Venkata S Govindarajan

HE/HIM/HIS

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RESEARCH STATEMENT

I am a Ph.D. candidate in **Computational Linguistics** at UT Austin *expecting to graduate in May 2024*. I am interested in **Pragmatics**, **Computational Social Science**, and **Natural Language Processing** with a focus on social dynamics (like intergroup bias) in online conversation and communication.

EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Austin   2019–2024

Ph.D. Computational Linguistics   GPA: 3.92/4

Committee: Jessy Li, David Beaver, Kyle Mahowald & Malihe Alikhani

University of Rochester   2017–2019

M.S. Computational Linguistics   GPA: 3.75/4

Advisor: Aaron Steven White

Indian Institute of Technology Madras   2012–2017

B.Tech & M.Tech Biological Engineering   GPA: 8.68/10

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. Anirudh Srinivasan, **Venkata S Govindarajan**, and Kyle Mahowald (Dec. 2023). "Counterfactually Probing Language Identity in Multilingual Models". In: *Proceedings of the The 3rd Workshop on Multi-lingual Representation Learning (MRL)*. Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL).

2. **Venkata S Govindarajan**, Juan Diego Rodriguez, Kaj Bostrom, and Kyle Mahowald (Dec. 2023). "Lil-Bevo: Explorations of Strategies for Training Language Models in More Humanlike Ways". In: *Proceedings of the BabyLM Challenge*. ACL.

3. **Venkata S Govindarajan**, David Beaver, Kyle Mahowald, and Junyi Jessy Li (July 2023). "Counterfactual Probing for the Influence of Affect and Specificity on Intergroup Bias". In: *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: ACL 2023*. Toronto, Canada: ACL, pp. 12853–12862.

4. **Venkata S Govindarajan**, Katherine Atwell, Barea Sinno, Malihe Alikhani, David Beaver, and Junyi Jessy Li (May 2023). "How people talk about each other: Modeling Generalized Intergroup Bias and Emotion". In: *Proceedings of the 17th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics*. Dubrovnik, Croatia: ACL, pp. 2488–2498.

5. Venelin Kovatchev, Trina Chatterjee, **Venkata S Govindarajan**, Jifan Chen, Eunsol Choi, Gabriella Chronis, Anubrata Das, Katrin Erk, Matthew Lease, Junyi Jessy Li, Yating Wu, and Kyle Mahowald (July 2022). "longhorns at DADC 2022: How many linguists does it take to fool a Question Answering model? A systematic approach to adversarial attacks." In: *Proceedings of the First Workshop on Dynamic Adversarial Data Collection*. Seattle, WA: ACL, pp. 41–52.

6. **Venkata S Govindarajan**, Benjamin Chen, Rebecca Warholic, Katrin Erk, and Junyi Jessy Li (Nov. 2020). "Help! Need Advice on Identifying Advice". In: *Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)*. Online: ACL, pp. 5295–5306.

7. Aaron Steven White, Elias Stengel-Eskin, Siddharth Vashishtha, **Venkata Subrahmanyan Govindarajan**, Dee Ann Reisinger, Tim Vieira, Keisuke Sakaguchi, Sheng Zhang, Francis Ferraro, Rachel Rudinger, Kyle Rawlins, and Benjamin Van Durme (May 2020). "The Universal Decompositional Semantics Dataset and Decomp Toolkit". In: *Proceedings of The 12th Language Resources and Evaluation Conference (LREC)*. Marseille, France: European Language Resources Association, pp. 5698–5707.

8. **Venkata Govindarajan**, Benjamin Van Durme, and Aaron Steven White (2019). "Decomposing Generalization: Models of Generic , Habitual, and Episodic Statements". In: *Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics (TACL)* 7, pp. 501–517.

TALKS

1. *Modeling Generalized Intergroup Bias* (May 2023). Conference talk at EACL. Dubrovnik, Croatia.

2. *Help! Need Advice on Identifying Advice* (Nov. 2020). Conference talk at EMNLP. Virtual.

3. *Decomposing Generalization* (July 2020). Conference talk at ACL. Virtual.

TEACHING & MENTORSHIP

Teaching

Principal Instructor at UT Austin   Summer 2022
Language and Computers (LINS313)
Introductory course to computational studies of language. Summer course over 5 weeks with 3 students. Designed and developed lectures, assignments, discussion topics, and supervised final projects over last 2 weeks.

Teaching Assistant

I served as TA on the following courses, where my responsibilities included holding office hours, grading assignments, and occasional substitute lectures:

- Machine Learning Toolbox for Text Analysis (LIN373N)   Spring 2021
- Analyzing Linguistic Data and Programming for Linguists (LIN350)   Spring 2020
- Introduction to Computational Linguistics (LIN353C)   Fall 2019

- Introduction to Computational Linguistics   Fall 2018
- Data Structures and Algorithms for Biology   Fall 2016

Mentorship

Matianyu Zang (undergraduate at Brown University)   Summer 2023–Present
Intergroup Bias dynamics & discourse structure

EMPLOYMENT

The New York Times   Summer 2023
Data Science Intern

Built a framework using hierarchical (mixed effects) linear modeling for offline evaluation of novel user and article features to inform model building in algorithmic recommendations. Delivered potential features that could **boost engagement up-to 2%** while diversifying recommendations.

Amazon   Summer 2021
Alexa Applied Scientist Intern

Implemented an unsupervised method for detecting data drift in NLU models, and validated the approach on simulated and customer data. Received return internship offer for summer 2022.

SKILLS

Programming Languages: Python, Swift, Javascript, R, SQL, Julia, LISP

Tools & Frameworks: pyTorch, Transformers, Tensorflow, Keras, scikit-learn, statsmodels, SciPy, Pandas, SwiftUI, CoreML, BigQuery, lme4

Languages: English (native), Tamil (native), Hindi (intermediate)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Organizing Committee

South by Semantics Workshop   2022–2024

I am co-organizing a series of talks on semantics, computation and philosophy of language. Our goal is to provide a forum for emerging scholars with UT Austin's rich community of language researchers, and to foster collaboration and dialogue through receptions and dinners organized with the talks.

Texas Linguistics Society (TLS) Conference   2021, 2022

TLS is an annual student-run academic conference by the Department of Linguistics at UT Austin which includes presentations in all areas of linguistics. I served on the organizing committee and was involved in reviewing and assigning submissions for review, website design, scheduling, logistics for a fully virtual conference, and chairing keynote sessions and talks.

Reviewer

    ACL ARR 2023, EMNLP 2023, ACL 2023, *SEM 2023, 2024, SIGDIAL 2022, 2023

Volunteer

    Underpaid@UT

APPS

DeTeXt: I built an open source app for iOS, iPadOS and macOS that predicts the best LaTeX commands corresponding to hand-drawn symbols using deep neural networks. Built using SwiftUI, Combine, PencilKit and CoreML, the app has over 10,000 downloads.

AWARDS

NASSLI Student Grant (800 USD)	Summer 2022
COLA Supplemental Graduate School Fellowship (5000 USD)	Spring 2020
Silver medal at International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM)	Fall 2016
Indian Biological Engineering Competition (iBEC) grant (15,000 USD)	Fall 2016
National BIRAC-IdeaThon on Antimicrobial Resistance Finalist	Fall 2016
Second runner up in 3M-CII Young Innovators Challenge	Spring 2015