

Friday PhD Talks 2025-2026
#23
Luis Martínez-Kleiser
27th February 2026



From the Classroom to the PhD: Being an Outsider, a Part-Time Researcher, and a Public Speaker

Abstract:

Starting a PhD in my mid-forties was not a linear academic decision, but the result of a professional life lived across multiple worlds: secondary school teaching, teacher training, entrepreneurship, ESP teaching (Veterinary Medicine and Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgery), design thinking, and even performing in a rock band. Entering academia from this background has often made me feel like an outsider but also given me a different lens through which to do research.

In this talk, I will reflect on what it means to pursue a doctorate as a part-time student while balancing teaching, business responsibilities, and ongoing professional practice. Rather than framing this as a limitation, I will discuss how this position can become an advantage: it keeps research grounded in real audiences, real communication needs, and real educational impact.

I will also present my current doctoral project on the recontextualization of scientific dissemination for adolescent audiences: how expert scientific knowledge is transformed into accessible multimodal discourse for teenagers, for whom, and to what end. Drawing on a design thinking mindset, I approach research as an audience-centred practice, where empathy, usability, and communicative effectiveness are central; always having in mind for whom and why we do things.

Finally, I will share insights on delivering conference papers and speaking in public, comparing academic presentations with the training sessions I regularly teach. How do we adapt voice, structure, and engagement strategies across contexts without losing rigor? I hope this session opens a conversation about non-linear academic identities, part-time doctoral journeys, and research that remains deeply connected to people beyond academia.

Bionote:

Luis Martínez-Kleiser Magaña is a lecturer and teacher educator at the University of Zaragoza, where he teaches English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and in the School of Engineering and Architecture (EINA). He has also taught in the Master's Degree in Teacher Training (English specialization), delivering the course Design of Learning Activities, as well as in Early Childhood and Primary Education degrees. His current research interests focus on corpus linguistics

and its potential applications to the EFL classroom.

Alongside his university career, he has over 20 years of secondary-school teaching experience, leading bilingual programmes and Erasmus+ projects. As a teacher trainer, he delivers professional development in active methodologies, task- and project-based approaches, bilingual education, and the pedagogical use of AI for educational purposes.