

# METE (MAHAMMAD) ISMAYILZADA

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I am a second-year Ph.D. student at EPFL and a Visiting Researcher at USI. 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.

## Experience




### Research

- 2025 – Present  **Visiting Researcher.** Università della Svizzera italiana. *Lugano, Switzerland.*
- 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.*

## Education

- 2023 – Present  **Ph.D. Computer Science.** EPFL, Switzerland.  
Research on computational creativity.
- 2021 – 2023  **M.Sc. Data Science.** EPFL, Switzerland.  
Thesis: *CRoW: Benchmarking Commonsense Reasoning in Real-World Tasks* (Published at EMNLP 2023).
- 2012 – 2016  **B.Sc. Computer Science, With Distinction.** University of Waterloo, Canada.

## Research Publications

### Preprint

- 1 **M. Ismayilzada**, A. L. Jr., S. A. Luchini, R. Patel, A. Bosselut, L. van der Plas, and R. Beaty, “Creative preference optimization”, (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**, C. Stevenson, and L. van der Plas, “Evaluating creative short story generation in humans and large language models”, in Proceedings of the iccc 2025 (2025).

- 2 **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 (volume 1: long papers) (Apr. 2025), pp. 1270–1305.
- 3 **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 (volume 1: long papers) (Dec. 2023), pp. 9785–9821.
- 4 **M. Ismayilzada** and A. Bosselut, “Kogito: a commonsense knowledge inference toolkit”, in Proceedings of the eacl 2023 system demonstrations (May 2023), pp. 96–104.
- 5 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 (volume 1: long papers) (Mar. 2024), pp. 1100–1126.
- 6 S. Gao, **M. Ismayilzada**, M. Zhao, H. Wakaki, Y. Mitsufuji, and A. Bosselut, “DiffuCOMET: contextual commonsense knowledge diffusion”, in Proceedings of the acl 2024 (volume 1: long papers) (Aug. 2024), pp. 4809–4831.
- 7 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 (Aug. 2024), pp. 6433–6452.

## Skills

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

## Misc

### Teaching

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

### Service

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

### Awards

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.