

Waylon Li

waylon.li@ed.ac.uk | waylonli.com | github.com/waylonli

EDUCATION

University of Edinburgh <i>PhD candidate in AIAI, School of Informatics Supervised by Prof. Tiejun Ma</i>	Edinburgh, United Kingdom <i>Feb. 2023 – Feb. 2027 (expected)</i>
University of Edinburgh (Distinction) <i>Master by Research in ILCC, School of Informatics Supervised by Prof. Shay B. Cohen</i>	Edinburgh, United Kingdom <i>Oct. 2021 – Oct. 2022</i>
University of Edinburgh (First Class Degree) <i>Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence, School of Informatics</i>	Edinburgh, United Kingdom <i>Aug. 2018 – June 2021</i>
South China University of Technology <i>Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics, School of Mathematics</i>	Canton, China <i>Aug. 2016 – July 2018</i>

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

Spectral Attention Steering for Prompt Highlighting

Weixian Waylon Li, Yuchen Niu, Yongxin Yang, Keshuang Li, Tiejun Ma, Shay B Cohen
International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) 2026

Can LLM-based Financial Investing Strategies Outperform the Market in Long Run?

Weixian Waylon Li, Hyeonjun Kim, Mihai Cucuringu, Tiejun Ma
ACM SIGKDD 2026

Learn to Rank Risky Investors: A Case Study of Predicting Retail Traders' Behaviour and Profitability

Weixian Waylon Li, Tiejun Ma
ACM Transactions on Information Systems (TOIS) 2025

TSPRank: Bridging Pairwise and Listwise Methods with a Bilinear Travelling Salesman Model

Weixian Waylon Li, Yftah Ziser, Yifei Xie, Shay B. Cohen, Tiejun Ma
ACM SIGKDD 2025

SynthRank: Synthetic Data Generation of Individual's Financial Transactions Through Learning to Ranking

Weixian Waylon Li, Mengyu Wang, Carsten Maple, Tiejun Ma
AI in Finance for Social Impact @ AAAI 2024

BERT Is Not The Count: Learning to Match Mathematical Statements with Proofs

Weixian Waylon Li, Yftah Ziser, Maximin Coavoux and Shay B. Cohen
EACL 2023

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Self-Improving World Modelling with Latent Actions

Yifu Qiu, Zheng Zhao, [Weixian Waylon Li](#), Yftah Ziser, Anna Korhonen, Shay B. Cohen, Edoardo M. Ponti
Preprint (under review at top-tier conference)

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Forty-Third International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML 2026)	reviewer	Feb. 2026
International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) 2026	reviewer	Nov. 2025
31st ACM SIGKDD Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining	presenter	Aug. 2025
International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) 2025	attendee	April 2025
Economics of Financial Technology Conference 2024	session chair	June 2024
Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL) 2024	reviewer	Feb. 2024

TSDiP Workshop @ Warwick University	presenter	Jan. 2024
Conf. on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP) 2023	reviewer	July 2023
TSDiP Workshop @ Warwick University	attendee	July 2023
Conf. of the European Chapter of the ACL (EACL) 2023	presenter	May 2023
Conf. on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP) 2022	reviewer	Aug. 2022
Conf. on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP) 2021	attendee	Nov. 2021
ACL-IJCNLP 2021	attendee	July 2021
Annual Conf. of the North American Chapter of the ACL (NAACL) 2021	attendee	June 2021
World Artificial Intelligence Conference 2019	attendee	Aug. 2019
Huawei Developer Conference 2019	attendee	Aug. 2019

EXPERIENCE

NLP Intern Researcher	Nov 2025 – May 2026
<i>Tencent Lightspeed Studio</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on LLM Agent related research project. 	
RAG Intern Researcher	May 2024 – Oct 2025
<i>Huawei Technologies Research & Development (UK) Ltd - 2012 Laboratories</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked on the SEKA paper which has been accepted by ICLR 2026. Developed RAG-based research assistant system to enhance research efficiency. The developed system has been actively used by researchers in multiple Huawei labs, including those in the UK, Germany, and Italy. 	
Research Assistant	June 2022 – Jan. 2024
<i>The Alan Turing Institute</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked on the topic of “Synthetic Data Generation for Finance and Economics” which has been accepted by Finance for Social Impact @ AAI 2024. Collaboration with University City College London (UCL) on time series financial data generation. 	
System Engineer Internship	July 2019 – Sep. 2019
<i>International Business Machines Corporation (IBM)</i>	<i>Canton, China</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GF Bank Z14 mainframe upgrade project: helped with wiring installation and switching the Hardware Management Console (HMC). Chaozhou Sanhuan IT Consultation: attended the first meeting with Chaozhou Sanhuan as a member of the consultation team. Canton Mobile Server Room Maintenance: helped maintain the server models including Power 780, S814 servers, DS 8870, 8880 storages. 	
Data Platform Engineer	May 2019 – July 2019
<i>China Unicom</i>	<i>Canton, China</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed the daily maintenance of the big data platform and helped with the security upgrade project. Participated in the internal Spark computing framework training. 	

OTHER PROJECTS

Discriminative Training of LPCFGs | *University of Edinburgh*

June 2020 – April 2021

- Supervised by Prof. Shay B. Cohen.
- Turned the spectral learning algorithm of syntactic parsing to a neural like model.
- Applied the tensor form of inside-outside algorithm to build a constituent parser.

TEACHING

2023-2025	Introductory Applied Machine Learning	Teaching Assistant	University of Edinburgh
2023-2024	Natural Language Understanding	Demonstrator	University of Edinburgh
2023-2024	Introduction to Algorithms and Data Structures	Marker	University of Edinburgh
2022-2023	Introductory Applied Machine Learning	Teaching Assistant	University of Edinburgh
2021-2022	Introductory Applied Machine Learning	Tutor, Demonstrator	University of Edinburgh
2021-2022	Foundation of Natural Language Processing	Demonstrator	University of Edinburgh

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages: Python, Java, C/C++

Deep Learning: PyTorch, Huggingface Transformers, NLTK, Pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib

Version Control: Git

Operating System: Linux, Mac OS, Windows