

CANSU MALAK

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Brain and Cognitive Engineering

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EDUCATION

Korea University, Korea

September 2023 – 2025, Faculty of Engineering, Brain and Cognitive Engineering

- PI: Christian Wallraven
- Thesis: *Decoding Faces: Fine-Grained Ethnicity Categorization of East Asian Faces by Humans and Machines*

Yeditepe University, Turkey

September 2018 – 2022, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Psychology (in English)

- **CGPA:** 3.94/4
- Undergraduate Research Project: *Masking emotions: How does perceived gaze direction affect emotion recognition in masked faces? – An eye-tracking study*
 - PI: Dr. Funda Yıldırım

September 2016 – 2021, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Sociology (in English)

- **CGPA:** 3.91/4
- Second in the Sociology department - 2021

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Global Korean Scholarship

August 2022 – August 2025

- Scholarship Amount – around \$75.000
- Full tuition

Undergraduate Project Grant - 2209-A TUBITAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye)

September 2022 – June 2023

- Grant – 4000 TL
- Project Name – [Effects of perceived gaze direction and face mask on emotion recognition – An eye-tracking study](#)

High Honors Student

- *June 2022*, High Honors Student - Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Psychology
- *June 2021*, High Honors Student - Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Sociology

PUBLICATIONS

Malak, C., & Yildirim, F. (2025). Pupillary responses to masked and gaze-averted faces. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1586186. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1586186>

Malak, C., Wallraven, C. (Under preparation). Perceptions of attractiveness and trustworthiness in East Asian faces: How Koreans distinguish Korean, Japanese, and Chinese ethnicities.

Malak, C., Wallraven, C. (submitted, preprint available). The importance of external features for identifying ethnicity: Testing Korean, Japanese, and Chinese faces in a Korean cultural background.
<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/gxky7>

PRESENTATIONS

Malak, C., Wallraven, C. (2025). Humans versus machines: Distinguishing Korean, Chinese, and Japanese faces via internal and external features. *Vision Sciences Society 2025*.
<https://doi.org/10.1167/jov.25.9.2027>

Malak, C., Wallraven, C. (2025). 민족성을 범주화하는 데 있어 외부 특징의 중요성: 한국인은 한국, 일본, 중국 얼굴을 구별할 수 있을까? (The importance of external features for categorizing ethnicity: Can Koreans identify Korean, Japanese, and Chinese faces?). 한국인지및생물심리학회 (Korean Cognitive and Biological Psychology Society) 2025. [presented in Korean]

Malak, C., Yildirim, F. (2022) Effects of perceived gaze direction and face mask on emotion recognition – An eye-tracking study. *Vision Sciences Society, virtual Undergraduate Just-in-Time Sessions*.
<https://www.visionsciences.org/presentation/?id=4526>

Yorgancıgil, E., Urgen B.A., **Malak C. & Yildirim, F. (2021)** Audio-visual components and cross-generation characteristics of uncanny valley. *43rd European Conference on Visual Perception*. Perception. 50:104 [doi: 10.1177/03010066211059887](https://doi.org/10.1177/03010066211059887)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Cognitive Systems Lab

September 2023 – present, Korea University, Seoul

Principal Investigator: Christian Wallraven

- **Project 1:** The importance of external features for identifying ethnicity: Testing Korean, Japanese, and Chinese faces in a Korean cultural background. (completed)
- **Project 2:** Comparative analysis of human and machine learning performance in fine-grained ethnicity-based face recognition (completed)
- **Project 3:** Perceptions of attractiveness and trustworthiness in East Asian faces: How Koreans distinguish Korean, Japanese, and Chinese ethnicities (completed)

Collaboration with Korea University Psychology Department and Brain and Cognitive Engineering Department - Korea Army Academy Psychology Department:

Principal Investigator: Kim Hackjin, Christian Wallraven, Kim Daeun

- **Project 4:** Investigating strategic conformity through eye-tracking: A focus on attention during social feedback and observation cues (in progress)

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Computational Neuroscience Visual Perception Lab

September 2020 – 2022, Yeditepe University, Istanbul

Principal Investigator: Dr. Funda Yildirim

- **Project 1:** [Effects of perceived gaze direction and face mask on face perception](#)
- **Project 2:** [Audiovisual side of uncanny valley](#)

Research Assistant

September 2020 –2022, Yeditepe University, Istanbul

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pinar Ugurlar

- **Project 1:** Background effect on online lecture
- **Project 2:** Self-other overlap and economic decision-making game

Responsibilities: Designing experiment, data collection

Project Assistant

September 2020 –2021, Yeditepe University, Istanbul

Principal Investigator: Dr. Baris Gencer Baykan

- **Project:** [Project for monitoring gender equality in the media](#)

Responsibilities: Data collection, and analysis.

Summer Research Assistant

June 2019- August 2019, Koc University Principal Investigator:

Ayşegül Özsoy Tunali

- **Project:** A closer look at the relationship between brand equity and marketing standardization

Responsibilities: 55 semi-structured interviews with employees at Ford.

SKILLS

SPSS, Psychopy3, Prism, MATLAB, Python, Eye-tracking, fMRI (spm), R

LANGUAGES

- **Turkish**-Native
- **English**-Advanced
- **Korean**-Advanced (TOPIK – 5급)

CERTIFICATES

- Electrophysical and Psychophysical Implementations with Arduino -Yeditepe University
- EEG use in cognitive neuroscience research: Basic and advanced analysis techniques - Bilkent University
- Eye-tracking Methods - Bilkent University

MEDIA

[Interview](#) with Cansu Malak&Funda Yıldırım on “Effects of perceived gaze direction and face mask on emotion recognition" project

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

WORKAWAY-KOREA

August 2019 - October 2019

ESL teacher

AIIESEC Global Volunteering-Ukraine

2017-2018

Supporting social and linguistic skills of the marginalized communities