

# MAHAMMAD (METE) ISMAYILZADA

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I am a third-year Computer Science Ph.D. student at EPFL supervised by Antoine Bosselut (EPFL) and Lonneke van der Plas (Università della Svizzera italiana). My research interests broadly lie in the nature of robust artificial intelligence, language and creativity. Currently, my research focuses on understanding and improving LLMs' creative capabilities.

## Education

- 2023 – Present **Ph.D. Computer Science.** EPFL, Switzerland.  
Research on computational creativity.
- 2021 – 2023 **M.Sc. Data Science.** EPFL, Switzerland.  
Research on commonsense and causal reasoning.
- 2012 – 2016 **B.Sc. Computer Science, With Distinction.** University of Waterloo, Canada.

## Experience

### Research

- Apr – Jun 2026 **Incoming Research Intern.** Microsoft. *Cambridge, UK.*  
Research on LLMs for scientific discovery (AI for Science team).
- 2023 – 2025 **Research Assistant.** Idiap Research Institute. *Martigny, Switzerland.*
- Fall 2022 **Research Assistant.** AI Lab. EPFL. *Lausanne, Switzerland.*  
Research on causal reasoning. Work published at ACL Findings.
- Summer 2022 **Research Intern.** Sony Inc. *Tokyo, Japan.*  
Developed a dialogue system that can imitate characters.

### Engineering

- 2019 – 2021 **Software/ML Engineer.** integrate AI. *Toronto, Canada.*  
Designed and built ML tools to automate model training, prediction, and deployment.
- 2017 – 2019 **Co-founder/CTO.** Destin AI. *Toronto, Canada.*  
Designed and developed a chatbot and marketplace platform. Participation in startup incubators Next AI and DMZ.
- 2017 – 2018 **Software Engineer.** Bluecat Networks. *Toronto, Canada.*
- 2016 – 2017 **Software Engineer.** Cisco Systems. *Ottawa, Canada.*
- Summer 2015 **Software Engineer Intern.** Freescale Semiconductors. *Ottawa, Canada.*
- Summer 2014 **Software Engineer Intern.** TD Bank Securities. *Toronto, Canada.*

## Research Publications

### Preprint

- 1 “Apertus: democratizing open and compliant llms for global language environments”, (2025).
- 2 **M. Ismayilzada**, D. Paul, A. Bosselut, and L. van der Plas, “Creativity in ai: progresses and challenges”, (2024).

### Conference Proceedings

- 1 **M. Ismayilzada**, A. L. Jr., S. A. Luchini, R. Patel, A. Bosselut, L. van der Plas, and R. Beaty, “Creative preference optimization”, in Findings of the emnlp (2025).

- 2 **M. Ismayilzada**, C. Stevenson, and L. van der Plas, “Evaluating creative short story generation in humans and large language models”, in Proceedings of the iccc (2025).
- 3 **M. Ismayilzada**, D. Circi, J. Sälevä, H. Sirin, A. Köksal, B. Dhingra, A. Bosselut, D. Ataman, and L. V. D. Plas, “Evaluating morphological compositional generalization in large language models”, in Proceedings of the naacl (2025).
- 4 **M. Ismayilzada**, D. Paul, S. Montariol, M. Geva, and A. Bosselut, “CRoW: benchmarking commonsense reasoning in real-world tasks”, in Proceedings of the emnlp (2023).
- 5 **M. Ismayilzada** and A. Bosselut, “Kogito: a commonsense knowledge inference toolkit”, in Proceedings of the eacl system demonstrations (2023).
- 6 D. Paul, **M. Ismayilzada**, M. Peyrard, B. Borges, A. Bosselut, R. West, and B. Faltings, “REFINER: reasoning feedback on intermediate representations”, in Proceedings of the eacl (2024).
- 7 S. Gao, **M. Ismayilzada**, M. Zhao, H. Wakaki, Y. Mitsufuji, and A. Bosselut, “DiffuCOMET: contextual commonsense knowledge diffusion”, in Proceedings of the acl (2024).
- 8 S. Cui, L. Milikic, Y. Feng, **M. Ismayilzada**, D. Paul, A. Bosselut, and B. Faltings, “Exploring defeasibility in causal reasoning”, in Findings of the acl (2024).

## Awards

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|-----------|---|
| 2025      | ■ <b>Swiss AI Initiative PhD Fellowship.</b> Awarded for major contributions to the development of Apertus models. Swiss AI Initiative. |
| 2012-2016 | ■ <b>Full State Scholarship.</b> Full funding for undergraduate studies at the University of Waterloo. Government of Azerbaijan.        |
| 2012      | ■ <b>Certificate of Distinction.</b> Euclid Mathematics Contest. University of Waterloo.  |
| 2010      | ■ <b>Presidential Scholarship.</b> Awarded to top students entering university studies. Government of Azerbaijan.                       |

## Teaching & Service

### Teaching

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|------------------|---|
| Spring 2023-2025 | ■ <b>Teaching Assistant.</b> Modern NLP. EPFL.                      |
| Fall 2022, 2025  | ■ <b>Teaching Assistant.</b> Applied Data Analysis. EPFL.           |
| Fall 2024        | ■ <b>Teaching Assistant.</b> Distributed Information Systems. EPFL. |

### Service

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| 2024-Present | ■ <b>Reviewer.</b> ACL ARR, SEM, EACL Student Research Workshop.             |
| 2024         | ■ <b>Volunteer.</b> Perspectives on AI Symposiums, Idiap Research Institute. |

## Skills

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|-----------|--|
| Languages | ■ English, French, Turkish, Russian, Azerbaijani             |
| Coding    | ■ Python, Java, C, C++                                       |
| Databases | ■ MySQL, PostgreSQL, MongoDB                                 |
| Web Dev   | ■ HTML, CSS, JavaScript, node.js, React.js                   |
| ML        | ■ pytorch, pandas, transformers, scikit-learn, seaborn       |
| Misc.     | ■ git, linux, MLOps, DevOps, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X |