

VidLA: Video-Language Alignment at Scale

Mamshad Nayeem Rizve¹ Fan Fei¹ Jayakrishnan Unnikrishnan¹ Son Tran¹
Benjamin Z. Yao¹ Belinda Zeng¹ Mubarak Shah^{1,2} Trishul Chilimbi¹
¹Amazon Shopping ²University of Central Florida

{mnrizve, feiff, jayunn, sontran, benjamy, zengb, shahmub, trishulc}@amazon.com

Abstract

In this paper, we propose VidLA, an approach for video-language alignment at scale. There are two major limitations of previous video-language alignment approaches. First, they do not capture both short-range and long-range temporal dependencies and typically employ complex hierarchical deep network architectures that are hard to integrate with existing pretrained image-text foundation models. To effectively address this limitation, we instead keep the network architecture simple and use a set of data tokens that operate at different temporal resolutions in a hierarchical manner, accounting for the temporally hierarchical nature of videos. By employing a simple two-tower architecture, we are able to initialize our video-language model with pretrained image-text foundation models, thereby boosting the final performance. Second, existing video-language alignment works struggle due to the lack of semantically aligned large-scale training data. To overcome it, we leverage recent LLMs to curate the largest video-language dataset to date with better visual grounding. Furthermore, unlike existing video-text datasets which only contain short clips, our dataset is enriched with video clips of varying durations to aid our temporally hierarchical data tokens in extracting better representations at varying temporal scales. Overall, empirical results show that our proposed approach surpasses state-of-the-art methods on multiple retrieval benchmarks, especially on longer videos, and performs competitively on classification benchmarks.

1. Introduction

Vision-language alignment is crucial for solving many vision-language tasks like text-guided retrieval [41, 42, 47, 65, 74], visual question answering [11, 40, 88, 99], visual captioning [40, 42, 61, 86], etc. In the past few years, training on web-scale image-text pairs has significantly improved performance in many of these vision-language tasks [43, 44, 65, 99]. However, humans perceive the world as a continuous stream of images, which is also reflected

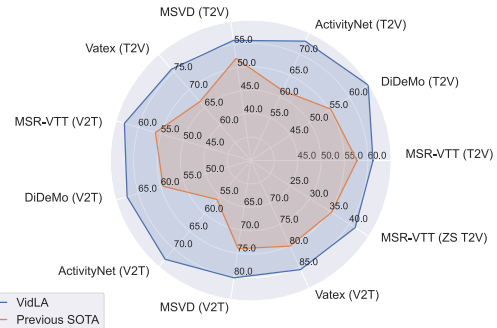


Figure 1. Recall@1 performance on retrieval benchmarks compared to previous SoTA with ViT-B scale models.

in the increasing number of videos uploaded to the web daily. Despite the ubiquitous use of videos, when compared to image-language alignment, video-language alignment is significantly more challenging for two key reasons.

First, unlike image-language data, it is much harder to collect aligned video-language data at scale. To address this issue, most prior works utilize automatic speech recognition (ASR) systems [2, 66, 102] to extract textual transcripts and generate paired video-language data for large-scale training [57, 93, 100]. However, it has been shown that transcripts often corresponds poorly with their associated visual contents [32, 56, 57, 72]. As a result, some recent works [12, 38, 46, 79] skipped large-scale video-language training and worked around by utilizing language-aligned image encoders, followed by lightly adapting them with temporal modules on small-scale video datasets with paired textual descriptions [6, 59]. However, training on such small-scale datasets often leads to overfitting [94] and does not encourage learning temporally diverse representations [38]. *Second*, since the vision transformer architecture lacks strong visual inductive bias such as that in CNN-type architectures, it requires large-scale pretraining data for effective generalization [21, 67]. In case of videos, this problem is amplified further due to the added temporal dimension. Facing this challenge, to be more efficient, existing works utilize factorized [4, 7, 60] or hierarchical [45, 48, 52, 68] space-time attention. However, neither of these solutions are optimal for large-scale

video-language alignment, as factorized space-time attention overly focuses on aggregating redundant local spatio-temporal information [45], while hierarchical space-time attention makes the use of pretrained language-aligned non-hierarchical image encoders [44, 65] challenging. Our work addresses both challenges in large-scale video-language alignment using large language models and a novel hierarchical temporal attention mechanism.

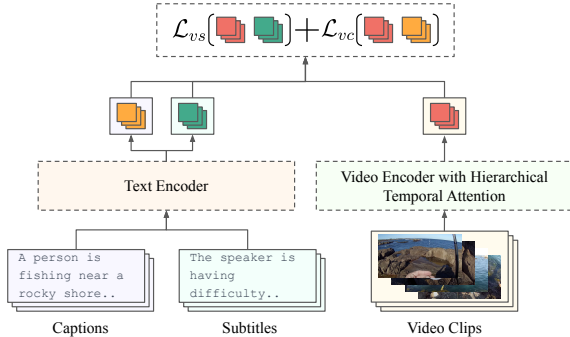


Figure 2. Figure summarizing our video-language alignment training approach with a two-tower architecture, where text encoder and video encoder with hierarchical temporal attention are trained with info-NCE losses to align video representations with subtitle and caption text representations simultaneously. We generate the captions using a multi-modal LLM and utilize an LLM to summarize the caption and subtitle texts.

In addition, having large-scale video-text data set is crucial for video-language alignment training. Towards that end, we construct a very large dataset, with $\sim 800M$ video-text pairs, to train video-language alignment model at scale. In this context, we propose several simple data curation strategies using LLMs [8, 14–16, 78] to improve the semantic correlation between textual description and associated visual content of large-scale video-language datasets. First, we utilize recent multi-modal large language models (MLLM) [17, 42, 49, 98, 105] to generate auxiliary captions grounded in visual content. Second, to scale our solution, we generate captions at a low frame rate, capitalizing on temporal redundancy of videos. Third, we augment the existing video-language datasets by incorporating videos of varying lengths to facilitate robust alignment across diverse temporal scales. We utilize LLMs for summarizing longer video descriptions, preventing training asymmetry when we sample the same number of frames for videos of all durations but use longer texts for longer videos. The LLM summarization also helps when long textual descriptions cover disparate concepts.

To efficiently utilize the non-hierarchical image-text pretrained models while accounting for the temporally hierarchical nature of videos, we factorize the space-time attention operation into two parts: local and global temporal attention. First, we focus on modeling the *local* temporal relationships by treating videos as collections of temporal tubes of single patch tokens. This attention operation fo-

cuses on capturing fine-grained motion across frames. Next, to model *global* spatio-temporal relationships in a temporally *hierarchical* manner, inspired from prior art [24, 104], we incorporate several Multi-Scale Temporal [MST] tokens that interact with all patch tokens at varying temporal resolutions to summarize the video semantic concepts at various temporal scales. To make this space-time attention operation more efficient, we update the patch tokens by attending over all the [MST] tokens and other patch tokens from the same frame. Finally, we utilize a [CLS] token to attentively aggregate information from all the [MST] and patch tokens. We utilize this aggregated spatio-temporal representation for video-language alignment training. Our hierarchical temporal attention design not only models local temporal relationships but also models global temporal relationships at different temporal hierarchies while utilizing strong pretrained image-text encoders.

To summarize, in this work, we make two major technical contributions: (i) we propose several techniques to utilize LLMs to generate a large scale video-text dataset where the generated text has high semantic correlation with the visual content. (ii) we design a hierarchical temporal modeling approach that effectively incorporates pretrained image-text encoders and handles videos of varying lengths in the training set to improve downstream performance as shown in Figure 1. We extensively evaluate the performance of our method on several video-text retrieval benchmarks to demonstrate its efficacy and the effectiveness of our data curation techniques and modeling approach. A summary of our approach is provided in Figure 2.

2. Related Works

Vision-Language Representation Learning Recently, image-language models [34, 44, 65, 74, 97, 99] have drawn huge attention because of their effectiveness in learning generic visual representations that are transferable to several downstream tasks like classification, retrieval, etc. This success can partly be attributed to the recently available large-scale image-text datasets [18, 69–71, 76]. However, in case of videos, there’s no large-scale aligned video-language dataset. Therefore, to perform video-language pretraining, most recent works [23, 29, 55, 62, 94] bootstrap from a pretrained image-language model and then perform some form of lightweight adaptation on the video datasets.

Adapting CLIP to Video Many video foundation model works aim to adapt CLIP for video representation. Most use a straightforward approach and encode frame samples with CLIP image encoder and pool across frames with various mechanisms [23, 29, 55] to represent the video. Other works insert additional temporal specific modelings such as divided space-time attention [7] or adapters [33] into CLIP vision transformer (ViT) layers [12, 62, 63, 79, 96]. Among others there are also works using novel parallel architectures

Clip Duration	# clips	Length (s)	Subtitle			Caption		
			# sent	# words	Summarized # words	# cap	# words	Summarized # words
Short	496M	13.2	2.1	31.6	31.6*	1.0	10.9	10.9*
Medium	212M	30.4	4.7	72.1	19.5	2.3	24.8	15.2
Long	100M	60.3	9.2	142.1	22.4	4.5	48.8	18.8

Table 1. Statistics of our curated training data set YT-VidLA-800M. *For short video clips, texts are not summarized.

[50] or using addition special tokens to capture temporal interaction between frames [94].

Video-Language Datasets For image-language pretraining, web images paired with alt-text have demonstrated to be extremely effective and can scale up to billions of samples [11, 69, 75, 81]. Video dataset using similar alt-text such as WebVid [6] are often at a much smaller scale. Alternatively, VideoCC [59] dataset is generated by finding visually similar video clips from existing image text data. Video subtitle datasets on the other hand are much more widely available and easy to scale, leading to wide adoption [57, 93, 100, 101], however these type of videos are often very short clips segmented by sentence boundaries, and the subtitles are usually noisy and have poor visual grounding. In this work, instead of generating a new dataset, we propose a way to effectively use existing large scale video dataset to improve video text alignment.

3. Video-Language Pretraining Dataset

A key component of our Video-Language Alignment method summarized in Figure 2 is a high quality large scale video-language dataset. In order to be able to effectively train the video-text models with hierarchical temporal attention, and to allow the model to learn to align videos with different temporal scales, we need a dataset with videos of different lengths, and corresponding text annotations with varying levels of temporal abstraction. We describe our novel data curation scheme in detail below.

Source Videos We utilize 20 million videos from the YT-Temporal-1B [100] dataset for creating video-text dataset since its the largest collection of publicly available videos. These videos cover a diverse set of video concepts, and have been filtered to ensure better visual groundedness as well as to protect user privacy. Unlike prior works which utilize the *video frame*-subtitle pairs from this dataset, we create a new dataset composed of *video clips* paired with subtitles and generated captions which we call YT-VidLA-800M. Next, we describe our multi-scale video clip extraction process.

Video Clip Extraction To extract video clips, first, we punctuate the ASR subtitles using a bert-based [20] punctuation model to split the full subtitle into sentences. Next, we split the videos at sentence boundaries to generate clips, where each clip covers one or more sentences. To facilitate video-language alignment across different temporal scales, we split each video into clips of varying temporal lengths. To be particular, our shortest clips are on average 13 sec-

onds long in duration, which are similar in length (6-13 seconds) to videos in existing large-scale datasets [57, 59, 93]. The medium length clips on the other hand are on average 30 seconds long, which is similar in length to videos in common retrieval benchmarks [3, 92]. The longer clips are on average 60 seconds in duration. Overall, we extract around 500 million short video clips, 200 million medium length video clips, and 100 million long video clips as summarized in Table 1. Next, we discuss about our visually grounded auxiliary caption generation process.

Caption Generation To improve visual grounding in language supervision, we generate auxiliary captions for each clip using multi-modal LLMs. Particularly, we utilize BLIP-2 [42] to generate captions for the frames of the extracted video clips. To be efficient, capitalizing on the temporal redundancy of videos, we generate these captions at a very low frame-rate (~ 0.1 FPS). To aggregate the frame-level captions to generate the video clip-level caption, we perform text summarization, which we discuss next.

Text Summarization We use an LLM [78] to summarize the individual frame captions to obtain the caption for each video clip. Additionally, we summarize ASR subtitles from longer videos to obtain right abstraction for video-language alignment training. Furthermore, caption and subtitle summarization address another practical problem: it reduces the size of the input text, making it feasible to fit within the context length window of CLIP’s pretrained text encoder. After this operation, each video clip is paired with two summarized texts corresponding to ASR subtitle and generated caption. We present the statistics of YT-VidLA-800M before and after summarization in Table 1.

4. Method

In VidLA, we utilize an extension of the two-tower architecture for image-language alignment from CLIP [65]. Particularly, we retain the CLIP text encoder architecture and extend CLIP’s vision encoder to improve its temporal modeling capability by introducing a novel attention mechanism illustrated in Figure 3. We provide details of our video encoder in the following.

Preliminaries The vision encoder accepts as input a video clip \mathbf{v} consisting of T RGB frames $\mathbf{v}^t \in \mathbb{R}^{H \times W \times 3}$, $t \in \{0, 1, \dots, T-1\}$ each of size $H \times W$ pixels sampled from the video. Following vision transformer [21] and pretrained image-language models [44, 65], we split each frame into non-overlapping patches of size $P \times P$ yielding $N =$

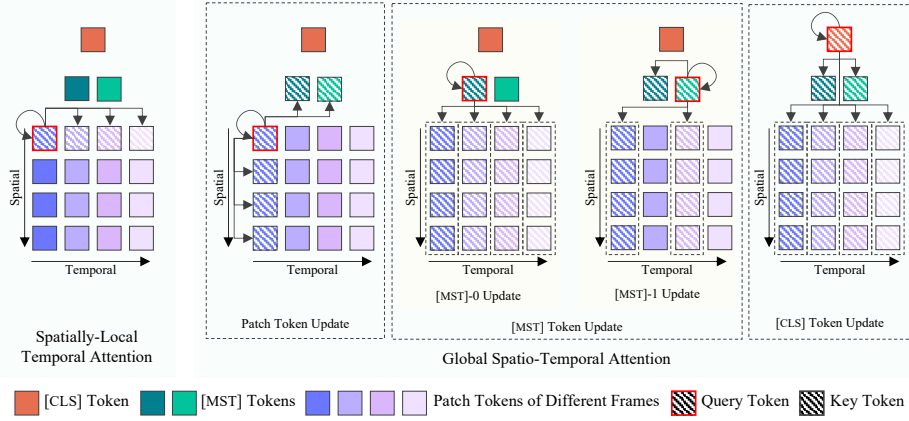


Figure 3. Figure summarizing the different tokens and the attention mechanisms used to update the tokens in our proposed Hierarchical Temporal Attention. This toy example uses $N = 4$ patches, $T = 4$ frames, $U = 2$ levels of temporal hierarchy, $V = 1$ [MST] token per level and temporal scale $r = 2$. Hierarchical temporal attention can be factorized into two parts. *Spatially Local Temporal Attention (left)*: Patch tokens only attend to its neighbors across time. For instance, *first* patch token of the first frame gets updated by only attending to the *first* patch token of all the other frames. *Global Spatio-temporal Attention (right)*: To capture global spatio-temporal semantics efficiently, we update the patch tokens by attending to other patch tokens from the same frame as well as all the [MST] tokens. The *third* and *fourth* column depict the hierarchical [MST] token update mechanism. Particularly, from the third column we observe that [MST]-0 gets updated by attending to all the patch tokens and other [MST] tokens of lower temporal resolution. The next column demonstrates the multi-scale [MST] attention mechanism where the second [MST] token, [MST]-1, only attends to patch tokens from a subset of frames with a higher stride. The [CLS] token acts as an *aggregator* and attentively pulls information from both [MST] and patch tokens.

HW/P^2 patches for each frame. Each of the NT patches is linearly mapped with a learnable matrix and then combined with learnable spatial and temporal position embeddings to obtain a sequence of TN patch tokens, represented by $\mathbf{Z}^0 \in \mathbb{R}^{TN \times d}$, where d denotes the dimension of each token. We incorporate a set of UV [MST] tokens to capture summarized information at different temporal scales from the video where U represents the number temporal hierarchies and V represents the number of [MST] tokens at each temporal hierarchy. We also include a [CLS] token to capture the global representation of the video (see e.g., [19]). We create the final input sequence, $\mathbf{Z}^0 \in \mathbb{R}^{(1+UV+TN) \times d}$, by prepending the learnable [CLS] token and UV additional [MST] tokens to the sequence of TN patch tokens. The sequence of input tokens are passed through L transformer layers. We use \mathbf{Z}^l to denote the sequence after the l -th layer. In each layer the sequence is treated with two steps of attention followed by an MLP layer as summarized in Figure 3 and detailed next.

Spatially Local Temporal Attention Inspired from a long line of works [24, 25, 73] that seek to model finegrained temporal motion for video understanding, we employ spatially local temporal attention. As the first operation in any l -th layer of the transformer, we remove the [CLS] and [MST] tokens from the sequence of input tokens to that layer, \mathbf{Z}^{l-1} , to apply this attention only on the patch tokens, $\tilde{\mathbf{Z}}^{l-1} \in \mathbb{R}^{TN \times d}$. To capture finegrained temporal motion during this attention operation, each patch token only attends to patch tokens from other frames in the same spatial position, effectively allowing attention only along the tem-

poral dimension. This operation can be represented using an attention mask, $\tilde{\mathbf{M}} \in \mathbb{R}^{TN \times TN}$, formally defined as

$$\tilde{\mathbf{M}}_{i,j} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \text{mod}(|j - i|, N) = 0 \\ -\infty & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Spatially local temporal attention is then performed as

$$\tilde{\mathbf{Z}}_{SIT}^l = \text{MMSA}(\text{LN}(\tilde{\mathbf{Z}}^{l-1}), \tilde{\mathbf{M}}) + \tilde{\mathbf{Z}}^{l-1} \quad (1)$$

where $\text{LN}(\cdot)$ is layer normalization [5] operation and $\text{MMSA}(\cdot, \cdot)$ is masked multi-head self-attention which can be expressed as $\text{MMSA}(\mathbf{Z}, \mathbf{M}) := \text{softmax}(\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{K}^T / \sqrt{d} + \mathbf{M})\mathbf{V} \in \mathbb{R}^{TN \times d}$; here $\mathbf{Q}, \mathbf{K}, \mathbf{V}$ are query, key, value embeddings of the sequence of input tokens \mathbf{Z} obtained through linear projection and \mathbf{M} is the input attention mask.

After the attention computation, we again prepend the [CLS] and [MST] tokens to the updated patch tokens, $\tilde{\mathbf{Z}}_{SIT}^l$, to obtain the token sequence $\mathbf{Z}_{SIT}^l = [(\mathbf{Z}^{l-1})^{[\text{CLS}]}, (\mathbf{Z}^{l-1})^{[\text{MST}]}, \tilde{\mathbf{Z}}_{SIT}^l]$.

Global Spatio-Temporal Attention To efficiently model the global spatio-temporal semantics in a hierarchical manner, we utilize the hierarchical [MST] tokens for guiding the global spatio-temporal attention. We employ an asymmetric attention mechanism to update the [CLS], [MST], and patch tokens as illustrated in the second grid in Figure 3. To keep the attention operation computationally efficient, each patch token attends to all patch tokens from the same frame, and to all the UV [MST] tokens $\in \mathbb{R}^{UV \times d}$. The patch token updates can be expressed using an attention mask, $\mathbf{M}^{[\text{PATCH}]} \in \mathbb{R}^{TN \times (1+UV+TN)}$, defined as

$\mathbf{M}^{\text{PATCH}} = [\mathbf{0}, \widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^G]$ where $\mathbf{0}$ is a $TN \times (1 + UV)$ matrix of zeros and $\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^G$ is a $TN \times TN$ matrix with

$$\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}_{i,j}^G = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \lfloor \frac{i}{N} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{j}{N} \rfloor \\ -\infty & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where $\lfloor \cdot \rfloor$ indicates the FLOOR function.

The update procedure for [MST] tokens is designed to capture the temporally hierarchical nature of video concepts. The attention mask for each [MST] token is determined by the hierarchy level of that token, ranging from 0 to $U - 1$, and the temporal scale r . Specifically, the [MST] tokens from a particular hierarchy level u attend to [MST] tokens from lower temporal hierarchies and to the [PATCH] tokens from every r^u -th frame. As there are V [MST] tokens in each hierarchy level, the updates for the [MST] tokens can be expressed using another attention mask, $\mathbf{M}^{\text{MST}} \in \mathbb{R}^{UV \times (1+UV+TN)}$ where the first V rows correspond to [MST] tokens of hierarchy level 0, followed by V rows of hierarchy level 1, and so on. The attention mask can be formally expressed as $\mathbf{M}^{\text{MST}} = [-\infty \mathbf{1}, \widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^{\text{MST},\text{self}}, \widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^{\text{MST},\text{patch}}]$ where $\mathbf{1}$ is a $UV \times 1$ vector of all 1's, $\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^{\text{MST},\text{self}}$ is a $UV \times UV$ matrix and $\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}^{\text{MST},\text{patch}}$ is a $UV \times TN$ matrix with

$$\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}_{i,j}^{\text{MST},\text{self}} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \lfloor \frac{i}{V} \rfloor \geq \lfloor \frac{j}{V} \rfloor \\ -\infty & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$\widetilde{\mathbf{M}}_{i,j}^{\text{MST},\text{patch}} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \text{mod} \left(\lfloor \frac{j}{N} \rfloor, r^{\lfloor \frac{i}{V} \rfloor} \right) = 0 \\ -\infty & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Note that both patch and [MST] tokens do not attend to the [CLS] token to limit propagation of *global* information into the these *local* tokens. We update the [CLS] token by attending to all the patch and [MST] tokens. This asymmetric update ensures that the [CLS] token merely acts as an *aggregator* where it attentively pulls information from all tokens. We denote the attention mask for updating the [CLS] token as $\mathbf{M}^{\text{CLS}} \in \mathbb{R}^{1 \times (1+UV+TN)}$. We set all the entries of \mathbf{M}^{CLS} to 0 to allow attention computation with all tokens. Finally, we vertically stack these attention masks, $[\mathbf{M}^{\text{CLS}}, \mathbf{M}^{\text{MST}}, \mathbf{M}^{\text{PATCH}}]$, to generate the attention mask, \mathbf{M} , for global spatio-temporal attention. The global spatio-temporal attention mechanism also includes an MLP and skip connection as summarized in the following,

$$\mathbf{Z}_{GST}^l = \text{MMSA}(\text{LN}(\mathbf{Z}_{SIT}^l), \mathbf{M}) + \mathbf{Z}_{SIT}^l$$

$$\mathbf{Z}^l = \text{MLP}(\mathbf{Z}_{GST}^l) + \mathbf{Z}_{GST}^l \quad (2)$$

We propagate these updated token embeddings, \mathbf{Z}^l , to the next transformer layer. Finally, we use a linear projection of the [CLS] token from the last transformer layer as the video embedding for video-language alignment training.

Pretraining Objective For video-language alignment training, we use language supervision from both ASR subtitle, \mathbf{t}_s , and caption, \mathbf{t}_c . Let's assume $s \in \mathbb{R}^D$, $c \in \mathbb{R}^D$ and $v \in \mathbb{R}^D$ are the encoded features vectors for subtitle, caption and video. We use the commonly used info-NCE loss [10] as the objective function for video-language alignment training. The overall objective function is

$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{i=1}^B (\mathcal{L}_{vs}^i) + \frac{1}{B} \sum_{i=1}^B (\mathcal{L}_{vc}^i) \quad (3)$$

where, \mathcal{L}_{vs} and \mathcal{L}_{vc} are info-NCE loss between video representation and the language representation from subtitle s and caption c respectively; for each loss,

$$\mathcal{L}_{vt}^i = -\log \frac{\exp(v_i^\top t_i / \tau)}{\sum_{j=1}^B \exp(v_i^\top t_j / \tau)} - \log \frac{\exp(t_i^\top v_i / \tau)}{\sum_{j=1}^B \exp(t_i^\top v_j / \tau)}$$

where $t \in \{c, s\}$, B is the batch size and τ is the learnable temperature scale.

5. Experiments and Results

Implementation Details We initialize our text and video encoders from pretrained OpenAI CLIP [65] checkpoints. We randomly initialize the [MST] tokens. To ensure that the initialization of our video encoder is close to CLIP's vision encoder, we initialize the projection matrices of spatially local temporal attention with zero. During training, we uniformly sample 12 frames from each video clip. We use multi-scale random crop [83] with a ratio of 1.0 and 0.8 to crop the video to 224×224 while preserving aspect ratio. We also apply random horizontal flip for augmentation. We train our models for 3 epochs. We use a initial learning rate of $2e - 5$ with cosine decay to $4e - 8$. For training, we utilize 128 A100 GPUs and set the batch size to 4096. We set the number of hierarchies, U , to 3, the number of [MST] tokens in each hierarchy, V , to 4, and the temporal scale r to 2. We provide additional training and finetuning implementation details in the Supplementary.

Video-Text Retrieval Datasets We evaluate our retrieval performance on MSR-VTT [92], DiDeMo [3], ActivityNet Captions [37], MSVD [9] and VATEX [89] datasets. On all these datasets, we finetune on the standard training split and test it on the standard test/val splits. Following prior works [6, 39, 91, 94], we concatenate the multiple descriptions to form a paragraph and perform paragraph-to-video retrieval on DiDeMo and ActivityNet Captions datasets.

Main Results We compare the retrieval performance of our proposed method VidLA with other recent works on MSR-VTT, DideMo, ActivityNet Captions, MSVD, and VATEX datasets and report the results in Table 2 and 3. We use VidLA-X/Y to denote the variant of our model that

Method	MSR-VTT Text-to-Video						MSR-VTT Video-to-Text					
	R@1	R@5	R@10	Avg	MdR↓	MnR↓	R@1	R@5	R@10	Avg	MdR↓	MnR↓
ClipBERT [39]	22.0	46.8	59.9	42.9	6.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Support Set [64]	30.1	58.5	69.3	52.6	3.0	–	28.5	58.6	71.6	52.9	3.0	–
HD-VILA [93]	35.6	65.3	78.0	59.6	3.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
All-in-One [80]	37.9	68.1	77.1	61.0	–	–	37.5	66.1	77.4	60.3	–	–
Frozen [6]	32.5	61.5	71.2	55.1	3.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIP-ViT-B/32												
CLIP4Clip [55]	44.5	71.4	81.6	65.8	2.0	15.3	42.7	70.9	80.6	64.7	2.0	11.6
CenterCLIP [103]	44.2	71.6	82.1	66.0	2.0	15.1	42.8	71.7	82.2	65.6	2.0	10.9
CLIP2TV [27]	46.1	72.5	82.9	67.2	2.0	15.2	43.9	73.0	82.8	66.6	2.0	11.1
CAMoE* [13]	47.3	74.2	84.5	68.7	2.0	11.9	49.1	74.3	84.3	69.2	2.0	9.9
DRL [87]	47.4	74.6	83.8	68.6	2.0	–	45.3	73.9	83.3	67.5	2.0	–
STAN* [50]	49.0	74.8	83.5	69.1	2.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PIDRo [31]	48.2	74.9	83.3	68.8	2.0	12.6	47.4	74.8	84.1	68.8	2.0	8.7
Cap4Video [91]	49.3	74.3	83.8	69.1	2.0	12.0	47.1	73.7	84.3	68.4	2.0	8.7
UATVR* [22]	49.8	76.1	85.5	70.5	2.0	12.9	51.1	74.8	85.1	70.3	1.0	8.3
CLIPViP [94]	50.1	74.8	84.6	69.8	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIPViP* [94]	55.9	77.0	86.8	73.2	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
VidLA-B/32	55.6	79.7	86.9	74.1	1.0	11.4	55.1	79.9	88.0	74.3	1.0	6.9
VidLA-B/32*	60.9 ^{†5.0}	81.6	89.4	77.3	1.0	8.7	60.8 ^{†9.7}	82.4	89.1	77.4	1.0	6.3
CLIP-ViT-B/16												
BridgeFormer [28]	37.6	64.8	75.1	59.2	3.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIP2TV [27]	49.3	74.7	83.6	69.2	2.0	13.5	46.9	75.0	85.1	69.0	2.0	10.0
TS2-Net [51]	49.4	75.6	85.3	70.1	2.0	13.5	46.6	75.9	84.9	69.1	2.0	8.9
Cap4Video [91]	51.4	75.7	83.9	70.3	1.0	12.4	49.0	75.2	85.0	69.7	2.0	8.0
DRL* [87]	53.3	80.3	87.6	73.7	1.0	–	56.2	79.9	87.4	74.5	1.0	–
STAN* [50]	54.6	78.4	85.1	72.7	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PIDRo* [31]	55.9	79.8	87.6	74.4	1.0	10.7	54.5	78.3	87.3	73.4	1.0	7.5
UATVR* [22]	53.5	79.5	88.1	73.7	1.0	10.2	54.5	79.1	87.9	73.8	1.0	7.6
CLIPViP [94]	54.2	77.2	84.8	72.1	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIPViP* [94]	57.7	80.5	88.2	75.5	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
VidLA-B/16	58.0	81.1	87.8	75.6	1.0	10.4	56.1	80.5	88.7	75.1	1.0	6.8
VidLA-B/16*	61.1 ^{†3.4}	83.8	90.4	78.4	1.0	8.1	63.1 ^{†6.9}	84.7	90.8	79.5	1.0	6.1
Two Stage Models with Cross-Modal Fusion Re-Ranking												
VINDLU† [12]	46.5	71.5	80.4	66.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
UMT† [46]	51.0	76.5	84.2	70.6	–	–	49.0	77.0	84.7	70.2	–	–
InternVideo(ViT-L)†* [90]	55.2	79.6	87.5	74.1	–	–	57.9	–	–	–	–	–

Table 2. Retrieval performance on the MSR-VTT benchmark, metrics used are recall at (R@) 1, 5, 10, average recall (Avg), top candidate median rank (MdR) and mean rank (MnR). * indicates inference with dual-softmax. † indicates two-stage method with candidate re-ranking. Performance delta is calculated against SoTA two-tower methods.

uses ViT-X/Y as the vision encoder, e.g., VidLA-B/32 uses ViT-B/32 as the vision encoder. We present results with and without using dual-softmax [13] for score normalization prior to ranking at the inference stage. Our proposed method outperforms all prior works using a similar ViT backbone by a significant margin. Particularly, from results reported in Table 2, we observe that VidLA-B/32 outperforms the second best method, CLIP-ViP, by 5.5% on MSR-VTT for text-to-video retrieval in terms of R@1 without dual-softmax. We notice similar improvement (3.8%) with ViT-B/16 backbone. We also notice a large improvement on the video-to-text retrieval task. Table 3, demonstrates a similar pattern on other four datasets. Particularly, we observe a larger improvement on datasets with longer videos such as ActivityNet Captions and DiDeMo, where our proposed method outperforms the second best method, CLIP-ViP, by 8.4% and 10.1% respectively. These results demonstrate that our proposed method not only outperforms the prior best method but also attains larger improvement if the downstream dataset is temporally longer.

6. Analysis and Discussion

We empirically validate our design choices on the model architecture, dataset temporal scales, language supervision as well as their combined effect by conducting a series of experiments to evaluate the model’s retrieval performance. In all experiments, unless otherwise specified, we use the VidLA-B/32 model pretrained on an 80M subset of the YT-VidLA-800M dataset for 1 epoch, finetuned on MSR-VTT dataset. For these analysis experiments, we evaluate the retrieval performance without DSL. This 80M subset is constructed by sampling about 2M random source videos and then splitting them into short, medium and long clips as discussed in Section 3. For a fair comparison with other methods, we also utilize the same ViT-B/32 model as the vision encoder, initialized from the same CLIP checkpoint, and trained with the same compute and data budget.

Attention Design To analyze the effectiveness of [MST] guided hierarchical temporal attention mechanism, we conduct a series of experiments with different attention configurations and report the results in Table 4. The first two

Method	DiDeMo			ActivityNet Captions			MSVD			Vatex		
	R@1	R@5	R@10	R@1	R@5	R@10	R@1	R@5	R@10	R@1	R@5	R@10
ClipBERT [39]	20.4	48.0	60.8	21.3	49.0	63.5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Support Set [64]	–	–	–	29.2	61.6	–	28.4	60.0	72.9	45.9	82.4	90.4
HD-VILA [93]	28.8	57.4	69.1	28.5	57.4	94.0	–	–	–	–	–	–
All-in-One [80]	32.7	61.4	73.5	22.4	53.7	67.7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Frozen [6]	34.6	65.0	74.7	–	–	–	33.7	64.7	76.3	–	–	–
CLIP-ViT-B/32												
CLIP4Clip [55]	43.4	70.2	80.6	40.5	72.4	–	46.2	76.1	84.6	–	–	–
CenterCLIP [103]	–	–	–	43.9	74.6	85.8	47.6	77.5	86.0	–	–	–
CLIP2TV [27]	45.5	69.7	80.6	44.1	75.2	–	47.0	76.5	85.1	–	–	–
CAMoE* [13]	43.8	71.4	–	51.0	77.7	–	49.8	79.2	87.0	–	–	–
DRL [87]	47.9	73.8	82.7	44.2	74.5	86.1	48.3	79.1	87.3	63.5	91.7	96.5
STAN* [50]	51.3	75.1	83.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PIDRo* [31]	48.6	75.9	84.4	44.9	74.5	86.1	47.5	77.5	86.0	–	–	–
UATVR [22]	43.1	71.8	82.3	–	–	–	46.0	76.3	85.1	61.3	91.0	95.6
CLIPViP [94]	48.6	77.1	84.4	51.1	78.4	88.3	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIPViP* [94]	53.8	79.6	86.5	59.1	83.9	91.3	–	–	–	–	–	–
VidLA-B/32	56.9	82.2	89.2	61.3	84.8	91.3	48.6	77.9	85.7	66.5	86.2	88.4
VidLA-B/32*	62.2 ^{+8.4}	84.6	90.0	69.2 ^{+10.1}	88.2	93.3	52.7 ^{+2.9}	80.4	87.0	73.7 ^{+7.2}	87.6	89.1
CLIP-ViT-B/16												
BridgeFormer [28]	37.0	62.2	73.9	–	–	–	52.0	82.8	90.0	–	–	–
DRL [87]	49.0	76.5	84.5	46.2	77.3	88.2	50.0	81.5	89.5	65.7	92.6	96.7
UATVR [22]	45.8	73.7	83.3	–	–	–	49.7	79.0	87.3	64.5	92.6	96.8
Cap4Video [91]	52.0	79.4	87.5	–	–	–	51.8	80.8	88.3	66.6	93.1	97.0
CLIPViP [94]	50.5	78.4	87.1	53.4	81.4	90.0	–	–	–	–	–	–
CLIPViP* [94]	55.3	82.0	89.3	61.4	85.7	92.6	–	–	–	–	–	–
VidLA-B/16	61.1	83.7	89.1	65.2	87.4	92.8	51.5	79.9	86.9	69.2	87.1	88.9
VidLA-B/16*	64.8 ^{+6.9}	86.0	91.8	73.0 ^{+10.8}	89.9	93.6	55.9 ^{+3.9}	82.3	88.3	75.8 ^{+9.2}	88.3	89.3
Two Stage Models with Cross-Modal Fusion Re-Ranking												
VINDLU†[12]	61.2	85.8	91.0	55.0	81.4	89.7	–	–	–	–	–	–
UMT† [46]	61.6	86.8	91.5	58.3	83.9	91.5	71.9	94.5	97.8	–	–	–
InternVideo(ViT-L)* [90]	57.9	82.4	88.9	62.2	85.9	93.2	58.4	84.5	90.4	71.1	–	–

Table 3. Text-to-video Retrieval performance on the DiDeMo, ActivityNet Captions, MSVD and Vatex datasets. * indicates inference with dual-softmax. † indicates two-stage method with candidate re-ranking. Performance delta is calculated against SoTA two-tower methods.

[MST]	Hierarchy	Local	MSR-VTT Retrieval			
			R@1	R@5	R@10	Avg
✗	✗	✗	49.1	75.3	83.5	69.3
✓	✗	✗	49.2	77.6	85.2	70.7
✓	✓	✗	50.0	77.6	85.4	71.0
✓	✗	✓	51.3	76.5	85.0	70.9
✓	✓	✓	53.5	77.5	85.6	72.2

Table 4. Comparison of retrieval performances on MSR-VTT dataset with different settings for [MST] token attention and the effect of spatially-local temporal attention.

Multi-Scale	MSR-VTT Retrieval			
	R@1	R@5	R@10	Avg
✗	51.9	78.2	85.6	71.9
✓	53.5	77.5	85.6	72.2

Table 5. Ablation study on the length distribution of videos in the pretraining dataset. Retrieval performance improves when the dataset is created with *short*, *medium* and *long* clips

rows demonstrate the effectiveness of [MST] tokens, even without any temporal hierarchy. Third row demonstrates the effectiveness of introducing multiple temporal hierar-

chies in [MST] tokens. On the other hand, the fourth row shows the effectiveness of spatially-local temporal attention, where it provides a significant improvement in terms of R@1 retrieval performance over the seon. Finally, the last row confirms the efficacy of our proposed temporal attention mechanism, providing a substantial 4.4% improvement over the baseline. Overall, these results not only validate the effectiveness of our proposed attention mechanism but also highlight the efficacy of its individual components.

Temporal Scales in Pretraining Data To analyze the impact of incorporating multiple temporal scales in the proposed pretraining dataset, we compare a model pretrained on the 80M subset containing *short*, *medium* and *long* clips against a model trained on only *short* short clips from the same set of 2M videos. For a fair comparison, we train these models for same number of steps. We present the finetuned results in Table 5 and observe that including multiple scales in the pretraining dataset helps boost retrieval performance.

Retrieval Performance on Videos of Different Lengths

To conduct a more finegrained analysis of the performance of our method, in the left plot of Figure 4, we compare

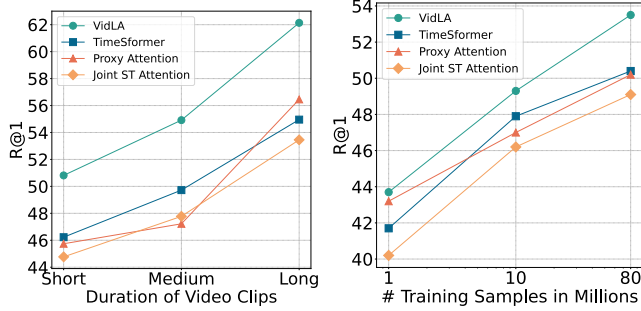


Figure 4. Retrieval performance on MSR-VTT compared to other attention mechanisms *Left*: R@1 numbers for validation videos separated into 3 bins of different durations. VidLA consistently improves over baselines for all video durations. *Right*: Scaling up the pretraining dataset improves the performance. Our architecture improves over other attention mechanisms at all data scales.

the performances of VidLA with respect to other attention methods on videos of different lengths. For this analysis, we report MSR-VTT R@1 results for three splits of videos in the validation set. Particularlry, we sort the videos by length and pick the shortest third for the short split, longest third for the long split and the remaining for the medium split. We observe that VidLA consistently outperforms other methods on all splits of different video lengths.

			MSR-VTT Retrieval			
Sub	Cap	Sum	R@1	R@5	R@10	Avg
✓	✓	✗	36.3	65.0	76.3	59.2
✗	✓	✓	48.9	74.1	84.0	69.0
✓	✗	✓	50.1	76.7	84.5	70.4
✓	✓	✓	53.5	77.5	85.6	72.2

Table 6. Comparison of finetuned retrieval performances on MSR-VTT dataset with different language supervision during pretraining. We compare the effectiveness of using subtitles, captions and whether or not they are summarized.

Training Data Size It is well-known that performance of retrieval models scales with the pretraining data size in the contrastive learning setting. We study our model’s performance as a function of the pretraining dataset size by pretraining different models on datasets of sizes 80M, 10M and 1M. We report the results in the right plot on Figure 4 and compare the performance of VidLA with other attention methods. We notice that VidLA outperforms all the methods across all data scales.

Effect of Different Language Supervision To validate the efficacy of utilizing both subtitles and captions for language supervision, as well as the effectiveness of text summarization, we pretrain our model with different combinations of text sources and summarization. From the results presented in Table 6, we observe that the model’s performance is better with supervision from both subtitles and captions compared to using only one of the two. Additionally, removing

summarization significantly degrades performance. Without summarization, video-text alignment suffers due to increased verbosity in longer videos and the inability to leverage CLIP’s pretrained embedding layer due to increased context length.

Method	Frames	K400		Sth-sth-v2	
		Views	Top-1	Views	Top-1
TimeSformer-B/16 [7]	96	1 × 3	80.7	1 × 3	62.4
VideoMAE-B/16 [77]	16	5 × 3	81.5	2 × 3	70.8
VideoMAE-v2-B/16 [82]	16	5 × 3	81.5	2 × 3	71.2
ViViT-L/16 [4]	32	1 × 3	81.7	1 × 1	65.9
VideoSwin-B [53]	32	3 × 4	82.7	1 × 3	69.6
UMT-B/16 _{800e} [46]	8	3 × 4	85.7	2 × 3	70.8
VidLA-B/32	16	5 × 3	82.4	2 × 3	67.9
VidLA-B/16	16	5 × 3	84.9	2 × 3	69.9

Table 7. Comparison of finetuned classification performances on Kinetics-400 and Something-Something-v2. VidLA models using ViT-B backbones achieve competitive results in spite of being pre-trained only for alignment.

Classification Results Even though our proposed method primarily focuses on video-language alignment, we evaluate the performance of our method on a related downstream task, *i.e.*, action recognition. We add a classification head on top of the video encoder from VidLA and finetune it on the popular benchmark datasets Kinetics-400 [36] and Something-Something-V2 [30]. We report the results of the finetuned models in Table 7. Although VidLA was pre-trained only for video-language alignment, we observe that VidLA performs competitively even against models such as VideoMAE that use dense pretraining objectives to promote the learning of finegrained features.

7. Conclusion

In this work, we propose a novel hierarchical temporal modeling architecture that captures temporal relationships at multiple temporal scales while remaining flexible to leverage image-text pretrained models. We also introduce an approach for utilizing LLMs to create the largest video-language dataset with better semantic alignment between video and language. We empirically validate the efficacy of our proposed hierarchical temporal attention mechanism as well as its design choices on data with varying temporal lengths and at different dataset sizes, demonstrating its advantage over other performant temporal modeling approaches. Our extensive experimentation also validates our data curation choices. Overall, our results highlight the importance of both high-quality large-scale training data as well as simple and scalable temporal architecture, and establishes VidLA as the new state-of-the-art on multiple video-text retrieval benchmarks while demonstrating its competitiveness on classification benchmarks.

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