

MC-LLaVA: Multi-Concept Personalized Vision-Language Model

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Abstract

Current vision-language models (VLMs) show exceptional abilities across diverse tasks, such as visual question answering. To enhance user experience, recent studies investigate VLM personalization to understand user-provided concepts. However, they mainly focus on single-concept personalization, neglecting the existence and interplay of multiple concepts, which limits real-world applicability. This paper proposes the first multi-concept personalization paradigm, MC-LLaVA. Specifically, MC-LLaVA employs a multi-concept instruction tuning strategy, effectively integrating multiple concepts in a single training step. To reduce the costs related to joint training, we propose a personalized textual prompt that uses visual token information to initialize concept tokens. Additionally, we introduce a personalized visual prompt during inference, aggregating location confidence maps for enhanced recognition and grounding capabilities. To advance multi-concept personalization research, we further contribute a high-quality instruction tuning dataset. We carefully collect images with multiple characters and objects from movies and manually generate question-answer samples for multi-concept scenarios, featuring superior diversity. Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative experiments demonstrate that MC-LLaVA can achieve impressive multi-concept personalized responses, paving the way for VLMs to become better user-specific assistants. The code and dataset will be publicly available at <https://github.com/arctanxarc/MC-LLaVA>.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, large language models (LLMs) [1, 4, 39, 42] have made significant advancements, proving their effectiveness in various applications and transforming the way humans interact with machines. In line with this trend, many vision-language models (VLMs) [6, 22, 28, 40]

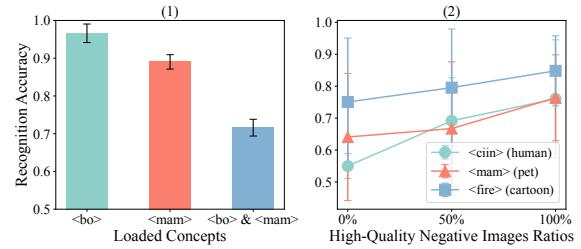


Figure 1. Case studies utilizing various concepts from the Yo'LLaVA dataset. The left panel shows the limitations of separately trained Yo'LLaVA models, while the right panel emphasizes the significance of high-quality negative samples for Yo'LLaVA.

have been proposed to connect vision encoders with LLMs for various vision-language tasks [11, 21, 26, 49] such as visual question answering. Despite their success, VLMs face challenges when personalized responses are required, such as answering visual questions based on user-provided concepts. For example, given images with a concept named \langle Anna \rangle , VLMs fail to generate sentences with its identifier, as illustrated in Fig. 2. This limitation hinders the smooth integration of VLMs into our daily lives.

Although some methods [2, 13, 34] have produced impressive results in VLM personalization, they mainly concentrate on single-concept personalization. However, in real-world scenarios, vision-language tasks often involve multiple concepts, which is crucial for the effective deployment of personalized VLMs. From this perspective, personalizing multiple concepts while ensuring that VLMs respond accurately can be challenging for current methods. For example, Yo'LLaVA [34] faces two main challenges when directly applied to multi-concept scenarios. First, because it trains each concept separately, merging parameters for different concepts leads to severe performance degradation due to concepts confusion (see Fig. 1(1)). Second, Yo'LLaVA learns concept tokens and classifier heads from scratch, resulting in a strong reliance on high-quality negative samples (see Fig. 1(2)). As the number of concepts increases, the demand for negative samples also rises, making data collection more challenging and requiring the model

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Figure 2. The vanilla LLaVA fails to understand user-provided concepts. Existing methods like Yo'LLaVA mainly focus on single-concept personalization and cannot generate accurate, personalized responses based on multi-concepts. The proposed MC-LLaVA learns multiple concepts and can perform accurately in multi-concept personalization across various tasks such as recognition, VQA, and captioning.

to spend additional time fitting the data. Consequently, multi-concept personalization of VLMs incurs significantly higher manual labor and training costs.

To solve the abovementioned problems, we introduce a novel method called MC-LLaVA, which ensures the accurate generation of personalized responses based on multiple concepts. MC-LLaVA considers multiple concepts together in a single training step rather than treating them independently. To reduce the cost of joint training, we pass all concept images through the VLM vision encoder and projection layer, using projected vision embeddings to initialize the concept tokens in personalized textual prompts. Our experiments show that this initialization can accelerate joint training and reduce dependence on high-quality negative samples. Additionally, MC-LLaVA enhances the model’s recognition and grounding capabilities by introducing a personalized visual prompt. We aggregate the location confidence maps based on the concept tokens to create the personalized visual prompt for VLMs.

To advance research in multi-concept personalization, datasets for training and testing are essential. Recent studies [2, 34] have developed datasets for personalized VLMs; however, these datasets focus only on evaluating single concepts. Furthermore, the types of questions and answers they address are limited to basic recognition and multiple-choice formats. The lack of datasets hinders the progress of multi-concept personalized VLMs. Therefore, we contribute a high-quality dataset by meticulously gathering images from concept-rich movies. We then utilize GPT-4o [1] to generate the initial question-answer samples and then manually refine the generated samples. Our dataset features diverse movie types and question-answer types. In total, our dataset includes approximately 2,000 images and 16,700

question-answer samples. To comprehensively evaluate multi-concept personalized VLMs, we assess MC-LLaVA across various tasks, including multi-concept recognition, visual grounding, question answering (QA), and captioning. Our dataset will facilitate future research in VLM personalization. We summarize our contributions as follows:

- We introduce MC-LLaVA, the first method designed for multi-concept personalized VLMs, which employs personalized textual and visual prompts to learn various concepts and generate tailored responses effectively.
- We contribute a high-quality dataset for training and testing multi-concept personalized VLMs.
- We perform thorough experiments on our dataset—as well as on two additional benchmarks—achieving state-of-the-art results among various types of tasks in single- and multi-concept personalization.

2. Related Work

Vision Language Models. Recently, LLMs have achieved significant advancements [1, 4, 39, 42]. Following this, the emergence of VLMs [5, 25, 27, 28] has significantly expanded the capabilities of LLMs, enabling them to be applied in tasks such as data processing [31], VQA [12], and captioning [22]. Although they exhibit strong general abilities in numerous tasks, it is challenging for them to fulfill the requirements for highly personalized responses [2], especially when multiple concepts are involved. In this work, we propose a multi-concept personalization method, allowing VLMs to reason accurately with multiple concepts.

Personalized VLMs. The emergence of LLMs has revolutionized the way humans interact with machines. Thanks to their superior capabilities in understanding, reasoning, and generation, LLMs serve as fundamental building blocks for

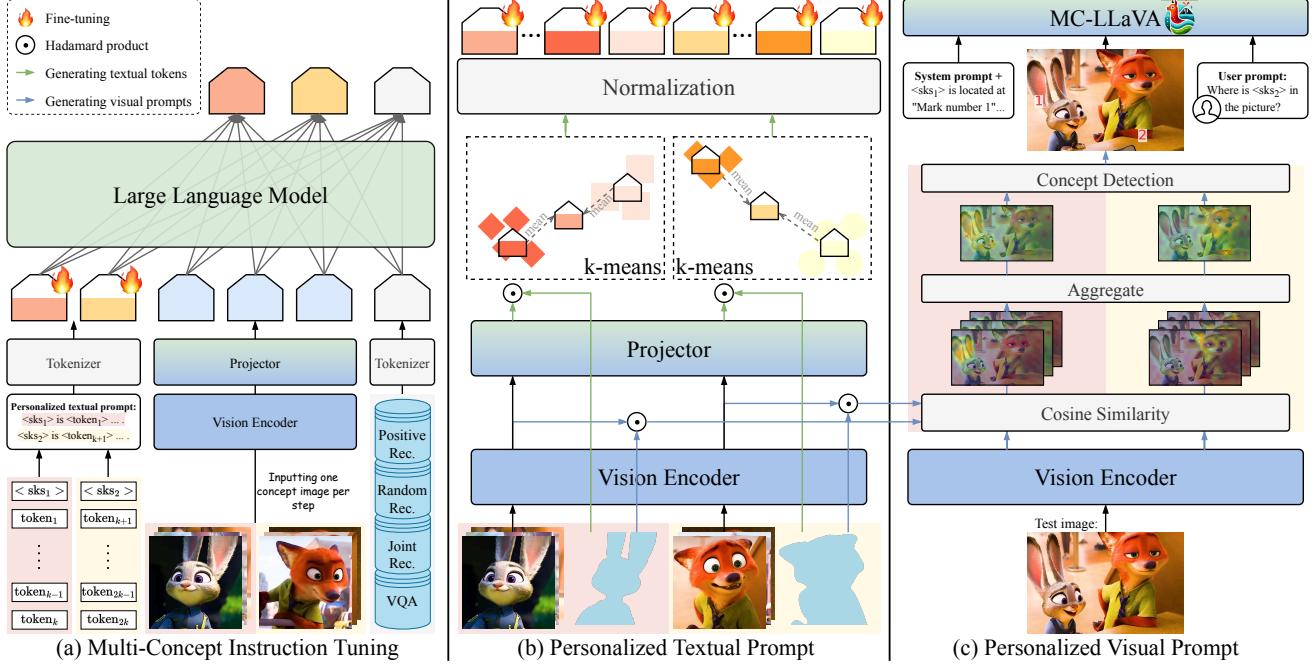


Figure 3. **The illustration of MC-LLaVA.** (a) We use a multi-concept joint training strategy to learn the personalized textual prompts and classifier weights. (b) Given m concepts, we utilize visual tokens obtained from K-means centroids to initialize the $m \times (k + 1)$ concept tokens in personalized textual prompts, reducing the costs associated with joint training. (c) During inference, we introduce a personalized visual prompt for VLMs by aggregating location confidence maps based on learned concept tokens.

our daily lives [9, 10, 38]. The primary applications include personalized search [3, 7] and personalized recommendations [32, 44]. To enhance individual experiences and preferences, personalized LLMs consider user personas to better meet customized needs. However, in the context of VLMs, personalized models require not only textual information but also additional visual information to aid in understanding concepts. Although recent works [2, 13, 34, 36] have begun to explore VLM personalization, they primarily focus on single-concept scenarios. To the best of our knowledge, our paper is the first to investigate multi-concept VLM personalization. To promote the advancement of VLM personalization, we create a high-quality dataset that includes both single-concept and multi-concept images along with their corresponding annotations.

3. Method

Our method’s pipeline is shown in Fig. 3. First, we propose multi-concept instruction tuning for MC-LLaVA (Sec. 3.1). Next, we introduce a personalized textual prompt for multi-concept (Sec. 3.2). Finally, we propose a personalized visual prompt to boost recognition and grounding (Sec. 3.3).

3.1. Multi-Concept Instruction Tuning

Given a pre-trained VLM and multiple user-provided concepts, our goal is to introduce new concepts by expand-

ing the vocabulary and learning the personalized textual prompts, while preserving the model’s knowledge. Instead of training concepts separately, as in Yo’LLaVA [34], we propose a joint training approach that considers multiple concepts together and simultaneously learns personalized textual prompts and classifier weights (see Fig. 3(a)). Specifically, for m concepts $\{C^j\}_{j=1}^m$, each with n images $\{I^i\}_{i=1}^n$, we define $k + 1$ learnable tokens per concept:

$$\bigcup_{j=1}^m \{\langle \text{sks}_j \rangle, \langle \text{token}_{(j-1)k+1} \rangle \dots \langle \text{token}_{jk} \rangle\} \quad (1)$$

where each $\langle \text{sks}_j \rangle$ serves as a unique concept identifier. As these concepts are new to the VLM, we expand the vocabulary by adjusting the language model classifier’s weights W from $D \times N$ to $D \times (N + m)$, where D is the feature dimension and N is the original vocabulary size.

To train MC-LLaVA, we construct training samples in the form (I, X_q, X_a) , where I is the input image, X_q is the question, and X_a is the answer. Following prior works such as Yo’LLaVA [34], we adopt standard dialogue formats (e.g., positive recognition, random recognition, and conversation tasks) in our training pipeline. Additionally, we design a novel joint recognition task. In our joint training, we pair text and image samples corresponding to different concepts within the same scenario, to generate cross-concept pairs. This inter-concept negative sampling strat-

egy produces at least $m \times (m - 1) \times n$ negative samples for a scenario containing m concepts with n images each.

Details on the training set construction are provided in Sec. 4. All the mentioned data examples are shown in the Appendix. In our multi-concept joint training framework, the parameters to be updated are:

$$\theta = \{\langle \text{sks}_{1:m} \rangle, \langle \text{token}_{1:mk} \rangle, W(:, N + 1 : N + m)\} \quad (2)$$

We utilize the standard masked language modeling loss to compute the probability of the target responses X_a :

$$\mathcal{L}(X_a | I, X_q, \theta) = - \sum_{t=1}^T \log P(X_{a,t} | I, X_q, X_{a,<t}, \theta) \quad (3)$$

where T is the length of the answer X_a , $X_{a,t}$ denotes the t -th word in the answer, and $P(X_{a,t} | I, X_q, X_{a,<t}, \theta)$ represents the probability of predicting the t -th word given the input image I , the question X_q , all preceding words in the answer $X_{a,<t}$, and the parameters θ .

3.2. Personalized Textual Prompt

To train the newly introduced tokens, we construct the personalized system prompt by sequentially appending prompts for each concept in the given scenario. Specifically, for each concept C^j , we add the prompt: “⟨sks_j⟩ is ⟨token_{(j-1)k+1}⟩ … ⟨token_{jk}⟩”.

Furthermore, to decrease reliance on high-quality negative samples, which are challenging to acquire in multi-concept scenarios, we present a new initialization strategy that leverages visual information. Instead of manually collecting negative samples to learn the personalized textual prompts in Eq. 1, we directly extract visual tokens from concept images to initialize concept tokens.

Given a set of training images $\{I^i\}_{i=1}^n$ for each concept, we utilize the LLaVA vision encoder E_{CLIP} and the projection layer P_{MM} to obtain the projected visual tokens $\{F_{\text{MM}}^i\}_{i=1}^{nhw}$. To eliminate background noise, we apply Grounded-SAM [37] with the prompt “the main character in the image” to generate masks $\{M^i\}_{i=1}^n$ as a pre-processing step conducted offline. The concept-relevant tokens $\{\tilde{F}_{\text{MM}}^i\}_{i=1}^l$ are then extracted through an element-wise Hadamard product between $\{F_{\text{MM}}^i\}_{i=1}^{nhw}$ and their corresponding masks. To construct a compact concept representation, we apply k-means clustering [15] to the compressed visual tokens, reducing them to k cluster centers $\{K^i\}_{i=1}^k$. The special token ⟨sks⟩ is then computed as the mean of these clustered centers, yielding a representation of shape $1 \times D$. Consequently, the final concept tokens for each concept have dimensions $(k + 1) \times D$, effectively encapsulating the concept’s semantic essence. As demonstrated in Sec. 5.5, this initialization significantly accelerates convergence, facilitating efficient multi-concept training in VLMs.

3.3. Personalized Visual Prompt

Localizing concepts enhances a model’s recognition and grounding in multi-concept scenarios. Relying solely on textual tokens may be inadequate for accurate recognition and grounding. To address this, we propose Personalized Visual Prompt based on Set-of-Mark (SOM) [43], an inference-time, training-free method that provides additional spatial information about concepts without introducing extra modules. The construction of the personalized visual prompt consists of two key stages: generating the location confidence map and constructing the visual prompt.

Consider a multi-concept scenario with m concepts. During training, for each concept C^j , we store a set of filtered features $\{\tilde{F}_{\text{CLIP}}^i\}_{i=1}^{l_{C^j}}$, obtained by applying the LLaVA vision encoder E_{CLIP} and subsequent masking to the training images. Given a test image I_t , we can also extract its encoded features $F_t \in \mathbb{R}^{hw \times c}$ using E_{CLIP} .

For each concept C^j , we compute the cosine similarity between feature set $\{\tilde{F}_{\text{CLIP}}^i\}_{i=1}^{l_{C^j}}$ and test image feature F_t :

$$S_{C^j}^i = \frac{F_t \tilde{F}_{\text{CLIP}}^{iT}}{\|\tilde{F}_{\text{CLIP}}^i\|_2 \cdot \|F_t\|_2}, \quad i = 1, \dots, l_{C^j} \quad (4)$$

where $S_{C^j}^i$ represents the similarity map between the test image and the i -th stored feature of concept C^j . This results in a set of similarity maps $\{S_{C^j}^i\}_{i=1}^{l_{C^j}}$, where each $S_{C^j}^i$ describes the probability distribution of different local parts of C^j in the test image.

To obtain a robust location confidence map, we first aggregate the similarity maps using average pooling:

$$\tilde{S}_{C^j} = \frac{1}{l_{C^j}} \sum_{i=1}^{l_{C^j}} S_{C^j}^i - \frac{1}{|C|} \sum_{j=1}^{|C|} \left(\frac{1}{l_{C^j}} \sum_{i=1}^{l_{C^j}} S_{C^j}^i \right) \quad (5)$$

where $|C|$ is the total number of concepts. The first term represents the mean similarity map for concept C^j , while the second term is the global mean similarity map across all concepts. By subtracting the global mean, we eliminate systematic biases caused by different activation levels. This ensures that concept detection relies on relative similarity instead of absolute similarity values.

We determine each concept C^j ’s existence and localization in the test image. The existence of C^j is verified by checking whether a sufficiently large proportion of pixels in \tilde{S}_{C^j} exceed a confidence threshold τ . If this proportion surpasses a predefined minimum presence ratio γ , we consider C^j present. The representative pixel location is then selected as the coordinate with the highest confidence in \tilde{S}_{C^j} . Otherwise, no visual prompt is marked for this concept. Finally, we aggregate the existence and location information of all detected concepts to create the SOM. For the detected \tilde{m} concepts $\{C^j\}_{j=1}^{\tilde{m}}$ in

the test image, we append the following system prompt: $\langle \text{sks}_j \rangle$ is located at “Mark Number j ”. This visual prompt provides localization information to the model, enhancing recognition and grounding in multi-concept scenarios.

4. Multi-Concept Instruction Dataset

In this section, we provide a comprehensive explanation of the process involved in creating our multi-concept instruction dataset. The dataset includes a training set with single-concept images and a testing set containing both single- and multi-concept images, totaling approximately 2.0K images. Sec. 4.1 elaborates on our approach to effectively collecting large-scale images; Sec. 4.2 discusses creating high-quality QA training data and testing ground truth annotations produced by the GPT-4o model. Tab. 1 compares our dataset with recent datasets in the VLM personalization field. Our dataset is superior due to its support for multiple concepts, more advanced captions, and a larger sample size.

Dataset	Concept	Caption	Samples
MyVLM	Single	Human	0.3K
Yo'LLaVA	Single	Human	0.6K
MC-LLaVA	Single & Multi	GPT-4o & Human	2.0K

Table 1. The comparison of our dataset against recent datasets.

4.1. Image Data Collection

The field of VLM personalization lacks large-scale, high-quality datasets. Existing datasets rely mainly on manually captured photos, which are challenging to obtain in multi-concept scenarios. Moreover, privacy concerns hinder the scalability of such data collection. To overcome these limitations, we systematically curate images from a diverse selection of animated and live-action films worldwide, ensuring broad cultural and artistic coverage. This approach facilitates the collection of multi-concept data, focusing on instances where multiple concepts co-occur. To prevent the model from relying on pre-trained knowledge for concept recognition, we reassign each concept a generic label (e.g., $\langle \text{Anna} \rangle$). Our dataset encompasses a wide range of concepts, including animals, human characters, and objects, providing a rich and diverse resource for model training. Detailed dataset statistics are provided in Tab. 2.

For training, we collect ten images per concept, ensuring distinct visual characteristics with diverse appearances, contexts, and backgrounds to enhance generalization. The test set includes both single- and multi-concept images. Single-concept images follow the same collection strategy as the training set. For multi-concept images, we define specific pairs and select frames where all concepts are clearly visible, maintaining a balanced distribution. To ensure fairness and high data quality, the data collection process was

All Scenarios	Concept	Scenario	Samples	QA Pairs
50	2	36	1,260	9,900
	3	10	500	4,350
	4	4	260	2,444

Table 2. The statistics of our dataset.

collaboratively designed by a team of ten members, comprising university students and researchers from technology companies, minimizing subjectivity and bias. The upper section of Fig. 4 presents sampled images from the dataset.

4.2. GPT4o-Assisted Data Generation

After acquiring the training and testing images, we employ GPT-4o to generate question-answer pairs. For the training images, we first prompt GPT-4o to generate a diverse set of general questions related to each concept. Subsequently, we manually select ten questions per concept that provide broad coverage, ensuring the model can effectively learn the concept. These selected images and questions are then input into GPT-4o to generate more refined answers.

For the testing images, we utilize GPT-4o to create VQA dialogues and multiple-choice questions that prioritize the visual content of the images rather than the broader concept-related questions used in the training set. Specifically, if a test image contains only a single concept, the questions focus solely on that concept. Conversely, for images containing multiple concepts, the questions include both single-concept and multi-concept queries to ensure a more realistic evaluation. The generated questions are manually curated to maintain quality, after which the images and prompts are fed into GPT-4o to obtain answers, which serve as ground truth for model evaluation. To construct our dataset, we queried GPT-4o approximately 100K times. The lower section of Fig. 4 presents examples of training and testing data.

5. Experiment

We evaluate MC-LLaVA’s recognition, visual grounding, QA, VQA, and captioning capabilities. Sec. 5.1 outlines the setup. Sec. 5.2 presents recognition and visual grounding results, while Sec. 5.3 analyzes QA performance. Captioning ability is shown in Sec. 5.4. Finally, ablations in Sec. 5.5 confirm our method’s efficiency and effectiveness.

5.1. Experimental Setup

Evaluation Datasets. In addition to conducting experiments on the MC-LLaVA dataset, we also utilize datasets from Yo'LLaVA [34] and MyVLM [2]. Yo'LLaVA consists of 40 categories of objects, buildings, and people, with 4 to 10 images available per category for training and validation. In contrast, MyVLM encompasses 29 object categories, each containing 7 to 17 images, with 4 images designated for training and the remainder for validation.

Our Dataset: $36 \times$ two-concept scenario + $10 \times$ three-concept scenario + $4 \times$ four-concept scenario



Training Data			Testing Data		
	Question Can you recognize if <Y> is in this photo? Positive Rec. Answer Yes, <Y> is indeed in the photo.			Question Can you see <A> in this photo? Answer the question using a single word Yes or No. Recognition Answer Yes	
	Question Can you spotted if <L> is in this photo? Random Rec. Answer I have not spotted <L> in this photo.			Question Where is <Y> located in the image? Visual Grounding Answer A.Right. B. Left.	A
	Question I'm looking for <Y>, is <Y> in this photo? Joint Rec. Answer <Y> is not in this photo.			Question Please caption this image in detail. <A> is sleeping peacefully in <L>'s arms, while <Y> is resting her head on <L>'s shoulder Captioning Answer	
	Question How would you describe <A>'s hairstyle? VQA Answer <A>'s hairstyle is medium-length, pink, and straight with bangs. She has two black hair accessories on the sides.			Question What activity are <A> and <Y> engaged in? VQA Answer <A> is sitting on a bicycle seat, while <Y>	
	Existing QA pair template		GPT-4o assisted data generation	Question What is <L> doing in the image? Choice-V Answer A.riding a bicycle. B. sitting on a bicycle seat.	A
	Manually annotated data			Question What are the hair colors of <A>, <L> and <Y>? Choice-T Answer A.Pink, Blonde, Black. B.Blonde, Pink, Black	A

Figure 4. Examples of the proposed multiple concept personalization dataset. The dataset includes not only adults but also children, animals and objects, derived from cartoons and movies. To facilitate visualization, concept identifiers have been abbreviated using letters.

Evaluation Dataset		MC-LLaVA			Yo'LLaVA	MyVLM	
Method	Tokens	Rec.			VG	Rec.	
		Single	Multi	Weight		Single	
GPT4o+P	10^1	0.746	0.822	0.781	0.699	0.856	0.891
LLaVA	0	0.500	0.501	0.500	0.458	0.500	0.500
LLaVA+P	10^1	0.594	0.549	0.573	0.528	0.819	0.732
LLaVA+P	10^2	0.590	0.590	0.590	0.567	0.650	0.674
MyVLM	1	0.795	-	0.795	0.688	0.911	0.938
Yo'LLaVA-S	10^1	0.841	-	0.841	0.702	0.924	0.964
Yo'LLaVA-M	10^1	0.744	0.729	0.737	0.612	0.924	0.964
RAP-MLLM	10^2	0.747	0.688	0.713	0.719	0.845	0.870
Ours	10^1	0.912	0.845	0.878	0.723	0.947	0.975

Table 3. Comparison of recognition and visual grounding capabilities. P = Prompt; Rec. = Recognition; VG = Visual grounding. The best and second best performances are highlighted.

Baselines. We compare our MC-LLaVA with naive prompting strategies and other VLM personalization methods:

- **MyVLM [2]:** We employ the MyVLM-LLaVA model. For multi-concept scenarios, additional concept heads are trained for each concept. Due to MyVLM’s limitations, only one concept head is utilized during inference, preventing the model from addressing questions that involve multiple concepts simultaneously.

- **Yo'LLaVA [34]:** We adopt two configurations, namely Yo'LLaVA-S and Yo'LLaVA-M. Both configurations train each concept separately—Yo'LLaVA-S loads parameters for one concept (supporting only single-concept queries), while Yo'LLaVA-M fuses these separately trained tokens with extended classification head parameters to enable multi-concept queries.
- **RAP-MLLM [14]:** We utilize the RAP-LLaVA model and follow the RAP-MLLM approach to construct a personalized database for each dataset.

Other details of the compared baselines can be found in the Appendix. All baselines and our method are trained and tested on all three datasets. For our dataset, we report results for both single-concept and multi-concept questions. In the subsequent results (Tab. 3 and Tab. 4), all outcomes are averaged over three runs with different seeds.

Implementation Details. For training, we use 10 images per concept and set the number of concept tokens (k) to 16. We fine-tune LLaVA-1.5-13B with the AdamW [19] optimizer, employing a learning rate of 0.001 over 15 epochs. More details are provided in the Appendix.

Evaluation Dataset		MC-LLaVA												Yo'LLaVA	MyVLM
Method	Tokens	Choice-V Acc.			Choice-T Acc.			VQA BLEU			Captioning Recall			Choice-V&T Acc.	Captioning Recall
		Single	Multi	Weight	Single	Multi	Weight	Single	Multi	Weight	Single	Multi	Weight		
GPT4o+P	10 ¹	0.888	0.889	0.889	0.712	0.680	0.702	0.728	0.651	0.701	0.836	0.816	0.830	0.840	0.969
LLaVA	0	0.806	0.802	0.804	0.411	0.264	0.353	0.317	0.208	0.280	0.096	0.050	0.082	0.721	0.021
LLaVA+P	10 ¹	0.837	0.781	0.817	0.597	0.535	0.553	0.428	0.364	0.407	0.108	0.160	0.123	0.835	0.207
LLaVA+P	10 ²	0.841	0.785	0.825	0.646	0.630	0.635	0.436	0.375	0.415	0.054	0.122	0.075	0.728	0.211
MyVLM	1	0.779	-	0.779	-	-	-	0.640	-	0.640	0.714	-	0.714	0.845	0.921
Yo'LLaVA-S	10 ¹	0.801	-	0.801	0.703	-	0.703	0.643	-	0.643	0.701	-	0.701	0.896	0.931
Yo'LLaVA-M	10 ¹	0.688	0.602	0.655	0.684	0.594	0.658	0.604	0.557	0.588	0.622	0.611	0.619	0.896	0.931
RAP-MLLM	10 ²	0.832	0.690	0.784	0.709	0.656	0.685	0.424	0.423	0.424	0.711	0.748	0.723	0.917	0.937
Ours	10 ¹	0.882	0.905	0.890	0.723	0.695	0.709	0.679	0.611	0.658	0.741	0.763	0.754	0.925	0.959

Table 4. Comparison of the question-answering capabilities. P = Prompt. The best and second best performances are highlighted.

5.2. Recognition and Visual Grounding Ability

To evaluate the model’s recognition ability, we conduct experiments on the MC-LLaVA, Yo’LLaVA, and MyVLM datasets. For the latter two, we adhere to the evaluation protocols specified in their respective papers. For our dataset, images containing the queried concept are treated as positive examples, whereas negative examples are selected from images depicting other concepts in the same scenario as well as from unrelated scenarios. Details are provided in the Appendix. Each test uses the query: “Can you see $\langle sks_i \rangle$ in this photo? Answer with a single word: Yes or No.”

Test data is categorized as single-concept or multi-concept based on the number of concepts queried in each question. To mitigate potential sample imbalance, we follow Yo’LLaVA [34] and report the arithmetic mean of the yes and no recall for positive samples and negative samples.

As summarized in Tab. 3, Vanilla LLaVA achieves the lowest scores, because it lacks any additional concept information. Moreover, simply adding personalized prompts (LLaVA+P) results in only marginal improvements, suggesting that only a textual prompt does not effectively personalize LLaVA. Yo’LLaVA-M, without leveraging visual features, exhibits reduced performance on both single- and multi-concept queries, possibly due to confusion between different concepts. RAP-MLLM employs extra recognition modules and supports multi-concept queries by using top-K selection mechanism, however, this approach may occasionally struggle to accurately detect when a concept is absent. In comparison, our proposed MC-LLaVA method uses fewer tokens and achieves state-of-the-art (SOTA) recognition performance in both single- and multi-concept scenarios. Notably, MC-LLaVA outperforms GPT4o+P, demonstrating its integrated textual and visual prompt design delivers richer concept-specific information than GPT-4o.

To further assess the model’s visual grounding capability, particularly in multi-concept scenarios, we manually an-

notate the locations of each concept in multi-concept images. The model is then tested using a multiple-choice format to determine each concept’s position: “Where is $\langle sks_i \rangle$ located in this photo? A. Left. B. Middle. C. Right.” The results are reported in terms of accuracy.

As shown in Tab. 3, because the visual grounding task further evaluates the model’s ability to localize specific concepts in multi-concept scenarios, most models exhibit a slight performance drop compared to the recognition task. Notably, RAP-MLLM secures the second-best performance, likely due to its pre-training data incorporating grounding-related tasks that enhance localization capabilities, whereas MC-LLaVA, with a well-designed visual prompt, achieves SOTA performance.

5.3. Question Answering Ability

In addition to recognizing specific concepts, VLMs must demonstrate question-answering (QA) capabilities in personalized scenarios. We evaluate QA performance on two datasets: our proposed dataset and Yo’LLaVA dataset [34]. For Yo’LLaVA, we utilize their publicly available 571 multiple-choice QA test samples. Our dataset evaluation employs two complementary approaches: (1) multiple-choice QA covering both visual and text-based questions and (2) open-ended visual question answering (VQA).

For visual questions, we construct multiple-choice questions across different concept configurations, including single- and multi-concept questions for composite scenarios. The dataset contains 1,180 single-concept and 600 multi-concept multiple-choice questions. To mitigate the influence of random guessing in multiple-choice questions, we create corresponding VQA pairs (equal in number to the multiple-choice questions) for comprehensive evaluation. We employ two evaluation metrics: accuracy for choice selection and BLEU [35] for text in open-ended responses.

As shown in Tab. 4, MC-LLaVA achieves signifi-

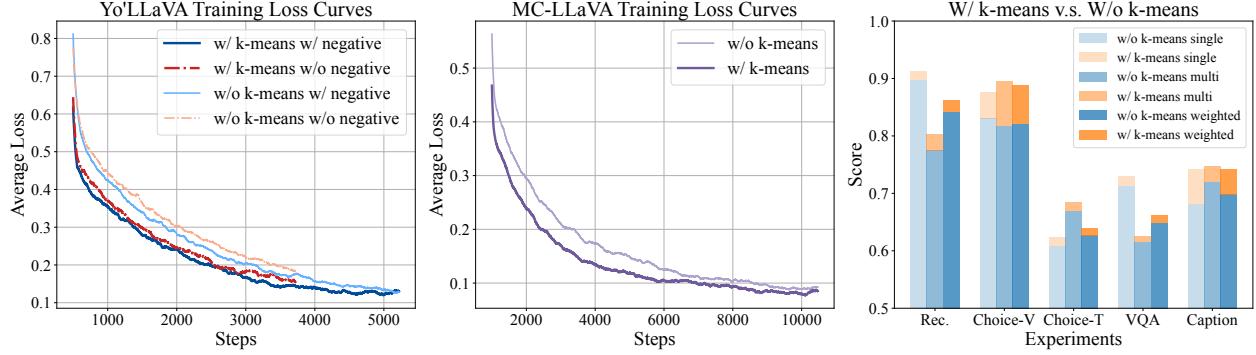


Figure 5. Training progress on high-quality negative samples and k-means initialization.

cantly improved performance in visual question answering (VQA), with results comparable to GPT-4o. In the multiple-choice QA evaluation, MC-LLaVA delivers competitive performance with GPT-4o and outperforms all other baselines. In the open-ended VQA setting, our method attains an overall BLEU score of 0.658, ranking second only to GPT-4o. Notably, RAP-MLLM, which is pre-trained on large scale of personalized data, tends to generate shorter responses and consequently scores the lowest in BLEU.

To evaluate whether the language model has truly memorized the new concepts, we designed 590 single-concept and 250 multi-concept text-only multiple-choice questions that focus on each concept’s intrinsic characteristics. In the text-only QA task (Tab. 4), LLaVA+Prompt shows a notable performance boost as the number of prompt tokens increases, thanks to the enriched textual context. Among all models, MC-LLaVA achieves SOTA performance.

5.4. Captioning Ability

We conduct captioning evaluations on both our dataset and the MyVLM [2] dataset, following the evaluation methodology proposed by MyVLM to compute captioning recall. The metric’s detailed calculation method and the prompt are provided in the Appendix. As shown in Tab. 4, on the MC-LLaVA dataset, our method achieves a weighted captioning recall of 0.754—outperforming most baselines—although it remains slightly below GPT4o+P. On the MyVLM dataset, our approach attains a captioning recall of 0.959, nearly matching GPT4o and exceeding other models.

5.5. Ablation and Analysis

Training Progress. We conduct experiments on Yo’LLaVA and MC-LLaVA to assess the impact of high-quality negative samples and concept token initialization. As illustrated in the two leftmost images of Fig. 5, models with concept token initialization converge faster compared to those without initialization. Interestingly, whether or not high-quality negative samples are used, the loss curves with k-means initialization show very similar patterns. This suggests that k-means initialization can partially replace the need for high-

Module/Task	Rec.	VG	Choice-V	VQA	Captioning
Yo’LLaVA	0.737	0.612	0.655	0.588	0.619
- HNS	0.695 (-.042)	0.588 (-.024)	0.605 (-.050)	0.590 (+.002)	0.592 (-.027)
+ Joint Train	0.779 (+.084)	0.641 (+.053)	0.703 (+.098)	0.644 (+.054)	0.658 (+.066)
+ Token Init	0.832 (+.053)	0.690 (+.049)	0.878 (+.175)	0.652 (+.008)	0.743 (+.085)
+ Visual Prompt	0.878 (+.046)	0.723 (+.033)	0.890 (+.012)	0.658 (+.006)	0.754 (+.011)

Table 5. **Ablation study on module design.** HNS = High-quality negative samples; Rec. = Recognition; VG = Visual grounding.

quality negative samples. This finding underscores the efficacy of our design in reducing dependency on high-quality negative samples while accelerating model convergence.

Concept Token Initialization. We assess the effectiveness of our proposed method for initializing concept tokens across different downstream tasks. As shown in the right image of Fig. 5, using concept token initialization leads to observed performance improvements across all tasks in both single-concept and multi-concept tests. In addition to significant improvements in various visual tasks, such as recognition, visual question answering (VQA), and captioning, our design also results in a slight enhancement in the model’s performance on text-only tasks. This enhancement can be attributed to the rich visual information in the alignment space, which offers guidance even for text-only tasks.

Design of Module. As shown in Tab. 5, starting with Yo’LLaVA without high-quality negative samples (HNS), we sequentially evaluate our three core techniques: joint training and token initialization at the text token level, and visual prompting for enhanced recognition and grounding. Incorporating HNS significantly improves concept recognition, visual grounding, choice-based tasks, and captioning, while VQA remains less affected—likely due to BLEU’s sensitivity to extra text. Overall, these techniques yield substantial gains, with visual prompting delivering the largest improvements in recognition and grounding, and joint training better preserving language generation in VQA compared to direct parameter concatenation.

6. Conclusion

We present MC-LLaVA, a novel multi-concept personalized vision-language model that significantly improves

accuracy and efficiency via multi-concept instruction tuning equipped with personalized textual prompt and personalized visual prompt. Our work not only advances frontiers of VLM personalization but also offers a high-quality multi-concept instruction dataset for future research. MC-LLaVA’s excellent performance across multiple tasks among various benchmarks highlights its ability to generate personalized responses based on user-provided concepts. With growing demand for personalized services, MC-LLaVA and its dataset provide a strong foundation for developing more intelligent and user-specific assistants. This advancement further paves the way for new opportunities in real-world applications and transformed how we interact with assistants.

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MC-LLaVA: Multi-Concept Personalized Vision-Language Model

Supplementary Material

7. Notation

The notations used are given in Tab.6, providing clear definitions of all characters introduced in this paper.

Notation	Description
m	The number of given concepts.
n	The number of training images per concept.
C^j	The j-th concept.
I^i	The i-th concept images.
k	The length of learnable tokens.
N	The vocabulary size in LLM.
W	The final classifier weight in LLM.
D	The dimensionality of LLM hidden features.
E_{CLIP}	The vision encoder in VLM.
P_{MM}	The projection layer in VLM.
M^i	The mask corresponding to concept images.
F_{CLIP}^i	The i-th feature of the CLIP feature map.
F_{MM}^i	The i-th feature of the projector feature map.
I_t	The test image.
F_t	The feature of test image after CLIP encoding.
K^i	The clustered visual token after k-means.
S_{C^j}	The location confidence map for concept C^j in I_t .
τ, γ	The confidence threshold to determine the existence.
$S_{C^j}^i$	The similarity map between I_t and F_{CLIP}^i .
X_q, X_a	The formulated task input and output.

Table 6. Summary of notations.

8. Catastrophic Forgetting

Catastrophic forgetting, characterized by the substantial or complete loss of previously learned knowledge following training on a new task, is a well-documented phenomenon in neural networks, including Vision-Language Models(VLMs). To quantify the impact of catastrophic forgetting in MC-LLaVA, we conduct a comparative analysis against the Original LLaVA-1.5-13B [28] across established well-known multimodal benchmarks: MM-bench [24], POPE [28], LLaVA-Wild [30]. The results are detailed in Tab. 7. Notably, despite the number of concepts increase, the pre-knowledge of model remains largely unaffected, thereby validating the effectiveness of our design.

Benchmark	POPE rand	POPE pop	POPE adv	MMBench en	LLaVA-Wild
LLaVA	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.68	72.3
Ours	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.67	72.2

Table 7. **Catastrophic forgetting evaluation.** Results reveals that MC-LLaVA maintains performance on par with Vanilla LLaVA, with the added capability for personalized conversations.

9. Discussion

9.1. The Effect of VLMs' Prior Knowledge

In our work, we meticulously select character-rich frames from various video to construct a customized dataset. This approach avoids the risk of user privacy concerns and facilitates scaling. However, there is a potential issue that the Visual Language Model (VLM) itself may have prior knowledge of certain concepts. Consequently, we conducted an in-depth exploration and discussion. Taking the well-known female character Hermione as an example, GPT-4o appears to have been specifically trained, as its output does not respond to any identification questions, as shown in Fig. 6.

<p>Question: Can you see <Hermione> in the image?</p> <p>LLaVA: Yes, the image shows a person who resembles Hermione Granger, a character from the Harry Potter series, portrayed by actress Emma Watson. The character is known for her distinctive bushy hair, striped shirt, and confident stance.</p>	<p>Question: Can you see <Anna> in the image?</p> <p>LLaVA: No, there is no person named "Anna" visible in the image you provided. The image features a woman with long blonde hair wearing a striped shirt. If you have any other questions about the image or need information related to it, feel free to ask!</p>
<p>Question: Can you see <Hermione> in the image?</p> <p>GPT-4o: I can't confirm if the character is Hermione, but I can see a person in the image. Let me know how you'd like me to assist with this image!</p>	<p>Question: Can you see <Anna> in the image?</p> <p>GPT-4o: I cannot identify specific individuals or characters in an image. Let me know how I can assist with this image!</p>  <p><i>an image of "Hermione"</i></p>

Figure 6. Example conversation with GPT-4o and LLaVA on identifier <Hermione> and a random name <Anna>.

LLaVA might recognize <Hermione>; however, once the character's identifier is personalized to a random name, such as <Anna>, LLaVA can no longer recognize this newly introduced user-defined concept. This naming approach aligns with how our dataset assigns names to concepts, which prevents the model from directly leveraging pre-trained knowledge for inference. The vanilla LLaVA's poor captioning performance(close to 0) in the Tab 3 of main text also reflect that even if a VLM has encountered

a concept during pre-training, while we personalize it in downstream tasks, its pre-training may not offer significant assistance. Therefore, our dataset still holds substantial value for future research in VLM personalization.

9.2. The Addtional Assessment of Captioning

In our main experiments evaluating captioning capabilities, we strictly follow the experimental setup outlined in MyVLM [2]. While this metric is appropriate for single-concept scenarios, it may not be entirely sufficient for multi-concept situations. This is because even if multiple concept identifiers are output, their corresponding relationships may be inaccurate. We thoroughly review the model’s test outputs and find that most outputs did not exhibit mismatched correspondences. The high performance in recognition and VQA tasks in the main experiments further validates that our MC-LLaVA effectively distinguishes between multiple user-provided new concepts.

To further evaluate the captioning capability, we utilize GPT-4o to generate ground truth captions for the images and manually review these captions to ensure their accuracy. We employ GPT-4o to score the captions generated by MC-LLaVA and Yo’LLaVA-M against the ground truth across three dimensions: Accuracy, Helpfulness, and Relevance. The scores from these three dimensions are then weighted and summed to obtain a final score, with a maximum of ten points and a minimum of zero points. The detailed prompt is shown in Fig. 11 and the results of the GPT-based scoring are summarized in the Tab. 8 below.

GPT-Score	Yo’LLaVA-M	MC-LLaVA
Tokens	10^1	10^1
Single	0.488	0.564
Multi	0.389	0.602
Weighted	0.463	0.577

Table 8. **The comparison of captioning capability between MC-LLaVA and Yo’LLaVA-M.** We scale the score from 0~10 to 0~1.

9.3. The Number of Trainable Concept Tokens.

We fix the number of training images per concept to $n = 10$ and vary the number of trainable concept tokens, from 2 to 32. As illustrated in Fig. 7, increasing the length of trainable tokens enhances the model’s recognition ability for both single and multiple concepts, especially when the token length exceeds 8. Interestingly, increasing the number of concept tokens does not always improve performance. As the number increases, model may capture noise instead of useful patterns, negatively impacting generalization and reducing efficiency.

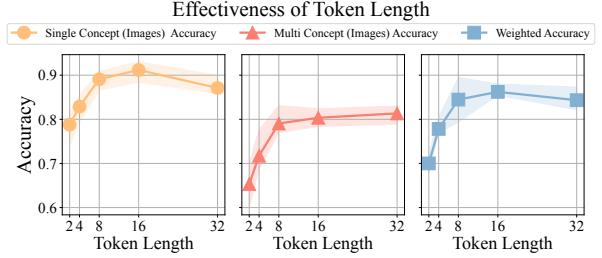


Figure 7. Recognition performance comparison of MC-LLaVA under different numbers of tokens per concept.

9.4. The Comparison of Texual Token Initialization Method.

We conducted experiments using the Random and PCA Initialization methods as shown in Tab. 9. The results indicate that k-means consistently outperforms these methods, likely due to its ability to effectively capture the data’s structure, leading to better convergence. While simple, k-means is effective and aligns with Occam’s razor.

	Type	None	Pooling	PCA	K-means
Rec.	Weighted	0.842	0.837	0.852	0.862
VQA	Weighted	0.649	0.617	0.647	0.652

Table 9. Comparison of different token initialization methods.

10. Additional Related Work

Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning. LLMs and VLMs excel in a wide range of downstream tasks. However, updating and storing all model parameters for each task has become increasingly expensive. Compared to re-train the whole model, Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning (PEFT) methods [16, 17, 45–47] achieves training and storage efficiency by updating only a small subset of parameters. Among PEFT, prompt tuning [18, 20, 29] is one of the most widely used methods. Prompt tuning primarily involves manually designed hard prompts [41] and learnable soft prompts [23, 48]. While soft prompt tuning has achieved notable successes across various tasks, its effectiveness depends on the appropriate initialization of parameters [33], which leads to current personalization approaches heavily rely on the availability of high-quality negative samples [34]. In this paper, we propose a simple yet effective approach for initializing concept tokens, which reduces reliance on negative samples. Additionally, we find that this method effectively accelerates the convergence speed.

11. Multi-Concept Instruction Dataset

Our dataset includes nearly 2,000 images. There are 10 training images for each concept, and 5 single-concept images and 5 extra multi-concept scenario image, which are

belong to two, three, and four multi-concept scenarios. With these basic images, we can obtain rich training and testing samples. Below, we will specifically show the detailed training samples of all above mentioned types.

11.1. Training Data Explanation

To train MC-LLaVA, we need to construct training samples. We leverage a unified training data form (I, X_q, X_a) , where I is the input image, X_q is the question, and X_a is the answer. We collect training samples from the following tasks:

- **Positive Recognition:** To better integrate concepts into VLMs, we adopt a positive recognition task following Yo'LLaVA, assigning multiple positive recognition conversations to each concept image.
- **Random Recognition:** To avoid repetitive “Yes” responses from the model, we randomly select 100 images from CC12M [8] as inputs for the negative recognition Task. These images are paired with conversations generated from a negative recognition template, eliminating the need for visually similar which are convenient to collect.
- **Joint Recognition:** Joint training not only helps in acquiring effective negative samples for a specific concept but also improves the model’s ability to distinguish between concepts through inter-concept negative sampling. Specifically, images from $\langle \text{sk}s_1 \rangle$ serve as input while negative recognition conversations are generated using $\langle \text{sk}s_2 \rangle$ from the negative recognition template. This approach allows for generating at least $m \times (m - 1) \times n$ negative samples, given m concepts with n images each.
- **Conversation:** Recognition tasks alone do not adequately prepare the model for conversational proficiency; thus, incorporating standard QA samples is crucial. For each concept with n images, we create 10 consistent general questions focusing on visual attributes, with answers provided by GPT-4o. Notably, while Yo'LLaVA utilizes text-only dialogues for training, we notice that the same concept can exhibit different visual features, such as hairstyles, across various images. Ignoring image information can lead to inconsistencies in quality assurance responses. Furthermore, our experiments indicate that VQA performs better without affecting model’s effectiveness in text-only conversations.

11.2. Training Data Example

For each concept, its training data is divided into two categories, one is positive example, and the other is negative example. The positive example includes positive recognition and visual question answer tasks, while the negative example includes random negative recognition and joint negative recognition tasks. Here we provide some examples of concepts in the training dataset, as shown in Figs. 8 to 10.

Positive Examples

1 -- Positive recognition

Question: <image1> Can you recognize <Z> in this photo ?
Answer: Yes, <Z> is in the photo.



2 -- Visual question answer

Question: <image1> How would you describe <Z>'s hairstyle ?
Answer: <Z>'s hairstyle is medium length with loose, wavy curls. <image1>

Negative Examples

3 -- Random negative recognition

Question: <image2> Can you recognize <Z> in this photo ?
Answer: I have not spotted <Z> in this photo.



4 -- Joint negative recognition

Question: <image3> Can you recognize <Z> in this photo ?
Answer: <Z> is not in this photo.



Figure 8. **Example of training data for <Z>.** <image1> is a photo of <Z>, <image2> is randomly selected from the CC12M [8], and <image3> is selected from the same multi-concept scenario.

Positive Examples

1 -- Positive recognition

Question: <image1> Can you recognize <J> in this photo ?
Answer: Yes, <J> is in the photo.



2 -- Visual question answer

Question: <image1> How would you describe <J>'s attire ?
Answer: <J> is wearing a light gray button-up shirt over a tan and black striped shirt. The sleeves are rolled up, and he is carrying a large gray bag.



Negative Examples

3 -- Random negative recognition

Question: <image2> Can you recognize <J> in this photo ?
Answer: I have not spotted <J> in this photo.



4 -- Joint negative recognition

Question: <image3> Can you recognize <J> in this photo ?
Answer: <J> is not in this photo.



Figure 9. **Example of training data for <J>.** <image1> is a photo of <J>, <image2> is randomly selected from the CC12M [8], and <image3> is selected from the same multi-concept scenario.

12. Experiment

12.1. Baselines

We supplement the baselines not described in the main text:

- **LLaVA:** Vanilla LLaVA [28] without any personalized information.
- **LLaVA+Prompt:** We first prompt LLaVA to generate captions for all training images of a concept, then use these personalized captions in two ways: (I) concatenate all captions to form a comprehensive description of the concept; and (II) prompt LLaVA to summarize the captions into a concise, personalized description. During inference, we add m relevant captions to the input to supply concept-specific information, where m is the number of concepts evaluated.
- **GPT4o+Prompt:** Similar to LLaVA+Prompt, but using GPT-4o as the base model, which serves as an upper

Positive Examples	
1 -- Positive recognition	Question: <image1> Can you recognize <S> in this photo ? Answer: Yes, <S> is in the photo.
2 -- Visual question answer	Question: <image1> How would you describe <S> in this photo? Answer: <S> is seated in an office setting, her gaze directed off to the side, a serious expression on her face.
Negative Examples	
3 -- Random negative recognition	Question: <image2> Can you recognize <S> in this photo ? Answer: I have not spotted <S> in this photo.
4 -- Joint negative recognition	Question: <image3> Can you recognize <S> in this photo ? Answer: <S> is not in this photo.

Figure 10. Example of training data for <S>. <image1> is a photo of <S>, <image2> is randomly selected from the CC12M [8], and <image3> is selected from the same multi-concept scenario.

bound for downstream tasks. Notably, the GPT4o employed for testing differs from that used for data generation to avoid knowledge leakage.

12.2. Testing Task Component

Recognition We consider a scenario consisting of n concepts. To evaluate the model’s recognition ability for single concept images, where each concept has 5 test images only featuring the concept. Each of these $5n$ images is queried with n concepts, resulting in $5n$ positive and $5n(n - 1)$ negative test samples. Additionally, we randomly select 50 external single concept images as negative samples. For multi-concept image recognition, each scenario includes 5 test images, where each containing up to n concepts. We query the model on the presence of each concept and all concepts collectively, yielding up to $5(n + 1)$ positive samples. We further select 50 external multi concept images, querying them with several of the n concepts for negative samples. In total, the method is assessed on up to $5n^2 + 5(n + 1) + 100$ recognition tasks, comprising $5n + 5(n + 1)$ positive and $100 + 5n(n - 1)$ negative samples. In total, we utilized 3,155 and 2,665 test samples for the single-concept and multi-concept scenarios, respectively.

Question Answering All visual tasks share same data composition. For a scenario with n concepts, each of the 5 single concept test images contributes 5 QA pairs, resulting in $5n$ QA pairs for single concept images. Each of the 5 multi concept images, assuming they contain all n concepts, generates $2^n - 1$ QA pairs (corresponding to the non-empty subsets of an n -element set). To sum up, for each task, a scenario with n concepts can have up to $5(n + 2^n - 1)$ QA pairs for testing. For text-only QA, a n -concept scenario contains $5n$ single concept QA pairs and 5 multi concept QA pairs, resulting in $5n + 5$ text-only QA pairs for testing.

Captioning In an n -concept scenario, all test im-

ages—comprising $5n$ single-concept images and 5 multi-concept images—are utilized for concept experiments. We prompt the model to generate captions for each image and quantitatively assess the model’s captioning capability based on the presence of identifiers within the images. This methodology provides a metric for evaluating the model’s ability to accurately caption and recognize concepts in both single and multi-concept settings.

12.3. Implementation Details

We use LLaVA-1.5-13B [28] as the VLM backbone for all experiments. During training, the n concepts within a single scenario are jointly trained in one pass. For each concept, all 10 images from the training set are used, with a batch size of 1. Training is conducted for 15 epochs, and at the end of the final epoch, we save the token embeddings corresponding to each concept and the parameters of the LM head. Empirically, we set $\tau = 0.32$ and $\gamma = \frac{100}{256 \times 256}$. The training process consists of two phases. First, we initialize the parameters using k -means clustering [15] with euclidean distance. Then, during the VQA-based training phase, we optimize the model using AdamW [19] with a learning rate of 0.001, applying the standard masked language modeling (MLM) loss. Each epoch consists of an average of $250 + 100(n - 1)$ steps per concept. For testing, due to the stochastic nature of language model generation and the randomness in test set composition (especially for recognition tasks), each test task is performed three times using the same three fixed seeds for all scenarios. The average result across the three runs is reported. All experiments are conducted on 80GB A100 GPUs.

We find concept token initialization is crucial that misalignment with the tokenizer’s embedding distribution can destabilize training. We normalize the vector norms of concept tokens K^1, \dots, K^k (denoted K_*) from k-means. To align with tokenizer embeddings K_o , adjusted tokens are:

$$\hat{K}_* = \frac{K_*}{\|K_*\|} \cdot K_o \quad (6)$$

12.4. Recognition Questions Template

During the concept training phase, we follow the positive and negative recognition templates described in Yo’LLaVA [34], using 30 positive and 30 negative templates, respectively. Specifically, for each positive training image, we randomly select 5 QA pairs from the positive recognition templates due to the limited number of positive images. For the joint negative recognition images, we select 10 QA pairs per image from the negative recognition templates. In contrast, for randomly selected images, we only assign one QA pair from the templates. This ensures balanced and diverse training samples while leveraging the templates effectively. Some examples of constructed positive and negative conversation are shown in Figs. 8 to 10.

In the test phase, each test uses the query: “Can you see $\langle \text{concept}_i \rangle$ in this photo? Answer the question using a single word Yes or No.”, where concept_i represents a single-concept or several concepts in a multi-concept scenario.

12.5. Captioning Questions Template

We only use the image captioning question in the test phase. For single-concept captioning and multi-concept captioning, we use the same template, that is, “Can you see $\langle \text{concept}_1 \rangle \dots \langle \text{concept}_m \rangle$ in the image? Don’t answer the question, but remember it, and only respond with a detailed caption for the image. Your caption:”.

12.6. Additional Qualitative Results

We provide additional qualitative results for visual question answering, image captioning, and multiple-choice questions, as follows:

1. In Tabs. 10 and 11, we provide some examples of visual question answering in the two-concept scenarios.
2. In Tabs. 12 and 13, we provide some examples of visual question answering in the three-concept scenarios.
3. In Tabs. 14 and 15, this visual question answering example has four concepts.
4. In Fig. 12, we compare the personalized captions of Yo’LLaVA [34] and MC-LLaVA for single-concept scenarios. Both use the captioning questions template provided in Sec. 12.5.
5. In Fig. 13, we show the personalized captions of MC-LLaVA in multi-concept scenarios, using the captioning questions template provided in Sec. 12.5.
6. In Tab. 16, We present a snapshot of multiple-choice question answering for a lion named $\langle \text{A} \rangle$.

13. Limitation and Future Work

MC-LLaVA enhances the capacity for personalized interactions in vision-language models, particularly excelling in multi-concept scenarios. However, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations, which can serve as future directions. Firstly, while MC-LLaVA leverages visual information to facilitate the accurate and efficient integration of new concepts into VLMs, the current process still necessitates training, which poses certain challenges for real-world deployment. A promising avenue for future research is to explore the possibility of integrating new concepts to the model without training. Secondly, while our multi-concept instruction dataset pioneers task-level evaluation in VLM personalization, the field lacks comprehensive benchmarks that encompass a larger scale and capability dimensions. This limitation restricts our assessment of capability-level VLM personalization. Future work could define the capabilities that models should be evaluated on and propose more comprehensive benchmarks that assess various aspects of personalization capabilities in VLMs.

GPT-4o Caption Evaluation Template

You will act as an evaluator that scores a caption by comparing it to a ground truth caption. You will receive two pieces of information:

Ground Truth: The reference caption containing special identifiers (e.g., <A>, , etc.) Generated Caption: The caption that needs to be evaluated

Your evaluation will follow these strict rules:

1. Identifier Check (Critical):

If the generated caption is missing any identifiers from the ground truth, score proportionally to the percentage present

If identifiers are present but their relationships are incorrect/mixed up, score 0

Only proceed to other criteria if identifiers are present and correctly related

2. If identifier check passes, evaluate on three key criteria:

Accuracy (40%): How factually correct is the caption compared to ground truth?

Relevance (30%): How well does the content align with the ground truth's main points?

Helpfulness (30%): How effectively does it convey the key information?

3. Score each criterion from 0-10, where:

0: Completely incorrect/irrelevant/unhelpful

10: Perfect match with ground truth

Final score will be weighted average of the three criteria (only if identifier check passes).

Please provide:

Identifier Check Result (Pass/Fail/Partial)

Individual criteria scores (if applicable)

Overall Score (0-10)

Brief explanation of scoring rationale

Example:

Ground Truth: "<A> is wearing a red hat and has blue shoes" Generated Caption : "<A> wears a green hat and has blue shoes"

Output:

Identifier Check: Pass

Accuracy: 5/10 (hat color wrong) Relevance: 9/10 (describes same elements) Helpfulness: 8/10 (conveys main info)

Overall Score: 7/10

Explanation: All identifiers present and correct. Minor accuracy issue with hat color, but maintains good relevance and helpfulness.

Ground Truth: {{your ground truth}} Generated Caption: {{your caption}}

Figure 11. The caption evaluation template prompted to GPT-4o

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question: What is <D> wearing in the image?

Is <K> in this photo? If yes, describe her location and the scenario.

MC-LLaVA: <D> is wearing a dark blue velvet jacket, a white t-shirt, and light blue denim jeans.

Yes, I can confirm that <K> is indeed in the photo. <K> is standing against a blue background with a soft, diffused light that creates a gentle glow around her.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question: What are <D> and <K> wearing in the image?

Can you see <D> and <K> in this picture? If so, please describe their attire and the scenario.

MC-LLaVA: <D> is wearing a brown and gray sweater, while <K> is wearing a brown hooded garment. And they both wear sunglasses.

Yes, I can see them here. <D> is wearing a gray cap and gray pants. <K> is wearing a black and white plaid shirt. <D> and <K> are shaking hands in the image.

Table 10. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with learned concept <D> and <K>.

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question: What is <J> wearing in the image?

What is <N> holding in his hand?

MC-LLaVA: <J> is wearing a pink and white checkered shirt and a straw hat.
<N> is holding a pink lollipop in his hand.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question: What are <J> and <N> doing in the image?

What are <J> and <N> doing in the image?

MC-LLaVA: <J> and <N> are sitting at a table, looking at a tablet. <N> is wearing a green shirt with a tie, and <J> is wearing a blue shirt. They both appear to be engaged in whatever is displayed on the tablet.
<N> and <J> are standing next to each other in the image. <N> is wearing a green shirt and a blue tie, and he has a cup in his hand. <J> is wearing a red and white checkered shirt. They both appear to be looking off to the side with serious expressions.

Table 11. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with learned concept <J> and <N>.

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question: What is <M> doing?

Is <R> in this photo? If yes, describe his location and the scenario.

MC-LLaVA: <M> is holding a green glass flask in her left hand and a clear glass flask in her right hand, suggesting she might be conducting an experiment or a study.

Yes, <R> is in this photo. <R> is standing in a classroom, his face contorted in an expression of shock. His eyes are wide and his mouth is slightly open, suggesting he has just been startled or caught off guard.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question: What are <H>, <M>, and <R> doing in this photo?

Can you see <H> and <M> in this photo? Please describe the current scenario.

MC-LLaVA: <H> and <M> are peeking around a corner, with <M> wearing a pink hoodie. <R> is on the far right, holding a small animal in his hand.

Yes, I can confirm that <H> and <M> are indeed in the photo. <H> is sitting at a table with books, while <M> is standing nearby in a library setting. <R> seems to be in the picture too, holding a golden egg in his hand.

Table 12. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with a learned concept <H>, <M> and <R>.

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question:	What is <A> wearing on her head?	What is <Y> doing with her hand in the image?
MC-LLaVA:	<A> is wearing black and gold horn-like headpieces. She has pink hair.	<Y> is holding her hand up to her face, possibly in surprise or to block her face. She is wearing a pink jacket with black details and has long black hair.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question:	What activity are <A>, <L>, and <Y> engaged in?	What are <A>, <L>, and <Y> doing in the image?
MC-LLaVA:	<L> is riding a bicycle with <A> in a stroller attached to it and <Y> standing behind them. He is wearing a hat and a blue jacket.	<A>, <L>, and <Y> are in a family pose. <A> is sleeping on <L>'s shoulder, and <Y> is holding <A>. They are under a clear sky.

Table 13. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with a learned concept <A>, <L> and <Y>.

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question: What is <Z> wearing in the photo?
What is he doing?

Can you describe the scenario in the photo?

MC-LLaVA: <Z> is wearing a green jacket over a white shirt with horizontal stripes. He has a neutral expression on his face and is making a hand gesture with his right hand.

In the photo, we see <M> sitting at a kitchen counter, her hand resting on her chin in a thoughtful pose. The overall scenario suggests a moment of contemplation or preparation.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question: What activity are <Y>, <Z>, <M> and <Q> engaged in?

Can you provide a detailed description of what <Y>, <Z>, <M> and <Q> are wearing in this photo?

MC-LLaVA: <Y>, <Z>, <M> and <Q> are sitting together on a red couch, taking a selfie with a phone.

Yes, <Y> is wearing a red dress with a belt, <Z> is wearing a black and white checkered shirt with blue jeans, <M> is wearing a light pink dress, and <Q> is wearing a blue checkered suit.

Table 14. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with learned concept <Y>, <Z>, <M> and <Q>.

MC-LLaVA



▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Single-concept)



Question: What is <Z> doing in the image?

What is <S> wearing on her head?

MC-LLaVA: <Z> is standing in front of a mailbox, looking displeased.

<S> is wearing a clear helmet with a pink flower on top.

▷ **Visual Conversation** — (Note: Multi-concept)



Question: What festive accessory are <H>, <P>, <Z> and <S> wearing?

What are <H>, <P>, <Z> and <S> doing in the image?

MC-LLaVA: <H>, <P> and <Z> are wearing red Santa hats on their heads, but <S> wears a helmet with a flower on it.

<H>, <P> and <S> are standing together with happy expressions, but <Z> looks bored.

Table 15. Examples of MC-LLaVA’s abilities with learned concept <H>, <P>, <Z> and <S>.



Figure 12. Comparison of personalized captioning between Yo'LLaVA and MC-LLaVA.



Figure 13. Personalized caption of multi-concept with MC-LLaVA.

Text-only Question-Answering (*No image is given as input
[due to limited space, only a fraction of the questions are shown here]*)

Question 1: Is <A> a lion or a cat?

- A. A lion
- B. A cat

Correct Answer: A

Question 2: What is <A>'s mane color?

- A. brown
- B. black

Correct Answer: A

Question 3: What color are <A>'s eyes?

- A. green
- B. blue

Correct Answer: B

Question 4: Is <A>'s demeanor lively or serious?

- A. lively
- B. serious

Correct Answer: A

Question 5: Does <A> have a large or small mane?

- A. large
- B. small

Correct Answer: A

Visual Question-Answering

[due to limited space, only a fraction of the questions are shown here]

Question 1: What is <A> looking at in the image?

- A. His claws
- B. The sky

Correct Answer: A



Question 2: What is <A> doing in the image?

- A. Sleeping
- B. Dancing

Correct Answer: B



Table 16. Example of multiple choice question answering.