Zhao Yang

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yangzhao-666.github.io

I'm a CS PhD student at Leiden University, broadly interested in artificial intelligence. My research focuses on reinforcement learning for robotics and game AI.

Education

2020–Present   **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Computer Science**, *Leiden University*, the Netherlands.
- Topic: Intrinsically Motivated Reinforcement Learning
- Application: Robotics, Games
- Supervision: Dr. Thomas M. Moerland, Dr. Mike Preuss, Prof. Aske Plaat

2018–2020   **Master of Science (MSc) Computer Science**, *Leiden University*, the Netherlands.
- Specialization: Reinforcement Learning
- Master's thesis: Reinforcement Learning for Navigation Tasks

2014–2018   **Bachelor of Engineering (BE) Computer Science**, *Beijing Language and Culture University*, China.
- Courses: Data Structure, Linear Algebra, Advanced Mathematics, Mathematical Statistics, Discrete Mathematics, etc.

Publications / Pre-print

Guiding Skill Discovery with Foundation Models Zhao Yang, Thomas Moerland, Mike Preuss, Aske Plaat, Vincent Francois-Lavet and Edward Hu. In submission, 2025

World Models Increase Autonomy in RL Zhao Yang, Thomas Moerland, Mike Preuss, Aske Plaat and Edward Hu. Transactions on Machine Learning Research, 2025.

Continuous Episodic Control Zhao Yang, Thomas M. Moerland, Mike Preuss and Aske Plaat. IEEE Conference On Games, 2023

Two-Memory Reinforcement Learning Zhao Yang, Thomas M. Moerland, Mike Preuss and Aske Plaat. IEEE Conference On Games, 2023

First Go, then Post-Explore: the Benefits of Post-Exploration in Intrinsic Motivation Zhao Yang, Thomas M. Moerland, Mike Preuss and Aske Plaat. ALOE workshop @ICLR, 2022

Applied Projects

2023   **Reinforcement Learning Educational Suite**, *Designed and implemented environments and interactive tutorials for reinforcement learning beginners.*

Teaching Assistant, Mentorship

2022, 2023, 2024   **Deep Reinforcement Learning (master CS course)**.

2023   **Video Games for Research (master CS course)**.

2023   **Seminar Advanced Deep Reinforcement Learning (master CS course)**.

2024   **Master Thesis Mentorship**, *Reinforcement Learning for Stock Market.*

Community service

2023–current   **Co-Host**, *Belgium-Netherlands-Luxembourg Reinforcement Learning Seminar Series.*

2021–current   **Reviewer**, *Various venues, including RLC, ICRA, AAMAS, ICAPS, EWRL.*

Personal experience

I used to be the chair of The Association of Chinese Students and Scholars in the Netherlands, Leiden, 2021. I did a product manager internship at Meituan-Dianping, China, 2018. I am also a big fan of sports.