

Hongli Zhan

Ph.D. Student at UT Austin

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Education

2021 – **Ph.D. in Computational Linguistics (Minor in Computer Science).**

Department of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

• Advisor: Prof. [Junyi Jessie Li](#)

2017 – 2021 **B.A. in English Linguistics (Second Major in Law).**

School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

Industry Experience

Summer 2024 **Research Scientist Intern, IBM Research**, Yorktown Heights, NY.

• Hosts: Dr. [Raya Horesh](#), Dr. [Muneeza Azmat](#), Dr. [Mikhail Yurochkin](#)

Research Interests

The ambition of my Ph.D. research is to **build emotionally intelligent AI systems in a broader social context**. Specifically, I focus on Affective Computing, which tries to build NLP models with a deeper emotional understanding.

Refereed Publications

* denotes equal contributions

COLM 2024 **Hongli Zhan**, Allen Zheng, Yoon Kyung Lee, Jina Suh, Junyi Jessie Li, and Desmond C. Ong. Large language models are capable of offering cognitive reappraisal, if guided. In *Proceedings of the 1st Conference on Language Modeling (to appear)*, 2024. (28.8% acceptance rate).

ACII 2024 Yoon Kyung Lee, Jina Suh, **Hongli Zhan**, Junyi Jessie Li, and Desmond C. Ong. Large language models produce responses perceived to be empathic. In *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Affective Computing and Intelligent Interaction (to appear)*, 2024. (the acceptance rate is lower than 40%).

EMNLP 2023 **Hongli Zhan**, Desmond C. Ong, and Junyi Jessie Li. Evaluating subjective cognitive appraisals of emotions from large language models. In Houda Bouamor, Juan Pino, and Kalika Bali, editors, *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: EMNLP 2023*, pages 14418–14446, Singapore, December 2023. Association for Computational Linguistics. (45.4% acceptance rate).

ACL 2023 Tiberiu Sosea*, **Hongli Zhan***, Junyi Jessie Li, and Cornelia Caragea. Unsupervised extractive summarization of emotion triggers. In Anna Rogers, Jordan Boyd-Graber, and Naoaki Okazaki, editors, *Proceedings of the 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers)*, pages 9550–9569, Toronto, Canada, July 2023. Association for Computational Linguistics. (23.5% acceptance rate).

EMNLP 2022 **Hongli Zhan***, Tiberiu Sosea*, Cornelia Caragea, and Junyi Jessie Li. Why do you feel this way? summarizing triggers of emotions in social media posts. In Yoav Goldberg, Zornitsa Kozareva, and Yue Zhang, editors, *Proceedings of the 2022 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, pages 9436–9453, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, December 2022. Association for Computational Linguistics. (22.1% acceptance rate).

Professional Service

Reviewer, *EMNLP 2023, ICRA 2024*.

Student Volunteer, *ACL 2023*.

2023 – 2024 **Organizer**, *Natural Language Learning Reading Group*, UT Austin.

Teaching Experience

The University of Texas at Austin

LIN 371 **Machine Learning for Text Analysis**, *Graduate Teaching Assistant*, Spring 2024.

Instructor: Prof. [Junyi Jessy Li](#)

LIN 306 **Intro to the Study of Language**, *Guest Lecturer*, Spring 2023.

Instructor: Seyeon Park

LIN 373N **Machine Learning Toolbox for Text Analysis**, *Graduate Teaching Assistant*, Fall 2022.

Instructor: Prof. [Junyi Jessy Li](#)

LIN 350 **Computational Semantics**, *Graduate Teaching Assistant*, Fall 2021.

Instructor: Prof. [Katrin Erk](#)

Mentoring

2023 – 2024 **Allen Zheng**, *B.S. in Computer Science (Turing Honors) & Mathematics*, UT Austin.

Fellowships & Awards

Fall 2023 **Professional Development Award for Attending [EMNLP 2023](#)**, *UT Austin*, 1,160 USD.

Fall 2022 **Professional Development Award for Attending [EMNLP 2022](#)**, *UT Austin*, 1,200 USD.

Spring 2022 **COLA Supplemental Graduate School Fellowship**, *UT Austin*, 5,000 USD.

2021 **Outstanding Graduate**, *Shanghai Jiao Tong University*.

2021 **Outstanding Undergraduate Thesis Award**, *Shanghai Jiao Tong University*.

Conference Presentations

ACL 2023 **Unsupervised Extractive Summarization of Emotion Triggers**, *Toronto, Canada*, presented in-person on July 11th, 2023.

EMNLP 2022 **Why Do You Feel This Way? Summarizing Triggers of Emotions in Social Media Posts**, *Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*, presented in-person on Dec 9th, 2022.

Invited Talks

Oct 11, 2023 **Can I Cheer You Up? Psychologically-Grounded Emotional Support: Leveraging LLMs for Targeted Re-Appraisals**, *Computational Affective and Social Cognition Lab (CASCogLab)*, Department of Psychology, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.

Feb 22, 2023 **An Introduction to Computational Linguistics**, *Westlake High School*, Austin, TX.

Open-Source Contributions

CovidET <https://github.com/honglizhan/CovidET>.

CovidET (**E**motions and their **T**riggers during **Covid**-19) is a dataset of 1,883 English Reddit posts related to COVID-19, which contains manual annotations of perceived emotions and abstractive summaries of their triggers described in the post.

CovidET- <https://github.com/tsosea2/CovidET-EXT>.

EXT CovidET-EXT is a dataset that augments Zhan et al. (2022)'s abstractive dataset CovidET (in the context of the COVID-19 crisis) with extractive triggers. The result is a dataset of 1,883 Reddit posts about the COVID-19 pandemic, manually annotated with 7 fine-grained emotions (from CovidET) and their corresponding **extractive** triggers.

CovidET- <https://github.com/honglizhan/CovidET-Appraisals-Public>.

Appraisals CovidET-Appraisals is the most comprehensive dataset to-date that assesses 24 cognitive appraisal dimensions of emotions, each with a natural language rationale, across 241 Reddit posts. CovidET-Appraisals presents an ideal testbed to evaluate the ability of large language models — excelling at a wide range of NLP tasks — to automatically assess and explain cognitive appraisals.