Pourya Shahverdi

« Robotics | AI/ML | HRI/HCI | Affective Computing »

♀ Rochester, Michigan
☐ pourya.shahverdi@gmail.com +1 (248) 805 9101

Google Scholar in LinkedIn G GitHub X X.com YouTube ₩ Website

Summary _____

My research focuses on developing emotionally context-aware verbal and nonverbal behavior models for social robots and autonomous agents to enhance empathy, engagement, and efficacy in human-agent interactions. This involves designing and conducting user studies to explore the complexity and dynamics of both group and one-on-one interactions, employing quantitative and qualitative analyses of objective and subjective measurements derived from behavioral observations and multimodal sensory signals. Grounded in affective and cognitive theories, I leverage multimodal Al approaches to model context, user affective states, and cognitive processes, enabling the generation of emotionally context-aware agent behaviors for real-world social HRI applications.

Education ____

Ph.D. Oakland University, Ph.D. Candidate in Electrical and Computer Engineering Jan 2021 - 2025 (Expecting)

• Dissertation: "Emotional Intelligence and Context Awareness in Social HRI"

Advisor: Prof. Wing-Yue Geoffrey Louie ☑,

M.Sc. University of Tehran/Azad University of Qazvin, Mechatronics Engineering

• Thesis: "Whole-Body Imitation of Human Movement by a Humanoid Robot"

• Advisor: Prof. Mehdi Tale Masouleh 🗹

B.Sc. Hamedan University of Technology, Robotics Engineering

2008 - 2013

2013 - 2016

• Final project: Balance Recovery Techniques in Humanoid Robots

Advisor: Prof. Behnam Miripour Fard ☑

Mechatronics Research Laboratory (MRL

Selected Coursework (all A or A-): Human-Robot Interaction, Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Neural Networks, Dynamic Systems Modeling, Robotic Systems and Control, Advanced Robotics, Mobile Robot Navigation, Robot Sensors, Embedded Programming, Advanced Autonomous Vehicle, Engineering Project Management

Research Experience ______

• In Real-Life Intelligent Robotics Laboratory (IRL ² ☑), PI: Prof. Geoffrey Louie ☑	Michigan, USA 2021 – Present
University of Tehran, Research Assistant • Taarlab ☑ Human-Robot Interactoin Laboratory, PI: Prof. Mehdi Tale Masouleh ☑	Tehran, Iran 2012 – 2017
Azad University of Qazvin, Research Intern (part-time)	Qazvin, Iran 2013 – 2015

Skill Set _____

Research Tools and Techniques	Interdisciplinary Experimental Design for Social HRI/HCI; Psychological and Physiological Social Behavior Data Collection; Advanced Statistical Analysis and Qualitative Analysis
Programming	Proficient with Python, C++; Widely used Matlab, Simulink, Mathematica, R; Familiar with Kotlin
AI Tools	Widely used OpenCV, PyTorch, scikit-learn; Familiar with TensorFlow, Keras, JAX, Hugging Face
Al Techniques	Developed Multimodal (text, audio, video) Emotion, Cognitive, and Task Perception Frameworks Using Computer Vision (CNNs, YOLO), Time-Series ML (LSTM), and Transformers; Agent's Social

Behavior Modeling and Planning; Imitation Learning for Manipulation; Multimodal Navigation (Vision-Radar-LiDAR Fusion), and Bayesian AI (Kalman and Particle Filters, uncertainty modeling); Familiar with Generative AI (VAEs, ViTs)

Robotic and Mechatronic Tools ROS/ROS2, Gazebo, NVIDIA Isaac Sim, CoppeliaSim, Point Cloud Libraries (PCL), Controller Design and Real-World Implementation, Embedded System Design (AVR, ARM) and Real-Time Operating System (RTOS), Single Board Microcontroller/Computer Programming (Arduino, Raspberry Pi), CAD (Solidworks)

and Techniques
Miscellaneous

Agile Scrum Master, Linux, Git, Docker, QT Creator (PyQt and C++), SPSS, LaTeX

Publications .

Journal Articles

- **P. Shahverdi**, S.Walker, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Embodied conversational agent's affective interaction: A survey," *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing*, 2025, **Submitting**.
- **P. Shahverdi**, N.Huang, K.Rousso, M.Trombly, R.Berger, Q.Chen, J.Korneder, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Robot-mediated group instruction for children with asd: A longitudinal study," *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*, 2025, **Under Review**.
- K.Rayati, A.Beigy, A.Saadati, **P. Shahverdi**, M. T.Masouleh, A.Kalhor, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Few-shot learning from human demonstrations framework on a humanoid robot," *Robotics and Autonomous Systems*, 2025, **Under Review**.
- I.Bakhoda, **P. Shahverdi**, K.Rousso, E.Dallas, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Robot-mediated read-aloud context of reading comprehension and vocabulary development," *Computers & Education*, 2025, **Under Review**.
- C. M.Wilson, L.Boright, W.-Y. G.Louie, **P. Shahverdi**, S. K.Arena, R.Benbow, J. R.Wilson, Q.Chen, K.Rousso, N.Huang, "Effect of robotic delivery of physical activity and fall prevention exercise in older adults: A pilot cohort study," *Cureus*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2023. DOI: 10.7759/cureus.44264 2.
- **P. Shahverdi** and M.Tale Masouleh, "Imitation of human motion by a nao humanoid robot using an analytical method and considering balance of the robot," *Modares Mechanical Engineering*, vol. 17, no. 7, pp. 386–396, 2017. [Online]. Available: https://mme.modares.ac.ir/browse.php?a id=4583&sid=15&slc lang=en.

Conference Proceedings

- **P. Shahverdi**, S.Walker, K.Kenville, A.Tyshka, P.Mazzara, J.Korneder, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Co-design of a robot-mediated behavior skills training framework for teaching autism interventions," in *Proceedings of the 34th IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN), Under Review, IEEE, Eindhoven, Netherlands, 2025. [Online]. Available: https://github.com/Intelligent-Robotics-Lab/BST.*
- W.-Y. G.Louie, T.Christ, **P. Shahverdi**, K.Rousso, E.Dallas, A.Tyshka, A.Wowra, K.Barnett, I.Bakhoda, "Exploring task-level contingent mediations for vocabulary instruction across robot, virtual, and human teachers," in *2024 33rd IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (ROMAN)*, 2024, pp. 1048–1055. DOI: 10.1109/R0-MAN60168.2024.10731230 2.
- W.-Y. G.Louie, T.Christ, A.Wowra, D.Alexander, I.Bakhoda, **P. Shahverdi**, ""if a robot was teaching, then everybody would definitely like school better": An analysis of grade 3-5 children's perceptions of learning stem vocabulary with an educational social robot," in 2024 33rd IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (ROMAN), 2024, pp. 1675–1680. DOI: 10.1109/RO-MAN60168.2024.10731322 🗹.
- **P. Shahverdi**, I.Bakhoda, K.Rousso, J.Klotz, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Exploring the impact of narrator type on response latency and utterance length during interactive storytelling," in *2024 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*, 2024, pp. 5499–5504. DOI: 10.1109/ICRA57147.2024.10610817 ...
- K.Rayati, A.Feizi, A.Beigy, **P. Shahverdi**, M. T.Masouleh, A.Kalhor, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Real-time imitation of human head motions, blinks and emotions by nao robot: A closed-loop approach," in *2023 11th RSI International Conference on Robotics and Mechatronics (ICRoM)*, 2023, pp. 794–800. DOI: 10.1109/ICRoM60803.2023.10412471 .

- **P. Shahverdi**, K.Rousso, J.Klotz, I.Bakhoda, M.Zribi, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Emotionally specific backchanneling in social human-robot interaction and human-human interaction," in 2023 IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS), 2023, pp. 4059–4064. DOI: 10.1109/IROS55552.2023.10341823 ☑.
- P. Shahverdi, K.Rousso, I.Bakhoda, N.Huang, K.Rohrbeck, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Robot-mediated job interview training for individuals with asd: A pilot study," in 2023 32nd IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN), 2023, pp. 564–570. DOI: 10.1109/RO-MAN57019.2023.10309611 ☑.
- P. Shahverdi, A.Tyshka, M.Trombly, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Learning turn-taking behavior from human demonstrations for social human-robot interactions," in 2022 IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS), 2022, pp. 7643–7649. DOI: 10.1109/IROS47612.2022.9981243 .
- Q.Chen, E.Dallas, **P. Shahverdi**, J.Korneder, O. A.Rawashdeh, W.-Y.Geoffrey Louie, "A sample efficiency improved method via hierarchical reinforcement learning networks," in *2022 31st IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, 2022, pp. 1498–1505. DOI: 10.1109/RO-MAN53752.2022.9900738 .
- **P. Shahverdi**, M.Trombly, N.Huang, Q.Chen, J.Korneder, W.-Y. G.Louie, "Robot-mediated group instruction for children with asd: A pilot study," in *2022 31st IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, 2022, pp. 1506–1513. DOI: 10.1109/R0-MAN53752.2022.9900584 .
- **P. Shahverdi**, M. J.Ansari, M. T.Masouleh, "Balance strategy for human imitation by a nao humanoid robot," in 2017 5th RSI International Conference on Robotics and Mechatronics (ICROM), 2017, pp. 138–143. DOI: 10.1109/ICROM.2017.8466225 2.
- **P. Shahverdi** and M. T.Masouleh, "A simple and fast geometric kinematic solution for imitation of human arms by a nao humanoid robot," in *2016 4th International Conference on Robotics and Mechatronics (ICROM)*, 2016, pp. 572–577. DOI: 10.1109/ICRoM.2016.7886806 ☑.

Research Projects

Emotional Intelligence and Context Awareness in Social Human-Robot Interaction

- 2025 IRL² Lead Researcher (My Ph.D. Dissertation Project)
 - Tasks: Proposed a Theoretical Framework Based on the Emotional Intelligence Theory, Conducted a Systematic Survey on Embodied Conversational Agents' (ECAs) Affective Behavior, Prototyping the Social HRI Framework and Designing the Experiment Now
 - *Tools Used:* PyTorch, Hugging Face, LangChain, Prompt Engineering Techniques on different LLMs and VLMs, Kotlin, Furhat Robot API, ROS (Data Collection)

Few-shot Learning from Human Demonstrations Framework on a Humanoid Robot

- 2024/2025 A Collaboration Between IRL² and Taarlab © Co-Advisor
 - Tasks: Co-Advised a Team of Researchers on Framing the System with Emphasis on Feature Extraction and Evaluations for the Few-Shot Learning Algorithms
 - Tools Used: PyTorch, Keras3, YOLO, CoppeliaSim

Robot-mediated Read-aloud for Pre-K Children

2024 ♥ IRL² ® Engineering Team Leader



- Tasks: Designed the Behaviors of a Pepper Robot, Developed the Wizard of Oz (WoZ) Interface, Collected and Coded Data, Statistical Analysis
- Tools Used: Python (PyQt, NAOqi), R

Robot-mediated STEM Vocabulary Training for Children

2024 • IRL² • Engineering Team Leader



- *Tasks:* Designed the Behaviors of a Pepper Robot, Developed the WoZ Interface, Collected and Coded Data, Statistical Analysis
- Tools Used: Python (PyQt, NAOqi), R

Emotionally Specific Backchanneling in Social HRI and Human-Human Interaction 2023 PIRL ² Lead Researcher
 Tasks: Developed the Theory, Designed the Experiment, Wrote the IRB, Designed the Behaviors of a Furhat Robot, Collected and Coded Data, Statistical Analysis
• <i>Tools Used:</i> Python, Kotlin, Furhat Robot API, R
Robot-mediated Physical Activity and Fall Prevention Exercises for Older Adults 2023
 Tasks: Designed Physical Therapy Behaviors for a NAO Robot, Developed a Teleoperation WoZ System through a Virtual Reality Headset and Kinect Camera for a Pepper Robot
• Tools Used: C++, Python, PyQt, ROS
Robot-mediated Job Interview Training for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
2023 ♥ IRL ²
 Tasks: Developed the Theory, Designed the Experiment, Wrote the IRB, Developed a Telepresence WoZ Interface, Collected and Coded Data, Statistical Analysis
• Tools Used: Python, Kotlin, SPSS
LIDAR, Radar, and Vision Data Fusion and Classification-Autonomous Vehicle Course 2022 Oakland University Team Member
 Tasks: Merged Measurements into Single-Object Track, Object Annotation by YOLO Image Classification, Filtered Noises by Extended Kalman Filter (EKF)
• Tools Used: ROS, C++, YOLO, PCL, EKF
Learning Turn-Taking Behavior from Human Demonstrations for Social HRI
2022 ♥ IRL ²
 Tasks: Developed the Theory, Designed the Experiment, Wrote the IRB, Collected and Annotated Data, Trained and Tested an LSTM RNN Model
Tools Used: TensorFlow, ROS (Data Collection)
Robot-Mediated Group Instruction for Children with ASD 2022 ♥ IRL² ® Lead Researcher
 Tasks: Contributed in Developing the Theory, Designed the Experiment, Wrote the IRB, Designed the Behaviors of a Pepper Robot, Developed the WoZ Interface, Collected and Coded Data, Statistical Analysis
• Tools Used: Python (PyQt, NAOqi), SPSS
Augmented Reality for Assisting End-User Development For Social Robot Applications Page 62 ■ 2021
• 2021-@IRL ² - Co-Advisor
 Tasks: Helped Undergraduate Students with Modeling a NAO Robot in Microsoft HoloLens 2 and How to Choreograph this Robot Through a Representative Virtual Hologram. (Abstract Submission to Mid-SURE)
• Tools Used: Unreal Engine 4, Blueprint
A Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) Data Logger Device for Iron Workers 2018 Freelancing
 Tasks: Designed an Embedded Electronic Board to Collect Gate Pattern Data from an IMU Module Connected to Iron Workers, Collected Hours of Data from 35 Iron Workers Walking on 5 Types of Beams with Different Widths Trained a K-NN Model to Classify the Beams from the IMU Data

• Tools Used: Altium Designer, Arduino, scikit-learn

Whole-Body Imitation of Human Motion by a NAO Humanoid Robot

2016

♀ Taarlab

Lead Researcher (My M.Sc. Thesis)

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- *Tasks:* Developed the Motion Capture Framework, Modeled the whole body of a NAO Robot Kinematically and Dynamically, Presented a Geometric Solution for the Inverse Kinematics with the Imitation Goal
- · Tools Used: Python (OpenNI, NAOqi), ROS, Mathematica

Humanoid Robot Push Recovery

2015

• MRL © Team Member

- Tasks: Developed a Push Recovery Model Using an Inverted Pendulum Model and a PID Controller
- · Tools Used: Matlab, Webots

Humanoid Robot Navigation

2015

♀ MRL

Team Member

- Tasks: Developed a Navigation Model Towards the Opponent's Gate Utilizing Compass Data
- · Tools Used: Matlab, Webots

Tripteron: a 3-DoF Parallel Manipulator

2013

○ Taarlab

Team Member

- Tasks: Designed a PCB and Programmed an AVR Micro Controller to Communicate Under the MODBUS Protocol with the three AC Servo Motor Drivers in the Torque-Control Mode, Designed a Graphical User Interface (GUI) to Control the Robot in Different Modes (e.g., Position, Speed, Torque)
- Tools Used: Altium Designer, AVR Codevision, C, C++, Qt Creator

Teaching Experience _____

Lab Instructor, EGR2800: Electromechanics System Design Lab

Oakland University, MI 2021-Present

- Course Lecturer: A Group of ECE/ME Professors Led by Prof. Osamah Rawashdeh 🗹,
- Instructing the Lab's Experiments: Arduino Programming, Electronic Circuit Design, Sensors and Actuators
- Leading and Training Graduate Teacher Assistants
- Mentoring Sophomore Design Project Team Works

Education Department Chair, Iran Chapter Based in Amirkabir University of Tech.

FIRA **∠**, Iran 2018-2020

- Designed Syllabus and Educational Platforms in Collaboration with FIRA-International
- Trained Teachers
- Created Educational Content for Online Courses
- Designed Competitions for FIRA-Iran and FIRA-International

Teaching Assistant, Rapid Prototyping in Embedded Systems

University of Tehran,

Iran

2016-2017

- Professor: Dr. Mostafa Ersali 🗹
- Designed a Modular Educational Robot Platform Based on Raspberry Pi and Arduino Capable of Interfacing with Different Sensor and Actuator Modules
- Taught Lab Experiments of the Course
- Supervised the Students' Final Projects

Robotics Mentor,

NOET ☑, Iran

Princeted a Team of Pohotics Mentors from Ton-Panked Iranian Universities to Teach

2012-2018

 Directed a Team of Robotics Mentors from Top-Ranked Iranian Universities to Teach Robotics in Middle Schools and High Schools

- Designed Syllabus and Educational Platforms
- Participated in National and International Robotics Competitions such as RoboCup

 and FIRACup

Teaching Assistant, Physics of Mechanics

• Helped Students to Understand the Concepts by Working through Sample Problems

Hamedan University of Technology, Iran 2009-2011

Honors and Awards

- Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Honor Society, IEEE-Eta Kappa Nu
- Received the Highest Student Evaluation Score for Teaching the Electromechanics System Design Lab (EGR-2800)
 in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Oakland University (2023-2024)
- Outstanding Early Career Scientist Paper Award, 31st IEEE International Conference on Robot & Human Interactive Communication, RO-MAN 2022, Naples, Italy
- Approved for Permanent Residency (Green Card) in the US Based on National Interest Waiver (NIW), No Need for VISA Sponsorship to Work in the US
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Fully-funded Ph.D. Student
- Multiple International Awards from Robotic Competitions such as Robocup (e.g., 2013 Eindhoven, 2014 Brazil, 2015 IranOpen) and FIRACup (2016, 2017 Iran)

Service _

Reviewer

- International Journal of Social Robotics (IJSR AKA SORO)
- IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters (RA-L)
- IEEE Transactions on Neural Systems & Rehabilitation Engineering
- IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)
- IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)
- IEEE International Conference on Robot & Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)
- Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) Symposium Series
- Journal of Intelligent Systems
- International Conference on Reconfigurable Mechanisms and Robots
- SICE Journal of Control, Measurement, and System Integration

Oakland University's SECS Day Representative

Presented a Warm and Welcoming Demonstration of our Lab (IRL²) and Robots to Show-case Oakland University's School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS) Potential to Prospective Students and their Families in the SECS Days

2022-Present Oakland University, Michigan

International OASIS's 2 Ambassador

Empowering International Students to Embrace Their New Life in the US

2022-Present Rochester, Michigan

Co-Chair of the FIRA World Cup Innovation and Business League

2019-2021 Changwon, South Korea

Technical Committee (TC) Member of the International RoboCup Competitions

Humanoid Soccer, Demonstration, Junior Rescue

2010-2018 Tehran, Iran

Executive Administrator of the Robotics Engineering Students' Scientific Association

Organized Workshops, Talks, Competitions, and STEM Tours for the Robotics Engineering Students at Hamedan University of Technology

2009-2011 Hamedan, Iran

Reference ___

Professional References

Dr. Wing-Yue Geoffrey Louie 🗹

☑ louie@oakland.edu Associated Professor

Oakland University

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dr. Osamah Rawashdeh 🗹

☑ rawashd2@oakland.edu

Professor and Department Chair

Oakland University

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Personal References

Dr. Lionel Robert ☑

□ Iprobert@umich.edu

Professor of Robotics and Information

University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

School of Information and College of Engineering