MAHAMMAD (METE) ISMAYILZADA

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I am a third-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. "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).

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, LaTeX

Misc

Teaching

Spring 2023-2025	**Teaching Assistant.** Modern NLP. EPFL.
Fall 2024	**Teaching Assistant.** Distributed Information Systems. EPFL.
Fall 2022	**Teaching Assistant.** Applied Data Analysis. EPFL.

Service

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

Awards

2012-2016	**Full State Scholarship**, Full funding for undergraduate studies at the University of Waterloo, Government of Azerbaijan.
2012	**Certificate of Distinction**, Euclid Mathematics Contest, University of Waterloo.
2010	**Presidential Scholarship**, Awarded to top students entering university studies, Government of Azerbaijan.