

Shurjo Banerjee

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

I am a 5th year PhD at the University of Michigan working for Dr. Jason Corso and Dr. Jesse Thomason. I am interested in deep learning and its applications to deep reinforcement learning, incremental learning and vision-and-language-navigation (VLN) problems.

EDUCATION

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Ph.D. program in Electrical Engineer (Robotics thread)

Sept. 2015 – Present

- **Masters:** Received masters degree in May 2017
- **Courses:** Advanced Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing, SLAM
- **Academics:** Curriculum GPA: **3.89/4.00**

The Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering
2015

Sept. 2011 – May

- **Courses:** Computer Vision, Data Structures, Embedded Programming
- **Teaching:** Matlab Teaching Assistant for 1000+ undergraduates (7 semesters)
- **Academics:** GPA: **3.93/100**

Papers

S. Banerjee, J. Thomason and J. J. Corso, “*The RobotSlang Benchmark: Dialog-driven robot Localization and Navigation*”, [arxiv](#)
Accepted at [The Conference on Robot Learning](#), 2020.

B. Sakelaris, Z. Li, J. Sun, **S. Banerjee**, V. Booth and E. Gourgou, “*Mathematical model of chemosensory circuit that mediates learning in T-mazes through monitoring C. elegans locomotion*”, submitted to *PLOS Computational Biology*

S. Sekeh, M. R. Ganesh, **S. Banerjee**, J. J. Corso, and A. Hero, “*A Geometric Approach to Online Streaming Feature Selection*”, [arxiv](#)

V. Dhiman, **S. Banerjee**, J. M. Siskind, and J. J. Corso, “*Learning Goal-Conditioned Value Functions with one-step Path rewards rather than Goal-Rewards*”, [openreview](#)

V. Dhiman, **S. Banerjee**, J. M. Siskind, and J. J. Corso, “*Floyd-Warshall Reinforcement Learning: Learning from Past Experiences to Reach New Goals*”, [arxiv](#)

S. Banerjee*, V. Dhiman*, B. Griffin, J. M. Siskind, and J. J. Corso, “A Critical Investigation of Deep Reinforcement Learning for Navigation”, [arxiv](#)

S. Banerjee*, V. Dhiman*, B. Griffin and J. J. Corso, “Do Deep Reinforcement Learning Algorithms really learn to Navigate?”, [NuerIPS Deep Reinforcement Learning Workshop](#), 2017

N. Sebkhi, D. Desai, A. Khan, N. Prasad, **S. Banerjee**, J. Eng, K. Wilson, and M. Ghovanloo, “Towards a wireless multimodal speech capture system”, [IEEE Biomedical Circuits and Systems Conference](#), 2016

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan, COGLAB, EECS <i>Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) with Jason Corso</i> <i>Specialty: Computer Vision, Reinforcement Learning, Robotics, VLN</i>	Ann Arbor, MI, USA Sept. 2015 – present
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Georgia Institute of Technology, GT Bionics Lab, ECE <i>Undergraduate Student Research Assistant with M. Ghovanloo</i> <i>Teaching Assistant teaching Matlab to 1000+ undergraduates</i>	Atlanta, GA, USA May. 2013 – May. 2015 Jan 2012 – May. 2015
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Software Engineering Internship, Panasonic <i>Human Machine Interaction, Automotive Systems Co of America</i>	Atlanta, GA, USA June 2013 – Aug.. 2013
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Software Development Internship, Cognizant <i>Workload Automation, Cambridge Learning Management System</i>	Calcutta, West Bengal, INDIA May 2012 – July.. 2012
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PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Organizer, UM Computer Vision Reading Group
Annotation Team for Human-Robotic Navigation and Language Acquisition (12 members)

<i>Mentor</i> ,	<i>Masters student(s)</i>	:	Zongyu Liu and Jiawei Sun
	<i>Undergraduates student(s)</i>	:	Matthew M. Dorrow
	<i>High School student(s)</i>	:	Aryan Seth

Reviewer: CVPR 2018, ECCV 2020

AWARDS

<i>President's Undergraduate Research Award</i> , The Tongue Tracking System 2014 (The Georgia Institute of Technology)	2013 &
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SELECTED RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

RobotSLANG: Unified Vision-Language Training for Robotics

UM COG LAB

Supervisors: Dr. J. J. Corso

May 2016 – present

Collaborators: Dr. J. Thomason

- Details: <https://umrobotslang.github.io>
- Created the RobotSLANG (Simultaneous Localization, Mapping and Language Acquisition dataset) tabletop maze dataset; the intention of the dataset was to collect data for human-robotic collaborative navigation in new environments.
- Performed embedded design and web app development to make a live interface between the web and a tabletop robot; Trials required two humans, a *commander* and *driver*. The commander was provided a map of the environment and a designated set of navigation goals. The driver controlled the robot but had no access to the objectives. The commander and driver were tasked with reaching the goals in a desired order. The only line of communication was a chat window - we thereby gathered plenty of un-templated unstructured language instructions related to goal directed navigation. Teams were incentivized to complete the trial as quickly as possible.
- Organized a team of 12 annotators collecting over 181 trials between participants with an average runtime of 7 minutes. Sentences were large requiring 6.8 words per sentence on average. 1.6 million frames of sensor data were collected in along with more than 36000 words of interaction.

Deep Reinforcement Learning for Navigation

UM COG LAB

Supervisors: Dr. J. J. Corso and J. M. Siskind

May 2018 – present

Collaborators: Dr. V. Dhiman and Dr. B. Griffin

- Investigated the abilities of Deep Reinforcement Learning for Navigation tasks. Deep Reinforcement Learning has been considered by some as a potential alternative to SLAM and is attractive due to functional changes that must be made to algorithms themselves when applying them to navigation tasks.
- Quantified the generalizational abilities of Deep Reinforcement Learning for navigation in unknown environments; trained agents on 1000 mazes and tested them on never before seen new mazes - agents were not found to possess any significant navigational abilities in the new mazes based on standard SLAM metrics such as traversing along the shortest path available to previously seen goals.

The Tongue Tracking System (TTS)

GT Bionics Lab

Supervisors: Dr. Maysam Ghovanloo and Dr. Sarah Ostabaddas
2015

May 2013 – May

Collaborator: Justin Eng, Dhyey Desai, Aamir Khan, Nordine Sebkhi

- The Tongue Tracking System project intended to track the tongue of a patient suffering from speech related issues; the resultant information was provided to Speech Language Pathologist to research

whether tongue tracking information could help with speech rehabilitation.

- The tongue was tracked by placing a magnet on the tip of the tongue: we modelled interactions of the magnets as a noisy magnetic dipole and localized the tongue using a multitude of approaches including a Kalman Filter, Particle Filter and a Nelder-Mead based optimization approach.
- Created a 3D printed chassis for housing embedded magnetic sensors connected to an FPGA for highly parallelizable capture of sensor information; made a QT based GUI for patients to use for data collection.
- Helped write proposals for Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. Performed Human Testing during data collection.

Quantifying the Spatial Navigational Abilities of *C. elegans* Worms

UM COG LAB

Collaborators: Dr. E. Gourgou, Jiawei Sun, Zongyu Li

June 2019 – June 2020

- Working with UM Mechanical Engineering and the UM Institute of Gerontology on applications of Computer Vision to biological tasks: specifically the tracking of *C.elegans* worms that navigate T-Mazes.
- *C. elegans* are nematodes (worms) that possess only 302 neurons. They are particularly useful for genetic studies as their entire genealogy is mapped out. Though they possess very few neurons, they possess many remarkable abilities including the ability to remember and navigate t-mazes while searching for food. We applied simple tracking based approaches to quantify the differences between worms with different genetic markers so as to correlate genetic differences with spatio-navigational abilities. Presented at *International C. elegans Conference* in June 2020.

PROFICIENCY AND SKILLS

Technical Skills: PyTorch, Python, Tensorflow, C/C++, Linux, Git, LaTeX, Matlab, HTML, CSS, JS, Java, CUDA

Languages: English (proficient), Bengali (native) and Hindi (native)

Alternative Skills: Improvisational Comedian

REFERENCES

Prof. Jason Corso, Professor, University of Michigan, jjcorso@umich.edu

Dr. Jesse Thomason, Assistant Professor, University of Southern California, , jessetho@usc.edu

Dr. Vikas Dhiman, PostDoc, Contextual Robotics Institute, UC San Diego, vdhiman@ucsd.edu

Prof. Salimeh Sekeh, Assistant Professor, University of Maine, salimeh.yasaei@maine.edu

Dr. Eleni Gourgou, Assistant Research Scientist, University of Michigan, egourgou@umich.edu