

MERT KOBAS

EDUCATION

New York University, New York, United States Ph.D. in Cognition & Perception GPA: 3.88/4.00	09.2021 – 05.2026
Koç University, İstanbul, Turkey M.A. in Developmental Psychology GPA: 3.89/4.00	09.2018 – 08.2021
Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, Turkey B.A in Guidance and Psychological Counseling under Educational Sciences Graduated with honors GPA: 3.43/4.00	09.2012 – 07.2018
Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands Student in Psychology Department, Erasmus Plus Program	08.2016 – 01.2017

PUBLICATIONS

- Kobaş, M.**, Demir-Lira, Ö., Akman, İ., & Göksun, T. (2025). Spatial Language Development in Preterm and Full-Term Infants: The Role of Object Exploration and Parents' Spatial Input. *Journal of Child Experimental Psychology*, 256, 106264.
- Doğan, I., Kızıldere, E., **Kobaş, M.**, Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, Ö. E., Akman, İ., & Göksun, T. (2025). Early parental multimodal input is differentially associated with later vocabulary knowledge for preterm and full-term infants. *Language Learning and Development*, 1-27.
- Kobaş, M.**, Kızıldere, E., Doğan, I., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, Ö., Akman, İ., & Göksun, T. (2023). Motor skills, language development, and visual processing in preterm and full-term infants. *Current Psychology*, 1-13.
- Turan, E., **Kobaş, M.**, & Göksun, T. (2021). Spatial Language and Mental Transformation in Preschoolers: Does Relational Reasoning Matter? *Cognitive Development*, 57, 100980.
- Kobaş, M.** Aktan-Erciyes, A., & Göksun, T. (2021). Fine Motor Abilities and Parental Input of Spatial Features Predict Object Word Comprehension of Turkish-Learning Children. *Infant and Child Development*, 30(4), e2243.
- Schoenegger, P., Salvi, F., Liu, J., Nan, X., Debnath, R., Fasolo, B., Leivada, E., Recchia, G., Günther, F., Zarifhonarvar, A., Kwon, J., Islam, Z. U., Dehnert, M., Lee, D. Y. H., Reinecke, M. G., Kamper, D. G., **Kobaş, M.**, Sandford, A., Kgomo, J., ... Karger, E. (under review). Large Language Models Are More Persuasive Than Incentivized Human Persuaders.
- Horne, Z., **Kobas, M.**, & Cimpian, A. (accepted). Historical and Empirical Evidence for an Inference Bias in Scientific Explanation.
- Kobas, M.**, & Cimpian, A. (in preparation). Reconciling two competing views on the process of generating explanations: Rational inference vs. intuitive biases.

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Ateş, T., Ateşoğlu, Ş., Yiğit, Ç., Kesen, İ., **Kobaş, M.**, Erdem, E., Erdem, A., Göksun, T., & Yüret, D. (2022). CRAFT: A Benchmark for Causal Reasoning About Forces and interactions. 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics.

Ateş, T., Ateşoğlu, Ş., Yiğit, Ç., Kesen, İ., **Kobaş, M.**, Erdem, E., Erdem, A., Göksun, T., & Yüret, D. (2020). CRAFT: A Benchmark for Causal Reasoning About Forces and interactions. NeurIPS Shared Visual Representations in Human & Machine Intelligence Workshop.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Kobaş, M., & Cimpian, A. (2025, May). Reconciling two competing views on the process of generating explanations: Rational inference vs. intuitive biases. Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) 2025 Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN.

Kobaş, M., Horne, Z., & Cimpian, A. (2023, July). The Inherence Bias in Scientific Explanations. Poster presented at 1st Minds, Brains, and Machine Summer Poster Conference, New York, NY.

Kobaş, M., Tworek, C. M., & Cimpian, A. (2023, July). Expertise mitigates the inherence bias in everyday explanations. Poster presented at 45th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, CogSci 2023, Sydney, Australia.

Kobaş, M., Aktan-Erciyes, A., & Göksun, T. (2021, July). Fine Motor Abilities and Parental Input of Object Dimensions Predict Receptive Language. Poster presented at the 15th International Association for the Study of Child Language, Philadelphia, PA.

Kobaş, M., Kızıldere, E., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Doğan, I., & Göksun, T. (2021, July). Fine Motor Abilities, Visual Perception, and Language Development in Preterm and Term Infants. Poster presented at the 15th International Association for the Study of Child Language, Philadelphia, PA.

Kızıldere, E., **Kobaş, M.**, Doğan, I., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, E., & Göksun, T. (2021, July). Event Representation, Parental Spatial Input, and Relational Language Comprehension in Full-Term and Preterm Infants. Paper Presented in Demir-Lira (chair), Beyond Quantity-Quality: Specifying Aspects of High-Quality Parental Language Input that Predict Optimal Child Outcomes. International Congress for the Study of Child Language, Philadelphia, PA.

Doğan, I., **Kobaş, M.**, Kızıldere, E., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, E., & Göksun, T. (2021, July). Parental Verbal Input in Different Gestational Weeks and Atypical Development. Poster Presented at the International Congress for the Study of Child Language, Philadelphia, PA.

Turan, E., **Kobaş, M.**, Aktan-Erciyes, A., & Göksun, T. (2021, July). Turkish children's learning of postpositions: The role of spatial representations. Poster Presented at the International Congress for the Study of Child Language, Philadelphia, PA.

Kobaş, M. & Göksun, T. (2021, June). Early Walking Leads to Changes in Parents' Spatial Input. Poster presented at the Development in Motion Conference (Virtual Conference).

Kızıldere, E., **Kobaş, M.**, Doğan, I., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, E., Akman, İ. & Göksun, T. (2021, April). Parents' spatial language scaffolds pre-and full-term infants' mental rotation skills. Poster presented at Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting (Virtual Symposium).

Doğan, I., **Kobaş, M.**, Kızıldere, E., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Demir-Lira, E., Akman, İ. & Göksun, T. (2021, April). Parents' gestural but not verbal input associates with word comprehension in pre-and full-term infants. Poster presented at Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting (Virtual Symposium).

- Kobaş, M.,** Aktan-Erciyes, A. & Göksun, T. (2021, January). Fine Motor Abilities, Visual Perception and Executive Functions in Preterm and Full-Term Infants. Poster presented at the 11th Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development, Budapest, Hungary.
- Kobaş, M.,** Kızıldere, E., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Doğan, I., & Göksun, T. (2020, January). Gross Motor Abilities, Visual Perception, and Language Development in Preterm and Term Infants. Poster Presented at the 10th Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development, Budapest, Hungary.
- Turan, E., **Kobaş, M.,** Altunay, H., Esmer, Ş., Erkekli, E., & Göksun, T. (2020, January). The Effects of Relational Language on Children's Spatial Cognition. Poster Presented at the 10th Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development, Budapest, Hungary.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

New York University, Cognitive Development Laboratory, New York Prof. Andrei Cimpian	Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimental task design, data analysis, participant recruitment, data visualization, and conceptualization of a study investigating the theories about how people generate explanations Survey design, participant recruitment, data analysis, data visualization, and conceptualization of a study investigating scientific explanations Survey data analysis, and conceptualization of a study investigating the relation between expertise and cognitive biases 	
The University of Edinburgh, Cognition Computation and Development Lab Dr. Zachary Horne	06.2022 – 05.2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey design, participant recruitment, data analysis, data visualization, and conceptualization of a study investigating scientific explanations 	
Koç University Language and Cognition Laboratory, İstanbul Prof. Tilbe Göksun	10.2018 – 08.2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis and project management from preschoolers for the study investigating the relationship between spatial abilities and relational language Experimental task design, survey design, data analysis, participant recruitment, coding and collection for the study investigating longitudinal relationship between event representation, language development & motor abilities in infants and children Experimental task design, survey design, data collection and conceptual support for a machine learning project related to intuitive physics 	
Educational Sciences at Boğaziçi University, İstanbul Asst. Prof. Nihal Yeniad	02.2017 – 06.2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed to literature search & project organization on attention, well-being and parent-child interaction. 	
Koç University Independent Evaluation Laboratory, İstanbul Asst. Prof. Yasemin Kisbu Sakarya	06.2017 – 08.2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chosen under the Koç University Summer Research Program, helped data collection from adults on the brief psychosocial intervention and assisted report for intervention evaluation. 	
Meta-Analysis Study, Educational Sciences at Boğaziçi University, İstanbul Asst. Prof. Nihal Yeniad (collaboration with Dr. Michael Sulik from NYU)	05.2016 – 08.2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed to literature search on executive functions, depression and well-being. 	

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

• Teaching Assistant, Masters Statistics (PSYCH-GA.2016, Prof. Elizabeth A. Bauer)	Fall 2025
• Instructor, Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (PSYCH-UA.10)	Summer 2025
• Teaching Assistant, Masters Statistics (PSYCH-GA.2016, Prof. Elizabeth A. Bauer)	Spring 2025
• Teaching Assistant, Masters Statistics (PSYCH-GA.2016, Dr. Aspen Yoo)	Fall 2024
• Teaching Assistant, Masters Statistics (PSYCH-GA.2016, Prof. Elizabeth A. Bauer)	Spring 2024
• Teaching Assistant, Research Methods in Psychology (Psyc 301; Prof. Tilbe Gökşun)	Spring 2020
• Teaching Assistant, Lifespan Development (Psyc 206; Prof. Tilbe Gökşun)	Fall 2019
• Teaching Assistant, Cognitive Development (Psyc 445; Prof. Tilbe Gökşun)	Spring 2019
• Teaching Assistant, Issues in Psychology (Psyc 210; Prof. Fuat Balçı)	Fall 2018

UNDERGRADUTE MENTORING

Madelyn Zamelis (2025 - present)
Ariella Pevzner (2024 – present)
Stephanie Yandun* (2024 – 2025)
Maya Rabago (2023 – 2025)
Emma Baxendale (2023-2024)
Olivia Duan** (2023 – present, NYU Dean's Undergraduate Research Fund recipient,
Coons/Leibowitz Award for Honors Research recipient)
Vidisha Goyal *** (2021 – 2022)
Taygun Yorulmaz (2020-2021)
Elif Erkekli (2019-2021, Koç University Summer Research Program)
Mahmut Kurupınar (2019-2020, Koç University Summer Research Program)
Gülfem Sarı (2019-2020, Koç University Summer Research Program)

* Student mentee presented research project at the NYU 2nd Annual DreamMakers Summit

** Student mentee presented research project at the NYU Undergraduate Research Conference,

*** Student mentee presented a research project and was awarded best poster at the NYU Undergraduate Research Conference

AWARDS

NYU GSAS Dean's Travel Grant
MacCracken Fellowship
Academic Excellence Award, Koç University
Fee Waiver, 10th & 11th Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development

REVIEWING (Co-reviewing & Conference Reviewing)

NeurIPS 2022 Shared Visual Representations in Human & Machine Intelligence (SVRHM)

Infant and Child Development

13th Budapest Central European University Conference on Cognitive Development

Child Development

The ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology (VRST) 2025

ACTIVITIES

AI Persuasion Team – Project Lead

Present

- Co-leading a big science research project about the big questions, risks, and opportunities of artificial intelligence research

Sepya (Band) – Bass Player

09.2017 – 05.2021

- Played bass guitar for indie band *Sepya*, contributing to songwriting, rehearsals, and live performances.
- Took part in recording and releasing several singles and an album in collaboration with Epic Istanbul, Avrupa Music and Sony Music labels.

Psychological Counseling Internship

09.2017 – 06.2018

- Co-facilitated group counseling sessions and provided one-on-one support to students, helping them address personal, social, and academic challenges.
- Assisted the school counselor with organizing activities, preparing materials, and coordinating communication between students, parents, and staff.

Boğaziçi University Social Service Club (BUSOS)

09.2013 – 06.2018

President, Active Membership, and Board Member

- Organized seminars and workshops on civil society, social services and human rights, contacted NGOs and people educated in social sciences.
- Worked in “Windmill Project” that includes expressive art activities with disadvantaged children for social transformation

SKILLS

Languages

- Turkish (Native), English (Advanced), German (Pre-Intermediate)

Computer

- R, Python, SPSS
- Elan, Octoparse, Qualtrics
- Microsoft Office, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premier