

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

### 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