

Yibo Zhao

Master's Student / East China Normal University

yibozhao@stu.ecnu.edu.cn | +86 13504070688

yibozhao624.github.io | Shanghai, China

Search Agents • Agentic RL • RAG • Information Retrieval



Education

East China Normal University

Sep. 2024 – Jun. 2027 (expected)

Master's student, Data Science and Engineering

Advisor: Prof. Xiang Li, PLANING Lab

East China Normal University

Sep. 2020 – Jun. 2024

Dual Bachelor's Degrees in Journalism and Data Science, School of Communication

Selected Research

Sole first author: led study design, implementation & writing. | **Co-first author (*):** led design & writing.

Retrieval, Reward, and Training Protocols: What Matters in Training Search Agents?

Yibo Zhao, Zichen Ding, Jiayi Wu, Zun Wang, Xiang Li.

Preprint, 2026 Fixing Wiki-18 mattered more than reward design; outcome rewards sufficed.

Think Big, Search Small: Where Capacity Matters in Hierarchical Search Agents?

Qinnan Cai*, **Yibo Zhao***, Xiang Li.

Preprint, 2026 Reasoning was the bottleneck; a 1.7B model sufficed for search.

GRACE: Reinforcement Learning for Grounded Response and Abstention under Contextual Evidence

Yibo Zhao, Jiapeng Zhu, Zichen Ding, Xiang Li.

Preprint, 2026 Evidence-aware answering and abstention; outcome rewards fell short on search control.

Text Detoxification: Data Efficiency, Semantic Preservation and Model Generalization

Jing Yu*, **Yibo Zhao***, Jiapeng Zhu, Wenming Shao, Bo Pang, Zhao Zhang, Xiang Li.

EMNLP 2025 RL for meaning-preserving text detoxification and generalization.

Enhancing LLM-based Hatred and Toxicity Detection with Meta-Toxic Knowledge Graph

Yibo Zhao, Jiapeng Zhu, Can Xu, Yao Liu, Xiang Li.

Findings of ACL 2025 Knowledge-graph augmentation for robust toxicity detection.

E²GraphRAG: Streamlining Graph-based RAG for High Efficiency and Effectiveness

Yibo Zhao, Jiapeng Zhu, Jianxiang Yu, Ye Guo, Kangkang He, Xiang Li.

Preprint, 2025 Efficient entity extraction and adaptive graph-based retrieval.

Further co-authored work

Agentic RL

Skill0.5 (Findings of EMNLP 2026); OS-Themis (preprint)

Knowledge-graph RAG

CogGRAG (AAAI 2026); CrossAug (preprint)

Information Retrieval

MERIT (EMNLP 2026); RATE (ACL 2026); LazyMem (preprint)

Full publication list

Research Experience & Leadership

Shanghai AI Laboratory

Dec. 2025 – Sept. 2026

Research Intern, LLM Center

Led *Retrieval, Reward, and Training Protocols*: experimental design, implementation, and writing.

Research mentorship, East China Normal University

Mentored junior collaborators on MERIT, LazyMem, and RATE; led experimental design and all manuscript writing for RATE.

Teaching & Languages

Teaching Assistant, Contemporary Artificial Intelligence, ECNU

Fall 2025

English: IELTS 7.0