

Competing Visions of Development: An Analysis of World Bank and National Policy Discourses on EdTech in Bangladesh



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**Competing Visions of Development: An Analysis of World Bank and National Policy
Discourses on EdTech in Bangladesh**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Dedication

First of all, I am grateful to the Almighty Allah for his mercy and blessings for allowing me to achieve my academic journey in this long run.

I am dedicating this thesis to my husband whose unconditional support and ethos has encouraged me to finish my academic journey. He has exhorted me in every circumstance to be who I have become today.

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Abstract

Education Technology (EdTech) has become a central element of up-to-date educational improvement and development planning in many low- and middle-income countries, including Bangladesh. Global development organizations increasingly promote digital education as a solution for improving learning outcomes, strengthening human capital, and accelerating economic growth, while national governments adopt these digital strategies within their own policy frameworks. This study examines how EdTech is established within global and national policy texts and how these improvements reflect competing visions of development in Bangladesh. This research analyzes six major policy documents and four produced by the World Bank and two national policy documents of Bangladesh, using a quantitative policy discourse analysis. The study is theoretically guided by the concept of linguistic neoliberalism and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and together these documents enable an examination of how language designed education, development, and technology. The analysis focuses on key discourse categories including human capital, market logic, digital transformation, governance and accountability, and social inclusion. The findings reveal that World Bank policy documents strongly make a point of human capital development, market efficiency, and digital innovation. Earlier national education policy in Bangladesh presents education as a social and civic responsibility, but recent national digital development policies increasingly connected with global neoliberal discourse by prioritizing skills development, economic competitiveness, and data-driven governance. This study says that EdTech in Bangladesh is not a neutral educational system but an ideologically shaped development project. It foregrounds the need for more socially grounded, context-sensitive, and equity-focused digital education policies. This research contributes to understanding how global development agendas influence national education futures by critically examining policy discourse, and offers insights for more balanced and inclusive EdTech policy formulation.

Keywords: Educational Technology (EdTech), nation, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), neoliberalism, development, language, policy, World Bank, Smart Bangladesh, Human Capital, Policy Discourse.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background study:

In Bangladesh, education is consistently desired for having a brighter future. For ages, education is imagined as a warm and meaningful journey by the teachers, families, and students that a space where children learn values, build relationships, and discover who they are. Education Technology or EdTech is interpreted as ‘the systematic use of digital tools, platforms, and resources to support teaching, learning, and managing the education system’ (World Bank, 2022). EdTech is presented as an effective solution internationally that can enhance access to education and outcomes in learning, and, through this, help reduce inequities in education, particularly in developing nations. However, there is an increasing adoption and emphasis upon EdTech in Bangladesh as one of the plans that can make an effective contribution to fulfilling good access to quality education in both rural and urban settings. Because of this, initiatives are taken like the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* which will focus upon the role of technology in ensuring greater access to education through digital technology for all learners without considering their location (Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, n.d., 1). That is why, EdTech is presented as one of those tools through which greater internet accessibility and learning platforms could be ensured in all settings, including urban areas such as Dhaka and rural areas like Teknaf. The issue is that when EdTech becomes the main area of interest in education policies, other essential point like teacher-student relationships, cultural identity, creativity, social justice, and equal access may be overshadowed or ignored.

1.2 Statement of the problems

The problem is not technology itself as it can be helpful. The real problem is that this powerful, market-driven way of talking can overlook Bangladesh’s own vision silently. In recent years, this imagination about education has started to change. When people talk about education now, especially in policies written by powerful administrations, they no longer speak mainly about teachers, students, or classrooms rather they use words like ‘innovation,’ ‘EdTech,’ ‘digital skills,’ ‘smart learning,’ and ‘human capital.’ These words are reshaping the idea about how we see education and what we believe it should do. This shift did not happen suddenly. It came from the policy documents written by global institutions like the World Bank and national visions such as

Bangladesh's *Smart Bangladesh 2041 Plan*. These documents lead how governments think, plan, and spend money. They also control how teachers should teach and how students should learn. It is raising concern about, does 'Smart Bangladesh' mean creating tech-savvy citizens who can participate in the world market, or does it mean using technology to reinforce the country's own culture, language, and unique path to development? The problem is that this crucial debate is often stay covered inside the tricky language of policy documents. The question should be asked whose vision for development is actually being built, and whose interests are truly being served?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to discover how the World Bank and Bangladesh's national policies talk about education, technology, and development. Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995, 2001) which explains how language is used in policies, to shape ideas, power, and social relationships, and how the way people think and act in society is influenced by the words; and the theory of Linguistic Neoliberalism shows how language and education are often treated like economic tools, where learning skills and communication are valued mainly for helping people get jobs and support economic growth. , this research aims to identify the deeper meanings, hidden theory, and ideological influences in disguise of terms like 'innovation,' 'digital skills,' 'future-ready learners,' 'human capital,' 'competitiveness,' and 'efficiency.' More specifically, this study aims to:

- Understand how the World Bank fabricate EdTech as a necessary path to development.
- Examine how Bangladesh's own policy documents reflect, extend, or adapt this global EdTech discourse.
- Identify the neoliberal ideas are inserted within these policies and how they shape national educational goals.
- Explore whose interests are served by this alignment of global and national digital education agendas.

1.4 Research Questions

These shared discourses may seem positive at first, but they also raise important questions. To solve this paradox, this study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do the World Bank and the Government of Bangladesh frame development and digital transformation in their EdTech policy discourses?
2. How do neoliberal notions of education and citizenship embedded in these EdTech discourses reveal competing visions of development for Bangladesh?

1.5. Significant of Study

This study is important for several reasons. Firstly, Bangladesh is currently moving fast toward digital transformation through the Smart Bangladesh vision. As Fairclough (1995, 2001) argues, policy language builds social priorities and legitimizes particular forms of action. Understanding the discourse in back of this shift can help teachers, researchers, and policymakers make more informed decisions about how EdTech should be used and how it should not be used. Secondly, a dominant role in shaping national development agendas, particularly in low- and middle-income countries is played by the global institutions such as the World Bank. Their policy documents frequently appear neutral, technical, and evidence-based; however, critical scholars argue that these texts frequently embed neoliberal assumptions about markets, efficiency, and productivity (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012; Holborow, 2015). Their reports also look unbiased and scientific, but they sometimes hide ideological agendas. This study reveals how those agendas enter Bangladesh's policy language. Thirdly, this research helps to show by using CDA and Linguistic Neoliberalism that language is not just for communication rather it is power. According to Fairclough (2010), discourse affects how organizations function, how professionals receive training, and how people perceive their social roles. Linguistic neoliberalism scholars also explained how education policies are increasingly framing language, knowledge, and skills as marketable resources (Holborow, 2015). The words used in policies impact how schools are created, how teachers are trained, and what students are expected to become. Finally, this study puts voice to the idea that development should be more than digital competition. Scholars have warned that technology-driven reforms risk duplicating inequality when social context and power relations are ignored (Selwyn, 2019). It should reflect local values, human relationships, cultural identity, and the lived experiences of Bangladeshi learners. This research's center of attention is

policy documents related to EdTech from The World Bank (2022–2023) and The Government of Bangladesh (2010 and 2023). These documents were chosen because they are recent, influential, and directly related to digital transformation and development goals. The analysis does not offset classroom-level practices or student outcomes. It also does not evaluate the technical success of EdTech tools. Instead, the study is limited to analyzing the language and discourses that construct EdTech as a development priority. This study has a few limitations. Firstly, it analyses only written policy texts, not interviews or field data. Secondly, the policy documents selected cannot represent every stakeholder's point of view. Third, as policies often change over time, the findings may not fully capture future shifts. After that, some documents do not have DOI number, which is normal for policy reports. Finally, discourse analysis needs explanation; while it is systematic and critical, it cannot claim complete fairness. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable information about how powerful institutions shape national development priorities through language.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Block, Grey, and Holborow (2012) says neoliberalism is a mechanism than just economic model, which is a system that spreads through language. They say that educational policies frame teachers and students as entrepreneurs of their own learning and responsible for investing in themselves like small business. This transformation shows how language works as a bearer of ideology. Neoliberalism makes people speaks the language like efficiency, skills, and accountability because of its power (Block, Gray, & Holborrow, 2012). To understand this better, let me share a small story. It was a sunny morning at a small government school in Dhaka and a teacher asks the students of class five to write about what they wanted to be in the future. ‘I want to be innovative’, said one student; ‘I want to be a world-class personality’, said another student. The teacher smiled, felt proud but little curious. He thought in his mind when the words like ‘kind’, ‘helpful’ replaced by the words like ‘innovative’, and ‘world-class personality’. This simple classroom experience explains how deeply the world’s language has changed. Now a days, the way we talk about education is filled with terms like skills, efficiency, world class, innovation. These words sound inspiring, but they also have invisible ideas about what education should be for, this is the change and this is silently redesigned. It is the power of discourse and this is what my thesis is about. Here the theoretical story begins with Linguistic Neoliberalism and Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA. These will help us to see how words can quietly shape what we believe about learning, technology, and development. These frameworks will also show the hypothetical lens for analyzing the way World Bank and the Government of Bangladesh enunciate their visions for development through Educational Technology or EdTech policy beyond doubt.

2.1 Linguistic Neoliberalism: The Grammar of the Global Marketplace

Our way of talking, writing, and even thinking is about education are shaped by neoliberal values such as competition, individual success, and market efficiency and that is called Linguistic Neoliberalism. Basically, it is when education speaks the language of business. Linguistic Neoliberalism needs to be understand, to understand this powerful blueprint. It is more like a ‘grammar’ or a ‘code’ for talking about the world, the world of business and the market. Firstly, a student is not a whole person here but a ‘human capital’, like an investment that should pay off. Secondly, learning is about ‘efficiency’ and getting ‘skills’ as quickly and cheaply as

possible. Thirdly, a school is not considered as a community rather it is a ‘service provider’, and parents are ‘consumers’. Finally, ‘success’ is not about knowledge or citizenship rather it is about ‘global competitiveness’.

Policy begins to focus on making the students as productive human capital, instead of focusing on being a good human being and thoughtful citizen. It is when students are seen as a person and as a future worker who needs to be ‘built’ or ‘upgraded’ for the job market (Block et al., 2012). Language skills are not only used for communication; but it is used as products that can be traded for jobs, mobility, or global recognition. Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of Linguistic Capital (1991) also support this idea. English language is not just seen as a tool for speaking or communicating but in a neoliberal world it is the most valuable language prevalence for global business. So, for participation in the global market, EdTech policies that promote English, are not just bothered with improving students’ language skills for communication or education; rather, they are very much tied to the economically valuable linguistic capital of production. According to the Bourdieu’s concept of linguistic capital (1991), language is not only a neutral tool but also a resource that gains value within specific economic and social structures. English has become the most powerful form of this capital in the contemporary global economy, because it is closely connected to international labor markets, digital economies, outsourcing industries, and global knowledge production. From the outlook of linguistic neoliberalism, this market-driven framing of English becomes even more visible. Holborow (2015) states that language is increasingly represented through the logic of profit, competition, and productivity, under neoliberal capitalism. English is not only promoted as a shared medium for global understanding in this system, but also as a systemic economic investment that promises individual mobility and national competitiveness.

This is the way how English appears within EdTech driven policy discourses, as a tool for building ‘future-ready workers,’ ‘globally competitive graduates,’ and a ‘digitally skilled labour force.’ The students who possess English are more valuable to the global economy than those who do not is reinforced by the idea When EdTech platforms values English-based digital content, English-medium online instruction, and English-centric assessment systems. As a result, language learning blend with market value, and students are positioned less as learners and more as future economic assets (Holborow, 2015). This neoliberal framing of English also has serious

implications for inequality. Scholars have repeatedly shown that when English is treated as economic capital, those who already have access to English through elite schooling, urban environments, and private resources gain further advantage, while rural and marginalized students fall even further behind. Block, Gray, and Holborow (2012) argue that neoliberal language policies produce a classified linguistic economy, where access to high-value languages like English determines one's position in global labor market. EdTech policies promoting English may unintentionally deepen existing class-based inequalities in the context of Bangladesh, as only a small section of students can fully benefit from English-dominated digital learning spaces. So, the promotion of English through EdTech is not just a pedagogical choice but it is mainly a political and economic project connected to the reproduction of global inequality (Block et al., 2012).

In the context of my thesis, according to the World Bank (2022) document, EdTech is an expenditure that will make education system more 'effective and resilient'. The core of linguistic neoliberalism takes over the language of public life with the logic of the market value (Fairclough, 1993). This neoliberal language appears strongly in both World Bank and national EdTech policies in the context of Bangladesh. One of the examples is the term 'Smart Bangladesh' represents ideas of innovation and entrepreneurship rather than community-based learning. Similarly, World Bank documents describe teachers as 'agents of productivity' and students as 'future human capital.' This kind of language incorporates the belief that education's main goal is economic growth, not critical citizenship or cultural enrichment. 'Language is where ideology lives, it makes market values appear as moral virtues (Holborow, 2015)', with this point Holborow says that the ideology of neoliberalism is covered by making its values sound natural. When policies say things like 'teachers must upskill to compete globally,' they try to put education in terms of competition but this competition benefits the global markets more than local needs. So, it can be said that Linguistic Neoliberalism helps to see how words are never neutral. When policies use words like 'accountability,' 'innovation,' or 'digital skills,' they are not just explaining education but shaping it to fit global market logic.

2.2. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Seeing Power in Language

Linguistic Neoliberalism explains the kind of language which dominates education and what ideas to look for in text, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA gives the step by step instructions to find them in the text and also explains the way this language works to shape thought and power.

Fairclough's model is a three-dimensional microscope for analyzing texts:

1. Dimension 1 (Micro Level): Analyzing the Text Itself

The linguistic aspects of the policy documents are examined by the first dimension. On this micro level, the study looks into the vocabulary, metaphors, catch phrases, and lexical patterns in the texts in order to detect the representation of education and EdTech. The presence of the so-called market-oriented vocabulary is paid special attention, which includes words and phrases such as 'investment,' 'human capital,' 'efficiency,' 'productivity,' 'skills,' 'returns,' and 'public and private partnership.' This kind of words and phrases are used in the analysis for the indications of the ideological beliefs inserted in the text. In terms of hypothesis and a set of ideas imagined and accepted without question in assessing this dimension. So, to take an example from Asaduzzaman et al. (2023) '*leveraging ICT for learning recovery*,' that ICT is the most sensible and effective remedy for this disorder. There could be other possibilities that does not appear in any of this discourse. So, this research is able to control the ways this kind of text uses its bond to certain kinds of meanings so as to shape certain choices as commonsense choices while delegitimizing others.

2. Dimension 2 (Meso Level): Analyzing the Discourse Practice

The processes by which texts of policies are created, communicated, and interpreted is considered as second dimension. It explains the way different texts use elements of other texts. It tells about how the language of global policies moves previous boundaries. In this research, analysis from the texts is employed to recognize the way in which the World Bank's EdTech paper concepts, frameworks, and terminologies, like 'skill development,' 'digital transformation,' 'recovery of learning,' and 'efficiency of the system,' have come up in the Smart Bangladesh policy documents, especially in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*. The way similar phrases have come up again, either repeated or replicate differently, describes the way in which

the global developmental standard is set. The investigation of the role of agency in the way that national policymakers either adopt the discourse about the world or reinterpret the discourse is analyzed in this level as well. Based on wordings, emphases, or frames comparison can be done so that the scope of the discourse within Bangladesh's national policy structure can be tested against the concept of alignment, adaptation, or resistance as regards the descriptive structure in the World Bank policies.

3. Dimension 3 (Macro Level): Analyzing the Social Practice

The third dimension regards the linking of text or discourse-based research outcomes with the overall societal, political-economic context. On the macroscopic level, CDA raises questions about why particular discourses are prominent and whose interests are served through these discourses. The analysis of EdTech policy discourse takes place in the context of globalization and development economics. The standardization of the language of the marketplace in education policy can serve to legitimize the role of global financial institutions like the World Bank within the process of formulating national development agendas. The repeated invocation of the need for public-private partnerships and efficiency agendas can be used to justify the increasing role of the corporate sector within the education domain, which can lead to the potential commercialization of the social right of education. This phenomenon is competently termed as 'technologization of discourse' by Fairclough (2001), wherein 'the discourse associated with corporate management and technological optimization seeps into other sectors, including education.' In this discourse, learning is made quantifiable, teachers become units of performance, and students become outcomes. This further strengthens the ideology of neoliberalism since the application of economic rationale is made to appear 'natural' and 'inevitable.' In this regard, the study shows that CDA is more than a linguistic practice since CDA examines the way in which the language used in policies creates an ideology that supports models of development, thus silencing alternative values in education. The study highlights the importance of critically engaging with texts instead of viewing them as nothing more than a technical text.

2.3. Synthesis: Why This Framework Fits My Thesis

This study is about how language shapes ideas of development through educational technology. Both Linguistic Neoliberalism and CDA fit perfectly because they focus on the connection between language, power, and ideology. First of all, it explains the ‘competing visions’ by analyzing with Linguistic Neoliberalism to reveal how both World Bank and Bangladeshi national policies use similar economic words. Phrases like ‘human capital,’ ‘smart learning,’ ‘innovation,’ and ‘competitiveness’ show how education is represented as a tool for market growth. Instead of listing what the World Bank or Bangladeshi government says, the ideological grammar that underlies their statements is being analyzed. For example, both of these may use the word ‘skills,’ but my analysis can reveal a critical difference like the World Bank’s ‘skills’ might be identical within a condition of global competitiveness, while the ‘Smart Bangladesh’ vision might use ‘skills’ within an area of national digital authority. Second, it makes the invisible visible. The power of neoliberal discourse lies in its ability to make its point of view seem like common sense. By applying CDA, this invisible ideology can be made visible and subject to review. For example, the *Bangladesh Country Partnership Framework* (World Bank, 2023) might advocate for ‘cost-effective’ EdTech solutions. Using my framework, I can critically analyze this as an act of standardization and explain its social practice. This prioritizes scalable, low-cost technologies that may overlook more academically rich but expensive approaches, and it creates a market opportunity for low-cost EdTech dealers, thereby serving private sector interests. Lastly, it connects language to power inequalities. The framework provides a direct pathway to discuss power in international development. The analysis of the texts are showing how Bangladeshi policies incorporate World Bank language and it is evidence of a process where recipient countries align their policies with donor frameworks to maintain access to funds and legitimacy (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). My thesis will use this framework to show how the ‘competition’ between visions is shaped by this fundamental power imbalance, where the World Bank’s linguistic and financial capital exerts a powerful pull on national policy formation. Thus, the combination of Linguistic Neoliberalism and Fairclough’s CDA provides a coherent, critical, and methodologically meticulous system for understanding not just what the EdTech policies say, but how they say it, why they say it that way, and, most importantly, who benefits from the reality that this language constructs.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Over the last few years, the flow of educational technology or EdTech in Bangladesh, quickened by the COVID-19 pandemic and by national digitalization ambition, has drawn growing attention from researchers. That is why, a large number of recent studies has investigated not only whether EdTech works, but also how the language around EdTech is shaped, circulated, and used to justify broader political and economic agendas. This literature review will explore three major areas of research that connect directly to this study. Firstly, the recent evidence on EdTech's benefits in low and middle-income contexts, secondly, critical scholarship on the neoliberalisation of education and EdTech 'solutionism,' and lastly, the gap between policy delivery and classroom realities. Together, these directions will help to create a clear picture of how global and national policy discourses shape what counts as 'development' in education. Recent studies from both Bangladesh and global contexts provide a complete idea of hopeful evidence, critical reflection, and caution about EdTech's promises. This complements theoretical critiques of neoliberal discourse and helps create a holistic picture of how EdTech becomes embedded in policy and everyday schooling.

3.1 EdTech in Bangladesh: Local Evidence and Challenges

Most local research has reported the general application of EdTech and, at the same time, the association of structural and contextual problems. A study conducted by Maisha and Shetu (2023), focused on the influencing factors of online learning among university students from Bangladesh after the pandemic. The study's findings suggested that availability of technology does not necessarily lead to common adoption of online learning. On the other hand, meaningful online learning depends mostly on factors like internet accessibility, use of individual devices, and prior experience with technology which remain unevenly distributed. With the aim to suggest a sustainable and context-dependent roadmap for digital transformation at all levels of the educational landscape, Hasan, Hossain, Nayem, and Haque (2022) introduced a Sustainable Digital Transformation Framework specifically for Bangladesh. The authors' approach to digital transformation highlights the need for systematic training of the educational workers and infrastructural development alongside digitalization, an approach which warns against the dangers

of digital transformation being perceived as just a delivery of technology through the distribution of devices.

The concerns above are also confirmed by experiences and observations of rural areas. The reality in rural areas has also been corporate in studies. The study conducted by Akter (2024) revealed significant inequalities in access, utilization, and outcomes of digital technology in rural schooling in Bangladesh. This is found that institutions are lacking regular electricity and internet, teachers' lack of training in digital technology, and improper use of digital technology. There are observations on the above dynamics within the academic literature related to higher education. A study conducted using the mixed-methods technique by Majumder, Uddin, & Dey (2025) underlined the views of teachers and students about online learning experiences at universities across Bangladesh. Three important themes were determined here like the disparity of technology access within rural and poor students, the lack of teaching responses while teaching online, and the issue with the equity of online learning.

These empirical observations largely echo observations from the compiled book *Language and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh*, edited by Hamid, Sultana, and Roshid (2024), which critically explores the connections and relations between development projects and policies, technology and education, and the roles and power of languages in these regards. Regarding the educational field and displayed through different chapters within the compiled book, English and technology literacy or skills increasingly represent the signifiers of modernization and development. Nevertheless, this approach may lead to the marginalization of students from the countryside and those from less educated and less powerful families. All these Bangladeshi contributions provide an important element in analyzing the discourse of EdTech policies. Because of the achievements of EdTech, it is evident that its success is not guaranteed but depends on social infrastructure, human infrastructure, among other elements. This set of literature strengthens the outstanding claim of the thesis, which is the fact that, despite the EdTech discourse promising development, its outcomes depend on the difference of local elements.

3.2 Global Scholarship: Evidence, Critique and Neoliberal Framing

At the same time, international and cross-national scholarship adds broader context and theoretical concepts for understanding EdTech and policy discourse. For example, a broad review by Rodriguez-Segura (2022) showed causal evidence from low and middle-income countries and found that EdTech only improves learning outcomes when it is rooted in quality education and instructional design that merely giving devices without pedagogical support is rarely effective. Critiques of what some scholars call ‘EdTech solutionism’ grew louder after COVID-19. Teräs et al. (2020) described how digital learning was quickly created as a single solution to educational disruption, arguing this ‘seller’s market’ often ignored structural differences and increased reliance on private EdTech providers.

Relatedly, post digital scholarship and critical voices in educational research guided against identifying digitalization as neutral, pointing out ethical, cultural and social consequences that global policy discourses tend to neglect (Suoranta et al., 2022). Particularly, Morley (2023) says that global and national policies are rapidly molded by market logic that education becomes a site for producing ‘market-ready’ human capital, and schooling is judged in terms of efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. Language analysis scholars like Holborow (2015) further show that neoliberal ideology spreads through everyday policy language: terms like innovation, efficiency, competitiveness, and human capital become normalized, making market logic seem natural rather than contested. These critical outlooks provide theoretical and analytical tools that help show that EdTech discourse is not just about technology rather it is about ideology, power, and who stands to benefit from digital education narratives.

3.3 Bridging Global and Local: Reality Gaps

The major contribution of Bangladeshi literature’s is the gap between top-down policy designs and the rural schooling reality that the study by Akter (2024) shows. Because of the digital infrastructure imbalance and limited digital literacy, many students and teachers remain unable to utilize and apply EdTech properly for learning and teaching. Our higher education study finds even the privileged university students and teachers find online classes too boring, assessments too difficult, and institutional support too limited (Mojumder et al., 2025). Rather, our research joins an international consensus that EdTech is neither a remedy nor an enemy, but can be considered

as another learning tool depending on context, teacher skill, infrastructure, and equity. The continued use of phrases like digital transformation, future-ready skills, smart education, and global competitiveness in global policy statements, as well as in Bangladeshi national policy, suggests that from a Linguistic Neoliberalism perspective, education is not conceptualized as a public good, but as a tool for increasing economic competitiveness.

Applied discourse analysis, especially in research on education, depending on Fairclough and CDA of policy, define various ways of understanding social reality and how such realities are constructed in policy at the levels of text including words and grammatical choices which means that texts are produced and circulated, and kind of social practice that ideologies and relations of power. When applied to a global review and to specific research in Bangladesh, CDA allows us to understand what is said in terms of policy language and ideologies and what is done in relation to classroom realities, inequality and access issues, and implementation challenges. This methodological separation is exactly what this study seeks to do but ideological framing and pointing out the structural and contextual limitations shape whether EdTech becomes inspiring or restrictive. While the growing volume of Bangladeshi and global EdTech research is encouraging, several gaps remain that this study is well positioned to fill.

First of all, there is comparative analysis of global vs national discourse. Most Bangladeshi studies focus on implementation, adaptation, or user-perception but few analyze how national policy documents mirror or diverge from global discourses from the World Bank. Secondly, ideological study of policy language is also important. There is limited work tracing how discourses changed over time as Bangladesh shifts from emergency remote learning to long-term digital strategies. Lastly, there is contextualization of equity and social justice. Also, there is insufficient research on how EdTech policy discourses consider or ignore social justice, rural-urban divides, gender, and cultural contexts especially in a country like Bangladesh with wide socioeconomic differences. By comparing World Bank documents with national policies and reading them through CDA and linguistic neoliberalism, will address all of these gaps. It will show not only what is being promised, but why and for whom; and it will connect discourse with context in a way that many existing studies do not.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study follows a policy discourse analysis method that is quantitative and critical theoretically grounded in its interpretations. The central aim of this methodology is to explore how Education Technology (EdTech) has been framed in global as well as national policy texts and contesting visions of development are articulated through language. While Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is traditionally a qualitative approach, the current study follows a more quantitative, corpus-informed methodological approach in which language data are quantified and subsequently analysed critically. This union makes possible the study of both empirical rigour and theoretical depth. The analysis is influenced by two intertwining theories: Holborow's Linguistic Neoliberalism (2015) and Fairclough's (2001, 2010) three dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. Linguistic neoliberalism explains how market-oriented ideology becomes standardized through everyday policy language, while CDA provides an organized framework for connecting textual patterns with broader social and ideological practices. The data is entirely secondary. They are in the form of official policy documents. Six major policy texts were purposively selected as they directly relate to education, technology, development, and post-pandemic learning recovery in Bangladesh. Four documents were collected from the World Bank: *Education Technology or "EdTech"* (2022), *Bangladesh: Country Partnership Framework for the Period FY2023–FY2027* (2023), *Bangladesh: Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation* (2023), and *Leveraging ICT for Learning Recovery and Acceleration in Bangladesh* by Asaduzzaman et al. (2023). These documents share what constitutes the prevailing global development discourse on EdTech and education reform. In addition, two national policy documents were selected: the *National Education Policy 2010* issued by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, and the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*. These two documents disclose Bangladesh's long-term national perception for education and digital transformation. All documents were downloaded from official government and World Bank websites to ensure authenticity, reliability, and transparency.

The unit of analysis is policy language, individual keywords, recurring phrases, and dominant thematic patterns about development, technology, governance, and education. Rather than basing it on the opinion or perception of others about what the texts mean or represent, this study treats policy texts as ideological-institutional products that necessarily and invariably carry

meanings, values, and power relations. This makes language itself the primary data through which visions of development can be construed. The analytical position that this research has taken is firmly grounded in the concept of linguistic neoliberalism and in Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. Linguistic neoliberalism explains how language and educational policy have increasingly adopted market-based rhetoric, including terms such as 'investment,' 'skills,' 'efficiency,' 'productivity,' and 'human capital.' Thus, education is transformed into an economic project rather than a social one. While Fairclough's CDA does not analyze the content of other tools per se, it does offer a useful three-level model of analysis: at the textual level through word choice, repetition, and modality; at the level of discursive practice in terms of how these policy texts are produced, circulated, and reused; at the level of social practice in terms of locating policy discourse within wider political, economic, and ideological structures. For example global neoliberal capitalism and digital governance. What they do enable theoretically is an analysis not just of what the policy documents say but how and why they say it in particular ways. To quantitatively analyze these theories, deductive coding framework was constructed to the lines that have been developed. The framework is developed on prior concepts frequently treated in the literature of linguistic neoliberalism and CDA. Five discourses were singled out: human capital, market logic, digital future, governance and social inclusion. For each category, a list of indicator keywords was chosen. As example, the human capital theme contained terms like 'skills', 'workforce', 'employability' and 'productivity' whereas the market logic theme included such words as 'skills,' 'workforce,' 'employability,' and 'productivity,' while the market logic category included words such as 'investment,' 'efficiency,' and 'returns.' The digital future category emphasized words such as 'innovation,' 'smart,' and 'transformation.' The governance category involved words like 'monitoring,' 'evaluation,' and 'accountability.' The social inclusion category picked up on words such as 'access,' 'equity,' and 'inclusion.' As such, these keywords were adopted as measurable indicators of the wider ideological patterns that permeated the policy texts.

The quantitative analysis was conducted in several systematic steps. First, the preprocessing of all documents was done by removing tables, figures, appendices, and reference sections so that it would be assured that only the main policy narratives are being analyzed. Second, keywords based on the coding framework were searched across each document. Third, raw frequency counts for each keyword within each policy text were found. Fourth, these raw frequencies were normalized into proportional percentages so that meaningful comparison could

be made across documents of different lengths. Fifth, comparative mapping was used to spot differences and similarities between World Bank discourse and national policy discourse. Last but not least, the numerical patterns were interpreted critically through a combined lens of linguistic neoliberalism and Fairclough's CDA. Reliability and validity were rigorously observed during the analysis. Reliability of counts was established through multiple manual checks and validation against the output that had been double-checked versus original texts. A strong fit existed among research goals, coding schemes and interpretive in theoretical terms to maintain robust validity. Also, triangulation through comparing across the policy documents helped to minimize over-generalization or bias.

This study does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors, and all interviews, surveys or personal data have been obtained through consent. All sources of data were public policy documents. Hence, formal ethical approval was not sought. However, ethical scholarly behavior was strictly obeyed by providing complete and accurate references to all policy documents; by reflecting the original meanings of the text; by avoiding any manipulation or distortion of content for the sake of analysis. However, this methodological approach does have limitations. First, keyword frequency analysis is unable to reveal implicit meanings, metaphors or ideological assumptions that are not manifested in explicit lexical items. Second, some significant discursive meanings are not lexicalized expressions but may be licensed by syntactic conformance. Third, there are fewer national policy documents than World Bank documents, potentially affecting the balance of comparison. Fourth, as some policy documents of Bangladesh are originally in Bangla and later translated into English, certain nuances may not be well captured. Lastly, quantification can offer empirical evidence, but cannot entirely substitute rich qualitative interpretation. These shortcomings were compensated for in that all numerical figures analyzed were read through Fairclough's CDA to retain ideological meaning. This methodological design is particularly appropriate for the present study because it allows for the systematic measurement of discourse dominance while remaining firmly grounded in critical theory. It enables direct comparison between global and national policy visions, reveals hidden neoliberal assumptions embedded in educational language, and transforms abstract ideological critique into measurable linguistic evidence. By integrating quantitative techniques with critical interpretation, this study ensures that its findings are both empirically robust and theoretically meaningful.

Chapter 5: Findings and analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative policy discourse analysis conducted on six major policy documents, four from the World Bank and two from the Government of Bangladesh. Five major discourse categories are ‘human capital,’ ‘market logic,’ ‘digital transformation,’ ‘governance and monitoring,’ and ‘social inclusion.’ The motive of this chapter is to present what was found in the policy texts based on repetition and comparative distribution across global and national documents. Interpretation and theoretical explanation of these findings are provided in the following Discussion chapter. The analysis shows that human capital discourse is one of the most dominant patterns across all World Bank documents. Keywords such as ‘skills,’ ‘productivity,’ ‘workforce,’ ‘employability,’ ‘capacity building,’ and ‘learning outcomes’ appear with very high frequency. Education is repeatedly constructed for preparing students for the job market and strengthening national productivity. *The Country Partnership Framework (2023–2027)* and *the Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation (2023)* place specifically strong significance on manpower development, job-market orientation, and job-relevant skills through education and EdTech. Similarly, the *Leveraging ICT for Learning Recovery and Acceleration in Bangladesh (2023)* report underline digital skills development, teacher capacity enhancement, and technology-based workforce readiness as key policy priorities.

In contrast, the *National Education Policy 2010* contains human capital language but at a noticeably lower number and again alongside broader social, moral, and national development goals such as citizenship building, ethical values, and social responsibility. The *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* shows a clear increase in the use of human capital terminology. The document repeatedly underline digital skills, workforce development, technological productivity, and global competitiveness. A measurable shift over time in national policy language indicates toward a skill-centered and productivity-oriented framing of education. Market-oriented discourse is also highly prominent in the World Bank documents. Keywords such as ‘investment,’ ‘efficiency,’ ‘cost-effectiveness,’ ‘returns,’ ‘private sector,’ and ‘economic growth’ appear frequently, particularly in discussions of education reform and EdTech implementation. The EdTech (2022) document repeatedly show technology as a cost-efficient and flexible investment solution for improving learning outcomes. *The Country Partnership Framework (2023–2027)* similarly presents education as a sector that requires financial efficiency and strategic economic

returns. Education is generally constructed as an economic investment rather than solely as a public or social responsibility.

By contrast, the *National Education Policy 2010* contains limited market-based language and frames education more strongly as a public good and a national responsibility. However, market discourse becomes much more visible in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*, which frequently refers to digital economy development, public–private partnerships, investment-driven growth, and technology entrepreneurship. This expresses a strong connection between recent national digital policy and global market-oriented development language. Digital transformation discourse emerges as one of the most dominant themes across both global and national policy documents. Keywords such as ‘digital,’ ‘smart,’ ‘innovation,’ ‘ICT,’ ‘automation,’ ‘transformation,’ and ‘technology-driven’ appear with very high frequency. In the World Bank’s EdTech (2022) document, digital technology is positioned as the central solution for personalized learning, learning recovery after COVID-19, teacher monitoring, and system-wide efficiency. The *Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation (2023)* also says about online platforms, digital assessments, and technology-based teacher training strategies. The digital focus becomes even more pronounced in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*, where digital transformation is presented as the core national development vision. The document repeatedly highlights smart education systems, digital governance infrastructures, innovation ecosystems, and technology-based service delivery as major goals. Compared to this, the *National Education Policy 2010* have relatively limited discussion of ICT integration, indicating a major increase in digital discourse in newer national policies.

Words such as ‘monitoring,’ ‘evaluation,’ ‘accountability,’ ‘performance indicators,’ ‘tracking systems,’ and ‘data management’ are used again and again, particularly in the *Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation (2023)* and *Leveraging ICT for Learning Recovery and Acceleration (2023)* reports. These documents shows digital tracking of student performance, technology-based teacher supervision, and centralized data-driven decision-making in education systems. On the other hand, the *National Education Policy 2010* contains fewer references to digital monitoring systems and discusses governance mainly in institutional and administrative terms rather than technological ones. However, the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* places strong remark on digital governance, centralized data infrastructures, e-

governance systems, and technology-based accountability procedure. This reflects a significant expansion of governance and monitoring discourse in recent national digital policy. Social inclusion and equity discourse appears across all documents but at a noticeably lower frequency compared to economic and digital development categories. Keywords such as ‘equity,’ ‘access,’ ‘inclusion,’ ‘marginalized,’ ‘rural,’ ‘gender,’ and ‘disability’ occur moderately in the World Bank documents, mainly in relation to expanding digital access, addressing learning losses, and reducing participation gaps. However, the overall priority given to inclusion remains lower than that of productivity, skills, and innovation. The *National Education Policy 2010* demonstrates the strongest emphasis on social inclusion among all the documents. It places reasonable focus on gender equity, rural access, support for disadvantaged groups, and comprehensive education principles. By contrast, the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* addresses inclusion primarily in terms of connectivity expansion and digital access rather than broader social inequalities. Issues such as poverty, gender barriers, and regional disadvantages receive relatively less attention compared to technological solutions.

The comparative analysis between World Bank documents and national policies reveals several important patterns. Human capital, market logic, and digital transformation discourses are significantly more dominant in the World Bank documents than in the *National Education Policy 2010*. While early national education policy presents education as a social and civic project, recent national digital policy increasingly frames education as a driver of economic growth and digital workforce development. Governance and monitoring language is also more performance-driven and data-centered in World Bank documents. But, this difference becomes less visible in the *ICT Master Plan 2041*. Across both global and national documents, inclusion and equity consistently receive lower priority than digital innovation and economic competitiveness. A clear temporal shift is observed in Bangladesh’s national policy discourse when comparing the *National Education Policy 2010* with the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*. The earlier policy frames education primarily as a social institution responsible for moral development, citizenship formation, and national cohesion. In contrast, the ICT Master Plan presents education as a key supplier of skilled digital labor, a driver of the digital economy, and a tool for technology-led national development. This shift highlights a major transformation in how education and development are discussed within national policy over time. Overall, the findings show that human capital, market logic, and digital transformation dominate the policy discourse on education and

EdTech across both global and national documents, while social inclusion receives comparatively lower emphasis. The analysis also shows that Bangladesh's recent digital development policy exhibits strong discursive alignment with World Bank development language, indicating increasing convergence between global and national policy visions over time.

4.1 World Bank and National Policy Discourses on EdTech in Bangladesh

In this essay, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA (Fairclough, 2013, 1995) and the theory of Linguistic Neoliberalism is used to clarify how the discourse of EdTech is constructed in key World Bank and Bangladeshi policy texts, and how these discourses shape particular visions of development, citizenship, and national progress. Linguistic Neoliberalism helps us understand how economic and capitalistic logics enter into language, especially policy language and making terms like efficiency, innovation, optimization, skills, competitiveness, and human capital sound like natural educational goals (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012). It is like two architects are drawing plans for a school. One is a global expert with a standard blueprint used worldwide. The other is a local architect who understands the community's unique needs. Both want what is best, but they have very different ideas about what a school should be. This is exactly what is happening in Bangladesh right now, as the World Bank and the Bangladeshi government create their visions for education technology. There was a time, when people heard the word education, they could only visualize of teachers' voices echoing in a classroom, the whispering of notebooks, or the warmth of learning together on shared benches. Now, a single word, education, often brings to mind glowing screens, digital classrooms, online assessments, and automated learning platforms. This shift in imagination did not happen accidentally. It emerged slowly through policy documents, development reports, and institutional narratives that quietly redefined what learning should look like. Fairclough's CDA complements this by showing how these linguistic choices reproduce subtle power relations, shape social realities, and naturalize ideological assumptions (Fairclough, 2013, 1995). When all of these applied together into these frameworks, these reveal how EdTech is not simply a bundle of digital tools, but a discourse that carries hidden values about what kind of society should be built and whose interests should guide education reform.

The first policy text, the World Bank's *Education Technology or "EdTech" (2022)*, serves as the global narrative foundation for EdTech reform. The document frames technology as

a ‘transformative tool’ that can ‘accelerate learning outcomes’ and ‘expand inclusion.’ At first glance, these phrases appear harmless and optimistic. The language is telling: students become ‘human capital,’ learning becomes about ‘cost-effectiveness,’ and schools should pursue ‘public-private partnerships’ (p. 1). However, Linguistic Neoliberalism teaches us to pay attention to the vocabulary of economic rationality: ‘cost-effectiveness,’ ‘scalable solutions,’ ‘impact measurement,’ ‘evidence-based investment.’ This is not accidental wording but it represents what scholar Norman Fairclough calls ‘marketization of public discourse,’ where the language of business colonizes educational thinking (Fairclough, 1993). These terms reframe education as an economic enterprise and reduce teachers and students to variables within a productivity system. Holborow (2015) argues that neoliberal discourse ‘marketizes the meaning of language itself,’ making even humanitarian goals sound like investment strategies. This is evident in the repeated portrayal of EdTech as a ‘smart investment’ rather than a pedagogical relationship. Using Fairclough’s CDA, we see important discursive strategies, such as nominalization which means ‘digitization,’ ‘modernization,’ ‘skill alignment’ obscures agency, making technological reform appear natural and inevitable and Passive constructions like ‘systems must be upgraded’ imply obligations without identifying who mandates them. This technique, Fairclough (2010) argues, is a key way of ideological pressure is embedded into institutional discourse. Through this lens, the World Bank’s EdTech discourse subtly implies that countries like Bangladesh must adopt digital solutions to avoid falling behind in global competition.

The Bangladesh Country Partnership Framework FY2023–2027 (World Bank, 2023), extends these global discourses into Bangladesh’s national development narrative. The document consistently ties education to economic objectives, emphasizing ‘job creation’ and ‘private sector-led growth’ (p. 6). The document repeatedly emphasizes ‘future-ready digital skills,’ ‘labor-market alignment,’ and ‘competitiveness in the global economy.’ These terms reflect a shift from seeing education as a cultural or civic process to viewing it as a mechanism for producing human capital, a central logic of neoliberal governance. It presents ‘digitalization’ as the inevitable path forward, using what critical discourse analysts call ‘presupposition’, treating contested ideas as established facts (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough’s concept of inter-discursivity helps us see how economic discourses blend into educational ones, creating hybrid language such as ‘skills ecosystems’ and ‘innovation-driven learning.’ Grammatically, the text uses what Fairclough calls presuppositions which are the statements that assume agreement. For example, phrases like ‘Bangladesh needs to

strengthen its digital learning ecosystem’ presuppose that digital ecosystems are unquestionably beneficial. Such linguistic tactics close off alternative imaginaries of education rooted in equity, well-being, or cultural relevance. What’s particularly revealing is how the framework discusses equity. It mentions reaching ‘all students’ but within a framework of ‘scaling up cost-effective solutions’ (World Bank, 2023, p. 8). This suggests that equity is achievable through market mechanisms rather than addressing structural inequalities - a classic neoliberal approach to social policy.

The third World Bank document, *Bangladesh: Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation* (2023), provides concrete examples and a more narrative-driven discourse. It frames the pandemic as a crisis requiring urgent technological intervention and repeatedly describes EdTech as a ‘lifeline,’ ‘shock absorber,’ and ‘resilient mechanism.’ These emotionally charged metaphors position technology as both savior and solution. *The Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation* (World Bank, 2023b) shows how discourse becomes practice. This \$300 million project promotes ‘blended learning’ and aims to build ‘resilient’ education systems (p. 2). The term ‘resilient’ appears repeatedly, reflecting what scholar Marnie Holborow would identify as neoliberal adaptability and preparing systems to withstand shocks without changing fundamental inequalities. The project document emphasizes ‘results-based financing’ and ‘system efficiency’ (World Bank, 2023, p. 15), prioritizing measurable outcomes over educational experiences. This represents what Pierre Bourdieu called ‘symbolic violence’, making social arrangements appear natural and inevitable, thereby silencing alternative visions (Bourdieu, 1991). Yet, as Fairclough’s CDA reveals, these metaphors conceal political and economic interests by making technological adoption feel morally necessary. Teachers are constructed as implementers who must ‘adapt,’ ‘upskill,’ and ‘digitally transition’ verbs that subtly shift responsibility onto individuals rather than systems. Students are portrayed as ‘beneficiaries’ who must ‘catch up’ and ‘accelerate,’ framing learning as a race. In contrast, large digital platforms and international partners are constructed as authoritative experts. This unequal distribution of agency reflects a broader neoliberal pattern where global institutions define progress, and national actors comply.

The fourth document, *Leveraging ICT for Learning Recovery and Acceleration in Bangladesh* (Asaduzzaman et al., 2023), demonstrates how crisis can accelerate policy agendas.

The document uses the COVID-19 learning loss to argue for accelerated EdTech adoption, presenting technology as the obvious solution to educational disruption. Additionally, it reinforces this expert-driven discourse but brings it closer to Bangladeshi realities. Its language highlights ‘smart classrooms,’ ‘adaptive digital models,’ ‘digital acceleration,’ and ‘low-bandwidth innovations.’ These terms reflect what Fairclough (2001) calls the ‘technologization’ of discourse, where managerial and technical vocabulary infiltrates educational policy. Terms such as ‘digitization’ and ‘optimization’ again appear to operate without human decision-makers, including digital reform as inevitable rather than ideological. The report states that ‘the pandemic has offered an opportunity to build back more resilient and equitable education systems’ (Asaduzzaman et al., 2023, p. 5), using emergency language to promote pre-existing policy preferences. This is what discourse analysts call ‘problematization’ that is defining a problem in ways that make your preferred solution seem inevitable. Through Linguistic Neoliberalism, we see how learners are increasingly constructed as ‘digital citizens,’ whose value lies in their technological proficiency. Holborow (2015) notes that neoliberal discourse constructs identity as a skillset, reducing human complexity to measurable competencies. This report mirrors that trend by framing students’ futures primarily in terms of their ability to engage with digital tools.

4.2. Bangladesh’s Vision and Adaptations

After examining the World Bank discourse, we turn to Bangladesh’s own policy texts to understand how national visions intersect with global ones. The *National Education Policy 2010* stands out as more balanced and humanistic. It presents a strikingly different orientation. While it includes technology in its ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision (Chapter 17), it frames technology as serving national development goals rather than global market integration. The policy strongly emphasizes Bangla as the medium of instruction, asserting cultural sovereignty in the face of globalization’s homogenizing pressures. It speaks of moral development, cultural identity, inclusiveness, creativity, and democratic citizenship. Words like ‘ethical values,’ ‘citizenship,’ and ‘creativity’ portray education as a holistic, culturally grounded process. However, CDA reveals early signs of neoliberal influence in the policy’s references to ‘global standards,’ ‘modern educational practices,’ and ‘ICT-enhanced classrooms.’ These opening threads paved the way for stronger digital and economic discourses in later policies. The NEP’s approach to technology is integrative rather than transformative. It imagines technology enhancing existing educational

values rather than fundamentally reshaping education's purpose. This represents what scholars call a 'counter-discourse' to the World Bank's market-oriented approach, maintaining space for national priorities and cultural preservation.

The *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* (Government of Bangladesh, 2023) represents the country's most futuristic vision, and the most sophisticated engagement with global technological discourse. It adopts the language of 'smart solutions' and 'digital transformation' but infuses these terms with local meaning. Where the World Bank documents emphasize global competitiveness, *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* emphasizes 'sovereignty' and 'inclusion' (p. 2). The term 'smart' is repeated relentlessly with words like 'smart citizens,' 'smart governance,' 'smart learning,' and 'smart services.' The plan speaks of 'leapfrogging' in development (Government of Bangladesh, 2023, p. 3), suggesting not just catching up with developed nations but finding new paths forward. This represents strategic 'discursive appropriation' that is taking the powerful language of global development and using it to advance locally-determined goals rather than externally-imposed agendas. Through Linguistic Neoliberalism, such discourse reframes identity itself, like, a person is 'smart' only if they possess market-aligned digital skills. This narrows the meaning of citizenship and risks marginalizing those who cannot keep pace with technological demands. While the plan promises inclusion, its vocabulary of competitiveness hints at a future where digital proficiency becomes the primary measure of social worth.

When we compare the World Bank documents with Bangladesh's policies, a powerful discursive convergence becomes visible. Both sets of texts employ similar keywords like 'innovation,' 'competitiveness,' 'efficiency,' '21st-century skills,' 'future readiness,' 'human capital,' 'digital transformation' etc. This alignment is not accidental. Fairclough's idea of 'interdiscursivity' helps us understand how global institutions shape the national policymaking language of countries like Bangladesh. Over time, these shared vocabularies solidify into what Fairclough calls 'naturalized ideologies', making it difficult to imagine education outside the logic of digital modernization. A crucial but often unstated tension concerns English language instruction. The World Bank documents implicitly treat English proficiency as essential 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991) for global market success. In contrast, Bangladeshi policies maintain pride in Bangla while acknowledging English's practical importance. This is not just about

language choice rather it is about whether Bangladesh's educational identity remains rooted in local culture or becomes oriented toward global markets. Linguistic Neoliberalism reveals that under the raising language of empowerment and modernization lies a deeper economic agenda: transforming education into a market-oriented system for global competitiveness. Students become workers-in-training, schools become skill factories, and teachers become facilitators of digital performance. Moreover, this discourse analysis helps to ask the central question, Whose vision of development is being advanced? For many Bangladeshi teachers, parents, and students, development may mean safety, cultural identity, meaningful learning, or social belonging. Though the World Bank documents consistently discuss 'empowering teachers' through technology (World Bank, 2022, p. 1), but this empowerment is rarely defined as upgrading efficiency and implementing suggested digital tools. However, development is imagined as technological modernization and economic competitiveness in the documents analyzed here. While promoting technology in Bangladeshi policies, leave more space for teachers as cultural figures and mentors. This difference reflects intense tensions about whether education is primarily about skill delivery or human formation. The ideas that dominate the language of policy do not necessarily reflect the lived realities of the people affected by them. Additionally, the World Bank's emphasis on 'public-private partnerships' (World Bank, 2022, p. 1) invites corporate influence into educational planning. Bangladeshi documents are more cautious, reflecting concerns about preserving educational sovereignty. This tension goes to the heart of whether education remains a public good or becomes a market opportunity.

This essay shows how powerful institutions use language to guide national priorities, construct what counts as progress, and redefine the role of education in society by clarifying these discourses. The World Bank presents its vision as neutral, technical, and modern, while the Bangladeshi documents struggle to articulate an alternative modernity that embraces technology without surrendering to market fundamentalism. What makes this analysis urgent is that these are not just documents but the planning that will shape millions of young Bangladeshi lives. The language of 'investment' and 'efficiency' might seem safe, but it builds an educational world where some students become 'human capital' for global markets rather than citizens of their own society. The most hopeful finding is that Bangladeshi policymakers are not just accepting the World Bank's vision rather they are engaging, adapting, and sometimes resisting and trying to craft a 'Smart Bangladesh' that is both technologically advanced and culturally authentic. The

ultimate lesson might be that true development is not about choosing between global and local visions, but about having the knowledge to build a future that honors both.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study in easy way with the quantitative results through the theoretical understanding of linguistic neoliberalism and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This discussion takes the findings from our document analysis and asks the big 'so what?' question. The previous chapter showed clear patterns in how EdTech is presented across World Bank and Bangladesh government policy documents. These patterns clear the idea of not only how technology is shaped as a tool for educational development, but also how extreme economic and ideological ideas are connected within policy language. Now, we explore what these words do, what hidden battles they reveal, and what they mean for the future of education in the country. This chapter explains what those patterns mean, why they matter for education and development in Bangladesh, and how they reflect competing but increasingly converging the visions of development promoted by global and national actors.

One of the strongest findings of this study is the powerful dominance of human capital discourse across World Bank documents. The World Bank does not just offer money and advice, also it offers a complete language kit for thinking about development. Keywords such as 'skills,' 'productivity,' 'workforce,' 'employability,' and 'learning outcomes' appeared with very high frequency. Through the lens of linguistic neoliberalism, these words clearly shows how education is designed not primarily as a human right or a social good, but as a tool for economic production. Students are repeatedly put as future workers, and education is considered as an investment that must repay the economic returns. The Government of Bangladesh writes about 'smart solutions,' 'digital transformation,' and 'investing in skills.' Generally, this looks like agreement but this critical analysis shows something trickier that is strategic allocation under control. Bangladesh is using the globally powerful language to be taken seriously and to gain funds, but it is trying to use these words with its own meaning. It is more like the World Bank provides the popular, trendy building blocks and Bangladesh is using these same blocks but tries to build a different style of house with a stronger foundation in local culture and national sovereignty. But the problem is that the original design of the blocks unconsciously shapes what can be built.

The World Bank's vision is built on linguistic neoliberalism, sees education as a factory for the global economy and success is measured by employability, competitiveness, and economic return on investment. English is the essential language for this global machine. *The Education*

Technology or 'EdTech' (2022) document is the finest design for this vision. The Government of Bangladesh's Vision, connected in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*, sees education as a garden for growing the nation's own future. The student is a future citizen and innovator, technology is a tool for national 'leapfrogging' and hegemony where success includes cultural care, social inclusion, and self-reliant development where Bangla remains a core pillar of identity. Both want a modern, technologically skilled population. But the ultimate goal is different, one serves the global market, the other serves the nation. This analysis shows that Bangladeshi policies are a site where this tension is constantly managed by using the World Bank's words to describe more locally grounded goals.

This finding strongly sets with Holborow's (2015) argument that neoliberal ideology reshapes education by turning language into a market tool. When learners are introduced as 'human capital,' they are valued for their economic usefulness rather than their full human development. In the World Bank's *Country Partnership Framework (2023–2027)*, education is directly connected to producing a 'skilled labor force for economic transformation,' which clearly reflects this economic logic. On the other hand, Bangladesh's *National Education Policy 2010* uses human capital language less frequently and places stronger emphasis on moral development, citizenship, and national values. This difference becomes much weaker in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*, where the discourse of skills, productivity, innovation, and competitiveness becomes increasingly dominant. This shift suggests that the national vision of education in Bangladesh is gradually being redesigned in line with global neoliberal development priorities. So, the policies initially reflect competing visions of education, one social and one economic that the newer digital development plans show a clear movement toward blending.

Another key finding is the strong presence of market-oriented language in the World Bank policy documents. Terms such as 'investment,' 'returns,' 'efficiency,' and 'cost-effectiveness' frequently appear in discussions of education and EdTech. Through this framing, education is built not as a public responsibility, but as an economic division that must justify its value through measurable productivity. From the idea of linguistic neoliberalism, this language performs an important ideological function and also adopts the idea that education must operate according to market principles. When policy documents repeatedly describe EdTech as a 'high-return investment,' they carefully shift the responsibility for educational success onto individuals

and institutions, rather than structural inequalities or state responsibility. Bangladesh's *National Education Policy 2010* reflects a much weaker market orientation. However, the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* strongly accepts the language of investment, digital economy, innovation ecosystems, and private-sector collaboration. This suggests that Bangladesh's digital future is increasingly imagined through economic competition and global market incorporation. Education becomes a training ground for the digital labor market rather than a space commonly for critical thinking, citizenship, and social justice. This finding strongly supports Fairclough's CDA at the social practice level, where policy discourse reflects wider political-economic forces. The global neoliberal economy shapes not only how education is funded and controlled, but also how it is talked about. Language becomes a powerful tool for normalizing market logic in public education. We saw it operating in three key ways. First of all, making the market sound natural that means the regular use of business words or market lexicon does a powerful thing that it makes the idea of education as business seem like simple common sense. When a crisis like the pandemic hits, a report like *Leveraging ICT for Learning Recovery (2023)* can then frame EdTech as the only logical 'solution.' This is not a neutral statement but it is a prediction that covers other possible choices like investing more in teachers or community learning. Secondly, borrowing to build credibility explains the Bangladeshi plans directly borrow terms and frameworks from the World Bank. The Country Partnership Framework encourages the priorities of national planning. This borrowing gives the validity to Bangladeshi policies in the eyes of global donors. Thus, in the Smart Bangladesh plan, we see these carried terms being re-purposed. 'Smart' becomes less about market efficiency and more about national intelligence and inclusion. Finally, ignoring alternatives that says this is the most critical effect. The overwhelming focus on 'cost-effective,' 'scalable' tech solutions quietly pushes aside educational approaches that are harder to measure but deeply valuable, like critical thinking, creativity, or teaching in one's mother tongue. This is what Pierre Bourdieu (1991) called symbolic violence a system that makes its own logic seem so obvious that alternatives become unthinkable. The World Bank's discourse, by setting the terms of the debate, can unintentionally sideline the very sovereign visions Bangladesh tries to articulate.

Another major pattern is the extremely high frequency of words such as 'digital,' 'smart,' 'innovation,' 'transformation,' and 'technology-driven' across both World Bank and national policy documents. This shows that digital transformation is constructed as the central pathway to national and educational development. The World Bank's *Education Technology or "EdTech"*

(2022) document strongly frames digital technology as the key solution to learning recovery, personalized education, teacher monitoring, and system efficiency. Similarly, the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* presents a future where education, governance, health, and the economy are all digitally integrated. However, the discourse analysis shows that while digital futures are celebrated in powerful and optimistic terms, far less attention is given to the risks and challenges of digitalization, such as unequal access, teacher preparedness, infrastructure gaps, and student well-being. Through CDA, this imbalance can be understood as a strategy of discursive legitimation, where positive futures are highlighted to silence potential problems. From a critical perspective, the digital transformation discourse reflects what many scholars describe as technological solutionism, the idea that technology alone can solve deep structural problems. This is especially significant in a country like Bangladesh, where digital divides between urban and rural areas, rich and poor students, and trained and untrained teachers remain very strong. The findings also reveal a strong pattern of governance and control discourse in the World Bank documents. Words such as ‘monitoring,’ ‘evaluation,’ ‘performance indicators,’ ‘accountability,’ and ‘tracking systems’ appear repeatedly. This shows that EdTech is not only framed as a tool for learning, but also as a tool for managing, measuring, and controlling education systems. From Fairclough’s CDA perspective, this reflects a shift toward managerial governance, where schools, teachers, and students are increasingly governed through data. Education becomes a system of measurable outputs rather than a human process of growth and learning. Students become data points, teachers become service providers, and administrators become performance managers. In Bangladesh’s *National Education Policy 2010*, this kind of data-driven governance is much less visible. However, it becomes strongly present in the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041*, which emphasizes digital monitoring, electronic data systems, and centralized digital governance. This demonstrates how global policy language travels into national plans, shaping how education is governed. Power does not operate only through funding and policy structures, it also operates through the language that defines what education should look like and how it should be managed.

A particularly important and concerning finding is that while terms such as ‘access,’ ‘equity,’ and ‘inclusion’ appear in both World Bank and Bangladesh policy documents, their frequency is far lower than economic, skills, and productivity-related terms. This suggests that although equity and inclusion are mentioned at a rhetorical level, they do not receive the same discursive importance as economic development and digital transformation. In CDA terms,

inclusion works as a form of ‘symbolic reassurance’ and it signals moral responsibility without structurally reordering priorities. The government’s discourse serves the interest of national development and sovereignty, but also of maintaining good relations with powerful donors. Economic elites who can access English-medium, tech-heavy education benefit first. The interests of students in rural areas, from poor families, or who thrive in Bangla-medium instruction are discursively marginalized. They are included in rhetoric about ‘all students,’ but the specific solutions offered like expensive tech, English-centric skills may not be designed for them. The true ‘competition’ is between a ready-made, market-tested development package and a messy, difficult, but potentially more authentic path of self-defined development. This study shows Bangladesh is trying to chart the latter path while using the language of the former which is a difficult but fascinating balancing act. This pattern is critical for Bangladesh, where large sections of the population still face serious barriers to digital access. Rural students, students from low-income families, girls in conservative communities, and children with disabilities often experience deep forms of digital exclusion. When policies focus more on innovation and competitiveness than on structural inequality, the promise of digital education risks becoming an elite project rather than an inclusive one.

One of the most important contributions of this study is showing how World Bank and Bangladesh policy visions are not entirely separate anymore. While earlier National Education Policy (2010) was more socially grounded, newer digital policies show strong ideological alignment with global development discourse. This suggests that policy borrowing and lengthy transfer are actively shaping Bangladesh’s development imagination. The World Bank does not merely fund projects and it also exports ideas, language, and values. Over time, these ideas become normalized within national planning. Thus, the title of this thesis ‘Competing Visions of Development’, finds partial confirmation. While social and economic visions still coexist, the economic-digital vision is increasingly dominant. Viewed through linguistic neoliberalism, the findings show how education is increasingly reconstructed as a market project. Language does not simply describe reality rather it produces it. By repeatedly connecting education with investment, productivity, competition, and skills, policy discourse redefines what education is for. Students are positioned as future workers. Teachers are framed as efficiency-driven service providers. Education institutions are imagined as productivity systems. This transformation occurs through language before it occurs through institutions. Therefore, linguistic neoliberalism helps explain

why EdTech is portrayed as unavoidable, necessary, and beyond debate. It becomes the ‘natural’ direction of progress. The frequent use of modal verbs like will, must, and priority in the texts shows strong authority and validity in policy language. At the long practice level, the similarity between World Bank and national documents explains how global policy language is redesigned, adapted, and institutionalized at the national level. These discourses reflect global neoliberal capitalism, digital governance, and the transformation of education into a knowledge economy at the social practice level. These levels show that EdTech discourse is not neutral rather it is deeply ideological in together. The findings have serious involvement for education in Bangladesh. While digital transformation offers real opportunities, policy discourse strongly prioritizes economic goals over social justice. If this continues unnoticed, education will be becoming increasingly unequal, performance-driven, and limited. Teachers may be pressured to adopt technologies without sufficient training. Students may be evaluated through data systems rather than supported as learners. Rural and poor communities may remain digitally unaware and marginalized while national policies celebrate ‘smart’ futures. This study contributes by showing how global neoliberal ideologies operate through policy language in a developing country and shows that CDA combined with quantitative discourse analysis can effectively uncover the power structures within educational development discourse.

This discussion shows that the debate over EdTech in Bangladesh is about much more than buying tablets or training teachers to use apps. It is a fundamental debate about the country’s future identity in a globalized world. The policy documents are the first battlefield where this debate is done. The World Bank exhibits immense financial power, promotes a vision of education that creates globally distinct, economically competitive citizens. By navigating this power the Government of Bangladesh tries to articulate a vision that creates locally rooted, sovereign architects of a smart nation. The tension between these visions is not a sign of failure, but of a nation actively negotiating its place in the world. By unpacking the words, the high-stakes choices about whether Bangladesh’s educational future will be primarily designed by the logic of the global market or by the desire of its own people is revealed. The fight for the future begins with the fight over the words used to describe it.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Using a quantitative policy discourse analysis supported by the theoretical lenses of linguistic neoliberalism and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this study set out to examine how Education Technology or EdTech is shaped within global and national policy discourses and how these framings reflect competing visions of development in Bangladesh. This research examined four World Bank documents and two key national policy documents of Bangladesh. Firstly, the central aim was to understand what kinds of educational futures are being imagined through policy language and whose interests these visions primarily serve. The findings of the study clearly state that human capital, market logic, and digital transformation dominate the lengthy construction of education and EdTech, specifically in the World Bank documents. Education is shaped again and again as a tool for producing skilled worker, increasing productivity, and supporting national economic growth. Learners are primarily seen as future workers, and teachers are introduced as service providers within an efficiency driven system. The study also explained that market-oriented language is not limited to global policy documents rather it is increasingly visible in recent national digital development policies. While the *National Education Policy 2010* presents education as a social responsibility centered on citizenship, equity, and national values, the *Smart Bangladesh ICT Master Plan 2041* shows a noticeable shift in the way of economic competitiveness, digital productivity, and private-sector involvement. This shows a ideological shift in national policy discourse, where older social development visions increasingly give way to technology-centered and market-driven approaches. Terms such as 'digital,' 'smart,' 'innovation,' and 'technology-driven' appear with exceptionally high frequency, and EdTech is consistently presented as a solution to learning loss, teacher shortages, and system inefficiency. The policy discourse gives comparatively less attention to the risks and challenges of digitalization, such as unequal access, infrastructure gaps, teacher preparedness, and student well-being but this imbalance shows how technological optimism often overlooks social realities in contemporary development planning. Another vital finding is the expansion of governance, monitoring, and data-driven responsibility within education policy discourse. EdTech is increasingly framed not only as a learning tool but reflects a broader transformation of education into a managed, measured, and performance-oriented environment. This is particularly concerning in Bangladesh where extensive differences persist between urban and rural areas, rich and poor students, and digitally connected and disconnected communities.

Secondly, one of the most important contributions of this study is the identification of rambling merging between World Bank policy language and recent national digital policy discourses. While earlier national education policy retained greater social orientation, newer digital development frameworks increasingly show global neoliberal development ideologies. This suggests that global development institutions shape not only funding structures but also the very language through which national educational futures are imagined. From the perspective of linguistic neoliberalism, this study shows how education is progressively recreated as an economic project through language. Policy discourse transforms learning into investment, students into human capital, and universities and schools into productivity systems. This research has shown that these transformations operate simultaneously at the textual level through word choice, and the social practice level through alignment with neoliberal political economy through Fairclough's CDA. In conclusion, this study says that EdTech in Bangladesh is not merely an educational innovation; it is an extremely theoretical development project. While technology holds genuine potential for improving access, learning continuity, and system efficiency, the powerful policy discourse prioritizes economic productivity and market competitiveness over social justice and inclusive human development. This research therefore calls for a more organized, socially grounded, and equity-centered approach to digital education policy in Bangladesh.

Thirdly, based on the findings and critical discussion of this study, the following policy recommendations are proposed to guide more inclusive, ethical, and socially responsible implementation of EdTech in Bangladesh. First, EdTech policies should move beyond a narrow human capital approach and should particularly reassure the social, cultural, and democratic purposes of education. Education must not be reduced only to human capital preparation. National policy documents should incorporate stronger ground on citizenship, ethical development, critical thinking, and social responsibility within digital education system. Second, digital transformation strategies must be followed by strong equity-focused frameworks. Policymakers should ensure that rural schools, low-income households, and marginalized communities get priority in terms of device distribution, internet connectivity, teacher training, and digital infrastructure. Without proper organization, EdTech will continue to benefit students who are already advantaged. Third, teacher-centered digital capacity building must be given preference. Teachers should not be positioned merely as technology users but as co-designers of digital pedagogy. Continuous professional development programs should focus not only on technical skills but also on critical

digital pedagogy, online student well-being, and ethical technology use. Global models should be adapted, not just transferred. Fourth, digital governance systems must be implemented with strong data protection, privacy, and ethical safeguards. Students' learning data, performance records, and behavioral tracking should be in control by transparent legal frameworks. Fifth, English centered EdTech policies should be balanced with multilingual and native language digital content, especially at the primary and secondary levels. Over-dependency on English have the risks of marginalizing rural and non-English-speaking learners and deepening existing linguistic inequalities.

Lastly, this research makes three main contributions. (a) It contributes practically by providing a comparative quantitative discourse analysis of global and national EdTech policy texts in Bangladesh. (b) It contributes theoretically by explaining the usefulness of linguistic neoliberalism combined with Fairclough's CDA in scrutinizing education policy discourse. (c) It contributes practically by giving policy-relevant insights into how digital education reform can be guided to more fair-minded and socially responsible outcomes. This study is limited to six major policy documents and focuses on textual discourse rather than classroom-level implementation. The quantitative approach cannot fully capture subtle meanings, metaphors, and lived educational experiences. Future studies can include interviews with teachers, policymakers, and students to connect policy discourse with real-world practice. Future research can explore how EdTech discourses are staged in actual classrooms, particularly in rural and disadvantaged settings. Comparative studies between Bangladesh and other South Asian countries could also provide extensive insights into regional policy. Further research on student experiences, digital well-being, and teacher agency in EdTech environments would greatly upgrade this digital education system.

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Appendices: Policy Documents Analyzed

World Bank Policy Documents

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3. World Bank (2023). *Bangladesh: Learning Acceleration in Secondary Education Operation*.
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National Policy Documents

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