

Education	The University of Texas at Dallas	2024 - Apr. 2027 (anticipated) Dallas, TX, USA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.D. in Computer Science Advisor: Zhiyu Zoey Chen 	
	Virginia Tech (transferred out)	2023 - 2024 Blacksburg, VA, USA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.D. in Computer Science 	
Research Summary	Soochow University	2020 - 2023 Suzhou, Jiangsu, China
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M.S. in Computer Science Advisors: Wenliang Chen, Xiabing Zhou 	
	Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications	2016 - 2020 Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.Eng. in Computer Science Top 3% in the Department; Principal's Award 	
Employment	My current research focuses on post-training (e.g., reinforcement learning) and synthetic data generation to evaluate and equip Large Language Models (LLMs) with reliable and advanced capabilities. I am particularly interested in developing controllable LLM Agents . Topics include complex instruction following , smart agentic search , and instruction hierarchy enforcement . Before the era of LLMs, my work primarily focused on improving the dialogue abilities of language models, such as maintaining self-consistency and safety in conversation, as well as understanding the speaker's core semantic meaning and emotions.	
	Zoom GenAI	Jun. 2025 - Aug. 2025 Seattle, WA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Intern (Mentor: Kaiqiang Song) Topic: Complex Instruction Following 	
	Tencent AI Lab	May. 2024 - Jul. 2024 Seattle, WA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Intern (Mentors: Haitao Mi, Linfeng Song) Topics: Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback 	
	Tencent AI Lab	Dec. 2021 - Dec. 2022 Shenzhen, China
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Intern (Mentor: Lifeng Jin) Topics: Dialogue Understanding, Semi-supervised Learning 	
Papers (Selected)	The full publication list is at Google Scholar . * denotes equal contribution.	
	<u>Instruction Following</u>	
	[1] Complex Logical Instruction Generation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preprint Mian Zhang, Shujian Liu, Sixun Dong, Ming Yin, Yebowen Hu, Xun Wang, Steven Ma, Song Wang, Sathish Reddy Indurthi, Haoyun Deng, Zhiyu Zoey Chen, Kaiqiang Song 	
	[2] Robust Instruction Following via Reinforcement Learning	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preprint Mian Zhang, Peilin Wu, Kaiyu He, Simin Ma, Xinlu Zhang, Xinya Du, Kaiqiang Song, Zhiyu Chen 	

Tool Using & Agentic Search

- [1] [HiPRAG: Hierarchical Process Rewards for Efficient Agentic Retrieval Augmented Generation](#)
 - ICLR 2026
 - Peilin Wu, **Mian Zhang**, Kun Wang, Wentian Zhao, Kaiyu He, Xinya Du, Zhiyu Chen
- [2] [Search Wisely: Mitigating Sub-optimal Agentic Searches By Reducing Uncertainty](#)
 - EMNLP 2025
 - **Mian Zhang***, Peilin Wu*, Xinlu Zhang, Xinya Du, Zhiyu Zoey Chen
- [3] [LiveMCP-101: Stress Testing and Diagnosing MCP-enabled Agents on Challenging Queries](#)
 - Preprint
 - Ming Yin, Dinghan Shen, Silei Xu, Jianbing Han, Sixun Dong, **Mian Zhang**, Yebowen Hu, Shujian Liu, Simin Ma, Song Wang, Sathish Reddy Indurthi, Xun Wang, Yiran Chen, Kaiqiang Song

Healthcare & Psycho-counseling

- [1] [Preference Learning Unlocks LLMs' Psycho-Counseling Skills](#)
 - Preprint
 - **Mian Zhang**, Shaun M. Eack, Zhiyu Chen.
- [2] [CBT-Bench: Evaluating Large Language Models on Assisting Cognitive Behavior Therapy](#)
 - NAACL 2025
 - **Mian Zhang***, Xianjun Yang*, Xinlu Zhang, Travis Labrum, Jamie C. Chiu, Shaun M. Eack, Fei Fang, William Yang Wang, Zhiyu Chen.

Dialogue Consistency, Safety & Understanding

- [1] [Inconsistent dialogue responses and how to recover from them](#)
 - EACL 2024
 - **Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Dong Yu.
- [2] [SafeConv: Explaining and Correcting Conversational Unsafe Behavior](#)
 - ACL 2023 Oral
 - **Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Wenliang Chen, Dong Yu.
- [3] [Friend-training: Learning from Different but Related Tasks](#)
 - EACL 2023
 - **Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Xiabing Zhou, Dong Yu.
- [4] [Emotion Recognition in Conversation from Variable-Length Context](#)
 - ICASSP 2023
 - **Mian Zhang**, Xiabing Zhou, Wenliang Chen, Min Zhang.

Selected Awards	Outstanding Graduate Award at Soochow University	2023
	First-class Scholarship at Soochow University	2020 - 2021
	Principal's Award	2019
	CUMCM National First Prize (top 1%)	2018
	First-class Scholarship at NJUPT	2017 - 2019