

Yating Wu

PhD Student

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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 **questions**. I work on:

- ⌚ Developing evaluation methods to measure structure, coherence, and information flow in text.
- ⌚ Identifying important parts of text to improve model learning and generalization to new texts and tasks.
- ⌚ Applying question-based representations to tasks such as elaborative generation and document understanding.

Education

- 2022 – Now **Ph.D. 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.** [\[Paper\]](#)
- [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 - Sept. 2025 **Applied Scientist Intern**, AWS AI Lab, Santa Clara, CA
 - Long-context memory support for LLM 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
- 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]

Honors

- Nov. 2024 **Outstanding paper award in EMNLP 2024**
- Jul. 2021 **1st place in VMware Codehouse Palo Alto**
- Jun. 2019 **Outstanding graduates of Dalian University of Technology**

Invited Talks

- Mar. 2025 Outstanding Student Lecture Series, UT Austin
- Apr. 2024 MLL Research Symposium, UT Austin

Service

Conference Reviewer

ACL Rolling Review, ACL 2024–2025, EMNLP 2024, COLM 2024-2025
Workshops: ICML 2025 XAI4Science, AAAI MARW, 2025NeurIPS 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

Student Volunteer

ACL 2023