

Education	<b>The University of Texas at Dallas</b> - Ph.D. in Computer Science - Advisor: <a href="#">Zhiyu Zoey Chen</a>	2024 - present Dallas, TX, USA
	<b>Virginia Tech</b> (transferred out) - Ph.D. in Computer Science	2023 - 2024 Blacksburg, VA, USA
	<b>Soochow University</b> - M.S. in Computer Science - Advisors: <a href="#">Wenliang Chen</a> , <a href="#">Xiabing Zhou</a> - Outstanding Graduate; Outstanding Thesis	2020 - 2023 Suzhou, Jiangsu, China
	<b>Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications</b> - B.Eng. in Computer Science - GPA: 3.96 / 5 (Top 3% in the Department)	2016 - 2020 Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
Research Summary	<p>My current research focuses on <b>post-training techniques</b> (e.g., reinforcement learning) and <b>synthetic data generation</b> to evaluate and equip Large Language Models (LLMs) with reliable and advanced capabilities, such as instruction following [1, 4], reasoning [6], and agentic problem solving [2,4,5]. In addition, I have experience in adapting LLMs for healthcare applications [7, 8, 9]. <i>I am particularly interested in developing <b>controllable LLMs</b>, such as complex instruction following [1], smart agentic search [4], and instruction hierarchy enforcing.</i></p> <p>Before the era of LLMs, my work primarily focused on improving the dialogue abilities of language models—for example, maintaining self-consistency [10] and safety [11] in conversation, as well as understanding the speaker’s core semantic meaning [12] and emotions [13].</p> <p>Overall, I have published 14 papers in these directions, including 9 first-authored papers and 10 peer-reviewed publications in top-tier AI conferences.</p>	
Research Experiences	<b>Human Language Technology Research Institute at UTD</b> <i>Student Researcher</i> (Advisor: <a href="#">Zhiyu Zoey Chen</a> ) Topics: Synthetic Data Generation, Post-training	Sep. 2024 - present Dallas, TX
	<b>Zoom Gen AI</b> <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: <a href="#">Kaiqiang Song</a> ) Topic: Complex Instruction Following	Jun. 2025 - Aug. 2025 Seattle, WA
	<b>Tencent AI Lab</b> <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentors: <a href="#">Haitao Mi</a> , <a href="#">Linfeng Song</a> ) Topics: Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback	May. 2024 - Jul. 2024 Seattle, WA
	<b>Tencent AI Lab</b> <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: <a href="#">Lifeng Jin</a> ) Topics: Dialogue Understanding, Semi-supervised Learning	Dec. 2021 - Dec. 2022 Shenzhen, China
	<b>Institute of Human Language Technology at Soochow University</b> <i>Student Researcher</i> (Advisors: <a href="#">Wenliang Chen</a> , <a href="#">Xiabing Zhou</a> ) Topics: Dialogue State Tracking, Conversational Emotion Recognition	Sep. 2020 - Jul. 2021 Suzhou, China

## Papers

(\*denotes equal contribution)

1. [Complex Logical Instruction Generation](#) (*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. [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
3. [MMTok: Multimodal Coverage Maximization for Efficient Inference of VLMs](#) (*Preprint*)  
Sixun Dong, Juhua Hu, **Mian Zhang**, Ming Yin, Yanjie Fu, Qi Qian
4. [Search Wisely: Mitigating Sub-optimal Agentic Searches By Reducing Uncertainty](#) (*EMNLP 2025*)  
Peilin Wu\*, **Mian Zhang**\*, Xinlu Zhang, Xinya Du, Zhiyu Zoey Chen
5. [LMR-Bench: Evaluating LLM Agent's Ability on Reproducing Language Modeling Research](#) (*EMNLP 2025*)  
Shuo Yan, Ziming Luo, Zimu Wang, Ruochen Li, Daoyang Li, Liqiang Jing, Kaiyu He, Peilin Wu, Juntong Ni, George Michalopoulos, Yue Zhang, Ziyang Zhang, **Mian Zhang**, Zhiyu Chen, Xinya Du
6. [IDEA: Enhancing the Rule Learning Ability of Large Language Model Agent through Induction, Deduction, and Abduction](#) (*ACL 2025*)  
Kaiyu He, **Mian Zhang**, Shuo Yan, Peilin Wu, Zhiyu Zoey Chen.
7. [Preference Learning Unlocks LLMs' Psycho-Counseling Skills](#) (*Preprint*)  
**Mian Zhang**, Shaun M. Eack, Zhiyu Chen.
8. [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.
9. [Large Language Models for Disease Diagnosis: A Scoping Review](#) (*npj AI 2025*)  
Shuang Zhou\*, Zidu Xu\*, **Mian Zhang**\*, Chunpu Xu\*, Yawen Guo, Zaifu Zhan, Sirui Ding, Jiashuo Wang, Kaishuai Xu, Yi Fang, Liqiao Xia, Jeremy Yeung, Daochen Zha, Mingquan Lin, Rui Zhang.
10. [Inconsistent dialogue responses and how to recover from them](#) (*EACL 2024*)  
**Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Dong Yu.
11. [SafeConv: Explaining and Correcting Conversational Unsafe Behavior](#) (*ACL 2023 Oral*)  
**Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Wenliang Chen, Dong Yu.
12. [Friend-training: Learning from Different but Related Tasks](#) (*EACL 2023*)  
**Mian Zhang**, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Xiabing Zhou, Dong Yu.
13. [Emotion Recognition in Conversation from Variable-Length Context](#) (*ICASSP 2023*)  
**Mian Zhang**, Xiabing Zhou, Wenliang Chen, Min Zhang.
14. [A Pairing Enhancement Approach for Aspect Sentiment Triplet Extraction](#) (*KSEM 2023*)  
Fang Yang, **Mian Zhang**, Gongzhen Hu, Xiabing Zhou.

## Skills

*Programming Language*: Python, C/C++, Shell,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , Matlab

*Machine Learning Framework*: PyTorch, NumPy, Transformers, Scikit-learn

*Tool & Software:* Vim, Git, pdb, Matplotlib, Pandas  
*Natural Language:* Mandarin (native), English (advanced)

Selected Awards	Outstanding Master’s Thesis	2024
	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