



The Libyan EFL Teacher as a Method Maker: Reconstructing Teacher Identity and Agency in the Post method Era

من تطبيق الطرائق إلى بناء الممارسة التدريسية: إعادة تشكيل هوية معلم اللغة الإنجليزية وفاعليته
المهنية في ليبيا في عصر ما بعد الطريقة

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the changing professional role of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Libya, focusing on their transition from implementers of prescribed methods to context-responsive designers of pedagogical practice. Adopting a critical conceptual analysis supported by a critical literature review, the study synthesizes international and Libyan scholarship on postmethod pedagogy, language-teacher identity, and ecological teacher agency, while considering the different working conditions of schools and universities.

The analysis indicates that effective language teaching cannot be achieved through procedural adherence to externally developed methods alone. Libyan EFL teachers interpret and adapt curricula, textbooks, tasks, and technologies in response to learner proficiency, assessment requirements, available resources, institutional expectations, and sociocultural conditions. Such adaptation, however, constitutes responsible method making only when it is guided by pedagogical principles, informed by evidence, and subjected to professional reflection.

The study proposes the Context-Responsive Method-Making (CRMM) framework, comprising four interrelated practices: diagnostic particularity, principled pedagogical design, constrained enactment, and reflective accountability. The analysis further demonstrates that opportunities for method making differ across institutional settings. School teachers generally work within prescribed curricula, textbooks, and examinations, whereas university instructors may possess greater formal autonomy but face uneven program coordination, pedagogical support, and technological capacity.

The study identifies a conceptual gap in Libyan EFL research concerning the relationship among postmethod pedagogy, professional identity, and teacher agency across school and university contexts. It concludes that repositioning teachers as responsible designers of pedagogical practice requires more than individual creativity or methodological training. It also requires supportive curriculum policies, aligned assessment, sustained professional learning, collaborative leadership, and institutional recognition of teachers' professional judgment.



الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة التحول في الدور المهني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في ليبيا، مع التركيز على انتقالهم من تنفيذ الطرائق المقررة إلى تصميم ممارسات تدريسية تستجيب لخصوصية السياق. واعتمدت الدراسة التحليل المفاهيمي النقدي، مدعومًا بمراجعة نقدية للأدبيات، من خلال توليف الدراسات الليبية والدولية المتعلقة بمقاربة ما بعد الطريقة، والهوية المهنية لمعلم اللغة، والفاعلية المهنية من منظور إيكولوجي، مع مراعاة اختلاف ظروف العمل بين المدارس والجامعات. تشير نتائج التحليل إلى أن تحسين تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لا يتحقق بالالتزام الإجرائي بالطرائق الجاهزة وحده؛ إذ يكيف المعلمون المناهج والكتب والمهام والتقنيات وفق مستويات المتعلمين، ومتطلبات التقويم، والموارد المتاحة، والظروف المؤسسية والاجتماعية. غير أن هذا التكيف لا يصبح بناءً مهنيًا مسؤولًا للممارسة إلا عندما يستند إلى مبادئ تربوية وأدلة تعليمية، ويخضع للتأمل والتقويم.

وتقترح الدراسة إطار بناء الممارسة التدريسية المستجيبة للسياق، القائم على أربعة أبعاد: تشخيص خصوصيات البيئة التعليمية، والتصميم التربوي المستند إلى المبادئ، والتنفيذ الواعي بالقيود، والمساءلة التأملية. كما تبين أن معلمي المدارس يعملون غالبًا ضمن مناهج وكتب وامتحانات محددة، بينما يتمتع أساتذة الجامعات باستقلالية أوسع، لكنها قد تفترن بضعف التنسيق والدعم التربوي والتقني.

وتكشف الدراسة عن فجوة مفاهيمية في بحوث تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا تتعلق بتفسير العلاقة بين مقاربة ما بعد الطريقة، والهوية المهنية، وفاعلية المعلم في السياقين المدرسي والجامعي. وتخلص إلى أن إعادة بناء دور المعلم بوصفه مصممًا مسؤولًا للممارسة التدريسية لا تعتمد على الإبداع الفردي أو التدريب على الطرائق وحدهما، بل تتطلب سياسات منهجية داعمة، وتقويماً متسقاً مع أهداف التعلم، وتطويراً مهنيًا مستمرًا، وقيادة تعاونية، واعترافاً مؤسسياً بالحكم المهني للمعلم.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: ليبيا؛ معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية؛ مقاربة ما بعد الطريقة؛ الهوية المهنية؛ فاعلية المعلم؛ بناء الممارسة التدريسية؛ التدريس المستجيب للسياق.

1. Introduction

Language-teaching methodology has frequently been presented as a succession of competing methods, including grammar–translation, audiolingualism, communicative language teaching (CLT), and task-based language teaching (TBLT). However, the search for a universally effective method overlooks the fact that teaching is enacted in classrooms shaped by different learners, purposes, resources, languages, and institutional conditions (Hall, 2024; Prabhu, 1990). The postmethod perspective emerged in response to this limitation, shifting attention from procedural fidelity to situated pedagogical judgment and teachers' capacity to generate knowledge from practice (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001, 2003). Nevertheless, critics warn that postmethod aspirations may remain rhetorical when teachers lack the authority, resources, and institutional support required to exercise such judgment (Akbari, 2008; Bell, 2003).



This concern is particularly relevant in centrally prescribed or weakly supported reform contexts. Teachers may be expected to implement communicative and learner-centered instruction while being evaluated through textbook completion, syllabus coverage, and examination results. Their responses to reform are shaped not only by professional beliefs and prior experience but also by assessment, class size, leadership, resources, learner expectations, and opportunities for professional learning (Cong-Lem, 2021; Tao & Gao, 2021). Teacher agency should therefore be understood as an ecological achievement produced through the interaction of professional purposes and contextual affordances, rather than as an individual characteristic or unrestricted autonomy (Priestley *et al.*, 2015). Recent studies of TBLT, digital assessment, and novice EFL teaching support this relational understanding of teachers' decision-making (Chen, 2026; Lee & Jeon, 2024; Xu & Fan, 2022).

Libya offers a significant context for examining these issues. Communicatively oriented reforms have operated alongside prescribed textbooks, examination pressures, uneven teacher preparation, resource limitations, and institutional instability. Research has consistently identified a gap between curricular intentions and classroom practice in Libyan schools (Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; Altaieb & Omar, 2015; Orafi & Borg, 2009). University instructors may possess greater discretion over materials and course organization, yet this autonomy is often weakened by limited infrastructure, uneven student preparation, insufficient professional development, and weak program coordination (Abdelatia *et al.*, 2023; Abushafa, 2014). At the same time, recent studies show that Libyan teachers adapt textbooks, explore task-based and technology-supported practices, negotiate professional identity, and exercise strategic agency under difficult conditions (Abdelaty, 2023; Alburki & Almashrgy, 2024; Juma-Elflow & Vanci Osam, 2025; Taha *et al.*, 2025).

Despite these contributions, Libyan EFL research has not adequately integrated postmethod pedagogy, professional identity, and ecological agency to explain how teacher adaptation may develop into responsible method making. It has also paid insufficient attention to the different decision environments of schools and universities. This paper addresses that gap by developing a Context-Responsive Method-Making (CRMM) framework comprising diagnostic particularity, principled pedagogical design, constrained enactment, and reflective accountability. The framework conceptualizes teachers as responsible designers of locally responsive pedagogy while maintaining accountability to professional knowledge, curricular purposes, and learners.

2. Statement of the Problem

Libyan ELT continues to exhibit a mismatch between reform-oriented curricular intentions and the conditions under which teaching is enacted. Although communicative curricula, compulsory materials, and digital initiatives may promote learner-centered instruction, classroom practice is mediated by assessment demands, limited time, class size, learner proficiency, material resources, and institutional support (Abdelatia *et al.*, 2023; Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; Altaieb & Omar, 2015; Orafi & Borg, 2009). This mismatch cannot be explained adequately through accounts that attribute implementation difficulties primarily to teachers' insufficient training, traditional beliefs, or resistance to change.



The central problem is that Libyan EFL teachers are commonly positioned as implementers of externally developed methods and curricular prescriptions rather than as legitimate producers of context-responsive pedagogy. Although post method and teacher-agency scholarship recognize the importance of situated professional judgment, such judgment cannot be reduced to individual autonomy or unsupported improvisation; it depends on teachers' knowledge, identities, purposes, and institutional environments (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2003; Priestley *et al.*, 2015; Tao & Gao, 2021).

The problem also differs across institutional levels. School teachers generally work within prescribed textbooks, schedules, and examination requirements, whereas university instructors may have greater formal discretion but experience weak program coordination and uneven pedagogical or technological support (Abdelaty, 2023; Abushafa, 2014). While Libyan studies document constraints and instances of teacher adaptation, they have not adequately explained how postmethod pedagogy, professional identity, and ecological agency interact across school and university settings. Consequently, a conceptual account is needed to distinguish responsible method making from unsupported adaptation and to identify the institutional conditions under which it can be sustained.

3. Significance of the Paper

The paper offers four contributions. Conceptually, it connects three literatures that are frequently discussed separately: postmethod pedagogy, language-teacher identity, and ecological teacher agency. Postmethod theory explains why context-sensitive teacher judgment is necessary; identity scholarship explains who a teacher understands themselves to be and which professional actions become imaginable; ecological agency explains why intentions translate into action in some environments but not others. Their integration prevents method making from being reduced either to personal creativity or to technique selection.

Contextually, the paper recentres Libya as a site of theoretical development rather than merely a location in which an international method succeeds or fails. Conditions often described as barriers prescription, multilingual classroom realities, resource inequality, institutional fragility, and discontinuities between school and university are treated as theoretically relevant to how agency is achieved. The framework may consequently speak to other under-resourced or reform-intensive EFL contexts without claiming that the Libyan case is interchangeable with them.

Analytically, the distinction between school and university settings avoids a false uniformity. It makes visible how formal autonomy, material capacity, accountability, and professional risk are distributed differently. Practically, the framework provides a basis for redesigning teacher education, professional development, curriculum guidance, assessment, and institutional leadership. It also supplies propositions that future empirical studies can investigate rather than presenting conceptual conclusions as observed facts.

4. Aim and Objectives





The paper aims to reconceptualise the role of Libyan EFL teachers in schools and universities from implementers of externally specified methods to context-responsive method makers whose professional judgment is principled, situated, and institutionally supported.

The objectives are:

1. To critically examine the limitations of method-implementation discourse in Libyan ELT.
2. To synthesise postmethod pedagogy, language-teacher identity, and ecological teacher agency into a context-sensitive explanatory framework.
3. To compare the conditions for teacher decision-making in Libyan school and university settings.
4. To formulate a context-responsive method-making model that clarifies the knowledge, practices, and institutional conditions required for responsible teacher agency.
5. To derive implications for curriculum policy, assessment, teacher education, professional learning, and future empirical research.

5. Research Questions

1. How does an implementation-oriented view of methodology constrain the professional identity and agency of Libyan EFL teachers?
2. How can postmethod pedagogy, teacher-identity theory, and ecological agency be integrated to conceptualise the Libyan EFL teacher as a method maker?
3. How do the opportunities and constraints for method making differ between Libyan schools and universities?
4. What pedagogical and institutional conditions are required for context-responsive method making to become sustainable and accountable?

6. Conceptual Foundations

6.1 From method to the postmethod condition

The method concept traditionally bundles assumptions about language, learning, teacher and learner roles, materials, and classroom procedures into a recognisable instructional system. Methods can provide useful shared vocabulary, practical repertoires, and coherence for novice teachers. The postmethod critique should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that pedagogical knowledge or structured approaches have become irrelevant. Bell (2003) cautioned that method and postmethod may be less incompatible in teachers' actual work than theoretical polarisation suggests. Hall's (2024) reassessment similarly treats method and postmethod as resources for understanding the relationship among theory, context, and classroom decision-making rather than as mutually exclusive historical periods. Teachers often draw on named approaches pragmatically, and teacher education still needs teachable representations of practice.

The stronger postmethod argument concerns authority and fit. No method can anticipate every classroom, and the authority to determine appropriate practice cannot remain exclusively with distant specialists. Kumaravadivelu's (2001, 2003) pedagogy of particularity, practicality, and possibility offers a useful



architecture. Particularity requires responsiveness to a specific group of teachers and learners within particular institutional and sociocultural conditions. Practicality challenges the division between theorists who produce knowledge and teachers who apply it, calling for teachers to theorise from practice and practise what they theorise. Possibility extends pedagogy beyond technical efficiency to the identities, power relations, and social futures implicated in language education. Empirical work on TBLT illustrates why these parameters matter: Xu and Fan (2022) found that teachers advanced implementation through adaptation and learning within contradictions, not through procedural fidelity alone.

Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategic framework further treats classroom procedures as locally generated realisations of broad pedagogical principles rather than fixed prescriptions. This creates conceptual space for teachers to use CLT, TBLT, explicit instruction, multilingual resources, digital tools, and other practices selectively and coherently. A Libyan teacher may, for example, retain explicit grammatical explanation while redesigning practice around meaningful interaction, or strategically use Arabic to scaffold difficult content while expanding opportunities for purposeful English. Such choices are not postmethod merely because they are mixed. They become defensible when they are based on a diagnosis of learners and context, informed by theory and evidence, evaluated against learning purposes, and revised through reflection (Hall, 2024; Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Postmethod pedagogy has also attracted criticism. Akbari (2008) argued that its emancipatory language can exceed the realities of teachers whose working conditions offer limited time, status, resources, or decision authority. If institutions remain unchanged, asking teachers to theorise practice may add intellectual labour without redistributing power. Contemporary agency research supports this reservation: reviews and ecological studies consistently show that action depends on structural, cultural, and material affordances, not professional will alone (Cong-Lem, 2021; Priestley *et al.*, 2015; Tao & Gao, 2021). Postmethod discourse can also romanticise local knowledge, understate the value of cumulative research, or turn principled flexibility into unsystematic eclecticism. These concerns are especially important in Libya. Scarcity-driven improvisation should not be celebrated as professional autonomy, and the absence of coherent support should not be renamed freedom. A viable account of method making must therefore combine teacher knowledge with external scholarship, individual judgment with collective review, and pedagogical possibility with an explicit analysis of constraints.

6.2 Professional identity: From compliant deliverer to pedagogical author

Teacher identity concerns how teachers understand and negotiate who they are as professionals, how they are positioned by others, and how these understandings shape participation and practice. Identity is not a fixed personal attribute. It is multiple, relational, historically formed, and continually reconstructed through classroom experience, institutional discourse, emotion, and interaction (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Truong *et al.*, 2025; Varghese *et al.*, 2005). In language education, identity is especially complex because teachers may be positioned simultaneously as language models, cultural mediators, curriculum implementers, subject



specialists, assessors, carers, and agents of social change (Pennington & Richards, 2016). El-Soussi's (2025) findings from UAE higher education demonstrate this dynamism empirically: teachers facing an abrupt change in instructional mode occupied shifting positions of adaptation, resistance, and ambivalence rather than a single stable professional identity.

An implementation regime privileges a particular identity: the compliant deliverer. Competence is judged by fidelity to a prescribed textbook, technique, or sequence, even when official rhetoric calls for learner-centred teaching. This identity may offer security, especially where assessment rewards coverage and deviation carry risk. It can also narrow professional responsibility to following directions. By contrast, the identity of pedagogical author or method maker recognises the teacher as someone entitled and obligated to interpret aims, diagnose needs, select and adapt resources, justify decisions, and learn from their consequences. The reciprocal relation identified in ecological research identity orienting agency while agentic action reconstructs identity makes this contrast analytically significant rather than merely terminological (Nazari *et al.*, 2024; Tao & Gao, 2021).

This reconstruction is neither automatic nor purely discursive. Golzar's (2020) systematic review showed that language-teacher identity is formed through classroom practice and interaction with context. Recent synthesis also indicates that identity, cognition, emotion, and agency interact, with reflective practice linking them to professional development and pedagogical change (Truong *et al.*, 2025). Teachers who attempt unfamiliar practices may experience vulnerability when students resist, colleagues disapprove, or outcomes are uncertain. Studies of online change and novice EFL work confirm that insecurity, prior trajectories, and institutional affordances shape the identities teachers can enact (Chen, 2026; El-Soussi, 2025). Recognition by peers and leaders, access to credible professional knowledge, and opportunities to examine evidence can support a more agentic identity. Conversely, surveillance, inconsistent policy, and deficit narratives may lead teachers to protect established routines.

In Libya, identity reconstruction must also address gendered expectations, emotional labour, recognition, and unequal professional risk. Recent studies show teachers negotiating identity and strategic agency under sociocultural and institutional pressures rather than merely carrying a method into classrooms (Juma-Elflow & Vanci Osam, 2025; Taha *et al.*, 2025).

6.3 Teacher agency as an ecological achievement

Agency refers broadly to the capacity to act purposefully and to influence practice or conditions. An ecological perspective rejects the idea that agency resides wholly inside the teacher. Drawing on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal-relational account, Priestley *et al.* (2015) describe agency as achieved through the interplay of the iterational, projective, and practical-evaluative dimensions. Teachers draw on past experience, imagine possible futures, and make judgments among present alternatives. The quality and direction of agency depend on available cultural, structural, and material resources, a pattern also identified across the international



literature reviewed by Cong-Lem (2021) and elaborated specifically for language education by Tao and Gao (2021).

Three qualifications follow. Agency is not synonymous with visible innovation: preserving a familiar practice may be a reasoned response to learners or assessment. Nor is agency inherently beneficial; discretion can reproduce exclusion and therefore requires ethical and evidentiary accountability. Finally, formal autonomy is insufficient when teachers lack time, resources, coordination, or professional learning (Cong-Lem, 2021; Priestley *et al.*, 2015).

Language-teacher research supports this relational view. Ashton (2022), examining emergency online teaching, showed how agency was exercised in line with professional identities while social and structural factors shaped what teachers could do. Chen (2026) found comparable ecological dependence among novice school EFL teachers, while Nazari *et al.* (2024) demonstrated the mutual constitution of identity and agency among teacher educators. Truong *et al.*'s (2025) scoping review similarly locates identity–agency relations within meso- and macro-level contexts. For Libya, this means teacher-development initiatives focused only on confidence, motivation, or technique will be insufficient. Agency must be designed into curricular guidance, assessment, leadership, workload, resource allocation, and professional communities.

6.4 Method making as bounded, principled authorship

The method maker is defined here as a teacher who constructs, justifies, enacts, evaluates, and revises a coherent response to a particular learning situation by drawing on research-informed principles, professional experience, learner knowledge, and available resources. Method making differs from method invention: teachers need not create a wholly novel named system. It also differs from eclecticism understood as choosing attractive activities from multiple methods. Its defining feature is the reasoned connection among diagnosis, purpose, design, enactment, evidence, and revision. This definition extends the postmethod claim to teacher-generated practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006) while incorporating the empirical lesson that adaptation becomes productive when teachers learn from contradictions and evidence (Xu & Fan, 2022).

Method making is bounded in three senses. It is epistemically bounded because teachers' knowledge is partial and should remain open to research, colleague critique, and learner evidence. It is ethically bounded because teacher decisions must respect learner dignity, inclusion, curricular entitlement, and fair assessment. It is institutionally bounded because decisions occur within rules, resources, and power relations. These boundaries do not negate agency; they specify the conditions under which agency becomes professionally accountable rather than arbitrary. Research on projective agency and collaborative teacher-educator inquiry indicates that curriculum knowledge and sustained dialogue can enlarge possible action without presenting autonomy as unlimited individual freedom (Banegas *et al.*, 2024; Banegas & Gerlach, 2021; Yuan *et al.*, 2022).

7. Previous Studies and the Libyan Evidence Base

7.1 International research on agency, identity, and pedagogical change



International research increasingly shows that the implementation of language-teaching innovation is mediated by agency rather than determined by the formal features of a method. In a qualitative study of two Chinese university EFL teachers implementing TBLT, Xu and Fan (2022) found that successful enactment involved both proactive and reactive agency. Teachers adapted tasks and learned through the contradictions of their activity systems instead of reproducing TBLT as a fixed script. This finding supports the present paper's distinction between fidelity and principled adaptation: variation from a prescribed procedure may represent pedagogical learning rather than implementation failure.

Research on technology-mediated practice reaches a comparable conclusion. Ashton (2022) showed that language teachers' responses to emergency online teaching were guided by their professional identities and practical-evaluative judgments, while structural conditions shaped the solutions they could enact. After the return to face-to-face teaching, Lee and Jeon (2024) found that teacher agency influenced how language-assessment practices drew upon or abandoned technological affordances. El-Soussi's (2025) study of 14 university English faculty members in the United Arab Emirates further demonstrated that changes in teaching mode required teachers to renegotiate beliefs, roles, and practices, producing identities that ranged from adaptation to resistance and ambivalence. Together, these studies caution against treating technology adoption as evidence of innovation by itself; the relevant issue is how teachers interpret affordances in relation to learning purposes and professional identity.

Recent ecological studies also demonstrate that agency is unevenly distributed. Chen's (2026) study of novice EFL teachers without an initial teacher-education background in Chinese state schools found that agency emerged from the interaction of prior trajectories with school affordances and constraints. Nazari *et al.* (2024) similarly showed that agency and identity construction among language teacher educators were relational and ecologically situated. Their analysis emphasised that identity can strengthen agency and that agency, in turn, can reshape professional identity. These findings reinforce the need to examine recognition, relationships, leadership, and institutional resources rather than attributing innovation solely to teacher motivation.

Teacher education can nevertheless expand the futures teachers perceive as actionable. Banegas *et al.* (2024), studying 220 preservice language teachers in a curriculum-development course, reported growth in projective agency, willingness to pursue professional development, and readiness for critical practice in multilingual classrooms. Banegas and Gerlach (2021) likewise connected critical teacher-educator identity and agency to sustained collaborative reflection. At the program level, Yuan *et al.*'s (2022) critical review of 69 studies warned against constructing TESOL teacher educators as professionally limitless individuals and argued for recognition of their diverse learning needs and contextual struggles. The implication is that calls for teachers to become method makers must be accompanied by curriculum knowledge, collaborative inquiry, mentoring, and realistic institutional support.



This evidence is used analytically, not as a template for Libya: it identifies mechanisms to examine while leaving their local form open to contextual interpretation.

7.2 School-level curriculum reform and classroom practice

Orafi and Borg's (2009) qualitative study remains foundational because it examined actual classroom implementation rather than relying only on reported attitudes. Across three Libyan secondary teachers, the communicative principles of pair work and extensive target-language use were weakly represented; lessons were largely teacher-fronted and Arabic was widely used. Interviews connected practice to teachers' beliefs and interpretations. The study should not be generalised to all Libyan teachers from three cases, but it demonstrates that curricular replacement does not directly produce pedagogical change.

Altaieb and Omar (2015) examined obstacles encountered in implementing the English curriculum in Libyan high schools. Their findings again indicated a gap between curriculum expectations and classroom realities and identified student resistance and contextual barriers. Aloreibi and Carey (2017) situated this gap historically and institutionally, arguing that communicative curriculum reform was not adequately aligned with teacher education and continuing professional development. Their account also highlights discontinuity between university preparation and school expectations: graduates may encounter curricula whose pedagogical demands they were not prepared to enact.

More recent studies suggest both constraint and adaptive action. Abdelaty (2023) investigated teachers' use of a compulsory EFL textbook and reported challenges alongside strategies for adaptation and supplementation. This is directly relevant to method making: prescription does not eliminate teacher mediation, although the extent and quality of adaptation vary. Hadia (2023) found generally positive teacher perceptions of task-based teaching among a university-based Libyan sample while also identifying difficulties in implementation. Positive perception, however, should not be treated as evidence of sustained classroom enactment, particularly when studies depend heavily on self-report.

The school literature has three limitations. First, it frequently evaluates teachers against the fidelity demands of a particular innovation, most often CLT or TBLT. Second, cross-sectional questionnaires reveal perceived barriers but cannot show how teachers make moment-to-moment decisions or how practices develop over time. Third, context is often listed as a set of obstacles after the preferred method has already been selected. A postmethod analysis reverses that order: contextual diagnosis becomes part of pedagogical design rather than an explanation for failed implementation.

7.3 University ELT, discretion, and institutional capacity

Libyan university ELT presents a different configuration. Abushafa's (2014) higher-education study identified challenges associated with student entry levels, curriculum, class size, teaching quality, and broader political change. Aloreibi and Carey (2017) observed that university lecturers may choose convenient materials and procedures, but university practice can remain grammar- and reading-focused. Formal discretion therefore does



not necessarily generate method making. Without shared programme aims, pedagogical development, and useful evidence of learning, choice may reproduce familiar routines.

Digital teaching makes the distinction between discretion and capacity particularly clear. Abdelatia *et al.* (2023), surveying Libyan university EFL instructors, reported major challenges involving technical skills, institutional support, student engagement, and internet connectivity. Alburki and Almashrgy (2024) found that university teachers recognised the value of technology and learner autonomy but faced resource, cultural, and pedagogical barriers. These studies frame technology not as a neutral tool but as part of an ecology. A teacher's willingness to design digitally mediated interaction matters, yet it cannot compensate for unreliable access or absent support.

Recent research on professional identity and agency expands the university evidence base. Taha *et al.* (2025) examined teacher professional identity in relation to Libyan students' grit, affirming the relevance of teacher self-understanding to learner experience, although its cross-sectional design cannot establish a simple causal pathway. Juma-Elflow and Vanci Osam (2025) offer a more explicitly contextual account of how female English teachers negotiate identity and strategic agency under intersecting institutional and sociocultural pressures. Taken together, these studies indicate that university teachers' work is shaped not only by knowledge and method but also by recognition, emotional labour, gender, institutional fragility, and available futures.

7.4 What the previous research does and does not establish

The evidence supports several cautious conclusions. There is a recurrent intention practice gap; teachers work within substantial material and institutional constraints; beliefs and prior learning influence practice; and teachers nevertheless adapt materials and exercise forms of agency. The literature does not support the claim that all Libyan classrooms are traditional, that communicative instruction is absent, or that one method would solve the identified problems. Nor does it yet provide a representative national account across regions, school types, universities, career stages, gender, and urban–rural differences.

Most importantly, the literature lacks an integrative explanation of how policy, identity, knowledge, and resources combine to produce pedagogical decisions. The present paper responds by treating observed adaptation neither as deficient implementation nor as inherently successful agency. It asks when adaptation becomes principled method making and which conditions allow it to improve through evidence and collective learning.

8. Methodology

8.1 Design

This study is a critical conceptual paper supported by a critical literature review. Conceptual papers contribute through the analysis, connection, differentiation, or reconstruction of concepts rather than through the collection of new participant data. Following Jaakkola's (2020) typology, the paper primarily uses theory synthesis and theory adaptation: it synthesises postmethod pedagogy, teacher identity, and ecological agency,



then adapts their relationship to the differentiated conditions of Libyan school and university ELT. A critical review was selected because the aim is not to estimate an intervention effect or exhaustively aggregate homogeneous findings. It is to interrogate assumptions, compare explanations, identify contradictions, and generate a context-sensitive conceptual framework (Snyder, 2019, 2024).

8.2 Search orientation and source selection

The review used an iterative, concept-led search orientation consistent with critical interpretive synthesis (Dixon-Woods *et al.*, 2006). Searches were organised around four domains: (a) method and postmethod pedagogy; (b) language-teacher identity; (c) teacher agency, especially ecological approaches; and (d) Libyan school and university EFL policy and practice. Core combinations included postmethod pedagogy, language teacher identity, EFL teacher agency, teacher autonomy, method making, Libya/Libyan EFL, communicative curriculum reform, textbook adaptation, teacher education, and higher education. Backward and forward citation tracing was used conceptually to connect foundational texts with recent reviews and Libya-specific studies.

Sources were included when they defined or critiqued a central construct, synthesised recent identity or agency research, or provided evidence about Libyan ELT. Peer-reviewed research and scholarly books were prioritised, with doctoral work used where published evidence was limited. Recent studies were emphasised; foundational postmethod and Libyan reform texts were retained. Sources making untraceable claims or using core constructs only as labels were excluded.

This is a critical, not exhaustive aggregative, review. Its heterogeneous theoretical, historical, empirical, and review evidence cannot yield prevalence estimates; it can expose how different literatures position teachers as implementers, decision makers, identity negotiators, or ecological actors.

8.3 Critical conceptual analysis

Analysis proceeded through four recursive operations. First, the key constructs method, post method, identity, agency, autonomy, adaptation, and method making were defined and differentiated. Second, explanatory assumptions were compared. For example, method implementation tends to locate change in fidelity and teacher competence, whereas ecological agency locates action in relations among purposes, histories, and conditions. Third, Libya-specific evidence was read against these assumptions, with attention to both confirming and disconfirming cases. Reports of constraint were compared with evidence of textbook adaptation, technology use, and strategic agency. Fourth, the concepts were reconstructed into a framework that could explain both school and university settings without treating them as identical.

The analysis asked who produces pedagogical knowledge, which decisions are supported and professionally safe, what evidence informs revision, and where responsibility is placed when reform fails. The framework was checked against romanticised freedom, unprincipled eclecticism, and structural neglect.

8.4 Reflexivity, quality, and limitations



Critical conceptual work depends on authorial interpretation. Transparency was therefore pursued by stating the paper's normative position: teachers should possess meaningful professional agency, but their decisions should remain evidence-informed, ethically accountable, and open to collective critique. Competing perspectives were retained, including the practical value of methods and concerns about postmethod feasibility (Akbari, 2008; Bell, 2003). Claims about Libya were calibrated to the design and scope of the supporting studies, and school–university differences were not inferred to be uniform across all institutions.

The review is limited by the uneven visibility and indexing of Libyan scholarship, the small or localised samples of several studies, and the scarcity of longitudinal classroom research. It is also an English-language synthesis, which may underrepresent relevant Arabic scholarship. Because no new empirical data were collected, the proposed framework should be treated as a theoretically grounded proposition requiring investigation, not as a validated description of every Libyan EFL teacher.

9. Discussion

9.1 Overview of the framework

The synthesis proposes Context-Responsive Method Making (CRMM) as a cycle of four interdependent practices: (1) diagnostic particularity, (2) principled pedagogical design, (3) constrained enactment, and (4) reflective accountability. These practices operate within an enabling ecology composed of curriculum and assessment coherence, professional knowledge, collaborative infrastructure, material resources, and leadership recognition. This ecological positioning is consistent with international reviews showing that teacher action is mediated across individual, relational, and institutional levels (Cong-Lem, 2021; Truong *et al.*, 2025). Identity and agency are not separate inputs added to the cycle. Identity shapes the purposes a teacher recognises as professionally legitimate, while agency is achieved as the teacher moves through the cycle using available resources and relationships (Nazari *et al.*, 2024; Tao & Gao, 2021).

CRMM does not replace CLT, TBLT, explicit instruction, or other approaches with a new branded method. Instead, it offers criteria for deciding how elements of such approaches can be selected, combined, adapted, and evaluated. This responds to Bell's (2003) and Hall's (2024) warning that abandoning the resources of method is neither necessary nor especially helpful. A practice is context-responsive not simply because it is local. It must connect a defensible diagnosis to an educational purpose, enact a coherent design under real conditions, and generate evidence for revision; this criterion distinguishes CRMM from both fidelity and unsystematic eclecticism as shown in (Table 1) (Akbari, 2008; Kumaravadivelu, 2003).



Table 1. Core practices in Context-Responsive Method Making

Practice	Guiding question	Primary evidence
Diagnostic particularity	What do these learners need under these conditions?	Learner work, observation, dialogue, assessment, and contextual information
Principled pedagogical design	Why should this sequence make the intended learning possible?	Design rationale linking aims, principles, tasks, scaffolds, and assessment
Constrained enactment	What can be adapted, negotiated, or transformed while preserving purpose?	Classroom interaction, implementation notes, participation, and emerging constraints
Reflective accountability	What worked, for whom, at what cost, and what should change?	Learner outcomes, feedback, peer critique, inclusion evidence, and documented revision

9.2 Diagnostic particularity

Diagnostic particularity translates Kumaravadivelu's (2001, 2003) parameter of particularity into a disciplined inquiry practice. The teacher examines learner proficiency, linguistic repertoires, prior learning, goals, participation patterns, cultural expectations, assessment demands, time, class size, available technology, and institutional rules. Diagnosis is not a one-time needs-analysis questionnaire. It is an evolving account built from observation, learner work, dialogue, and assessment evidence. The emphasis on evolving interpretation is supported by Xu and Fan's (2022) finding that teachers learned through contradictions during TBLT implementation and by Lee and Jeon's (2024) demonstration that perceived technological affordances changed with assessment context.

In a Libyan school, diagnosis may reveal that students are expected to complete a communicative textbook unit but lack the lexical or interactional resources required for open pair work. This inference is consistent with Libyan reports of mismatches among curriculum demands, learner proficiency, and classroom participation (Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; Altaieb & Omar, 2015; Orafi & Borg, 2009). A fidelity model presents a binary choice: implement the task as written or retreat to explanation and translation. Method making creates a sequence: activate relevant Arabic and English knowledge, model the interaction, rehearse a limited exchange, vary grouping, and expand the task as learners gain control. Strategic Arabic use becomes a scaffold rather than evidence that CLT has failed, while meaningful English use remains an explicit developmental goal.

At university, diagnosis may expose differences in entry proficiency, disciplinary aims, and technology access (Abdelatia *et al.*, 2023; Abushafa, 2014). Greater discretion permits differentiated texts or multimodal tasks but also demands stronger justification. Placement information, shared rubrics, and samples of student work can connect material choice to programme outcomes and reduce dependence on individual intuition (Yuan *et al.*, 2022).

Diagnostic particularity also challenges deficit labels. Student resistance, for example, may refer to fear of public error, unfamiliar participation norms, low perceived relevance, assessment misalignment, or insufficient



linguistic support. Each explanation implies a different response. Treating resistance as a stable cultural trait closes inquiry; treating it as relational evidence opens design possibilities. This interpretation is more defensible than attributing non-participation to culture alone because agency and engagement emerge relationally from tasks, identities, expectations, and available support (El-Soussi, 2025; Truong *et al.*, 2025).

9.3 Principled pedagogical design

The second practice converts diagnosis into an explicit design. Teachers define learning purposes, choose or adapt tasks and explanations, organise interaction, anticipate barriers, and decide what evidence will indicate progress. Design is principled when choices can be justified through a combination of language-learning scholarship, curriculum aims, professional experience, learner knowledge, and ethical considerations. Such an account operationalises postmethod practicality (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) while retaining the knowledge resources associated with method (Hall, 2024).

This element protects postmethod pedagogy from unprincipled eclecticism, a risk central to critiques of postmethod feasibility (Akbari, 2008; Bell, 2003). Combining grammar explanation, translation, controlled practice, and communicative tasks can be coherent if each component performs a specified function in a learning sequence. Conversely, a lesson containing fashionable group work and technology can remain incoherent if activities are disconnected from aims or accessibility. International evidence supports this emphasis on rationale: teachers implementing TBLT and technology-mediated assessment acted productively when they adapted tools in relation to pedagogical contradictions and purposes rather than adopting surface procedures (Lee & Jeon, 2024; Xu & Fan, 2022). The method maker therefore asks not Which method do I use? but What does this group need to learn, what conditions shape the learning, which principles are relevant, and how will this design make learning possible?

For school teachers, principled design often takes the form of adaptation within constraint. Curriculum guides should therefore distinguish non-negotiable outcomes from adaptable pathways. If every page and activity is treated as mandatory, teachers are denied the time needed to respond to evidence. If no outcome is shared, learners' curricular entitlement becomes dependent on individual preference. Bounded flexibility is the productive middle: common purposes with legitimate alternative routes. Banegas *et al.* (2024) provide relevant evidence that explicit curriculum-development study can strengthen preservice teachers' projective agency, suggesting that adaptation should be taught as professional reasoning rather than left to informal trial and error. For university teachers, principled design requires programme coherence. Individual academic freedom should not produce unrelated course islands. Departments can agree on learning outcomes, assessment principles, and progression while leaving instructors room to design context-responsive routes. Peer review of course plans and shared analysis of learner work can turn solitary discretion into collective professional authorship. This collective orientation answers Yuan *et al.*'s (2022) criticism of expectations that individual TESOL educators



should manage unlimited responsibilities and aligns with evidence that collaborative reflection can connect identity, agency, and critical pedagogical purpose (Banegas & Gerlach, 2021).

9.4 Constrained enactment

Design enters classrooms through constrained enactment. This concept foregrounds that teaching is contingent: time changes, students respond unexpectedly, electricity or connectivity fails, attendance varies, and institutional demands intervene. Skilled teachers adapt while preserving the purpose of the design. Agency is visible in these judgments, but the range of possible judgments is ecologically produced (Cong-Lem, 2021; Priestley *et al.*, 2015). Empirical language-teacher studies across school, university, and emergency-online contexts confirm that prior experience, professional identity, infrastructure, and institutional relationships mediate what can be enacted (Ashton, 2022; Chen, 2026; Nazari *et al.*, 2024).

The word constrained is not intended to naturalise poor conditions. It serves two analytic purposes. First, it prevents researchers and leaders from attributing all outcomes to teacher competence. Second, it makes constraints objects of action. Some can be handled pedagogically, such as modifying grouping in a crowded classroom. Others require collective or policy intervention, such as examination systems that reward memorisation, unreliable infrastructure, excessive teaching loads, or the absence of accessible materials. The latter distinction is essential in Libya because inadequate institutional support and connectivity have been reported alongside teachers' technical challenges; treating all three as individual skill deficits would misidentify their level of causation (Abdelatia *et al.*, 2023; Alburki & Almashrgy, 2024).

The framework distinguishes three responses to constraint. Adaptation changes classroom means while retaining the learning purpose. Negotiation involves teachers working with learners, colleagues, or leaders to alter schedules, resources, expectations, or assessment. Transformation seeks a more durable change in policy or institutional practice. These levels extend the evidence of proactive and reactive agency in TBLT (Xu & Fan, 2022) and the finding that digital affordances can be reinterpreted when assessment environments change (Lee & Jeon, 2024). A school teacher may adapt a textbook task, negotiate access to a shared projector, and collectively advocate assessment reform. A university instructor may redesign an online activity for low bandwidth, coordinate shared resources with colleagues, and press for institutional support. Agency is therefore both pedagogical and political, though the risks of political action vary and should not be romanticised (Tao & Gao, 2021).

9.5 Reflective accountability

Reflection is often recommended as a personal habit, but method making requires accountability to evidence and to others. Teachers examine learner work, participation, assessment results, observation notes, learner feedback, and colleague perspectives. They ask whether the design achieved its purpose, for whom it worked, who was excluded, and what should change. Reflection becomes consequential when it feeds the next diagnosis and when institutions provide time and forums for it. Truong *et al.* (2025) identified reflective practice as a



pivotal mechanism linking identity, cognition, emotion, agency, and pedagogical change; Banegas and Gerlach (2021) demonstrate how sustained dialogue can give such reflection a collective and critical form.

Critical reflection also examines power. English can open academic and professional opportunities, but language education can marginalise local repertoires, reproduce native-speaker norms, or frame learners' identities as deficient. Kumaravadivelu's (2001, 2003) parameter of possibility requires teachers to consider whose English, knowledge, and participation are legitimised. International teacher-education research connects projective agency with preparation for critical multilingual practice (Banegas *et al.*, 2024), while the Libyan evidence shows that agency is also negotiated through gendered and sociocultural pressures (Juma-Elflow & Vanci Osam, 2025). Responsible method making can therefore value Arabic and local cultural knowledge without reducing English exposure or communicative ambition, while scrutinising gendered participation and unequal digital access.

Accountability here is developmental, not punitive: teachers document rationales, examine proportionate evidence, and discuss revisions with peers, while leaders use findings to improve conditions. Because agency can conserve as well as change practice, its purposes and consequences not autonomy alone must be evaluated (Nazari *et al.*, 2024; Priestley *et al.*, 2015).

9.6 Identity reconstruction through the cycle

Moving through the CRMM cycle can reconstruct teacher identity. Diagnosis positions the teacher as an inquirer; design positions the teacher as a knowledgeable author; enactment positions the teacher as a situated decision maker; reflective accountability positions the teacher as a responsible professional learner. Repeated participation, recognition, and evidence can stabilise these positions into an identity of method maker. This cyclical claim is supported by studies in which action and identity reshape one another over time and through institutional change (El-Soussi, 2025; Nazari *et al.*, 2024; Truong *et al.*, 2025).

However, identity reconstruction is vulnerable. If a teacher is invited to innovate but blamed when structural conditions undermine the lesson, the compliant-implementer identity may become safer. If professional development presents techniques without engaging teachers' contexts, teachers remain recipients. If leaders interpret adaptation as disobedience, agency contracts. Chen's (2026) study of novice EFL teachers shows why personal willingness cannot substitute for supportive school affordances, while Yuan *et al.* (2022) warn against idealised expectations that disregard educators' working realities. Institutional recognition is therefore constitutive, not decorative. Teachers need explicit permission to adapt, criteria for responsible adaptation, access to knowledge and collaboration, and protection for well-reasoned experimentation.

Support must also vary by position. Novices may need structured repertoires and mentoring; experienced teachers may need opportunities to interrogate routines; female or precariously employed teachers may face distinctive risks (Chen, 2026; Juma-Elflow & Vanci Osam, 2025). Method making cannot become another universal role imposed without regard to career stage and institutional position.



9.7 Comparing schools and universities

The framework produces a differentiated comparison. In schools, the primary tension is often between curricular prescription and classroom responsiveness, a pattern evident both in Libyan curriculum studies and international research on teacher-mediated innovation (Altaieb & Omar, 2015; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Xu & Fan, 2022). The most important policy move is to create bounded adaptation: specify outcomes, assessment criteria, and core entitlements while authorising teachers to alter sequences, examples, grouping, pacing, and scaffolding. School-based professional communities can reduce the risk and workload of adaptation by co-designing lessons and reviewing learner work; preparation in curriculum development may also expand the future actions teachers can imagine (Banegas *et al.*, 2024).

In universities, the primary tension may be between individual discretion and programme coherence. Method making requires more than freedom from a textbook. Departments need shared diagnostic information, curricular progression, assessment literacy, peer dialogue, and reliable infrastructure. This argument follows from Libyan findings on fragmented support and digital constraints (Abdelatia *et al.*, 2023; Abushafa, 2014) and from the broader literature's rejection of solitary, limitless educator responsibility (Yuan *et al.*, 2022). University instructors should be recognised as designers, but their designs should contribute to collective programme purposes and equitable student experiences.

The school–university boundary is also ecological. The intention–practice gap persists when methods courses remain detached from Libyan classrooms or practica reward compliance, a discontinuity noted by Aloreibi and Carey (2017). Because curriculum study can strengthen preservice teachers' projective agency (Banegas *et al.*, 2024), school mentors and university educators should co-design practicum inquiries and context-rich adaptation cases as illustrated in (Table 2).

Table 2. Differentiated conditions for method making in Libyan schools and universities

Dimension	Schools	Universities
Typical decision space	Adaptation within prescribed curriculum, textbook, timetable, and examinations	Wider choice of materials and procedures, with variable programme coordination
Central risk	Innovation conflicts with coverage, assessment, or administrative expectations	Individual discretion produces fragmentation or repeats familiar routines
Priority support	Bounded adaptation, aligned assessment, mentoring, and school-based co-design	Shared outcomes, assessment moderation, peer review, pedagogical development, and infrastructure
Salient form of agency	Context-responsive adaptation and collective negotiation	Coherent course design and contribution to programme-level learning



9.8 Propositions for future empirical examination

The conceptual synthesis of postmethod theory, ecological agency research, and the reviewed Libyan evidence generates six propositions (Cong-Lem, 2021; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Priestley *et al.*, 2015; Truong *et al.*, 2025):

1. Teacher training in methods will produce limited sustained change when curriculum, assessment, and leadership do not authorise context-responsive adaptation.
2. Formal discretion will predict method making only when combined with professional knowledge, collaborative support, and access to evidence about learning.
3. Teachers who are institutionally recognised as pedagogical decision makers will be more likely to articulate and revise a coherent professional identity than teachers positioned primarily as implementers.
4. Collaborative design and review will produce more sustainable agency than isolated calls for teacher creativity, particularly under resource constraints.
5. The form of method making will differ by institutional level: bounded adaptation will be more salient in schools, while coherence-building will be more salient in universities.
6. Reflective accountability will mediate the relationship between teacher discretion and pedagogical quality by converting experience into revisable professional knowledge.

These are analytically derived expectations, not tested hypotheses. They provide a basis for longitudinal, comparative research across Libyan regions and institutions.

10. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the changing role of the Libyan EFL teacher cannot be understood as a simple movement from an old method to a new one. The deeper transition is from a professional identity organised around implementation to one organised around responsible pedagogical authorship. Postmethod pedagogy supplies the demand for particularity, practicality, and possibility; identity theory explains how professional roles are constructed and contested; ecological agency explains why purposeful action depends on histories, imagined futures, relationships, resources, and institutional conditions.

The Context-Responsive Method-Making framework defines this authorship through diagnostic particularity, principled design, constrained enactment, and reflective accountability. It rejects both procedural fidelity and romantic autonomy. Method making is bounded and collective, requiring research-informed judgment, ethical responsibility, shared purposes, evidence of learning, and institutional conditions that permit revision.

Libyan schools and universities present different decision ecologies. School reform should create legitimate space for bounded adaptation within common curricular entitlements. University reform should connect instructor discretion to programme coherence, pedagogical development, and collective evidence.

11. Recommendations

11.1 Curriculum and assessment policy



Libyan curriculum guidance should specify required outcomes while authorizing teachers to adapt content, sequencing, pacing, and scaffolding.

School examinations should be aligned with communicative and higher-order learning outcomes.

Teachers from different Libyan regions and school contexts should participate in curriculum piloting, evaluation, and revision.

11.2 Teacher education and professional development

Pre-service programs should present methods as adaptable, principled resources rather than fixed instructional packages.

Practicum assessment should evaluate diagnosis, pedagogical reasoning, responsive teaching, and reflection.

Professional development should priorities sustained collaborative planning, peer observation, lesson study, and classroom inquiry.

Mentoring, time, and resources should be differentiated according to teachers' experience, employment conditions, and digital competence.

11.3 Schools and universities

Schools should establish teacher-design groups to adapt materials, develop low-resource tasks, and evaluate learner evidence.

University English departments should balance instructor autonomy with shared outcomes, assessment standards, and curriculum coordination.

Institutions should provide protected time for pedagogical planning, collaboration, and reflection.

Digital initiatives should include low-bandwidth and offline options appropriate to Libyan infrastructure and learner access.

11.4 School–university partnerships and research

Faculties of education and schools should jointly investigate local teaching problems and develop context-responsive solutions.

Future studies should examine agency through classroom observation, teacher reflection, learner work, and policy analysis not self-report alone.

Longitudinal research should compare regions, institutions, career stages, and genders across Libyan ELT.

The CRMM framework should be empirically tested, refined, and examined for cases in which teacher discretion does not improve learning.

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