CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Literature Review

1. Alpha Generation

a. Definition of Alpha Generation

According to McCrindle (2009), Alpha Generation, named after the first letter of the Greek alphabet, follows Generation Z, thereby initiating a new cycle in generational nomenclature. Born predominantly to millennial parents between 2010 and 2025, Alpha Generation is characterized by staggering birth rates, with approximately 2.1 million born weekly, totaling over 130 million globally by 2018 (Lamble, 2018). Projections suggest that by 2025, their population could surpass two billion, underscoring their significant impact on future demographics (Carter, 2016; McCrindle, 2009). This demographic surge carries substantial implications for education systems worldwide, particularly in the field of Teaching English to Young Students (TEYL). As English continues to function as a global lingua franca, the growing number of children in this generation will require innovative, age-appropriate, and digitally responsive pedagogical approaches to meet their linguistic needs and learning preferences effectively.

Moreover, we can define Alpha Generation as those born from 2011 to 2025, highlighting their early immersion in digital technology and reputation as the most intellectually advanced generation to date. Despite their affinity for technology, their extensive screen time may contribute to social isolation.

b. Characteristics of Alpha Generation

According to Duanto (2017), Alpha Generation is characterized by a preference for control, dominance, and being in charge, feeling comfortable when they are the ones leading. Unlike other chicks who nurture, they tend to care for others, especially the weak. However, they are also driven to assert dominance by exploiting others' weaknesses. This behavior is a manifestation

of their desire to be first, best, or most recognized, but does not indicate a propensity for bullying. They have a reluctance to share and emphasize the importance of personal ownership, often saying "this is mine! Everything is mine!" They frequently challenge rules, such as breaking crayons when asked to color neatly or finding ways to escape from diapers, swaddling, jackets, or being placed in seats like dining chairs or car seats.

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Technology is integral to their lives, and they cannot imagine a world without social networks. From infancy, Alpha Generation is familiar with smartphones, viewing them not merely as tools but as essential parts of their lives. They find smartphones easier to use than laptops or desktop computers, favoring visually appealing and user-friendly applications that cater to their needs. While technology provides abundant information, it also diminishes their ability to communicate directly. Alpha children interact less face-to-face due to their preoccupation with gadgets, resulting in a decline in their awareness and communication skills over time.

The Alpha Generation was born during a time of strong economic growth and rapid development in technology. Growing up with easy access to the internet and digital tools, they are very familiar with using social media to communicate and share ideas. According to Rezeki et al. (2019), this has led to the fast spread and creation of new slang among young people. In today's digital world, slang has become a common part of everyday communication, especially among the younger generation. It's not just used in speech, but also in social media, online chats, and messaging apps. Azhari (2020) explains that slang helps young people express their identity and feel connected to their social groups.

Wahib (2020) also note that slang is most commonly used by young people. It shows how language changes over time, especially with the influence of technology and youth culture.

c. Learning Preference of Alpha Generation

Since Alpha Generation is the generation born from 2010 onwards, Alpha generation cannot be separated from technology (Ramadlani and Wibisono, 2017). Therefore, learning preferences of Alpha generation are

- Online Reading and Learning: Hutajulu et al. (2024) found that Gen Alpha effectively applies online reading skills and demonstrates a strong ability to interpret information through digital mediums.

- Interactive and Engaging Content: Alpha Generation's early and extensive use of technology fosters a preference for digital learning tools and resources. Drugaş (2022) emphasized that this generation gravitates towards interactive and engaging educational content, such as educational apps and games.

- Multisensory Learning: Ramadlani and Wibisono (2017) highlighted that Alpha Generation prefers visual and audio communication over text-based messages, reflecting the importance of visual literacy in engaging with this generation. Hutajulu et al. (2024) also noted that Gen Alpha students favor the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic tools for learning. This preference is further supported by Drugaş (2022), who observed that Gen Alpha's familiarity with multitasking, facilitated by technology, influences their preference for activities allowing simultaneous engagement in multiple tasks. Consequently, Alpha Generation shows a strong preference for visual and multimedia learning materials, which aligns with their digital literacy and comfort with multimedia formats (Ramadlani & Wibisono, 2017).

- Dependence on Technology: Gen Alpha's learning is heavily dependent on digital and communication technologies, including social media (Hutajulu et al., 2024). Their familiarity with these technologies means that they

benefit significantly from educational approaches integrating digital tools and platforms. They are comfortable using devices for learning purposes and appreciate interactive apps, and educational games, and noted that online resources enhance their understanding and engagement (Ramadlani & Wibisono, 2017). Similarly, Ziatdinov & Cilliers, (2021) Alpha Generation's learning style is largely dependent on technology, and they are well-versed in interacting with digital devices such as smartphones, iPads, and laptops.

- Adaptive and Flexible Learning: Drugaș (2022) suggests that Alpha Generation exhibits cognitive flexibility and adaptability, indicating a preference for learning environments that allow for autonomy and decision-making. This adaptability aligns with their comfort with technology and the dynamic nature of modern educational tools.

2. English Language Learning Theory

Teaching English presents unique challenges that require careful navigation by educators. According to Songbatumis (2017), these challenges include inadequate teacher training, resulting in educators grappling with classroom management issues and insufficient language proficiency among instructors not specialized in English teaching. Emery (2012) highlights overcrowded classrooms as another significant hurdle, impacting teachers' ability to provide individualized attention and maintain student engagement effectively. Moreover, the lack of vocabulary mastery among students poses a major obstacle (Maruyama cited in Hoa & Mai, 2016; Hasan, 2016), hindering their comprehension and expression in English. In environments where English exposure is limited, such as regions where English is not widely spoken, students face difficulties in practicing and using the language, further dampening their motivation (Garton et al., 2014). Additionally, the scarcity of appropriate teaching resources and materials (Ajibola, 2010) limits the effectiveness of English language instruction, especially in terms of developing essential language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Pande, 2013).

Linguistic challenges stemming from mother tongue interference also contribute to students' struggles with English (Fatiloro, 2015; Pande, 2013), affecting their overall language performance. Furthermore, psychological factors such as students' perceptions of English as a daunting subject can lead to negative attitudes and reluctance to engage actively in language learning (Pande, 2013).

Kildag (2009) identifies three main challenges in teaching English: institutional, instructional, and socio-economic challenges. Institutional challenges stem from inadequate support from schools or the Ministry of Education, which manifests in a lack of infrastructure for teaching communicative English and insufficient professional training for English teachers. Instructional challenges include a crowded curriculum with unrealistic learning goals and textbooks that lack supplementary materials necessary for effective English learning.

Khaljoo (2013) highlights several challenges in teaching English: First, there are insufficient hours allocated to English language teaching, which limits the depth of instruction. Second, disparities arise among students, particularly those who receive additional English tuition outside of school. Third, many high school teachers lack proficiency in spoken English, hindering effective language instruction.

a. **Integrating Learning Theories and Approaches in English Language Teaching**

To address these challenges, a theoretical foundation is essential. Several learning theories offer insights into effective language instruction:

- Behaviorism emphasizes the role of repetition, reinforcement, and conditioning in learning. In English teaching, this can be implemented through structured drills, memorization of vocabulary, and pattern-based sentence construction to build automatic responses.

- Cognitivism focuses on how students mentally process information. Teachers can use techniques such as scaffolding, concept mapping, and guided discovery to help students internalize language structures and understand usage rules, especially in reading and writing.
- Constructivism positions students as active participants in building knowledge. This theory supports task-based and project-based learning where students use English to solve problems, collaborate, and reflect, making learning more meaningful and personalized.

One widely used approach aligned with these theories is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT shifts the focus from grammar accuracy to communicative competence, encouraging students to use English meaningfully in real-life situations. Activities such as role plays, group discussions, and interviews are typical in CLT classrooms.

In addition, the Genre-Based Approach is particularly effective in supporting language learning through a functional lens:

- It highlights the social context of language use, teaching students how to structure texts according to purpose (e.g., recounts, reports, arguments).
- It emphasizes practical communication skills, helping students write and speak appropriately in academic, professional, and everyday situations.
- It fosters critical awareness of language, enabling students to reflect on how meaning is shaped by audience and context.

b. The Relevance of English for Alpha Generation

Alpha Generation, born after 2010, grows up in an environment saturated with technology, digital interaction, and global connectivity. These characteristics make English increasingly essential for this generation:

- English enables access to global knowledge and digital tools, including online platforms, games, and learning applications.
- It supports multilingual communication in digital spaces, from social media to online learning communities.
- Mastery of English fosters future readiness, aligning with the demands of globalized work environments and cross-cultural collaboration.

Therefore, English teaching for Alpha Generation must go beyond traditional rote learning. It should leverage interactive, technology-integrated, and student-centered methods. Approaches like CLT and Genre-Based Learning, supported by constructivist and cognitivist principles, are especially suited to engage digital-native students with authentic, relevant, and collaborative experiences.

c. **Potential Problems Faced by the teachers' in teaching the Alpha Generation**

Because Alpha Generation has been using digital technology their whole lives, they may learn in ways that make it hard to teach them English. These students were born between 2010 and 2025 and are likely to rely heavily on fast, interactive content. This could make it harder for them to do traditional language learning tasks that need sustained attention and deep focus (Jha, 2020; McCrindle & Fell, 2020). Because they are used to getting instant feedback and doing many things at once, they may also have trouble being patient with language learning tasks like mastering grammar, writing structure, and building vocabulary. Also, the fact that a lot of people use digital slang and informal language when they talk to each other online could affect how well they understand and use formal English (Rezeki et al., 2019; Azhari, 2020). These possible problems show how important it is to have flexible

teaching methods that balance digital fluency with the needs of structured language learning.

To teach Alpha Generation well, teachers need to use methods that fit with the generation's digital habits and ways of learning. Studies have shown that Alpha generation is great at reading and processing information online, which makes digital platforms great for teaching language (Hutajulu et al., 2024). They like interactive and fun content, like educational apps and games, because they have been around technology since they were young (Drugaș, 2022). Also, Gen Alpha prefers multimedia formats to traditional text-based instruction (Ramadlani & Wibisono, 2017; Hutajulu et al., 2024), so multisensory learning approaches that use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements are especially effective. Their dependence on technology also makes it easier to use digital tools like smartphones, tablets, and online learning platforms in the classroom (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021). Also, because they are cognitively flexible and adaptable, they need learning environments that give them freedom and encourage them to explore on their own (Drugaș, 2022). These ideas show how important it is to use adaptive, technology-enhanced, and student-centered teaching methods with this new generation.

B. Study of the Relevant Research

Previous research that is relevant to this issue is research conducted by Arifah, Munir, and Nudin (2021), which suggests that education needs to be designed in such a way that to suit the characteristics of generations and generations in accordance with developments over time. The educational design offered from the results of this research is based, among other things, on the digitalization of education and learning skills. Skills-based education can be realized in the form of education based on innovation and creativity as well as education that is open to people from the outside world. The two educational designs were designed by taking into account the various characteristics of the alpha generation and the

characteristics of the industrial revolution 4.0 so that they were able to contribute to the development of Islamic education.

Then, research from Senjaya, et al. (2021) shows that the Alpha Generation is a generation born in a situation where technology is developing rapidly, so it is necessary to utilize technological facilities. to be more communicative. Using a hybrid learning pattern, between using technology and conventional methods, the strategy that can be used is to learn more about ICT/Technology and introduce educational teaching to students.

Last, research from Carvalho, Monteiro, and Martins (2022). This research explains that generations is conceptualized as a theoretical framework for understanding the characteristics of groups born in the same historical time period. Individuals born after 2010 are identified as Alpha Generation, characterized by early and deep exposure to digital technology and communications platforms. This research examines the implications of Alpha Generation specifically in the context of their relationship to initial teacher education. A research study was conducted involving 57 undergraduate students pursuing a teaching degree at a federal public university in Brazil. Findings from participants' responses underscore their recognition of the complexities associated with the new generation and their capacity to undertake in-depth evaluation of their educational training experiences.

The studies referenced are pertinent to this research as they highlight the specific challenges inherent in teaching English to the Alpha generation, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches in English language instruction for this cohort. Building upon this foundation, this study aims to delve deeper into the distinct challenges confronted by educators when teaching English to the Alpha generation. Furthermore, the research seeks to propose effective strategies and solutions to address these challenges, with a particular focus on the educational context in Indonesia. By exploring these aspects, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into enhancing English language teaching methodologies that are responsive to the unique characteristics and needs of the Alpha generation students in Indonesia.