

Kun Zhao

kun.zhao@pitt.edu

<https://hegehongcha.github.io/kz.github.io/>

(Phone) +1 412-519-4341

Education

2023–26* **Ph.D.**, Electrical and Engineering, University of Pittsburgh
2019–22 **M.E.**, Cyberspace Security, Wuhan University
2014–18 **B.E.** Zhengzhou University of Light Industry

Research Experience

2022–2023 Research Assistant, , Wuhan University, (Advisor: Dr. Xiaohui Cui)
2023– Research Assistant, University of Pittsburgh, (Advisor: Dr. Liang Zhan)

Awards & Honors

2021 The First Prize Scholarship of excellence of School of Cyber Science and Engineering, Wuhan University (top 30%)

Publications

 [Google Scholar](#)

Journal Articles

- J1. **Kun Zhao**, Ding, H., Ye, K. & Cui, X. A Transformer-Based Hierarchical Variational AutoEncoder Combined Hidden Markov Model for Long Text Generation. *Entropy* **23**. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:239468459> (2021).
- J2. Tang, H., **Zhao, Kun**, Liu, G., Thompson, P. M., Huang, H., Leow, A. & Zhan, L. Brain Structural Network Alterations in Alzheimer’s Disease: Perspectives from Ethnicity-Specific Factors. *Alzheimer’s & Dementia* **21**, e101821 (2025).

Peer-reviewed Conference Proceedings

- C1. (**ACL2023 Main Oral**) **Zhao, Kun**, Yang, B., Lin, C., Rong, W., Villavicencio, A. & Cui, X. *Evaluating Open-Domain Dialogues in Latent Space with Next Sentence Prediction and Mutual Information* 2023.
- C2. (**ACL 2024**) **Zhao, Kun**, Yang, B., Tang, C., Lin, C. & Zhan, L. *SLIDE: A Framework Integrating Small and Large Language Models for Open-Domain Dialogues Evaluation* 2024.
- C3. (**ICANN2021**) **Zhao, Kun**, Ding, H., Ye, K., Cui, X. & Fu, Z. *A Latent Variable Model with Hierarchical Structure and GPT-2 for Long Text Generation* 2021.

- C4. (EMNLP2025) **Kun Zhao**, Yang, B., Tang, C., Liu, D., Zhan, L. & Lin, C. *Emphasising Structured Information: Integrating Abstract Meaning Representation into LLMs for Enhanced Open-Domain Dialogue Evaluation*
- C5. (COLING 2024) Yang, B., Tang, C., **Zhao, Kun**, Xiao, C. & Lin, C. *Effective Distillation of Table-based Reasoning Ability from LLMs*
- C6. (EMNLP2025) Yang, B., Liu, D., Xiao, C., **Zhao, Kun**, Tang, C., Li, C., Yuan, L., Yang, G., Huang, L. & Lin, C. *Crafting customisable characters with llms: Introducing simschat, a persona-driven role-playing agent framework*
- C7. (COLING 2024) Yang, B., Tang, C., **Zhao, Kun**, Xiao, C. & Lin, C. *Effective distillation of table-based reasoning ability from llms*
- C8. (MICCAI2024) Tang, H., Liu, G., Dai, S., Ye, K., **Zhao, Kun**, Wang, W., Yang, C., He, L., Leow, A., Thompson, P., et al. *Interpretable spatio-temporal embedding for brain structural-effective network with ordinary differential equation*

Working papers

- W1. **Kun Zhao**, Xiao, C., Yan, S., Cheung, W. K., Ye, K., Moubayed, N. A., Zhan, L. & Lin, C. *X-ray Made Simple: Lay Radiology Report Generation and Robust Evaluation* Official dataset for Shared Task: Lay Summarization of Biomedical Research Articles and Radiology Reports @ BioNLP Workshop, ACL 2025. arXiv: [2406.17911 \[cs.CL\]](https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.17911). <https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.17911>.
- W2. **Zhao, Kun**, Yang, B., Tang, C., Dai, S., Tang, H., Lin, C. & Zhan, L. *DRE: An Effective Dual-Refined Method for Integrating Small and Large Language Models in Open-Domain Dialogue Evaluation*
- W3. **Zhao, Kun**, Dai, S., Zhang, Y., Liu, G., Gu, P., Lin, C., Thompson, P. M., Leow, A., Huang, H., He, L., et al. *R-GenIMA: Integrating Neuroimaging and Genetics with Interpretable Multi-modal AI for Alzheimer's Disease Progression* 2025.
- W4. **Zhao, Kun**, Dai, S., Wang, P., Song, J., Ji, H., Lin, C., Zhan, L. & Tang, H. *Aligning Findings with Diagnosis: A Self-Consistent Reinforcement Learning Framework for Trustworthy Radiology Reporting* 2026.

Presentations

Oral	The 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics
Poster	The 62nd Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics
Oral	IEEE International Conference on Data Mining, SAIMBio, 2025

Academic Service

Reviewer

2022	Computer and Science
2022	ACL ARR

Research Project Management

Project 1: Automatic Evaluation Metrics for Open-Domain Dialogue Systems (Advisor: Prof. Chenghua Lin (The University of Manchester) and Prof. Liang Zhan (UPITT))

Role: Principal Project Lead; responsible for system design, implementation, and manuscript preparation.

Impact: Three top-tier NLP publications (ACL 2023, ACL 2024, EMNLP 2025) and one preprint under review at *Neural Networks*.

Project 2: LLM Application In Medical Domain (Advisor: Prof. Liang Zhan (UPITT), Prof. Chenghua Lin (The University of Manchester) and Prof. Haoteng Tang (UTRGV))

Role: Principal Project Lead; responsible for system design, implementation, and manuscript preparation.

Impact: One preprint is under review at ACL ARR10 and has been chosen as the official dataset Official dataset for Shared Task: Lay Summarization of Biomedical Research Articles and Radiology Reports @ BioNLP Workshop, ACL 2025. Another preprint has been submitted to Nature Aging.

Last updated: February 10, 2026