

# Deniz Nazar (Nazarova)

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## Research Interests

AI Safety, Security & Reliability, LLM Red Teaming, Abstention, Human-Centered NLP, Proactive Learning

## Education

**University of Washington** | Sept 2024–present  
PhD in Computer Science | GPA: 3.84/4.0.

Advisors: *Yulia Tsvetkov, Tim Althoff*

**American University of Central Asia** | 2018–2023

Bachelor's Degrees in Software Engineering and Psychology, *summa cum laude* | GPA: 3.91/4.0.

Advisors: *Almaz Bakenov, Elena Kosterina (AUCA); Dimitri Kanevsky, Artem Dementyev, (Google Research)*  
Theses: Application of Artificial Intelligence in Mental Healthcare: GPT-3 and Cognitive Distortions.

## Work Experience

**Data Engineer | UN Women, Europe and Central Asia** | May–Oct 2024  
Designed and deployed a web scraping and data processing pipeline for femicide cases from news sources.

**Data Engineer | EPAM Systems** | Jan–Jul 2024  
Engineered high-throughput data pipelines using Kafka producers/consumers and Spark (SQL, DataFrames), with scalable storage and querying via Azure Blob Storage and Azure SQL Database.

**Machine Learning Engineer | EIWA AI Doula** | Sep 2023–Sep 2024  
Post-trained an LLM agent for pregnancy guidance and integrated knowledge graphs to support decision-making in postpartum mental health (**top-5 at the Glovo KG Startup Competition (out of 250+)**).

**Machine Learning Engineer | USAID WSpark** | May 2023–Dec 2023  
Developed Kyrgyz-language NLP systems, contributed to public datasets, and optimized production backends.

**Summer ML Intern | Neuromatch** | 2021, 2024  
(2024) Evaluated Hebbian and SoftHebbian learning as biologically plausible alternatives to backpropagation.  
(2021) fMRI neural classifier distinguishing language vs. math tasks (93%; **Best Internship Award, AUCA**).

## Publications

**Nazar, D., [...], Althoff, T., Tsvetkov, Y.** (2026). It's What's Not in The Prompt: LLM Risk Assessment Framework in Mental Health Conversations under Uncertainty. *In preparation*.

Karamolegkou, A., [...], **Nazarova, D., [...], Dementieva, D.** (2025). NLP for social good: A survey of challenges, opportunities, and responsible deployment. Forthcoming in *Proceedings of the 19th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (EACL 2025)*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.22327>

**Nazarova, D.** (2023). Application of Artificial Intelligence in Mental Healthcare: Generative Pre-trained Transformer 3 (GPT-3) and Cognitive Distortions. In: Arai, K. (eds) *Proceedings of the Future Technologies Conference (FTC) 2023, Volume 1* (FTC 2023, Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol. 813). Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47454-5\\_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47454-5_16)

## Selected Honors & Awards

**(2024) First-Year Ph.D. Fellowship**, Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science and Engineering

**(2023) Best Thesis Award**, American University of Central Asia

**(2018) Golden Certificate Scholarship, President of the Kyrgyz Republic**, ranked 3rd nationwide.