

ZHUOFENG LI



zhuofeng-li.github.io
[Zhuofeng-Li](https://github.com/Zhuofeng-Li)



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EDUCATION

Stanford University, 450 Jane Stanford Way Stanford, CA 94305–2004 *Aug, 2025 – Current*

Visiting Student

Advisor: Prof. [Yejin Choi](#) and Prof. [James Zou](#)

Texas A&M University, 1226 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843 *Aug, 2025 – Aug, 2030 (expected)*

Ph.D. in Computer Science

Advisor: Prof. [Yu Zhang](#)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Fields Agents, Reasoning LLMs/VLMs, Reinforcement Learning, NLP

RESEARCH

* indicates equal contribution

Open Source Projects

1. **In-The-Flow Agentic System Optimization for Effective Planning and Tool Use.** (1.3K+ Stars)
Zhuofeng Li*, Haoxiang Zhang*, Seungju Han, Sheng Liu, Jianwen Xie, **Yu Zhang**, **Yejin Choi**, **James Zou**, **Pan Lu**
2. **VerlTool: A unified and easy-to-extend tool-agent training framework based on verl.** (700+ Stars)
Donfu Jiang*, **Zhuofeng Li***, Yi Lu*, Zhiheng Lv, Ping Nie, Chao Du, Tianyu Pang, **Wenhu Chen**

Selected Preprints

1. **In-The-Flow Agentic System Optimization for Effective Planning and Tool Use.** *NeurIPS 2025 Workshop Oral (Best Paper Runner-up)*. [\[arxiv\]](#) [\[website\]](#)
Zhuofeng Li*, Haoxiang Zhang*, Seungju Han, Sheng Liu, Jianwen Xie, **Yu Zhang**, **Yejin Choi**, **James Zou**, **Pan Lu**
2. **VerlTool: Towards Holistic Agentic Reinforcement Learning.** In a submission to *ICLR 2026*.
[\[arXiv\]](#) [\[code\]](#)
Donfu Jiang*, Yi Lu*, **Zhuofeng Li***, Zhiheng Lv, Ping Nie, Chao Du, Tianyu Pang, **Wenhu Chen**.
3. **ImagenWorld: Stress-Testing Image Generation Models with Explainable Human Evaluation on Open-ended Real-World Tasks.** In a submission to *ICLR 2025*.

Selected Publications

1. **GReF: A Unified Generative Framework for Efficient Reranking via Ordered Multi-token Prediction.** *CIKM 2025*.
Zhijie Lin*, **Zhuofeng Li***, ChengLei Dai, Wentian Bao, Shuai Lin, Yun En Yu, Haoxiang Zhang, **Liang Zhao**

2. **Avoiding Structural Pitfalls: Self-Supervised Low-Rank Feature Tuning for Graph Test-Time Adaptation.** *TMLR* 2025.

Haoxiang Zhang*, Zhuofeng Li*, Qiannan Zhang, Ziyi Kou, Juncheng Li, Shichao Pei.

3. **TEG-DB: A Comprehensive Dataset and Benchmark of Textual-Edge Graphs.** *NeurIPS* 2024. [[arXiv](#)] [[code](#)]

Zhuofeng Li*, Zixing Gou*, Xiangnan Zhang, Zhongyuan Liu, Sirui Li, Yuntong Hu, Chen Ling, Zheng Zhang, Liang Zhao.

4. **Learning from Novel Knowledge: Continual Few-shot Knowledge Graph Completion.** *CIKM* 2024. [[arXiv](#)]

Zhuofeng Li*, Haoxiang Zhang*, Qiannan Zhang, Ziyi Kou, Shichao Pei.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Stanford University, 450 Jane Stanford Way Stanford, CA 94305–2004

Department of Computer Science Zou's Group Choi's xlab

June, 2025 – current

Research Assistant, Advisor: Prof. James Zou and Prof. Yejin Choi

Project: In-the-Flow Agentic System Optimization [[arxiv](#)] [[website](#)]

- Introduce AgentFlow, a trainable tool-integrated agentic system to overcome the scalability and generalization limits of today's tool-augmented reasoning approaches.
- Pioneer a novel RL paradigm to directly optimize the agent within the system in an online fashion.
- Achieve strong performance on 10 benchmarks with a 7B backbone: +14.9% search, +14.0% agentic, +14.5% math, +4.1% scientific tasks; **surpassing larger-scale models like GPT-4o**.

University of Waterloo, 200 University Ave. West, Waterloo, Ontario

Department of Computer Science TIGER-AI-Lab

February, 2025 – current

Research Assistant, Advisor: Prof. Wenhui Chen

Project: Agentic Tool-Use LLMs through RL [[arXiv](#)] [[code](#)]

- Propose a novel agentic async tool-use RL training framework.
- Achieve strong performance across diverse benchmarks, including math and search tasks.
- **Open-source tool-agent training framework Verl-Tool (500+ stars now)** and submit work to ICLR 2026.

Kuaishou, Haidian District, Beijing

Machine Learning Researcher

October, 2024 – February, 2025

Project: Generative Personalized Re-ranking Recommendation

- Develop an end-to-end generative training framework for re-ranking recommendations powered by LLM, enhancing Recommendation System generalization and personalization.
- Deliver significant online gains on Kuaishou (300 M+ DAUs) and recognized as an excellent LR (launch review).
- **Accepted by CIKM 2025.**

PROGRAMMING SKILLS

Proficient Verl, OpenRLHF, VLLM, Sglang, Ray, DeepSpeed, Pytorch.