analysis design. The findings revealed that there are 42 slang words categorized into different morphological processes included compound (14,28%), clipping (11,90%), blending (14,28%), affixations (16,66%), reduplicative (7,14%), backformation (2,4%), abbreviation (2,4%), conversion (4,76%), alternation (14,28%), extension (4,76%) and word manufacture (7,14%). This study demonstrated the meaning changes of the slang words that have been affected through certain morphological processes by modifying their word category. Consequently, some slang terms have preserved the original meaning despite the changes in their spelling. In the meantime, certain slang words get abbreviated or shortened and retained their original meaning. Meanwhile, some slang words change their meaning by deriving their word category. Besides, there were certain slang words that change their meaning depending on word usage.

The third research entitled *Abbreviations Used by Millennials on Instagram: A Morphosemantic Study* by Grace and Heryono (2022). The purpose of this research is to analyze the types and meanings of abbreviations contained in captions and comments on Instagram. The research method used in this study is a descriptive method to analyze the

types of abbreviations on Instagram. The steps taken in this research are to collect data in the form of sentences that have abbreviations founded on Instagram, then analyze the types of abbreviations in captions and comments on Instagram. The theoretical basis used in this research is the theory of Verhaar (1993) in analyzing the types of abbreviations and the theory of Griffith (2006) to analyze the types of meaning. From the results obtained in this study, it shows that the 30 of data that has been analyzed, there are 4 (13,3%) acronyms data, 16 (56,6%) initializes data, 4 (13,3%) blending data, 4 (13,3%) clipping data and 2 (6,6%) compounding data. Meanwhile, the type of meaning that has been founded included is 30 data (100%).

The fourth research entitled *English Expressions Frequently Used by Indonesian social media "X" Users: A Morpho-Semantic Analysis* by Azura et al (2025). This research aims to find types of word formation English expressions frequently used by social media X users in Indonesia and describe how English expressions frequently used by social media X users in Indonesia are interpreted. The approach used in this research is the Morpho-Semantic approach, with word of formation processes theory by Bauer and Semantic theory by Leech as a reference for analysis. The research method used was qualitative method. The techniques of data collection used are reading and documentation study by capturing the screen from X's social media accounts @tanyakanrl and @convomfs. Meanwhile the data analysis design model applied was content analysis, the findings of the research show that, 25 English expressions are used by social media X users in Indonesia. These expressions experience the formation proces,s including 8 compounding, 6 affixations, 6 conversions, 2 blending, and 3 acronyms. Further, from the analysis of the use of English expressions in social media "X" were found 1 reflected, 2 affective, 1 collocative, 1 social, 20 connotative.

The fifth research was done by Napitu and Damanik (2021) entitled *Semantic Analysis of Slang Expressions Among Medanese Generation Z on Instagram*. This study aims to explore the semantic characteristics of slang words used by Generation Z in Medan during communication on Instagram. The objectives are to identify and classify the types of slang vocabulary, analyze their semantic meanings, and examine the forms of slang commonly used by Medanese youth. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a digital ethnography approach, focusing on observations of Instagram accounts belonging to teenagers and young adults from Medan. The findings reveal that the slang used falls into several categories: acronyms, clipped words, blended words, local dialect slang, and figurative or metaphorical slang. Many of these expressions are influenced by local culture, national trends, and global digital communication. The meanings of slang words are not only literal but also contextual and symbolic, shaped by the social interactions and cultural background of the users. The study concludes that slang serves as a tool for self-expression, group identity, and creative linguistic innovation among Medanese Generation Z. It reflects how youth navigate their cultural identity while engaging in informal communication through social media. This research contributes to the understanding of how language evolves in digital spaces and how regional identity influences online discourse.

Several previous studies have explored slang from various linguistic perspectives and across different user groups. For example, Oficiar (2019) conducted a morphosemantic analysis of gay lingo among homosexual college students, revealing how morphological patterns and semantic processes shape the formation and meaning of slang within a specific community. This aligns with the present research in its use of morphosemantic analysis; however, Oficiar's study focuses on adult participants in physical academic settings, unlike the present study which examines younger users in digital environments. Similarly, Tubagus et al (2021) analyzed slang in *Ralph Breaks the Internet*, identifying numerous

morphological processes influencing meaning changes. While their research shares a descriptive approach with the current study, their data is based on fictional cinematic dialogue rather than naturally occurring slang used by Generation Alpha.

Other studies also provide relevant insights. Grace and Heryono (2022) examined abbreviations used by Millennials on Instagram through a morphosemantic framework, showing how social media influences abbreviation patterns. Although their work addresses digital communication, it focuses on Millennials, a demographic whose linguistic behavior differs significantly from Generation Alpha. Meanwhile, Azura et al (2025) investigated English expressions on the social media platform X, identifying various morphological processes and semantic categories. Their study highlights how online spaces shape linguistic creativity, but it does not specifically target the unique linguistic tendencies of younger users. Finally, Napitu and Damanik (2021) analyzed the slang of Medanese Generation Z on Instagram, emphasizing cultural influence and contextual meaning. This research is closely related in its focus on youth language; however, it does not address the more recent digital-native Generation Alpha whose exposure to internet culture begins at an earlier age.

The novelty of the present research lies in two key contributions. First, it introduces new data by examining digital slang used specifically by Indonesian Generation Alpha. A group that remains largely underexplored in linguistic even being the most immersed in online communication. Their slang demonstrates rapid, innovative word formation influenced by digital trends. Second, this study extends Rochelle Lieber's morphosemantic theory by integrating digital and sociocultural dimensions into the analysis. While previous studies applied morphosemantics to conventional slang or older user groups, this research highlights how meaning shifts in Generation Alpha slang are shaped not only by morphological processes but also by digital trends and platform-specific communicative practices.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.1.1 Sociolinguistics**

People inherently interact through language, forming the backbone of communication in society. Language is not just a tool but an essential aspect of human interaction, integral to everyday activities and interpersonal relationships. This indispensable role of language underscores the significance of linguistics, which highlights the intricate connection between language and society. Sociolinguistics emerges as a field that scrutinizes how various societal factors influence language and vice versa (Madayani, 2014:1). It bridges sociology and linguistics, exploring the multifaceted interplay between language and society.

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language operates within social contexts, exploring the ways in which linguistic choices reflect and shape social interactions (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015:1). It seeks to understand the intricate relationship between language and society by examining variations in speech based on factors such as region, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and age.

According to Holmes (2013:1), language is not merely a tool for communication but also a marker of identity, group membership, and social relationships. Sociolinguistics investigates why people speak differently in various social settings and how linguistic variation can indicate social structures and power dynamics. For example, individuals may switch between formal and informal language depending on the context, such as using standard grammar in professional settings while adopting colloquial expressions in casual conversations with friends. This phenomenon, known as code-switching, illustrates how language adapts to social circumstances and expectations.

Additionally, sociolinguists analyze the role of language in shaping cultural norms and social hierarchies. Trudgill (2000:2) argues that

language variation is not random but systematically influenced by social factors, demonstrating how linguistic features can signify group affiliation or exclusion. For instance, in multilingual societies, speakers may use different languages or dialects to navigate social interactions strategically, signaling solidarity or distinction from others. In Indonesia, speakers often mix Indonesian with regional languages such as Javanese or Sundanese to express cultural identity and maintain traditional linguistic heritage. Similarly, in urban settings, young speakers frequently adopt global slang terms influenced by English and social media, reflecting generational and cultural shifts in linguistic preferences. By examining these dynamics, sociolinguistics provides valuable insights into the social functions of language and its role in maintaining and transforming societal structures.

Sociolinguistics provides a crucial perspective on the symbiotic relationship between language and society, emphasizing how language both reflects and shapes social structures. Yule (2010:254) highlights that sociolinguistics goes beyond analyzing linguistic elements in isolation; instead, it explores the underlying social and cultural factors influencing language use. This approach acknowledges that language is not merely a system of communication but also a fundamental aspect of human social behavior. For instance, the way individuals address each other—using formal titles like “Sir” or “Madam” in professional settings versus casual terms like “dude” or “bro” among friends and illustrates how linguistic choices signal social relationships and expectations. Such distinctions highlight the role of sociolinguistics in decoding language as a social tool, revealing the norms and values embedded within different speech communities.

Trudgill (2000:32) further elaborates that sociolinguistics investigates how cultural phenomena shape linguistic behavior, emphasizing the contextual nature of language use. Language adapts according to factors such as geography, ethnicity, class, and social setting, leading to variations

in dialects, accents, and vocabulary. For example, in multilingual societies like Indonesia, speakers frequently engage in code-switching, alternating between Indonesian, English, and regional languages depending on the context and their interlocutor. A student may use formal Indonesian with teachers, a regional dialect with family members, and English slang with peers, demonstrating how sociolinguistics explains linguistic flexibility as a response to cultural and situational influences. This adaptive nature of language reflects the dynamic interplay between linguistic structures and social identity.

Furthermore, Holmes (2013:01) argues that sociolinguistics extends beyond the mere description of language variation to examine the complex dynamics of social interactions mediated by language. The way people communicate often conveys implicit social messages about power, solidarity, and group membership. For instance, the use of honorifics in Japanese (e.g., "-san," "-sama") signifies respect and hierarchy, while in contrast, English speakers may rely more on tone and phrasing to express politeness. Another example is the rise of digital communication, where internet slang and emojis function as markers of online identity, shaping how different generations and social groups interact. These examples illustrate that sociolinguistics not only maps linguistic variation but also uncovers the deeper social meanings embedded in everyday language practices.

In essence, sociolinguistics acts as a prominent tool for deciphering the complex tapestry of human interaction and communication. It provides a nuanced understanding of how language functions within social contexts, shedding light on the intricate interplay between language, society, and culture. Through sociolinguistics, researchers can unravel the intricacies of social interactions and the subtle nuances embedded within linguistic behaviours, thereby enriching our comprehension of human communication and societal dynamics.

In essence, sociolinguistics acts as a prominent tool for deciphering the complex tapestry of human interaction and communication. It provides a nuanced understanding of how language functions within social contexts, shedding light on the intricate interplay between language, society, and culture. According to Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015:1), sociolinguistics explores the ways in which language varies and changes in response to social structures, identities, and cultural norms. This perspective highlights how language use is shaped by factors such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographical location. For example, in many societies, men and women may use language differently; studies have shown that women are more likely to use standard language forms, while men may prefer non-standard or vernacular speech to assert masculinity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013:79). Such variations underscore the role of sociolinguistics in uncovering the deep-seated social meanings embedded in linguistic choices, reinforcing the idea that language is more than just a communication tool. It is a reflection of societal values and relationships.

Through sociolinguistics, researchers can unravel the intricacies of social interactions and the subtle nuances embedded within linguistic behaviors, thereby enriching our comprehension of human communication and societal dynamics. Holmes (2013:3) emphasizes that language not only conveys information but also serves as a marker of identity, solidarity, and power relations. This is evident in multilingual societies where code-switching. The practice of alternating between languages in a conversation and functions as a means of signaling group affiliation or social status. For instance, bilingual speakers in Malaysia might switch between English and Malay to navigate different social contexts, using English in professional settings and Malay in casual interactions with family and friends. Similarly, in digital communication, the rise of internet slang and abbreviations among younger generations demonstrates how language adapts to technological and social changes (Crystal, 2011:152). By examining such linguistic

patterns, sociolinguistics helps us understand how language serves as a dynamic force that both shapes and is shaped by social interactions.

The study of sociolinguistics highlights the inextricable bond between language and society and offering how language shapes and reflects social dynamics. Through a sociolinguistic point of view, researchers examine the multifaceted interactions between language use and societal factors, uncovering the diverse ways in which language functions within different social contexts. From exploring the connection between language and culture to unravelling the social functions embedded within language usage, sociolinguistics provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of human communication. By elucidating the intricate dynamics of social interactions mediated by language, sociolinguistics enhances our comprehension of linguistic behaviours and societal norms. Ultimately, sociolinguistics serves as a cornerstone for deciphering the rich tapestry of human interaction, enriching our understanding of language, society, and culture. Through continued exploration and analysis, sociolinguistics remains essential in unravelling the complexities of human communication and societal dynamics.

### **2.2.2 Speech Community**

Community has its own characteristics in their communication. People who include there will approve and follow the rule that have been made especially in using language. Bloomfield (1933:42) states that “a speech community is a group of people who interact by means of speech”. In addition, Lyons (1970: 326) defines that speech community refers to all people who use a given language (or dialect). Language used in community called a speech community.

In community, it is possible the members have different language and ability. Community not only share about language in use, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language. Romaine (2000:23) speech

community is “a group of people who do not necessary share the same language”. Norms and rules are form of agreement from the member in how language is use although the language is different.

Every individual in different community wants to show their identity one occasion as members of one community and on another as members of another. Wardhaugh (2006: 128) states that “each individual is a member of many different speech communities. This phenomenon is easy to occur in bilingual country. Many forms of the structure language such as phonetic change, borrowing, language mixing, and language shift can be found. As Gumperz (1971:224) defines that speech community as "a dynamic fields of action where phonetic change, borrowing, language mixture, and language shift all occur".

Classroom is a simple part of speech community since the teacher and the students interact each other and have a communication in the classroom. When teaching learning process happens, the teacher cannot be avoided in using language shift; such as code switching or borrowing, particularly in an English class. They switch the language from English to Indonesia in order to make the students easy in understanding the material.

From description above, it can be concluded that speech community is a group of people who live together in same place and have a similar characteristic of language or dialect in daily activity and use more than one language in their conversation. They also have their own identity in using language in order to show their difference in communication with other community.

### **2.2.3 Language Contact**

Uriel Weinreich, in his book *Language in Contact: Findings and Problems* (1953), put forward the theory that language contact is a phenomenon that occurs when two or more languages come into contact with each other in a community or individual, resulting in changes in

language structure or lexical enrichment. Weinreich highlights that language contact can occur in various contexts, both physical (such as trade or migration) and non-physical (such as media or literature). This process can lead to the adoption of linguistic elements such as vocabulary, syntax, or even phonology from one language to another (Weinreich, 1953).

In addition, Weinreich examines the sociolinguistic impact of language contact, highlighting how a community's cultural and social identity shapes the process of adopting foreign linguistic elements. He emphasizes that language contact is not merely a structural phenomenon but also a socially driven process influenced by speakers' perceptions and attitudes toward the donor language (Weinreich, 1953). When a language is perceived as prestigious or associated with economic, technological, or cultural advancement, speakers are more likely to integrate its lexical items into their own language. Romaine (1995) supports this perspective, arguing that the extent to which borrowed words are assimilated depends on sociocultural dynamics, such as nationalism, resistance to linguistic change, or a desire for modernization.

In the modern digital era, social media, gaming platforms, and online forums serve as arenas where words and expressions from dominant languages, such as English are absorbed into local languages at an accelerated pace. Crystal (2011) notes that the rise of the internet has intensified linguistic borrowing, with netizens frequently incorporating terms like *meme*, *viral*, and *streaming* into their daily speech, often without translation. This phenomenon is particularly evident among younger generations, whose digital engagement fosters increased exposure to and adoption of foreign linguistic elements. Thus, Weinreich's framework remains essential for understanding contemporary linguistic change, as digital media reshapes language contact beyond geographical constraints.

#### **2.2.4 Morphology**

Morphology is the study of how words are constructed from the smallest units that carry meaning and grammatical function. This definition is supported by Lieber's statement that morphology is the study of the structure of words (Bauer, 1983). It is concerned with the internal structure of words and the rules by which words are formed. The word "morphology" is derived from two Greek words: "morphê", meaning "form" or "shape," and "-logia", meaning "study of" or "branch of knowledge." Thus, "morphology" literally means "the study of form." In the context of linguistics, it specifically refers to the study of the form and structure of words, including their smallest meaningful units and the rules by which they are formed and combined.

Morphology examines how these smallest units, known as morphemes, combine to create the vast array of words in a language, thus playing a crucial role in understanding linguistic patterns and the complexities of language formation. Morphology focuses on the structure of words, illustrating how words like "unhappiness" consist of smaller meaningful elements such as "un," "happy," and "ness." According to (Bauer, 1983), this area of linguistics is primarily concerned with word structure. Similarly, McCarthy states that morphology is the area of grammar concerned with the structure of words and with relationships between words involving the morphemes that compose them (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2022:2). Each morpheme carries semantic content or grammatical function, and their combination forms the complex structures of words. Understanding morphology involves analysing how morphemes interact to create meaning, how they change form to fit grammatical contexts, and how they evolve within a language. Based on the explanations above, it can be said that morphology is the linguistic study of words, focusing not only on their meanings but also on their structures. This branch of linguistics examines the basic components of language and grammar, along with their roles in grammatical and semantic changes. Morphology

seeks to explore the structure of words and their relationships with one another. By understanding word structures through morphology, the meanings and interactions between words become clearer.

### **2.2.5 Semantic**

Semantics is agreed as the term used in the field of linguistics which studies the signifier with signified. In other words, semantics is a field of study in linguistics which studies the meaning contained in language units. In addition, (Kreidler, 1998) defines Semantics is the study of meaning, and linguistic semantics is the study of how languages organize and express meanings. It means that meaning was extremely important in linguistic semantics for us to limit our expression of meanings to a single language. Moreover, semantics not only study meaning, but the relationship of one word to other word also learned in semantics that influences on humans and public.

The term semantics is often defined as the study of meaning, and more accurately the definition of semantics is the study of the relationship between linguistics form and meaning. Semantics is difference from pragmatics, semantics is concerned with the meaning of words and sentence as linguistics expression, in and of themselves, while pragmatics is concerned with those aspects of meaning that depend on or derive from the way in which the words and sentences are used. Based on that perception about semantic related to internal meaning focuses on the meaning of the text.

Kreidler stated, there are three disciplines are concerned in semantics meaning studies include psychology, philosophy, and linguistics. They each have their own set of interests and approaches. They each, however, borrow from and contribute to the others. Psychologists study how individuals acquire, retain, recall, and lose knowledge; how they classify, make judgments, and solve problems. In other words, how the human mind

finds and works with meanings. Language philosophers are interested in how we know, and how any particular fact we know or accept as true is related to other possible facts what must be antecedent (a presupposition) to that fact and what is a likely consequence, or entailment of it; what statements are mutually contradictory, which sentences express the same meaning in different words, and which are unrelated. (Presupposition and entailment are discussed further in this chapter.)

Linguists are interested in learning how language works. Linguistics is concerned with determining the meaning of certain language elements, such as English words such as paint and happy, as well as affixes such as the -er of painter and the un- of unhappy. It's all about showing how these elements interact to form more comprehensive meanings in phrases like the sad painter and sentences like the painter is unhappy and how they're connected to another.

Semantics plays an important role in language. Language activity is interpreted as communicating or speaking activity, either orally or in writing. In language activities, language used to convey the meaning. The meaning of language is found in every word of the sentence that used when communicate. Knowledge of relationship between symbols or units of language to the meaning is indispensable in communication with language. The advantages of studying semantics really depend on human daily task. That statement shows that learning semantics will be useful for all aspects, can be in acquisition, learning, and other activities. Semantic also useful for the profession that is all person have. Learning semantics is also useful at choosing words that have many changes and developments. Occasionally, language shows development with lots of new vocabulary. Each vocabulary has different meaning from other, so the people need semantics competence to choose right.

### 2.2.6 Lieber's Morphosemantic

Morphosemantics is obtained from combining the words "*morpho*" + "*semantics*" based on the word formation. *Morpho* is taken from the word "morphology," a branch of linguistics that identifies the basic units of language as grammatical units, while semantics examines meaning or meaning (Ghozali, 2021; Verhaar, 2004, p. 97). Morphosemantics is a branch of linguistics that identifies grammatical units and their meanings based on this understanding of morphology and semantics.

In the framework of morphosemantics proposed by Rochelle Lieber (2004), semantic primitives are the most basic and irreducible units of meaning used to analyze and explain how complex word meanings are constructed. These primitives play a central role in Lieber's theory, particularly in her model of Lexical Semantic Representations (LSR) where systematically connects morphological structures (such as affixation and compounding) to word meanings. As Lieber (2004) states, semantic primitives are a small set of abstract, semantically contentful elements that serve as the building blocks of meaning.

The purpose of using semantic primitives is to provide a formal and compositional explanation of how words especially derived words encode meaning. Each morpheme is assigned a basic semantic function, allowing Lieber to present a structured framework for understanding how affixes and roots contribute distinct components to a word's overall meaning. This enables a consistent approach to analyzing derived words across grammatical categories.

<b>Semantic Primitive</b>	<b>Meaning / Function</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Be	Existence in a particular state	<i>happy</i> → [BE (STATE: happy)]	Indicates being in a certain condition.
HAVE	Possession or relation	<i>owner</i> → [HAVE (THING)]	Describes someone who has or possesses something
ACT	Action or activity	<i>runner</i> → [ACT (run)]	Indicates a person performing an action
CAUSE	To cause something to happen	<i>modernize</i> → [CAUSE TO BE (STATE: modern)]	Used in affixes like <i>-ize</i>
GO	Change or transition	<i>develop</i> → [GO from STATE A to STATE B]	Expresses transformation or movement
STATE	Static condition or quality	<i>kindness</i> → [STATE: kind]	Represents a fixed state or characteristic
EVENT	Event or occurrence	<i>explosion</i> → [EVENT: explode]	Describes an actual happening or occurrence

THING	Object or entity	<i>creation</i> → [THING: created]	Nominalized result of an action or process
INSTRUMENT	Tool or means used in action	<i>opener</i> → [INSTRUMENT for opening]	Refers to a tool or device used to perform an action
RESULT	Outcome of a process or action	<i>development</i> → [RESULT of developing]	The final result of a change or action

To illustrate how this works in practice, take the word *happiness*. The root *happy* represents the semantic primitive [STATE: happy], and the suffix *-ness* contributes [THING] or [STATE], so the full lexical semantic representation becomes [THING: state of being happy]. Likewise, in the word *modernize*, the base *modern* expresses [STATE: modern], and the affix *-ize* contributes [CAUSE TO BE], resulting in [CAUSE TO BE (STATE: modern)]. These analyses show how semantic primitives help clarify the individual contribution of each morpheme in the formation of complex meanings.

Lieber's theory of semantic primitives belongs to the field of morphosemantics, which explores the relationship between word formation and meaning. Her framework merges morphological analysis with formal semantics in a way that is systematic, explanatory, and applicable to both standard and non-standard vocabulary. This makes it particularly useful for analyzing not only academic or technical language, but also slang, neologisms, and creative wordplay in contemporary usage.

Lieber shows that such patterns are not random but rather reflect a systematic interplay between form and meaning. This structured compositionality is particularly significant when analyzing modern linguistic phenomena such as slang expressions, borrowed words, or digitally-influenced neologisms. In these domains, creative and often non-standard word formations reflect evolving cultural practices and social identities. Lieber's model provides a robust analytical tool to decode how meaning is conveyed in such words, even when their forms diverge from traditional grammar. Moreover, by acknowledging that affixes possess independent semantic weight rather than serving merely as grammatical devices the theory elevates the study of word formation to a level that captures the richness and innovation present in everyday language use.

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in morphosemantic theory, with the aim of analyzing the structure and meaning of newly formed lexical items particularly those emerging through informal language use such as slang. Morphosemantics, as conceptualized by Lieber (2004), operates at the intersection of morphology and semantics, providing a framework to explore how morphemes not only contribute to word structure but also encode particular semantic roles and conceptual categories. The research methodology is structured to identify, categorize, and interpret the morphosemantic processes underlying contemporary word formation, especially within the linguistic behavior of younger speaker groups.

The initial phase of the methodology involves the systematic identification of lexical items relevant to the study, which are characterized by informal usage, innovation, and possible external language influence (Lieber, 2004). These items will be collected from both spoken and digital discourse sources. Once the lexical items are identified, a morphological segmentation process will be applied. This step isolates the roots, affixes,

and word-formation strategies involved (e.g., compounding, blending, clipping), allowing the researcher to map their structural elements.

The second stage consists of applying morphosemantic model by analyzing each lexical item's internal structure through semantic features associated with the morphemes (Lieber, 2004). Drawing from Lieber's notion of Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS), each morphological element will be assessed for features such as [+event], [+result], [+state], [+agent], or [+instrument], as well as abstract features relevant to the lexical item's conceptual content. This stage enables the researcher to evaluate how semantic properties are distributed across morphemes and how these contribute to the overall meaning of the lexical unit.

In the third phase, semantic analysis will be contextualized through discourse and pragmatic interpretation. Lieber (2004) emphasizes that meaning in morphology is not only compositional but also shaped by conceptual structure and usage context. Therefore, the analysis extends to include how lexical items function within social interactions and reflect particular speaker intentions, social roles, or cultural attitudes. This broader interpretive lens acknowledges the dynamic relationship between form and meaning as mediated by user perception and social practice.

Lastly, the findings will be synthesized to reveal patterns in morphosemantic construction, enabling the researcher to draw conclusions about the productivity, creativity, and sociolinguistic relevance of the lexical items under study. Through the framework, the study aims to provide a linguistically detailed and semantically rich account of how new words are constructed and integrated into everyday language, particularly within informal, digitally-mediated environments.

### **2.2.7 Slang**

Slang is a dynamic and informal aspect of language that emerges primarily in casual conversations and specific social groups. According to

Walter (2004), slang consists of words or phrases used in relaxed, informal settings, often characterized by their creative, playful, or exaggerated meanings. The *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines slang as a collection of non-standard words that frequently change over time, often originating within particular subcultures or communities. Slang terms can take the form of metaphors, similes, or other figurative expressions, adding color and expressiveness to everyday speech (Eble, 1996). Additionally, slang functions as a marker of in-group identity, fostering solidarity and social cohesion among users who share the same linguistic expressions (Dalzell & Victor, 2015).

Beyond its social function, slang plays a crucial role in linguistic evolution by reflecting cultural shifts and societal trends. As societies evolve, new slang terms emerge to encapsulate contemporary experiences, technological advancements, and generational identities (Crystal, 2008). For instance, modern slang in digital spaces such as *LOL* (laugh out loud) and illustrates how language adapts to new modes of communication especially among younger generations. Slang not only adds richness to language but also serves as a mirror of cultural change, enabling speakers to communicate in a more personal and engaging manner (Allan & Burridge, 2006). While slang is often perceived as temporary or informal, its widespread use and impact on mainstream vocabulary demonstrate its significance in shaping linguistic and cultural identities.

In social groups, language often serves as a symbol of identity, helping people distinguish themselves from others. Teenagers, in particular, are known for their creativity in language, constantly inventing new slang terms that reflect their experiences and social interactions. This slang is often used in informal settings, like with friends, and helps teenagers express themselves in ways that are unique to their group. The use of slang not only makes communication more personal and relatable but also strengthens the bond between teenagers, as they share a common

language that others may not fully understand. This creativity in language is a key way that teenagers shape their identities and connect with each other.

Slang is a highly informal and dynamic form of expression that often serves as an in-group language, fostering a sense of belonging among specific social groups such as teenagers, soldiers, or pop culture communities (Richards, 1985). It emerges as a result of rapid linguistic innovation and societal shifts, with new words and phrases spreading quickly through interaction and media exposure (Holmes, 2013). Slang is known for its creativity, often incorporating playful, metaphorical, or exaggerated expressions that make communication more engaging and relatable (Spolsky, 1998). This linguistic flexibility enables speakers to express identity, attitude, and social connections, helping individuals mark their membership within a group while distinguishing themselves from outsiders (Yule, 2010).

Beyond its social functions, slang also contributes to the efficiency and adaptability of spoken language. Many slang terms simplify pronunciation or condense longer expressions, making communication more fluid, particularly among younger generations (Wardhaugh, 2006). Because slang evolves rapidly, it resists rigid definitions, constantly adapting to cultural and linguistic trends (Trudgill, 2000). Slang plays a crucial role in linguistic development, influencing everyday speech and reflecting social and cultural transformations.

(Finegan, 2008) states that slang is generally very popular among teenagers and college students. (Akmazian, et al, 1998) add that slang has several notable characteristics: First, slang is part of an informal colloquial style, second, slang changes very rapidly, like clothing fashion and popular music, and third, it is a specific area of slang. It is often associated with a particular social group, so it may be called teen slang, underworld slang (criminal slang), drug culture slang, etc.

### 2.2.8 Generation Alpha in Indonesia

Generation Alpha are individuals born between 2010-2025, and the first generation to be born entirely in the digital era. In Indonesia, they have unique characteristics that are influenced by technological developments, social change, and local culture that continue to develop. (Tapscott, 2008) highlighted that generations born in the digital era tend to have a close relationship with technology from an early age. This can be seen from their exposure to gadgets and the internet, even before entering formal school age.

The main characteristic of Generation Alpha in Indonesia is their dependence on technology for learning, playing, and socializing. Generation Alpha tends to use digital applications and platforms as a means of learning and entertainment (McCrinkle & Fell, 2020). In Indonesia, this trend is reinforced by increasing internet penetration and government policies such as *Merdeka Belajar* which encourage the adoption of technology in education.

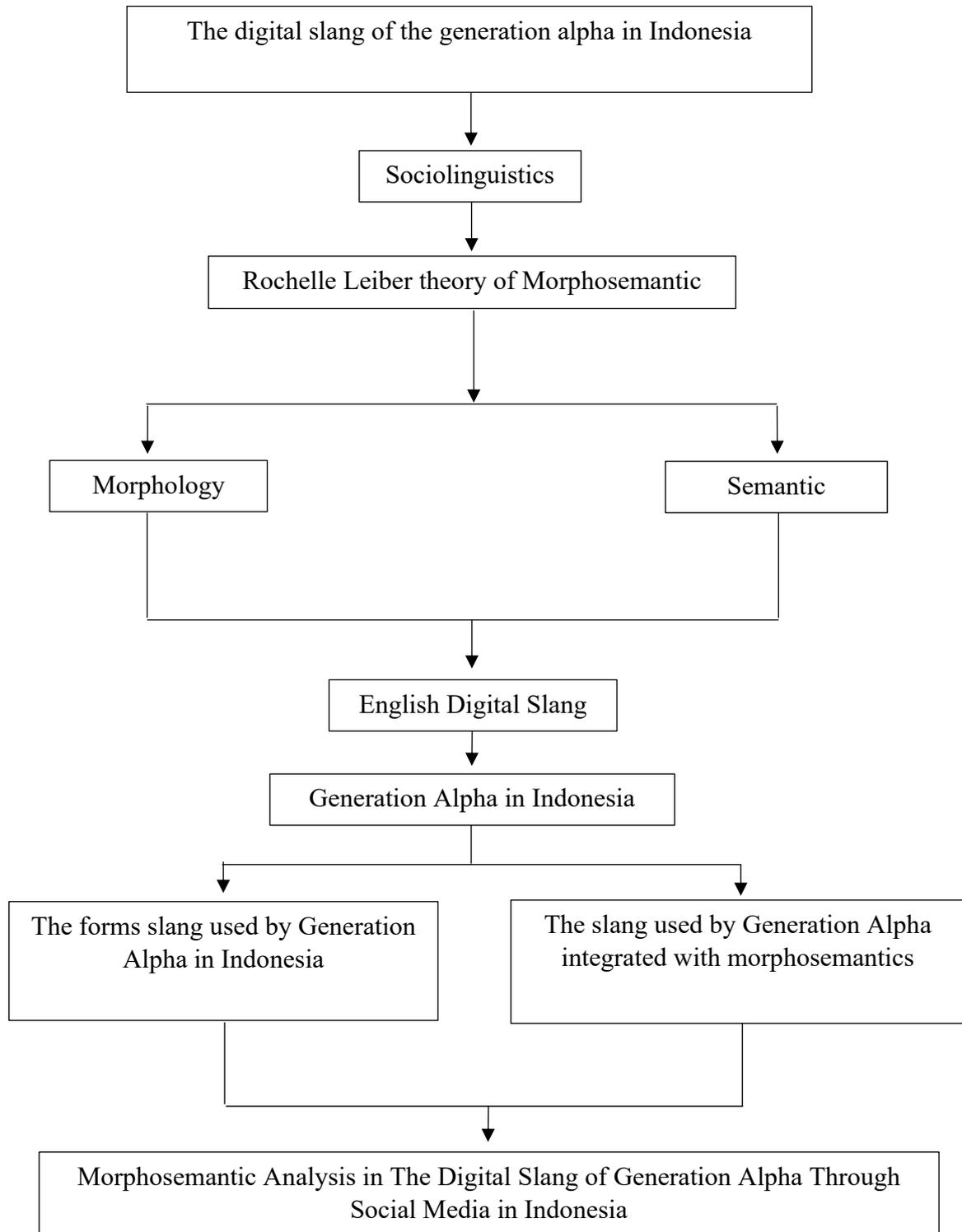
Generation Alpha also shows a strong preference for visual and interactive content. This is related to the increasing popularity of platforms such as YouTube and TikTok among Indonesian children. Research shows that 73% of children in Indonesia aged 6–14 years use YouTube as their primary platform for entertainment and learning (Setiawan, 2021). This platform allows Generation Alpha to access information instantly and participate in global culture while creating local trends.

From a cultural perspective, Generation Alpha in Indonesia shows a tendency to blend traditional values with modern lifestyles. For example, even though they are exposed to global content through the internet, they still maintain local traditions such as traditional celebrations or the use of regional languages in the family context. Generation Alpha tends to be a

bridge between traditional values and modern innovation, with their ability to navigate both worlds (Nugroho, 2020)

In addition, Generation Alpha in Indonesia faces significant challenges such as the negative impacts of technology including gadget addiction and lack of physical interaction. (McCrinkle & Fell, 2020) warn that these challenges require interventions involving parents and educators to ensure these children develop in a balanced environment.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework



This research focused on the use of digital slang by Generation Alpha in Indonesia, grounded in the field of sociolinguistics, which explores the intersection between language and society. To investigate this phenomenon, the study applies Rochelle Lieber's theory of morphosemantics, a framework that connects morphological structures (how words are formed) with their semantic components (what words mean). From this theoretical basis, the research focuses on two linguistic dimensions morphology and semantics to analyze how English digital slang emerges and functions within the communicative patterns of Indonesian Generation Alpha. These slang expressions are products of cultural interaction, social identity, and the heavy influence of online media where Generation Alpha is highly active.

The conceptual framework proceeds by identifying the types of English digital slang used by Generation Alpha and then analyzing them using the lens of morphosemantics. The first focus of the analysis is to determine the morphological forms of slang terms how they are constructed linguistically. The second focus involves interpreting the meanings embedded in these slang expressions and how these meanings reflect Generation Alpha's digital culture and social behaviors. The final goal of the research is to conduct a morphosemantic analysis of digital slang used through social media in Indonesia, shedding light on the linguistic creativity, adaptation, and cultural relevance of this generation's language use. This dual approach not only uncovers the linguistic characteristics of slang but also expands the application of Lieber's morphosemantic theory within the context of modern digital communication.

