Yating Wu

Ph.D. Candidate

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Research Overview

My research focuses on natural language processing, with an emphasis on developing methods that help language models better understand, organize, and generate text through **question-based representations**. I work on:

- Build computational frameworks to reveal implicit reasoning structures and trace how ideas connect in text.
- Develop evaluation methods to enable better and more efficient model training through structured reasoning feedback.
- Apply structured reasoning to real-world tasks such as summarization, retrieval, and elaborative generation.

Education

2022 – 2026 **Ph.D. Candidate in Electrical and Computer Engineering**, *The University of Texas at Austin*
Advisors: Jessy Li, Alex Dimakis

2020 – 2022 **M.S. in Electrical and Computer Engineering**, *The University of Texas at Austin*

2014 – 2019 **B.Eng. in Computer Science & B.A. in Japanese**, *Dalian University of Technology*

2017 - 2018 **Exchange student in Computer Science**, *The University of Tokyo*
Advisor: Toshihiko Yamasaki

Publications

[1] Ramya Namuduri, **Yating Wu**, Anshun Asher Zheng, Manya Wadhwa, Greg Durrett and Junyi Jessy Li "QUDsim: Quantifying Discourse Similarities in LLM-Generated Text." Conference on Language Modeling **(COLM)**, 2025 [Paper]

[2] **Yating Wu***, Ritika Rajesh Mangla*, Alexandros G. Dimakis, Greg Durrett, Junyi Jessy Li. "Which questions should I answer? Salience Prediction of Inquisitive Questions." Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing **(EMNLP Oral)**, 2024. **Outstanding Paper Award (Top 0.4%).** [Paper]

[3] Negin Raoof*, **Yating Wu***, Carlos Bonilla*, Junyi Jessy Li, Stephanie M Grasso, Alex Dimakis, Zoi Gkalitsiou. "Modeling Bilingual Disfluencies with Large Language Models." Workshop on LLMs and Cognition in International Conference on Machine Learning **(ICML Workshop)**, 2024. [Paper]

[4] **Yating Wu**, Ritika Rajesh Mangla, Greg Durrett, Junyi Jessy Li. "QUDeval: The Evaluation of Questions Under Discussion Discourse Parsing." Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing **(EMNLP Oral)**, 2023. [Paper]

[5] **Yating Wu***, William Sheffield*, Kyle Mahowald, and Junyi Jessy Li. "Elaborative Simplification as Implicit Questions Under Discussion." Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing **(EMNLP)**, 2023. [Paper]

[6] Wei-Jen Ko, **Yating Wu**, Cutter Dalton, Dananjay Srinivas, Greg Durrett and Junyi Jessy Li. "Discourse Analysis via Questions and Answers: Parsing Dependency Structures of Questions Under Discussion." Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics **(ACL)**, 2023. [Paper]

[7] Venelin Kovatchev, Trina Chatterjee, Venkata S Govindarajan, Jifan Chen, Eunsol Choi, Gabriella Chronis, Anubrata Das, Katrin Erk, Matthew Lease, Junyi Jessy Li, **Yating Wu**, Kyle Mahowald. "longhorns at DADC 2022: How many linguists does it take to fool a Question Answering model? A systematic approach to adversarial attacks." DADC Workshop in The Nations of the Americas Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics **(NAACL Workshop)**, 2022 [Paper]

Industry Experiences

Jun - Oct. 2025 **Applied Scientist Intern**, *AWS AI Labs*, Santa Clara, CA
- Long-context memory support for LLM coding agents

May - Aug. 2024 **Applied Scientist Intern**, *Amazon Alexa AGI*, Sunnyvale, CA
- Enhancing planning and tool-use capabilities in LLM agents

Jun. - Aug. 2023 **Software Engineer Intern**, *Amazon Prime Video*, Austin, TX
- Implemented an in-game notification system

Jun. - Sept. 2021 **Software Engineer Intern**, *Amazon Prime Video*, Austin, TX
- Implemented a live events ranking system

Teaching Experience

Head Teaching Assistant

CS391L **Machine Learning (Graduate)**, Summer 2022 – Present
Instructors: Adam Klivans, Qiang Liu, UT Austin

Teaching Assistant

CS391L **Machine Learning (Graduate)**, Fall 2021 – Spring 2022
Instructors: Adam Klivans, Qiang Liu, UT Austin

Recitation Instructor

EE422C **Software Design and Implementation II (Undergraduate)**, Spring 2021
Instructor: Edison Thomaz, UT Austin

EE422C **Software Design and Implementation II (Undergraduate)**, Summer 2020
Instructor: Vallath Nandakumar, UT Austin

Mentoring Experience

Master's student **Ritika Mangla**, 2022-2024, co-authored paper [1] and [3], UT Austin

Master's student **Ashwin Ram**, 2024, UT Austin

Honors and Fellowships

Honors

2025 **EECS Rising Stars, MIT**

2024 **Outstanding Paper Award, EMNLP 2024**

2021 **1st Place in VMware Codehouse Palo Alto**

2019 **Outstanding Graduates of Dalian University of Technology**

Fellowships

2025 **Outstanding Student Lecture Series Fellowship, UT Austin**

2023-2024 **Professional Development Awards, UT Austin**

2022-2025 **Head TA fellowship, UT Austin**

Presentations

Talks

2025 Which Questions Should I Answer? Salience Prediction of Inquisitive Questions, Outstanding Student Lecture Series, UT Austin

2024 Which Questions Should I Answer? Salience Prediction of Inquisitive Questions, EMNLP 2024

2023 QUDeval: The Evaluation of Questions Under Discussion Discourse Parsing, EMNLP 2023

Poster Presentations

2024 Elaborative Simplification as Implicit Questions Under Discussion, MLL Research Symposium, UT Austin

2023 Elaborative Simplification as Implicit Questions Under Discussion, EMNLP 2023

2022 Discourse Analysis via Questions and Answers: Parsing Dependency Structures of Questions Under Discussion, ACL 2022

Industrial Presentation

2025 ContextWeaver: Selective and Interpretable Long Context Construction for LLM Agents, AWS AI Labs

2024 Self Adaptive Question Generation for Planning Agent, Amazon AGI

Service

Conference Reviewer

ACL Rolling Review (ARR) 2024-2025, ACL 2024-2025
EMNLP 2024
COLM 2024-2025
Workshops: ICML 2025 XAI4Science, AAAI 2025 MARW, NeurIPS 2024 Behavioral ML, ICML 2024 DMLR, ICML 2024 LLMs and Cognition

Department Service

Graduate student representative on faculty hiring panel

TA representative on online course infrastructure building

Student Volunteer

ACL 2022