

Education	<b>The University of Texas at Dallas</b>	2024 - Apr. 2027 (anticipated)
	◦ Ph.D. in Computer Science	Dallas, TX, USA
	◦ Advisor: <a href="#">Zhiyu Zoey Chen</a>	
	<b>Virginia Tech</b> (transferred out)	2023 - 2024
	◦ Ph.D. in Computer Science	Blacksburg, VA, USA
	<b>Soochow University</b>	2020 - 2023
	◦ M.S. in Computer Science	Suzhou, Jiangsu, China
	◦ Advisors: <a href="#">Wenliang Chen</a> , <a href="#">Xiabing Zhou</a>	
	<b>Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications</b>	2016 - 2020
	◦ B.Eng. in Computer Science	Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
	◦ Top 3% in the Department; Principal's Award	

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>	Jun. 2025 - Aug. 2025
	◦ <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: <a href="#">Kaiqiang Song</a> )	Seattle, WA
	◦ Topic: Complex Instruction Following	
	<b>Tencent AI Lab</b>	May. 2024 - Jul. 2024
	◦ <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentors: <a href="#">Haitao Mi</a> , <a href="#">Linfeng Song</a> )	Seattle, WA
	◦ Topics: Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback	
	<b>Tencent AI Lab</b>	Dec. 2021 - Dec. 2022
	◦ <i>Research Intern</i> (Mentor: <a href="#">Lifeng Jin</a> )	Shenzhen, China
	◦ Topics: Dialogue Understanding, Semi-supervised Learning	

Papers (Selected)	The full publication list is at <a href="#">Google Scholar</a> . * denotes equal contribution.
-------------------	--

#### Instruction Following

- [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] [Robust Instruction Following via Reinforcement Learning](#)
  - *Preprint*
  - **Mian Zhang**, Peilin Wu, Kaiyu He, Simin Ma, Xinlu Zhang, Xinya Du, Kaiqiang Song, Zhiyu Chen

### 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	<a href="#">Tinker Research Grant from Thinking Machines</a>	2025
	<a href="#">Researcher Access Program from OpenAI</a>	2025
	Outstanding Graduate Award at Soochow University	2023
	First-class Scholarship at Soochow University	2020 - 2021
	Principal's Award	2019
	<a href="#">CUMCM National First Prize (top 1%)</a>	2018
	First-class Scholarship at NJUPT	2017 - 2019