ChenShani

📞 +972 50 2303 177 ✉ chen.shani@mail.huji.ac.il in g

My long-term goal is to create truly intelligent, **cognitively inspired machines**.
I am interested in **integrating insights from cognitive science to AI research, and vice versa**.

Education

2019-present	**Ph.D. in Computation and Information Processing (ELSC)**	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

- Advisor: Professor Dafna Shahaf

2017-2019	**M.Sc., Computation and Information Processing, magna cum laude**	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

- Interdisciplinary international excellence program
- Advanced courses in information processing, theory of deep learning, statistics

2011-2017	**B.A., Psychology and Management, cum laude**	The Open University of Israel, Israel

- Began studying at the age of 16
- Autodidactic program
- Dean's excellence award for the 2014-2015 academic year

Experience

2022-present	**NLP Consultant**	Nartis.ai, Israel
2022	**Visiting Researcher** with Jilles Vreeken	Helmholtz Center for Information Security (CISPA), Saarbrucken, Germany
2019-2022	**NLP Research Scientist at Amazon**	Amazon Research, Alexa Shopping team, Israel

- Co-founded the Alexa Humor team
- Large pretrained language models (BERT, GPT-2/3, T5), PyTorch, TensorFlow, HuggingFace

2019-present	**Reviewer** (ACL, CIKM, SIGIR, KDD, AMLC)	
2017-present	**Researcher at Dafna Shahaf's Lab**	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

- Computational surprise, humor & creativity
- AI, NLP, DL

2015-2017	**Manager** of Marketing and Public Relations	Psagot Institute, Israel

- Managed teams of over 30 employees

2015-2017	**Research Assistant**	Vital technologies, Israel

- Conducted cognitive-behavioral experiments
- Data processing and statistical analysis

2013-2014	**Research Assistant**	The Open University's behavioral lab, Israel

- Conducted cognitive-behavioral experiments

2013-2015	**Psychotechnical Diagnoser & Commander**	Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Israel

- Interviewed security service candidates to determine their quality data

Honors & awards

2022	**NeurIPS travel grant**

- The thirty-sixth Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) 2022, New Orleans, LA
- The Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC)

2017-present	**Excellence scholarship**

The Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC)

2014-2015	**Dean's excellence award** for the academic year

The Open University

Selected publications

2022 **The Lean Data Scientist: Recent Advances towards Overcoming the Data Bottleneck**
C. Shani, Y. Zarecki & D. Shahaf

- Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery (**CACM**), DOI: 10.1145/3551635
- WiML workshop, co-located with the thirty-sixth conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (**NeurIPS**) 2022, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
- Innovative Ideas in Data Science workshop, The Web Conference (**WWW**) 2020, Taipei, Taiwan

2022 **``Alexa, Do You Want to Build a Snowman?" Characterizing Playful Requests to Conversational Agents**
C. Shani, A. Libov, S. Tolmach, L. Lewin-Eytan, Y. Maarek & D. Shahaf

- The Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (**CHI**) Extended Abstracts 2022, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
- Amazon Machine Learning Conference (**AMLC**) 2020, Seattle, Washington, USA

2021 **How Did This Get Funded?! Automatically Identifying Quirky Scientific Achievements**
C. Shani, N. Borenstein & D. Shahaf

- Annual Conference of the Association for Computational Linguistics (**ACL**) 2021, Bangkok, Thailand
- Poster and blitz oral presentation at the Jerusalem Brain Community (**JBC**) annual meeting 2020, Mitzpe Ramon, Israel

2020 **Language (Re)modeling: Towards Embodied Language Understanding**
R. Tamari, C. Shani, T. Hope, M. R.L. Petruck, O. Abend & D. Shahaf

- Annual Conference of the Association for Computational Linguistics (**ACL**) 2020, Seattle, Washington, USA
- The Annual Meeting of the Israeli Seminar on Computational Linguistics (**ISCOL**) 2020, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Other peer-reviewed publications and presentations

2023 **Computational Humor in No Joke (invited talk)**

- AI week, Tel-Aviv University

2023 **Evaluating Response Generation to Playful Shopping Requests**
N. Shapira, O. Kalinsky, A. Libov, C. Shani & S. Tolmach

- The 45th European Conference on Information Retrieval (**ECIR**) 2023, Stavanger, Norway

2022 **Can Computers Understand Humor?**
C. Shani & D. Shahaf

- Frontiers for Young Minds, 10:982604. DOI: 10.3389/frym.2022.982604

2022 **``It is Impossible to Buy Love Because Love is Free": Generating Responses to Playful Shopping Requests (poster)**
N. Shapira, O. Kalinsky, A. Libov, C. Shani & S. Tolmach

- Amazon Machine Learning Conference (**AMLC**) 2022, Dallas, Texas, USA

2022 **What Is So Surprising About Surprise? (poster)**
C. Shani , J. Halpern & D. Shahaf

- Edmond and Lily Safra Center (**ELSC**) annual meeting 2022, Ein-Gedi, Israel

2021 **``Ha-ha, you're so funny" Do customers want Alexa to get their jokes? (poster)**
C. Shani, A. Libov, S. Tolmach, L. Lewin-Eytan, Y. Maarek & D. Shahaf

- Amazon Machine Learning Conference (**AMLC**) 2021, Seattle, Washington, USA

2019 **When Should I Respond? Ranking E-mails According to Predicted Response Time (poster and blitz oral presentation)**
C. Shani, Y. Lipiner Nir & D. Shahaf

- Edmond and Lily Safra Center (**ELSC**) annual meeting 2019, Ein-Gedi, Israel

2019 **Effects of Positive Psychology Intervention on Subjective and Work Wellbeing of Psychotherapists In CBT Training (poster)**
M. Barkavi-Shani, C. Shani, R. M. Bermejo, Ó. Sánchez-Hernández

- World Congress of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (**WCBT**) 2019, Berlin, Germany

Under review

2023	**A paper about analogy mappings** S. Jacob, **C. Shani** & D. Shahaf
	• ACL Rolling Review

In progress

2023	**Concept-aware large language models** **C. Shani** , J. Vreeken & D. Shahaf
2023	**A computational modeling of perceived human surprise for improbable facts** **C. Shani** , J. Halpern & D. Shahaf
2023	**Testing different configurations for assisting humans in analogy making using the output of our analogy engine** T. Melamed, **C. Shani** & D. Shahaf
2023	**A paper about augmenting language models with commonsese for humor generation** A. Klein, S. Filice, O. Kalinsky, A. Libov, **C. Shani** & S. Tolmach

Teaching

2023	**T.A. for ``Introduction to Data Science''**	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
2023	**T.A. for ``NLP for Medicine''** (graduate winter school)	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
2023	**Lecturer for ``Human-Computer Interaction''**	Tel-Aviv University (TAU), Israel
2023	**Lecturer for ``Introduction to Reinforcement Learning''**	Reichman University (IDC), Israel
2022	**Data analysis T.A. for ``System Neuroscience''** (graduate students)	Technische Universität München (TUM), Germany
2021	**Lecturer for ``Introduction to Data Science''**	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
2019-2022	**Tutor** for machine learning, linear algebra and probability courses	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Volunteering & extracurricular activities

2020-2022	**Mentor at JerusML** (Jerusalem's Machine Learning Community)	
	Mentor data scientists during their first steps in industry	
2019-2020	**Programming instructor** at Queen B	
	• A nonprofit organization that teaches teenage girls programming • Weekly basis • mentored hackathons	
2017-2021	Participation in **student council** of ELSC's direct Ph.D. program	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
2017-2019	Volunteer at the Jerusalem Brain Science Community (JBC), events coordinator	
2016-2017	Participation in the first **model UN** competitions	The Open University
	• Won **first place** & **second place**	
2010-2011	**Established a start-up company**	
	• "Young Entrepreneurs" program • Invention, manufacture, marketing, distribution, and selling of a solar panel for outdoor activities	
2009-2010	volunteered with **special needs children**	
2009-2010	Volunteered with **people suffering from mental illnesses**	Pardesiya Psychiatric Hospital

Languages

Hebrew - native
English - fluent