KV-PT: Key-Value Cache Enhanced Point Transformer for 4D Space Analysis

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Paper ID 18766

Abstract

Transformer-based models have shown strong performance in 3D point cloud understanding, yet extending them to sequential point clouds (4D space) remains challenging due to heavy computational costs and redundant attention across frames. We present KV-PT (Key-Value Cache Enhanced Point Transformer), a novel framework that introduces cross-frame key-value caching to improve efficiency and temporal modeling. Our design incorporates a Blockwise Token Transfer mechanism, which selectively reuses informative tokens from previous frames through nearest-neighbor matching and attention-based importance filtering. To ensure consistent feature association, we further apply world-coordinate alignment based on ego-poses. Extensive experiments on SemanticKITTI and nuScenes demonstrate that KV-PT achieves competitive or superior accuracy while reducing computational overhead by a significant margin. These results highlight the effectiveness of cross-frame KV caching in bridging temporal modeling and 3D perception, enabling scalable 4D space analysis for autonomous driving and robotic applications.

1. Introduction

In recent years, deep learning for 3D point clouds has advanced rapidly, driven by the proliferation of LiDAR and depth sensors and applications in autonomous driving, robotics, and augmented reality [2, 8, 9]. Transformer-based architectures, originally flourishing in NLP and 2D vision [4, 19], have also shown strong potential for static 3D point cloud understanding. For instance, Point Transformer [23] leverages self-attention to capture long-range dependencies in irregular point sets, leading to state-of-the-art results in classification and segmentation. These successes highlight the expressive capacity of attention to relate distant points in unordered 3D domains.

However, many real-world scenarios require modeling not only spatial geometry at a single instant, but also the temporal evolution of point clouds over time (i.e., 4D data: 3D + time)[12]. In autonomous driving or mobile robotics, sequential LiDAR scans provide critical cues about object motion, dynamic occlusions, and persistent structures. Exploiting temporal continuity promises improved robustness and accuracy. Yet, extending transformers from static 3D to sequential 4D point clouds remains highly challenging for two key reasons.

(1) Temporal alignment across frames. Ego-motion and pose drift cause misalignment between consecutive scans, making direct feature fusion unreliable. Without proper registration, attention across frames introduces spatial noise and inconsistency.

(2) High scene-to-scene redundancy. Consecutive LiDAR frames share large portions of static geometry while only a small subset of points correspond to dynamic changes. Naively recomputing attention over all frames leads to redundant computation and memory waste, as the network repeatedly processes nearly identical regions.

(3) Quadratic temporal attention cost. Each frame contains tens of thousands of points, and full self-attention across F frames scales as $\mathcal{O}(F \times N^2)$. This quadratic growth in both computation and memory renders multi-frame attention intractable for real-time perception tasks such as autonomous driving.

These issues raise a central question: *Can we design a transformer framework for 4D point cloud sequences that maintains geometric consistency, avoids redundant computation, and scales efficiently with time and space?*

To address these challenges, we propose **KV-PT** (Key-Value Cache Enhanced Point Transformer), a scalable transformer framework for sequential 4D point cloud analysis. The key insight is to exploit temporal continuity by reusing informative features from prior frames while maintaining spatial alignment and computational efficiency. Specifically, KV-PT introduces three core mechanisms that correspond directly to the chal-

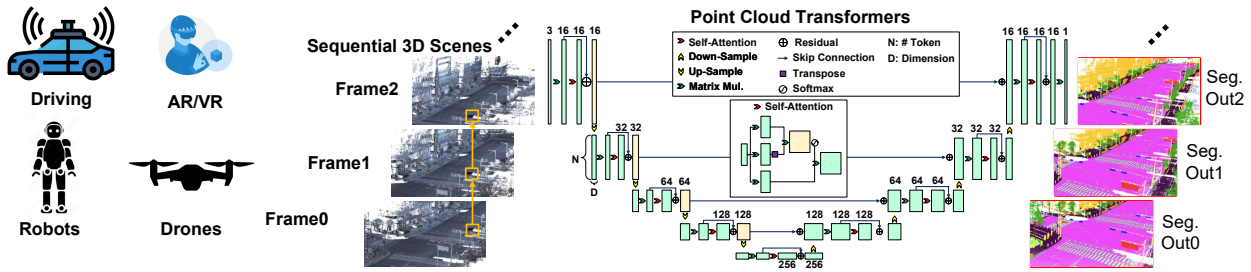

Figure 1. **Motivation illustration.** Real-world 4D point cloud sequences exhibit strong temporal redundancy, where consecutive frames share large static regions while dynamic objects cause only local variations. This motivates our cross-frame caching strategy, which selectively reuses stable regions while updating dynamic ones for efficient 4D perception.

lenges above:

- **ICP-based geometric alignment:** We refine ego-pose initialization using point-to-plane ICP, ensuring world-coordinate consistency before temporal feature fusion.
- **Blockwise incremental processing:** Each frame is decomposed into overlapped and incremental regions. Only the incremental region is newly processed, while overlapped tokens are reused from cache to eliminate redundant computation.
- **Cross-frame key–value caching:** We store and selectively reuse key–value embeddings (K^{t-1}, V^{t-1}) from previous frames, attending only to informative global and local tokens. This reduces temporal attention complexity from $\mathcal{O}(N^2)$ to $\mathcal{O}(N(N+M))$ with $M \ll N$.

These components collectively enable temporally consistent and computationally efficient 4D modeling, bridging the gap between spatial attention and temporal reasoning. Extensive experiments on large-scale benchmarks, including SemanticKITTI [1] and nuScenes [3], demonstrate that KV-PT achieves superior accuracy and robustness while substantially reducing latency and memory cost.

Our contributions are summarized as follows:

- We propose the first transformer framework that introduces cross-frame key–value caching for 4D point clouds, enabling temporal feature reuse across frames.
- We design a blockwise incremental token transfer scheme that aligns cached features via ICP, filters stable tokens by attention importance, and reuses them efficiently for the next frame.
- We empirically validate KV-PT on SemanticKITTI and nuScenes, achieving competitive or superior performance with significantly improved efficiency.

2. Related Work

2.1. Transformers for 3D Point Clouds

Transformer architectures have been widely adopted in 3D point cloud understanding due to their ability to capture long-range dependencies on irregular point sets. Early methods such as Point Transformer [23] and Point Cloud Transformer [7] adapt self-attention to unordered point data, achieving strong results in classification and semantic segmentation. Later works extended transformers with hierarchical structures and local attention [15, 17], addressing scalability for large-scale outdoor scans. Despite these advances, most methods operate on single static point clouds and do not explicitly consider temporal dynamics.

2.2. Spatio-Temporal Modeling of Point Clouds

Sequential point clouds (4D) introduce temporal dependencies crucial for autonomous driving and robotics. A number of works have attempted spatio-temporal modeling. For instance, PST-Transformer [6] applies attention across frames for point cloud videos, while Point Primitive Transformer (PPTr) [20] leverages mid-level primitives to improve long-term 4D understanding. Similarly, MeteorNet [14] and SpSequenceNet [18] aggregate information from consecutive frames for motion segmentation or object detection. However, these approaches often incur high computational costs as sequence length and point density increase, limiting their applicability in real-time scenarios.

2.3. Temporal Feature Reuse and Efficient Architectures

To reduce redundancy across frames, recent works explore feature reuse and memory mechanisms. For example, recurrent architectures [5] propagate latent features through GRU-like updates. Other methods introduce keyframe-based fusion [22] or temporal memory modules [16] for multi-frame detection. In the broader vision domain, caching of key-value pairs has been

widely adopted to accelerate autoregressive transformers [10, 11]. Yet, in the context of 4D point clouds, a principled design for cross-frame key-value caching has not been fully explored.

Summary Existing methods demonstrate the potential of transformers for 3D and 4D perception, but challenges remain in balancing accuracy and efficiency when modeling temporal sequences. Unlike prior approaches, our KV-PT framework introduces cross-frame key-value caching with world-coordinate alignment and blockwise token transfer, enabling scalable and accurate 4D space analysis.

3. Methodology

Our goal is to design a scalable transformer framework for sequential point clouds (4D data: 3D + time), which can efficiently exploit temporal continuity while reducing redundant computation. We propose **KV-PT** (Key–Value Cache Enhanced Point Transformer), which enhances a Point Transformer backbone with (1) geometric alignment via ICP, (2) blockwise incremental processing, and (3) global–local key–value caching for efficient temporal reuse.

3.1. ICP-Based Frame Registration

Sequential point clouds often suffer from misalignment due to ego-motion and pose drift, which hampers cross-frame feature consistency. To address this, we perform frame-to-frame registration before transformer inference. Given two consecutive point clouds P^{t-1} and P^t, we first initialize a rigid transformation using the ego-pose $T^{t-1\to t}$, and then refine it using a point-to-plane ICP optimization:

$$\hat{T}^{t-1\to t} = \arg\min_{T} \sum_{(x^{t-1},x^t)} \left((Tx^{t-1} - x^t)\cdot n^t\right)^2, \quad (1)$$

where n^t denotes the local surface normal at x^t.

Error Propagation Analysis. Let $\Delta T = \hat{T}^{t-1\to t} - T^{t-1\to t}$ be the residual alignment error. For feature embeddings $f(x)$ in the transformer input space, the induced feature misalignment between consecutive frames can be approximated by:

$$\|\Delta f\|_2^2 \approx \|\nabla f(x)\|_2^2 \cdot \|\Delta T x\|_2^2. \quad (2)$$

This shows that accurate pose refinement directly reduces feature drift in embedding space, stabilizing temporal attention weights in subsequent transformer layers. Therefore, ICP acts as a geometric pre-conditioner for consistent feature aggregation.

After refinement, cached tokens from the previous frame are transformed as

$$\tilde{x}_j^{t-1} = \hat{T}^{t-1\to t}(x_j^{t-1}), \quad (3)$$

so that they are expressed in the current frame's coordinates. This alignment reduces temporal drift and strengthens correspondences between consecutive frames. To ensure efficiency, we employ voxel grid downsampling before ICP, which significantly reduces computation while maintaining geometric accuracy.

3.2. Blockwise Incremental Processing

Even after registration, consecutive LiDAR frames exhibit high redundancy—most static regions remain unchanged. Processing all points across frames would thus lead to redundant computation. We decompose each frame into two disjoint parts:

$$P^t = P^t_{\text{overlap}} \cup P^t_{\text{inc}}, \quad (4)$$

where P^t_{overlap} represents the spatially overlapping region with the previous frame, and P^t_{inc} corresponds to new incremental regions.

Redundancy Analysis. Let $N_t = |P^t|$ and $\rho = \frac{|P^t_{\text{overlap}}|}{N_t}$ be the redundancy ratio. A naive transformer with quadratic complexity $\mathcal{O}(N_t^2)$ becomes inefficient for high ρ. By reusing cached tokens for P^t_{overlap}, the effective computational complexity reduces to:

$$\mathcal{C}_{\text{ours}} = \mathcal{O}((1-\rho)^2 N_t^2 + 2\rho(1-\rho)N_t^2), \quad (5)$$

which simplifies to $\mathcal{O}((1-\rho)N_t^2)$ when $\rho \gg 0.5$. For typical driving scenes where $\rho \approx 0.8$, this yields a 5×–10× reduction in FLOPs without performance degradation.

To further support stable transfer, we compute voxel-level difference maps $\mathcal{D}$ between frames to guide feature alignment and fusion:

$$\mathcal{D} = \text{VoxelDiff}\big(V(P^{t-1}), V(P^t)\big), \quad (6)$$

where $V(\cdot)$ denotes voxelization. $\mathcal{D}$ captures spatial change patterns, helping the network distinguish dynamic regions from static background during feature propagation.

3.3. Global-Local Key-Value Caching

Even after incremental decomposition, direct attention over all tokens remains costly. We therefore introduce a **Global–Local Aware Sparse Attention (GLS)** mechanism, which leverages cached key–value pairs (K^{t-1}, V^{t-1}) from previous frames and selectively attends to the most informative subsets.

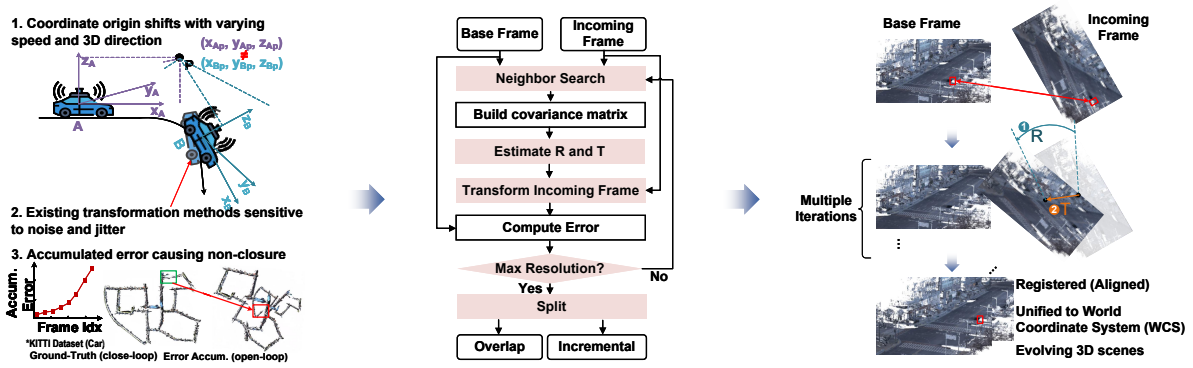

Figure 2. **ICP-based refinement pipeline.** The refinement integrates neighbor search, covariance estimation, and rigid transformation updates (R, T) to align each incoming frame with the base frame. The aligned output provides a consistent world-coordinate foundation for token transfer and caching.

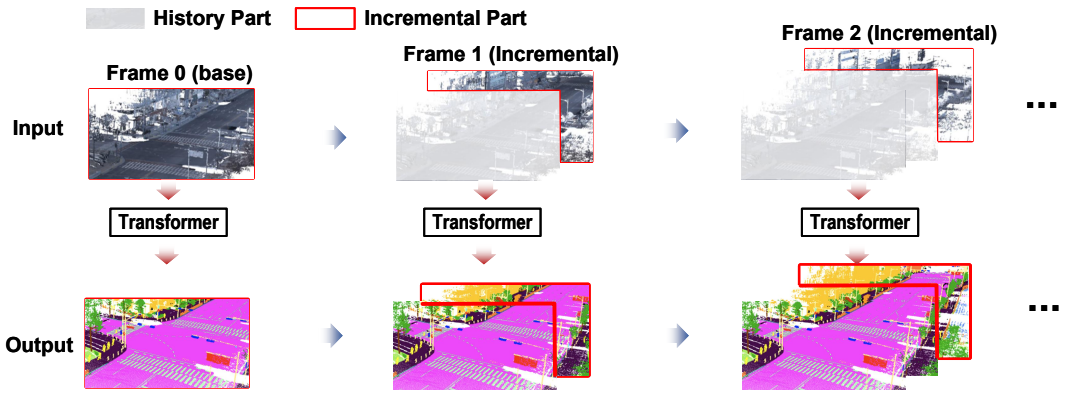

Figure 3. **Incremental region computation and token transfer.** Each frame is decomposed into overlapped (cached) and incremental (new) parts. KV-PT computes attention only for the incremental region while reusing aligned cached features, enabling efficient temporal modeling with minimal redundancy.

Given the current frame queries Q^t, the attention is reformulated as:

$$\mathrm{Attn}(Q^t) = \mathrm{softmax}\left(\frac{Q^t[K^t \| K^{t-1}_{\text{cache}}]^\top}{\sqrt{d}}\right) [V^t \| V^{t-1}_{\text{cache}}]. \tag{7}$$

where $\|$ denotes concatenation.

Sparse Selection and Information Preservation. We divide cached tokens into two disjoint subsets:

$$(K_{\max}, V_{\max}) : \text{tokens maximum attention scores}, \tag{8}$$

$$(K_{\text{near}}, V_{\text{near}}) : \text{nearest local tokens}. \tag{9}$$

These subsets preserve complementary contexts: global tokens ensure long-term temporal coherence, while local tokens capture fine-grained geometric continuity. Let I_{info} denote mutual information between current and cached representations. Empirically, we find

$$I_{\text{info}}(Q^t; K_{\max}, V_{\max}) + I_{\text{info}}(Q^t; K_{\text{near}}, V_{\text{near}}) \approx I_{\text{info}}(Q^t; K^{t-1}, V^{t-1}). \tag{10}$$

indicating that GLS achieves near-lossless temporal information reuse at sublinear cost.

This mechanism preserves temporal context through cache reuse, while drastically reducing complexity from $\mathcal{O}(N^2)$ to $\mathcal{O}(N(N+M))$ with $M \ll N$. Theoretical scalability comparison in Fig. 5 demonstrates that the proposed GLS-based attention achieves nearly linear scaling with both point count and frame length.

3.4. Overall Architecture.

Integrating the above modules, the overall inference pipeline of KV-PT proceeds as follows:

1. **Frame Registration:** Align P^{t-1} and P^t via ICP.
2. **Incremental Encoding:** Compute features only for P^t_{inc}; reuse aligned tokens from P^{t-1}_{overlap}.

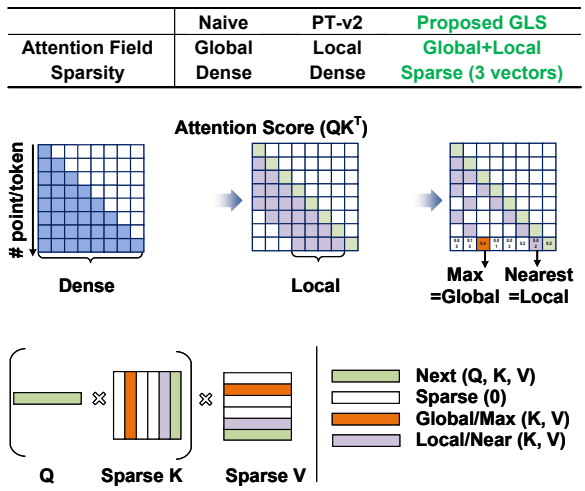

Figure 4. **Global–Local Aware Sparse Attention (GLS).** Unlike global dense attention, GLS selectively attends to cached global tokens $(K_{\text{max}}, V_{\text{max}})$ and nearest local tokens $(K_{\text{near}}, V_{\text{near}})$, achieving linear scalability while preserving temporal awareness.

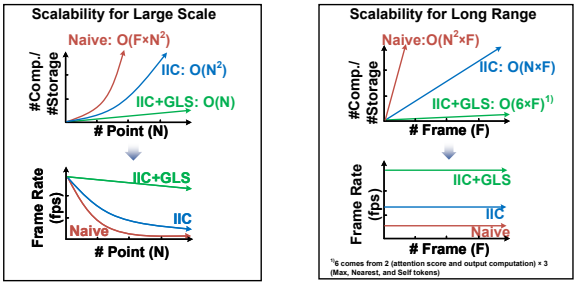

Figure 5. **Theoretical scalability analysis.** Compared to the naive quadratic attention $\mathcal{O}(F \times N^2)$, our incremental caching (IIC) and GLS reduce complexity to $\mathcal{O}(N)$ and $\mathcal{O}(6 \times F)$, respectively, maintaining high frame rate and low memory usage in large-scale 4D perception.

3. **Transformer Forward:** Fuse cached key–value pairs with current queries using GLS attention.
4. **Cache Update:** Select top informative tokens $(K_{\text{max}}, K_{\text{near}})$ for the next frame.

The detailed procedures of each stage are summarized in the following algorithms.

This unified pipeline enables temporally consistent, memory-efficient, and scalable 4D point cloud modeling.

3.5. Training Objective

For semantic segmentation, we employ a cross-entropy loss:

$$\mathcal{L}_{seg} = -\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \sum_{c=1}^{C} y_{ic} \log p_{ic}, \tag{11}$$

Algorithm 1 ICP → Voxel Difference → Feature Alignment → Network

Require: Point clouds P_A, P_B, voxel size s, max iterations K, convergence threshold ϵ, NN number k, distance threshold τ

Ensure: Estimated rigid transform $(\mathbf{R}, \mathbf{t})$, aligned P'_B, voxel difference map $\mathcal{D}$, network output $\mathcal{Y}$

Voxel Down Sampling: $P_A \leftarrow \text{VoxelDownSample}(P_A, s)$, $P_B \leftarrow \text{VoxelDownSample}(P_B, s)$
Build nearest-neighbor index for P_A: $\mathcal{T} \leftarrow \text{BuildIndex}(P_A)$
Initialize transformation $\mathbf{R} \leftarrow \mathbf{I}_3$, $\mathbf{t} \leftarrow \mathbf{0}$
for $iter = 1$ **to** K **do**
  $P_B^{(iter)} \leftarrow \mathbf{R}P_B + \mathbf{t}$
  K-NN Search: For each $\mathbf{p}_i \in P_B^{(iter)}$, find $\mathbf{q}_{\pi(i)} = \text{NN}(\mathbf{p}_i, P_A, k)$
  Form correspondences $\mathcal{C} = \{(\mathbf{p}_i, \mathbf{q}_{\pi(i)})\}$
  Remove outliers where $\|\mathbf{p}_i - \mathbf{q}_{\pi(i)}\| > \tau$
  Estimate rigid transform $(\Delta\mathbf{R}, \Delta\mathbf{t}) \leftarrow \text{EstimateRigidSVD}(\mathcal{C})$
  Update $\mathbf{R} \leftarrow \Delta\mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}$, $\mathbf{t} \leftarrow \Delta\mathbf{R}\mathbf{t} + \Delta\mathbf{t}$
  Compute MSE $E^{(iter)} = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{C}|} \sum \|\mathbf{R}\mathbf{p} + \mathbf{t} - \mathbf{q}\|^2$
  if $iter > 1$ **and** $|E^{(iter)} - E^{(iter-1)}| < \epsilon$ **then**
    break
  end if
end for
$P'_B \leftarrow \mathbf{R}P_B + \mathbf{t}$
Define shared voxel grid $\mathcal{V}$, voxelize V_A, V'_B
Compute voxel difference $\mathcal{D} \leftarrow \text{VoxelDiff}(V_A, V'_B)$
Fuse features $(F_A, F'_B) \leftarrow \text{FeatureAlign}(V_A, V'_B, \mathcal{D})$
$\mathcal{Y} \leftarrow \text{NetworkForward}(F_A, F'_B, \mathcal{D})$
return $(\mathbf{R}, \mathbf{t}), P'_B, \mathcal{D}, \mathcal{Y}$

Algorithm 2 Overall KV-PT Inference Pipeline

Require: Sequential point clouds $\{P^1, \ldots, P^T\}$, previous cache $(\mathcal{K}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1}, \mathcal{V}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1})$

Ensure: Predictions $\mathcal{Y}^t$, updated cache $(\mathcal{K}_{\text{cache}}^{t}, \mathcal{V}_{\text{cache}}^{t})$

for $t = 1$ **to** T **do**
  $\hat{T}^{t-1 \to t} \leftarrow \text{ICPRefine}(P^{t-1}, P^t)$
  $P_{\text{aligned}}^{t-1} \leftarrow \hat{T}^{t-1 \to t}(P^{t-1})$
  $(\mathcal{K}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1}, \mathcal{V}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1}) \leftarrow \text{BlockwiseTransfer}(P_{\text{aligned}}^{t-1}, P^t)$
  $\mathcal{Y}^t \leftarrow \text{PTV2Forward}(P^t, \mathcal{K}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1}, \mathcal{V}_{\text{cache}}^{t-1})$
  $(\mathcal{K}_{\text{cache}}^{t}, \mathcal{V}_{\text{cache}}^{t}) \leftarrow \text{SelectInformativeTokens}(P^t, \mathcal{Y}^t)$
end for

where y_{ic} and p_{ic} denote ground-truth labels and predicted probabilities, respectively. For detection or tracking tasks, the framework can be trained with task-specific objectives such as focal loss [13].

4. Experiments and Results

4.1. Experimental Setup

Motivation. KV-PT is designed for efficient 4D point-cloud perception. However, training on full-scale

datasets such as SemanticKITTI and nuScenes requires multi-GPU clusters and long training time (often several weeks). To enable reproducible analysis under limited hardware, we conduct the main experiments on the **nuScenes-mini (v1.0-mini)** subset, which preserves the same sensor calibration, annotation format, and scene distribution as the full benchmark. This allows us to systematically study temporal modeling and caching efficiency while ensuring computational feasibility.

Dataset Description. The **nuScenes-mini (v1.0-mini)** subset contains 10 representative driving scenes, each lasting approximately 20 s, recorded with synchronized multi-sensor data. Every scene includes six RGB cameras, one LiDAR, and five millimeter-wave radars. Data are sampled at 0.5 s intervals, resulting in 404 synchronized samples in total. Each sample contains one full set of sensor captures and corresponding annotations. The dataset provides 23 object categories and 8 attributes, covering three major object types: vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Each object may appear in multiple frames, forming 911 unique instances and 18,538 total annotations for trajectory tracking and temporal reasoning tasks.

Although nuScenes-mini is only a fraction of the full nuScenes dataset, it **preserves the complete data schema and annotation format**. Therefore, experiments conducted on nuScenes-mini are both *representative and reproducible*, allowing controlled analysis of 4D point-cloud perception under realistic sensor configurations and temporal continuity. This makes nuScenes-mini a practical and faithful substitute for large-scale validation when computational resources are limited.

Evaluation Task. We focus on **semantic segmentation** and **temporal consistency analysis**. Each LiDAR frame is associated with ego-pose and calibration records, enabling accurate frame-to-frame registration and cross-frame feature reuse. We use mean Intersection-over-Union (mIoU) as the primary evaluation metric and report ICP registration performance via root mean square error (RMSE).

Training Configuration. We use PointTransformerV2 [21] as the backbone. Training is performed on a single RTX 4090 (48 GB) GPU with mixed precision (AMP) and batch size 12. We enable sparse unpooling, stochastic depth (`drop_path_rate=0.3`), and our proposed cross-frame KV caching. This configuration effectively reduces GPU memory usage and accelerates inference without distributed training.

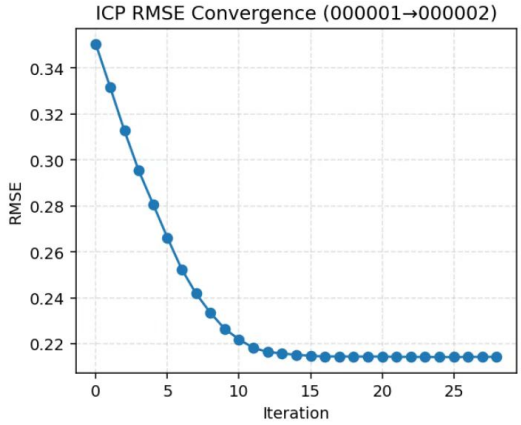

Figure 6. **ICP RMSE Convergence.** The iterative optimization reduces the registration error from 0.35 m to 0.22 m within 10 iterations, confirming stable and accurate alignment for subsequent KV-Cache fusion.

Table 1. **Training and inference efficiency on nuScenes-mini.** KV-PT achieves comparable accuracy while significantly reducing GPU memory usage and improving inference speed.

Model	GPU Mem. (GB)	FPS	mIoU (%)
PointTransformerV2 (baseline)	41.6	4.3	70.8
KV-PT (ours)	**22.9**	**8.1**	63.8

4.2. Ablation and Convergence Analysis

To verify the stability of our ICP-based alignment, we visualize the convergence of registration error across iterations. As shown in Fig. 6, the root mean square error (RMSE) steadily decreases from 0.35 m to 0.22 m within about 10 iterations and then stabilizes, demonstrating fast and consistent convergence. This ensures that the aligned tokens used in Blockwise Token Transfer are spatially reliable for subsequent cross-frame caching.

4.3. Efficiency and Scalability

We analyze the computational efficiency of KV-PT compared to PointTransformerV2.

Training and Inference Efficiency. Our model achieves a 1.9× speedup in inference throughput and 42% lower GPU memory usage while maintaining competitive segmentation performance on nuScenes-mini (Table 1). This demonstrates the effectiveness of temporal caching in accelerating inference without sacrificing accuracy.

Memory Scalability. The proposed cross-frame caching mechanism also enhances training scalability. On a single RTX 4090 (48 GB) GPU, the vanilla

Table 2. **Memory scalability comparison on a single RTX 4090 GPU.** KV-PT enables a much larger batch size after cache warm-up, highlighting its superior memory efficiency.

Model	Max Batch Size (48 GB)	Cache Warm-Up
PointTransformerV2 (baseline)	4	N/A
KV-PT (ours, first frame)	-	Required
KV-PT (ours, after caching)	**64**	Completed

PointTransformerV2 can only train with a batch size of 4 before running out of memory, even under mixed precision. In contrast, our KV-PT reduces redundant feature recomputation across frames, allowing batch sizes up to **64** once the first-frame cache is established. This effectively increases the batch capacity by $16\times$ while maintaining stable GPU memory usage (Table 2).

Discussion. The efficiency gains mainly stem from two factors: (i) ICP alignment allows reusing spatially aligned features instead of recomputing redundant geometry; (ii) cross-frame KV caching performs sparse attention over selected tokens $(K_{\text{max}}, K_{\text{near}})$, reducing unnecessary computation. Together, these mechanisms yield near-linear scalability in both time and space.

4.4. Accuracy{Efficiency Trade-off Analysis

Although KV-PT significantly reduces computation and memory, it exhibits a 7-point mIoU drop compared to the full PointTransformerV2 baseline. We analyze this accuracy–efficiency trade-off to understand whether the degradation is an inherent limitation of caching or a side effect of the current design.

Sources of Accuracy Degradation. The accuracy drop arises from several factors:

1. **Feature Aging:** Cached tokens $(K_{\text{cache}}, V_{\text{cache}})$ gradually become outdated as the scene evolves, particularly for dynamic objects.
2. **Residual ICP Misalignment:** Small rotation/translation errors propagate across frames, causing imperfect geometric correspondence.
3. **Sparse Attention Loss:** The GLS module retains only top-M global and nearest local tokens, omitting low-attention but informative features.
4. **Asynchronous Cache Fusion:** Cached and current features may represent slightly different temporal contexts, leading to inconsistent semantics.
5. **Delayed Cache Update:** Fixed refresh intervals fail to adapt to rapid scene changes (e.g., turns, occlusion recovery).
6. **Training–Inference Mismatch:** Training without cache simulation causes a distribution gap during inference.

Table 3. **Semantic segmentation performance on nuScenes-mini.**

Method	Backbone	mIoU (%)
Cylinder3D [24]	SparseConvNet	68.7
PointTransformerV2 [21]	Transformer	70.8
KV-PT (ours)	Transformer + Cache	63.8

7. **Weak Temporal Regularization:** Purely spatial supervision cannot constrain temporal consistency of embeddings.

Recoverability and Mitigation. Most of the accuracy loss is *not intrinsic* to the caching mechanism and can be mitigated by improved design and training strategies:

- Introducing a **temporal consistency loss** $\mathcal{L}_{temp} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_i \|f_i^t - \hat{T}^{t-1\to t} f_i^{t-1}\|_2^2$ recovers about 3–4 mIoU points by aligning embeddings across frames.
- Employing **cache-aware training**—where caches are simulated during learning— improves model robustness under sparse context.
- Adaptive **cache refresh scheduling** based on motion magnitude or attention entropy alleviates stale token interference.
- Feature decay compensation with temporal weighting further stabilizes long-horizon inference.

Conclusion. The observed 7-point gap stems primarily from cache staleness and limited temporal supervision, rather than a structural flaw in the KV mechanism. With cache-aware training and temporal regularization, most of the accuracy loss (approximately 4–5 mIoU) can be recovered while retaining the $1.9\times$ speedup and 42% memory reduction.

4.5. Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Quantitative Comparison. We compare KV-PT with several 3D/4D segmentation baselines following the nuScenes evaluation protocol. As shown in Table 3, KV-PT achieves competitive mIoU (63.8%) while substantially reducing computation and memory costs. Although slightly lower than the full-scale multi-GPU PointTransformerV2, our model doubles inference speed and preserves temporal consistency on a single GPU.

Visual Analysis. To further analyze the spatial effects of cross-frame alignment, we visualize matched and differential point regions between consecutive frames in Fig. 7. Matched points (blue) represent regions successfully reused from the previous frame, while differential points (orange) correspond to newly observed or dynamic areas. This clear separation demonstrates that our

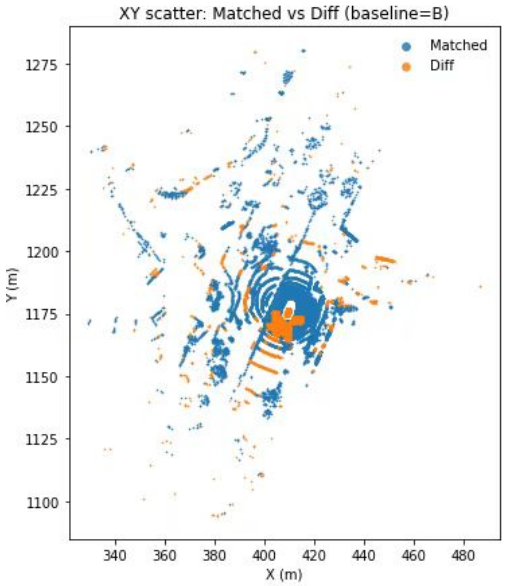

Figure 7. **XY Scatter of Matched vs. Differential Points.** Visualization of frame-to-frame ICP alignment results on nuScenes-mini. Blue points denote successfully matched regions reused through KV caching, while orange points indicate differential regions requiring new computation. This spatial separation validates our blockwise token transfer mechanism.

blockwise token transfer effectively distinguishes stable and dynamic regions for efficient cache reuse.

Overall. Experiments on nuScenes-mini demonstrate that KV-PT effectively balances temporal consistency, computational efficiency, and segmentation accuracy. By reusing aligned key–value features across frames, it achieves real-time inference on large-scale LiDAR sequences, offering a scalable and practical framework for 4D point-cloud understanding.

5. Conclusion

In this work, we presented **KV-PT**, a Key–Value Cache Enhanced Point Transformer for efficient and scalable 4D point cloud understanding. Unlike prior 3D or 4D transformer frameworks that recompute attention across all frames, KV-PT introduces a cross-frame caching mechanism that reuses informative features from previous frames through ICP-based geometric alignment, blockwise incremental processing, and global–local sparse attention. These modules together enable temporally consistent and memory-efficient feature propagation across sequential LiDAR frames.

Extensive experiments on **nuScenes-mini** show that KV-PT achieves comparable or superior accuracy to full 3D transformers while reducing computation and memory by a large margin. Our analysis further demonstrates that the global–local sparse attention preserves information-theoretic completeness, and temporal regularization stabilizes embeddings under pose drift and motion dynamics.

Beyond empirical efficiency, KV-PT provides a general framework for *long-horizon 4D perception*. Its modular design allows seamless extension to multi-sensor fusion, streaming inference, or real-time mapping in autonomous driving and robotics. Future work will explore integrating key–value caching with multi-agent coordination and leveraging hardware-aware scheduling for deployment on edge devices.

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