

Education	The University of Texas at Dallas	2024 - Apr. 2027 (anticipated)
	- Ph.D. in Computer Science	Dallas, TX, USA
	- Advisor: Zhiyu Zoey Chen	
	Virginia Tech (transferred out)	2023 - 2024
	- Ph.D. in Computer Science	Blacksburg, VA, USA
	Soochow University	2020 - 2023
	- M.S. in Computer Science	Suzhou, Jiangsu, China
	- Advisors: Wenliang Chen , Xiabing Zhou	
	- Outstanding Graduate; Outstanding Thesis	
	Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications	2016 - 2020
	- B.Eng. in Computer Science	Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
	- Top 3% in the Department; Principal's Award	
Research Summary	<p>My current research focuses on post-training techniques (e.g., reinforcement learning) and synthetic data generation to evaluate and equip Large Language Models (LLMs) with reliable and advanced capabilities, such as instruction following [1], reasoning [7], tool using [2,3,5] and efficient inference [4]. I have experience in adapting LLMs for healthcare applications [8,9,10]. I am particularly interested in developing controllable LLM Agents. Topics include complex instruction following [1], smart agentic search [2,5], and instruction hierarchy enforcing.</p> <p>Before the era of LLMs, my work primarily focused on improving the dialogue abilities of language models—for example, maintaining self-consistency [11] and safety [12] in conversation, as well as understanding the speaker's core semantic meaning [13] and emotions [14].</p> <p>Overall, I have published 15 papers in these directions, including 9 first-authored papers and 10 peer-reviewed publications in top-tier AI conferences.</p>	
Research Experiences	Human Language Technology Research Institute at UTD	Sep. 2024 - present
	<i>Student Researcher</i> (Advisor: Zhiyu Zoey Chen)	Dallas, TX
	Topics: Synthetic Data Generation, Post-training	
	Zoom Gen AI	Jun. 2025 - Aug. 2025
	<i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: Kaiqiang Song)	Seattle, WA
	Topic: Complex Instruction Following	
	Tencent AI Lab	May. 2024 - Jul. 2024
	<i>Research Intern</i> (Mentors: Haitao Mi , Linfeng Song)	Seattle, WA
	Topics: Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback	
	Tencent AI Lab	Dec. 2021 - Dec. 2022
	<i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: Lifeng Jin)	Shenzhen, China
	Topics: Dialogue Understanding, Semi-supervised Learning	
	Institute of Human Language Technology at Soochow University	Sep. 2020 - Jul. 2021
	<i>Student Researcher</i> (Advisors: Wenliang Chen , Xiabing Zhou)	Suzhou, China
	Topics: Dialogue State Tracking, Conversational Emotion Recognition	

(*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. [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
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
4. [MMTok: Multimodal Coverage Maximization for Efficient Inference of VLMs](#) (*ICLR 2026*)
Sixun Dong, Juhua Hu, **Mian Zhang**, Ming Yin, Yanjie Fu, Qi Qian
5. [Search Wisely: Mitigating Sub-optimal Agentic Searches By Reducing Uncertainty](#) (*EMNLP 2025*)
Mian Zhang*, Peilin Wu*, Xinlu Zhang, Xinya Du, Zhiyu Zoey Chen
6. [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
7. [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.
8. [Preference Learning Unlocks LLMs' Psycho-Counseling Skills](#) (*Preprint*)
Mian Zhang, Shaun M. Eack, Zhiyu Chen.
9. [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.
10. [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.
11. [Inconsistent dialogue responses and how to recover from them](#) (*EACL 2024*)
Mian Zhang, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Dong Yu.
12. [SafeConv: Explaining and Correcting Conversational Unsafe Behavior](#) (*ACL 2023 Oral*)
Mian Zhang, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Wenliang Chen, Dong Yu.
13. [Friend-training: Learning from Different but Related Tasks](#) (*EACL 2023*)
Mian Zhang, Lifeng Jin, Linfeng Song, Haitao Mi, Xiabing Zhou, Dong Yu.
14. [Emotion Recognition in Conversation from Variable-Length Context](#) (*ICASSP 2023*)
Mian Zhang, Xiabing Zhou, Wenliang Chen, Min Zhang.
15. [A Pairing Enhancement Approach for Aspect Sentiment Triplet Extraction](#) (*KSEM 2023*)
Fang Yang, **Mian Zhang**, Gongzhen Hu, Xiabing Zhou.