

# ANSHUN ASHER ZHENG

University of Texas at Austin  
The Department of Linguistics  
305 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street STOP B5100  
Austin, TX 78712

Email: asher.zheng@utexas.edu  
Homepage: <https://asherz720.github.io/>

## EDUCATION

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### DEGREE PROGRAM

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| <p>■ <b>University of Texas at Austin</b><br/><i>Ph.D. student in Computational Linguistics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Advisors: Junyi Jessy Li, David I. Beaver</li></ul>   | <p><b>Austin, Texas</b><br/>08/2024 – Present</p>       |
| <p>■ <b>University of Edinburgh</b><br/><i>Master of Science in Speech and Language Processing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dissertation:<br/><i>Anticipating the Future: Forward-Looking Discourse Based on Question Under Discussion (QUD)</i></li><li>- Supervisor: Catherine Lai</li><li>- First Class <i>with distinction</i></li></ul> | <p><b>Edinburgh, Scotland</b><br/>09/2022 – 08/2023</p> |
| <p>■ <b>Hanyang University</b><br/><i>Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Advisor: Ki Jeong Lee</li><li>- GPA: 3.96/4.0, 99.5/100</li><li>- <i>summa cum laude</i> honors</li></ul>   | <p><b>Seoul, South Korea</b><br/>09/2020 – 08/2022</p>  |

### NON-DEGREE PROGRAM

- 2024      The 8<sup>th</sup> NYI Global Institute of Cultural, Cognitive, and Linguistic Studies
- 2023      The 7<sup>th</sup> NYI Global Institute of Cultural, Cognitive, and Linguistic Studies
- 2021      Summer School in Languages and Linguistics, Leiden University
- 32<sup>nd</sup> European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information
- Eastern Generative Grammar Summer School

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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| <p><i>Broad</i></p>     | Computational Pragmatics, Natural Language Processing, Semantics           |
| <p><i>Narrow</i></p>    | Question Under Discussion (QUD), Non-cooperative Discourse, LLM Pragmatics |
|                         | Safe Alignment   |
| <p><i>Languages</i></p> | Mandarin, English, Korean  |

## PUBLICATIONS

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### DISSERTATIONS

1. **Anshun, Zheng.** 2023. Anticipating the Future: Forward-Looking Discourse Based on Question Under Discussion (QUD), M.Sc. Thesis, *University of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, Scotland. (*Distinction*)

### JOURNALS

2. **Anshun Asher, Zheng**, Junyi Jessy, Li, David I., Beaver. Strategic Dialogue Assessment: The Crooked Path to Innocence, *Dialogue and Discourse* 17(1), 1-53.

### PROCEEDINGS

3. Ramya Namuduri, Yating Wu, **Anshun Asher, Zheng**, Manya Wadhwa, Greg Durrett and Junyi Jessy Li. QUDsim: Quantifying Discourse Similarities in LLM-Generated Text, (*to appear*), *In Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Language Modeling*, (COLM 2025)
4. **Anshun Asher, Zheng**. Nandao-Qs: When Surprise Sparks Inquiry, (*to appear*). *In Proceedings of the the 43<sup>rd</sup> West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* (WCCFL 43)
5. **Anshun, Zheng**. CP Selection at the Syntax-Semantics Interface: A Case Study in Mandarin *think "xiang"*, 2024, *In Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Texas Linguistics Society*, TLS2024
6. **Anshun, Zheng**. Dynamic Questions: Evidence from Mandarin Think–"Xiang", 2023, *In Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Inquisitiveness Below and Beyond the Sentence Boundary (InqBnB4)*, IWCS2023, pages 40-49, Nancy, France. Association for Computational Linguistics.

## PRESENTATIONS

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### REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2023      **Anshun, Zheng**. Dynamic Questions: Evidence from Mandarin Think–"Xiang", 2023, *The 4<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Inquisitiveness Below and Beyond the Sentence Boundary (InqBnB4)*, IWCS2023, Université de Lorraine, June 20.

### ABSTRACTS/POSTERS

- 2025      **Anshun, Zheng**. Nandao-Qs: When Surprise Sparks Inquiry, 2025. *the 43<sup>rd</sup> West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* (WCCFL 43)
- 2024      **Anshun, Zheng**. Anticipating the Future: Forward-Looking Discourse Based on Question Under Discussion (QUD), 2024. Submitted to *the 48<sup>th</sup> Penn Linguistics Conference*
- 2024      **Anshun, Zheng**. CP Selection at the Syntax-Semantics Interface: A Case Study in Mandarin *think "xiang"*, 2023. Poster presentation at the *Texas Linguistics Society 2024* (TLS2024), The University of Texas at Austin, February 23.
- 2023      **Anshun, Zheng**. CP Selection at the Syntax-Semantics Interface: A Case Study in Mandarin *think "xiang"*, 2023. Poster presentation at the 2023 LSK Young Scholar Symposium, Korea University, December 8.

## EXPERIENCE

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## AT UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

- Quantitative Researcher (PI: Junyi Jessy Li and David Beaver) 2024-present
- △ **Strategic Language Understanding with LLMs:** Designed a game-theoretic framework to quantify how language moves advance speaker goals in adversarial settings. Created an annotated corpus of courtroom cross-examinations to benchmark SOTA LLMs on strategic language use, which is crucial for safe alignment. (*SDA, Dialogue and Discourse*)
  - △ **Diversity of LLM-generated texts:** Co-developed a methodology to measure discourse templaticity in LLM generations using Question Under Discussion (QUD) and alternative semantics. Led cross-document Q-A annotations and revealed consistent discourse-level homogeneity across LLM-generated texts compared to human written texts. (*QUDsim, COLM 2025*)
  - △ **LLMs as a Long-term Teacher** Designed an agentic framework enabling LLMs to strategically choose between direct answering and pedagogical guidance, optimizing for user learning and generalization.

## HONORS & AWARDS

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UT Professional Development Award (\$ 1208)	2025
Hanyang International Excellence Awards (HIEA) (≈\$12000), Hanyang University.	2021 – 2022
TOPIK Scholarship (≈\$400), Hanyang University.	2020
Hanyang International Scholarship Program (HISP) (≈\$1500), Hanyang University.	2020
The University Scholarship, Zhejiang Normal University (≈\$300).	2018 – 2020
Outstanding Student Leader, Zhejiang Normal University.	2018 – 2020.

## SERVICES

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### Reviewing

Journal of Linguistics, ACL ARR 2025

### Memberships

Member of Associated Students of Linguistics (ASOL) at UT Austin	2024 – Present
Member of Generative Linguistics in the Old World (GLOW)	2023 – Present
Member of The Association for Logic, Language and Information	2021 – Present
Member of UoE Meaning and Grammar Research Group (MGRG)	2022 – 2023

## LANGUAGES & COMPUTING SKILLS

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Natural	Mandarin, Chinese Wu (Native), English, Korean, Archaic Chinese (Advanced), Japanese, French (Intermediate), Thai, Latin (Elementary).
Programming	Python, JavaScript, R, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X, Praat, Html, SQLite.
Frameworks and Packages	PyTorch, Scikit-Learn, Numpy, Pandas, Nltk, spaCy, vLLM, LangChain, CHILDES, Penn Treebanks, JsPsych.

## REFERENCES

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Junyi Jessy Li, Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin, jessy@utexas.edu

David.I.Beaver, Professor, University of Texas at Austin, dib@utexas.edu

Catherine Lai, Lecturer, University of Edinburgh, c.lai@ed.ac.uk

Kajsa Djärv, Lecturer, University of Edinburgh, k.djarv@ed.ac.uk

Taehong Cho, Professor, Hanyang University, tcho@hanyang.ac.kr

Last updated: January 29, 2026

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