

Plug-and-Play Clarifier: A Zero-Shot Multimodal Framework for Egocentric Intent Disambiguation

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Abstract

The performance of egocentric AI agents is fundamentally limited by multimodal intent ambiguity. This challenge arises from a combination of underspecified language, imperfect visual data, and deictic gestures, which frequently leads to task failure. Existing monolithic Vision-Language Models (VLMs) struggle to resolve these multimodal ambiguous inputs, often failing silently or hallucinating responses. To address these ambiguities, we introduce the **Plug-and-Play Clarifier**, a zero-shot and modular framework that decomposes the problem into discrete, solvable sub-tasks. Specifically, our framework consists of three synergistic modules: (1) a text clarifier that uses dialogue-driven reasoning to interactively disambiguate linguistic intent, (2) a vision clarifier that delivers real-time guidance feedback, instructing users to adjust their positioning for improved capture quality, and (3) a cross-modal clarifier with grounding mechanism that robustly interprets 3D pointing gestures and identifies the specific objects users are pointing to. Experiments demonstrate that our framework improves the intent clarification performance of small language models (4–8B) by approximately 30%, making them competitive with significantly larger counterparts. We also observe consistent gains when applying our framework to these larger models. Furthermore, our vision clarifier increases corrective guidance accuracy by over 20%, and our cross-modal clarifier improves semantic answer accuracy for referential grounding by 5%. Overall, our method effectively resolves multimodal ambiguity and significantly enhances user experience in egocentric interaction.

Code and Datasets —

<https://github.com/YoungSeng/plugin-and-play-clarifier>

Extended version — <https://arxiv.org/abs/2511.08971>

Introduction

Egocentric AI agents, particularly those embedded in wearable devices such as AI glasses, are emerging as a new and significant area of human-computer interaction. The goal is to develop an always-on cognitive partner that perceives

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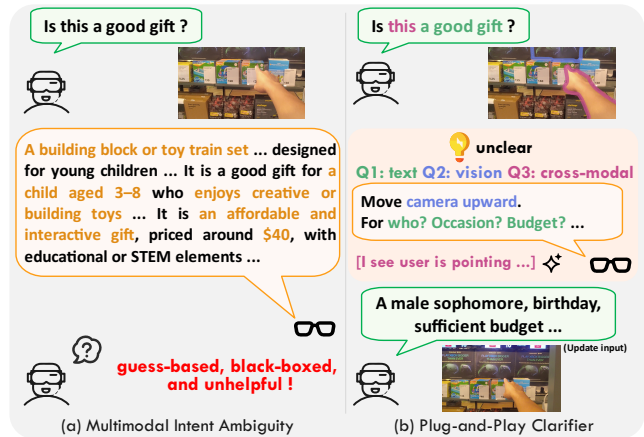


Figure 1: Our Clarifier framework resolves the multimodal ambiguous query, “Is this a good gift?” (a) Multimodal Intent Ambiguity: A standard AI defaults to a guess, making assumptions about the recipient (e.g., a child), their interests, and the user’s budget. This “black box” approach is unhelpful because if the assumptions are wrong, the recommendation is useless. (b) Our system avoids guessing. It first identifies that key information (e.g., occasion, budget), missing visual context, and pointing gestures between modalities. It then proactively asks clarifying questions and provides camera feedback (“For who? Move camera upward...”). Once the user provides the necessary context, the system can deliver a relevant and genuinely helpful recommendation.

the world from the user’s first-person perspective. Such an agent could understand user goals and provide seamless assistance for daily physical tasks, including assembling furniture, cooking complex recipes, or navigating unfamiliar environments. By operating from this viewpoint, these agents can deliver contextually-rich, proactive support that is tightly integrated with the user’s activities (Li et al. 2025a).

However, this vision faces a fundamental challenge: **multimodal intent ambiguity**. Unlike interactions with text-based chatbots, egocentric interaction is inherently noisy, fast-paced, and underspecified. A simple spoken command,

such as “What about that one?”, is inherently ambiguous. Which object is “that one”? Is the object of interest clearly visible, or is it blurry or partially occluded in the camera feed? This ambiguity stems from a combination of sources: underspecified natural language, imperfect visual data from the wearable camera, and deictic gestures like pointing (Huang et al. 2016). As a result, even state-of-the-art AI assistants frequently misinterpret user intent, leading to frustrating and unproductive task failures (Gabriel et al. 2024).

Current approaches, dominated by monolithic end-to-end Vision-Language Models (VLMs), fall short in robustly addressing this challenge (Huang et al. 2025). While large models like GPT-4o demonstrate strong general multimodal understanding, they function as opaque “black boxes.” When presented with ambiguous, mixed-signal inputs, they tend to “hallucinate” an interpretation or fail silently, as they lack a mechanism to proactively seek clarification. Requiring a single, massive model to concurrently manage linguistic interpretation, spatial reasoning, and visual quality assessment is inherently brittle. This approach is also computationally expensive, making it a poor fit for resource-constrained wearable devices. To overcome these limitations, we propose a shift from monolithic reasoning to a structured, modular, and interactive approach. We introduce the **Plug-and-Play Clarifier**, a zero-shot, multimodal framework that resolves ambiguity in egocentric interactions. Instead of relying on a single model’s opaque reasoning, our framework decomposes the problem into discrete sub-tasks managed by an explicit, programmatic control loop. This architecture integrates three core modules: (1) a *text clarifier* with dialogue-driven reasoning that clarifies user intent through a structured, step-by-step conversation; (2) a *vision clarifier* that assesses visual input quality (e.g., framing, clarity) and provides real-time corrective feedback; and (3) a *cross-modal clarifier* with grounding mechanism that interprets 3D pointing gestures by casting a geometric ray into the scene to localize the referenced object. Our framework enhances existing foundation models without requiring fine-tuning. This modular approach proves more robust and efficient than end-to-end black-box models for complex real-world tasks. We summarize our contributions as follows: (1) We propose a zero-shot and plug-and-play framework that resolves multimodal intent ambiguity in egocentric interaction through problem decomposition and interactive clarification. (2) We show that our framework improves the intent clarification accuracy of small language models (4–8B) by 30% on textual tasks, making them competitive with much larger models. (3) On our newly introduced VRA-Ego benchmark, we demonstrate that our individual modules achieve significant improvements: the vision clarifier increases corrective guidance accuracy by over 20%, and the cross-modal clarifier with 3D pointing module improves semantic grounding accuracy by 5%, outperforming strong monolithic baselines. (4) We validate that a hybrid architecture combining the generative capabilities of LLMs with algorithmic modules is a more robust, efficient, and interpretable approach for building reliable egocentric AI.

Related Work

Intent Clarification in Dialogue Systems

The field of intent clarification has moved from traditional approaches, such as programmatic slot-filling and templated questions (Zhang et al. 2025a,b; Li, Wu et al. 2025), towards end-to-end systems that use Large Language Models (LLMs) (Zhang et al. 2024a; Qian et al. 2024). To address the inconsistent performance of basic prompting methods like Chain-of-Thought (CoT), subsequent work has focused on incorporating more structure. For example, some methods require the LLM to first determine the type of ambiguity before generating a response (Tang, Soulier, and Guigue 2025). Others involve developing system-level frameworks that use specialized classifiers (Tanjim, Chen et al. 2025) or Bayesian inference (Wen et al. 2025) to guide the clarification process. Recent benchmarks (Li et al. 2025b) and datasets (Aliannejadi et al. 2021) support a move towards more structured and interpretable disambiguation, yielding specialized frameworks for enterprise (Murzaku et al. 2025) and knowledge-graph applications.

Despite these advances, existing work largely falls into two categories. The first is end-to-end LLM solutions, which can lack transparency and rely heavily on the model’s own reasoning capabilities (Nguyen et al. 2025; de Carvalho Souza, Souza, and Weigang 2025). The second is applications designed for text-only scenarios, such as travel planning (Zhang et al. 2024b; Wang, Ning et al. 2025) or e-commerce (Dammu, Alonso, and Poblete 2025). In contrast, we introduce a hybrid approach that uses a programmed, zero-shot external control loop to guide the clarification process. This architecture provides transparency and control by design, while reducing the reasoning load placed on the LLM. Furthermore, we are the first to apply such a framework to the challenging domain of multimodal, first-person interactions in the physical world, extending intent clarification beyond traditional text-based interfaces.

Egocentric Vision and Interaction

Egocentric Vision (EGV) provides a first-person perspective to infer user intent from tasks such as action recognition (Shiota et al. 2024), hand-object interaction (Xu et al. 2023, 2025), and scene understanding (Li et al. 2025a). This has led to large-scale projects like EgoLife and EgoM2P, which aim to build assistive agents from complex, real-world multimodal data (Tu et al. 2025). However, a key challenge in EGV is that its data is inherently noisy and ambiguous, unlike the curated data used in standard VQA or VLM benchmarks (Fan 2019; Perrett et al. 2025). Even state-of-the-art models like Gemini Pro struggle with it, revealing the limitations of current VLMs when processing uncurated, real-world egocentric video (Google DeepMind 2025).

Pointing gestures are a critical signal in Egocentric Vision (EGV) (Das 2021). While modern systems integrate gestures with language for 3D scene understanding (Mane et al. 2025), many earlier approaches were limited. For instance, some work relied only on the 2D screen position of a fingertip (Huang et al. 2015, 2016). This simplification ignores the 3D pointing vector, which is essential for determining what

a person is referring to. As a result, the ambiguity inherent in the pointing action itself remained largely unaddressed.

Most existing research passively attempts to interpret noisy and ambiguous inputs, with a recent trend of proactive agents only just beginning to emerge (Lu et al. 2025b). In contrast, we propose a proactive interaction framework. Rather than analyzing potentially flawed data after the fact, our system actively identifies input ambiguity—such as an imprecise pointing gesture—and uses real-time multimodal feedback to guide the user toward providing a clearer, more reliable input. We argue this shift from passive processing to active guidance is a key step toward more robust and intuitive first-person interactive systems (Zhang et al. 2025c).

Multimodal Reasoning with Large Models

While state-of-the-art Vision-Language Models (VLMs) like GPT-4o (Hurst et al. 2024), Gemini 2.5 Pro (Google DeepMind 2025), and Grok-3 (xAI 2025) perform well on general multimodal tasks (Bai et al. 2025), they are known to be unreliable for tasks requiring precise spatial or geometric reasoning, often leading to hallucinations (Mouselinos, Michalewski et al. 2024; Feng, Denny et al. 2024; Huang et al. 2025; Ramachandran et al. 2025). One line of work addresses this by improving the monolithic models themselves, for instance, through specialized pre-training for high-resolution visuals (DeepSeek-AI et al. 2024), incorporating fine-grained object grounding (Bai et al. 2025), or using native multimodal pre-training methods (Zhu et al. 2025). In contrast, our work follows an alternative approach that builds hybrid systems. These systems decompose problems to combine the semantic understanding of LLMs with the precision of specialized algorithms (Wu et al. 2024; Sharma et al. 2025; Patil 2025).

Our work differs from prior efforts by implementing a hybrid design as an interactive, iterative clarification loop. Unlike approaches that attempt to generate all clarification questions in a single turn, our method refines its understanding through a step-by-step dialogue to resolve ambiguity. This iterative process is not only more efficient but, crucially, allows smaller, resource-constrained models to handle complex multimodal tasks that would otherwise be beyond their capabilities.

Methodology

Text-based Intent Clarification

We propose a zero-shot, **dialogue-driven reasoner** for resolving ambiguous text intents. Our approach extends Chain-of-Thought (CoT) prompting (Zou et al. 2024; Yin, Hwang et al. 2025; Lu et al. 2025a) by guiding a Large Language Model (LLM) to iteratively clarify a user’s goal through conversation. This process relies entirely on in-context learning and does not require any task-specific fine-tuning (Zhang et al. 2025a; Lu et al. 2025a).

Our method operates iteratively. In each turn t , given the initial user request U_0 and the conversation history H_t , the LLM first analyzes the user’s intent to identify known (K_t) and missing (M_t) pieces of information:

$$(K_t, M_t) = \text{Analyze}(U_0, H_t) \quad (1)$$

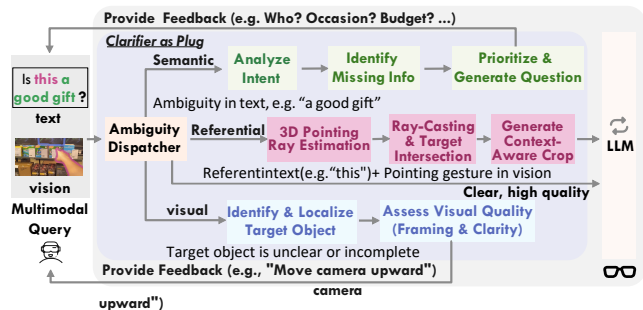


Figure 2: An overview of our clarification pipeline, a plug-in module for resolving ambiguous multimodal queries. The pipeline identifies and addresses three types of underspecification: (1) semantic ambiguity in language (e.g., “a good gift”) is clarified through dialogue; (2) visual ambiguity from unclear object views is handled by requesting a better view; and (3) referential ambiguity from pointing gestures (e.g., “this”) is improved by adaptive image cropping.

To maintain an efficient dialogue, the model then assigns a priority $p(m)$ (e.g., critical, important) to each missing item $m \in M_t$ and selects the highest-priority item $m_t^* = \arg \max_{m \in M_t} p(m)$ to ask about next. The LLM generates a question Q_t based on m_t^* . The user’s answer, A_t , is added to the history ($H_{t+1} = H_t \cup \{(Q_t, A_t)\}$), and the process repeats. The loop terminates when no high-priority information is missing from M_t . Finally, the LLM uses the complete history H_{final} to generate a structured and actionable summary of the user’s intent. The entire process is driven by structured in-context prompts, requiring no updates to the LLM’s parameters (Kojima et al. 2022).

Vision-based Intent Clarification

To address the visual ambiguity inherent in first-person interactions, our framework proposes a **vision clarifier**. As shown in Figure 3, this module is designed to identify the user’s intended visual target and verify its image quality before downstream processing.

The process begins when an VLM parses the query U_v to extract the target object’s class label c in a zero-shot manner:

$$c = \text{ExtractEntity}(U_v) \quad (2)$$

This label c guides an open-set object detector (Liu et al. 2024) to find the object in the image frame I , producing a bounding box B . If the detector fails to find the object, the system prompts the user to point the camera at the target.

Once the object is localized, the system evaluates the quality of the region of interest (ROI) inside B . First, it checks for proper *framing*. The object’s relative area must be within a predefined range $[\tau_{small}, \tau_{large}]$, and its bounding box B must not be clipped by the image edges (margin δ_{edge}). Second, it evaluates *image clarity* using a score that combines two metrics: the variance of the Laplacian (C_{lap}) to detect focus blur (Bansal, Raj, and Choudhury 2016) and the FFT high-frequency energy ratio (C_{fft}) to detect motion blur (Shi, Xu, and Jia 2014). The final clarity score is a weighted

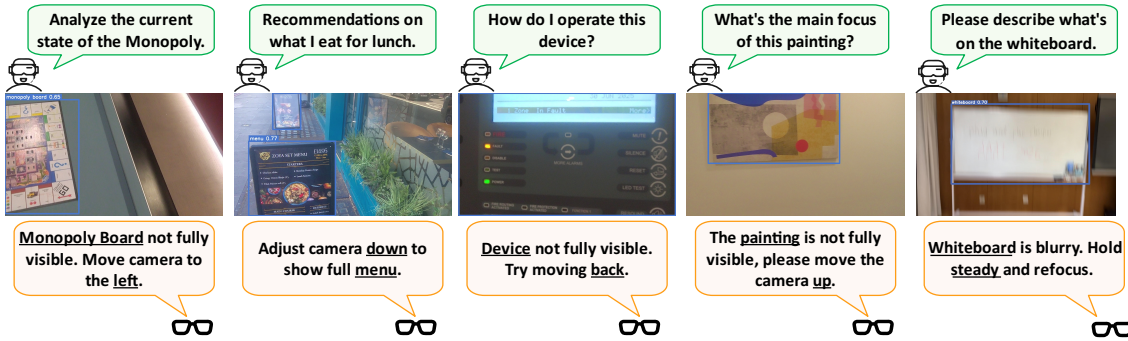


Figure 3: Overview of our vision-based clarification module. Given a user’s query about a physical object, the system first identifies the target class (e.g., “menu”) using an VLM. An open-set detector then localizes the object in the image frame. Subsequently, the visual quality is assessed for framing integrity and clarity. If issues like improper framing or blurriness are detected, the system provides real-time corrective feedback to the user, ensuring high-quality visual input before proceeding.

sum of the normalized values:

$$S_{\text{clarity}}(I_B) = w_{\text{lap}} \cdot \text{Norm}(\mathcal{C}_{\text{lap}}(I_B)) + w_{\text{fit}} \cdot \text{Norm}(\mathcal{C}_{\text{fit}}(I_B)) \quad (3)$$

If the framing is poor or S_{clarity} is below the threshold τ_{blur} , the system gives the user specific, corrective feedback (e.g., “Move further away”, “Hold steady”). This feedback loop repeats until a well-framed, clear image is obtained, improving the reliability of subsequent vision-based tasks.

Cross-Modal Referential Clarification

To resolve referential ambiguity from pointing gestures (e.g., “that object”), our framework introduces a **cross-modal grounding mechanism** that converts the user’s pointing direction into a 3D ray to identify specific objects in the scene. This multi-stage pipeline, depicted in Figure 4, ensures robust grounding from a single egocentric image.

First, we estimate the 3D pointing ray (Nakamura et al. 2023). From a single image I , we concurrently generate a hand segmentation (Wang et al. 2025) mask M_{hand} (via pose estimation (Khanam et al. 2024; Afifi 2019)) and a dense depth map D (via monocular depth estimation (Yang et al. 2024b)). The pointing vector is derived from two keypoints on the contour of M_{hand} : the fingertip (p_{tip}^{2D}) and base (p_{base}^{2D}). To improve robustness against ambiguous contours, we refine the location of p_{tip}^{2D} by analyzing depth gradients along the finger’s axis, ensuring it lies on the foreground finger. These 2D points are then unprojected to 3D using the depth map D . The final pointing ray originates at p_{base}^{3D} with a normalized direction vector \vec{v} :

$$\vec{v} = \frac{p_{\text{tip}}^{3D} - p_{\text{base}}^{3D}}{\|p_{\text{tip}}^{3D} - p_{\text{base}}^{3D}\|} \quad (4)$$

Next, we perform target localization via ray-casting. We cast the ray into the 3D scene to find the intersection point $P_{\text{intersect}}$. This point is determined by finding the point p along the ray whose depth, $\text{depth}(p)$, most closely matches the value in the scene’s depth map D at the corresponding 2D projection of p , denoted as p_{xy} . This process is formulated as:

$$P_{\text{intersect}} = \arg \min_{p \in \text{Ray}(p_{\text{base}}^{3D}, \vec{v})} |\text{depth}(p) - D(p_{xy})| \quad (5)$$

subject to $|\text{depth}(p) - D(p_{xy})| \leq \tau_{\text{collision}}$.

Finally, we conduct object identification and context-aware cropping. Since simple point-based grounding is often brittle in cluttered scenes, our approach generates a depth-aware Region of Interest (ROI). We define a bounding box B_{target} centered on the 2D projection of $P_{\text{intersect}}$, with dimensions dynamically scaled by its depth. This adapts the ROI size to the object’s distance. To resolve the user’s query U_v while preserving deictic context, we perform a context-aware crop: we compute a consolidated bounding box, B_{context} , that minimally encloses both the target ROI B_{target} and the user’s hand. The resulting crop $I[B_{\text{context}}]$ is passed with the query U_v to the VLM, mitigating background noise while retaining the crucial gesture-object link. As validated by our ablation studies (see supplementary material), this method is more robust than direct grounding or simple visual overlays.

Experiments

Experimental Setup

Dataset. Our evaluation leverages established benchmarks for textual disambiguation and introduces a novel benchmark to address ambiguities unique to first-person vision. For textual tasks, we use IN3 (Qian et al. 2024) and CLAMBER (Zhang et al. 2024a), with the hierarchical attributes in IN3 being crucial for assessing our model’s prioritization mechanism. To address the lack of targeted evaluation for visuospatial ambiguity, we introduce VRA-Ego (Visual and Referential Ambiguity in Egocentric view), a new benchmark of 1000 samples captured with modern AR glasses (e.g., Ray-Ban Meta (2024), RayNeo X2/X3 Pro (2025)). VRA-Ego is composed of two purpose-built subsets:

- Visual Ambiguity Set (500 images): This subset features intentionally flawed visual data (e.g., blur, poor framing). The ground truth consists of the precise corrective guidance needed to resolve the issue.
- Referential Ambiguity Set (500 samples): This subset focuses on grounding deictic gestures, containing pointing actions, ambiguous queries, and their corresponding annotated answers.

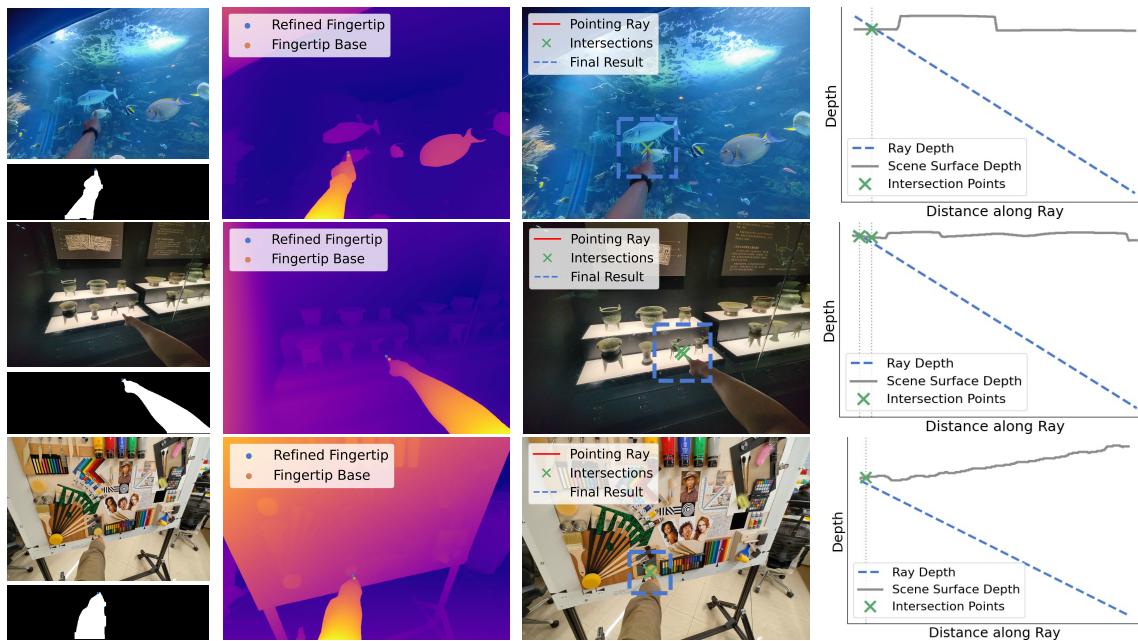


Figure 4: Our multi-stage pipeline for resolving cross-modal referential ambiguity. From a single image, we (1) estimate a 3D pointing ray from the user’s hand gesture, (2) cast this ray into the scene to find a 3D intersection point, and (3) identify the target object and generate a context-aware crop containing both the hand and the object, which is then passed to a VLM for final interpretation.

The entire dataset is meticulously curated for diversity across scenes, lighting, object distances, and hand-object configurations to ensure real-world robustness.

Evaluation Metrics. To evaluate our framework, we adopt a multi-faceted approach that assesses both component-level success and the semantic quality of the final output. For textual disambiguation, we first measure initial Vagueness Judgement Accuracy and dialogue efficiency through Average Conversation Rounds. The core performance is then captured by a Missing Details Recover Rate, calculated via a novel automated pipeline that simulates interaction to test the recovery of critical attributes. This principle of evaluating nuanced recovery extends to the vision module, where we assess not only the initial Target Identification Accuracy but also the quality of corrective feedback using a Strict and a Loose Recover Rate—the latter crediting partially correct suggestions (e.g., “left” for “top-left”). Ultimately, for cross-modal clarification, we evaluate pipeline applicability with Pointing Success Accuracy and measure the final output quality with a Semantic Answer Recover Rate. Here, to transcend the limitations of simple string matching and assess true comprehension, we employ a LLM judge to score the semantic similarity between the generated answer and the ground truth.

Comparison to Existing Methods

Choice of Baseline Model and Implementation Details. Our framework is designed as a zero-shot, external programmatic loop that enhances existing foundation models. To isolate and validate its benefits, we benchmark it against

strong monolithic baselines across three core clarification tasks. Our method is evaluated by augmenting a diverse set of foundation models (Qwen, Llama, GPT-4o, Gemini, etc.), creating enhanced versions we denote with a -Clarifier suffix. The experimental comparisons are as follows:

- **Textual Disambiguation:** We compare our iterative, multi-step clarification process against a standard monolithic prompt baseline. The baseline performs all reasoning steps (analysis, question generation) within a single, complex prompt, whereas our method guides the LLM through a sequence of targeted queries.
- **Visual Object Grounding:** The baseline VLM receives only the user query and image. In contrast, the VLM-Clarifier is augmented with our module that first invokes an open-set object detector and then performs a deterministic quality assessment on the resulting bounding box before proceeding.
- **Cross-Modal Referential Resolution:** The baseline VLM processes the raw image and query directly. The corresponding VLM-Clarifier is enhanced by our multi-stage pipeline that integrates depth estimation, hand segmentation, and 3D ray-casting to robustly interpret pointing gestures before feeding the identified target to the VLM.

For additional implementation details and baseline analyses (GPT-4 (OpenAI 2023), Mistral variants (Jiang et al. 2023; Qian et al. 2024)), please refer to the Appendix.

Quantitative Analysis. Our quantitative evaluation shows that our modular and programmatic framework achieves significant performance improvements on textual, visual,

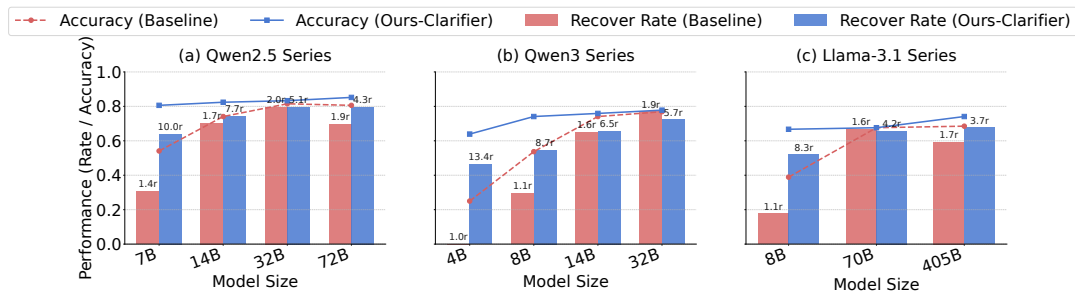


Figure 5: A comparative analysis of our proposed framework against the baseline across three open-source LLM families: (a) Qwen2.5, (b) Qwen3, and (c) Llama-3.1. The evaluation spans a range of model sizes to assess performance scalability. The primary performance metric, Recover Rate (representing the recovery of critical missing details), is shown using bar charts for both our method (blue) and the baseline (red). Additionally, the Accuracy (Baseline) is plotted as a dashed red line, while the Average Conversation Rounds (denoted by 'r' values) are annotated above each bar to measure dialogue efficiency.

Model	Parameter Size	Accuracy (%) \uparrow	
		w/o. Clarifier	w. Clarifier
Qwen2.5 (Yang et al. 2024a)	7B	24.4	53.0 (+ 28.6)
	14B	56.0	61.8 (+ 5.8)
	32B	56.0	66.0 (+ 10.0)
	72B	54.2	65.4 (+ 11.2)
LLama-3.1 (Dubey et al. 2024)	8B	25.9	52.9 (+ 27)
	70B	53.5	59.3 (+ 5.8)
	405B	54.9	60.1 (+ 5.2)

Table 1: Vagueness Judgement Accuracy on the CLAMBER benchmark. Our iterative Clarifier framework substantially boosts performance over single-prompt baselines. The framework yields an approximate 30% increase for smaller models like Llama-3.1-8B and Qwen2.5-7B, elevating them to be competitive with much larger counterparts. This demonstrates that our structured, step-by-step approach acts as a critical reasoning scaffold, enabling smaller models to handle complex clarification tasks reliably.

and cross-modal clarification tasks. These improvements are driven by the framework’s ability to either scaffold the reasoning of smaller models or to incorporate deterministic algorithms for tasks where Vision-Language Models (VLMs) are known to perform poorly.

The benefit of our iterative framework is most pronounced for smaller language models. As shown in Figure 5, our method improves the Recover Rate for smaller models like Qwen3-4B and Qwen2.5-7B by 43% and 32% respectively. This is because our step-by-step process decomposes a complex task into manageable sub-problems, which often overwhelms the single-turn capabilities of these models. While still beneficial, the performance margin narrows for larger models (e.g., Llama-3.1-405B) that are already proficient with complex, monolithic prompts. This trend is corroborated on the CLAMBER dataset (Table 1), where our framework elevates the vagueness judgment accuracy of smaller models by nearly 30%, making them competitive with much larger counterparts.

Our framework also shows strong performance on visuospatial tasks that challenge the geometric reasoning capa-

bilities of end-to-end VLMs. For example, baseline models can identify visual referents but fail to provide precise spatial corrective feedback, achieving low Strict Recover Rates for directional guidance (31.5%–46.2%) (Table 2). To overcome this, our -Clarifier module performs deterministic geometric analysis on the object’s bounding box. This targeted approach improves the Strict Recover Rate by a large margin of 11.9% to 20.7%.

Similarly, monolithic VLMs struggle to interpret pointing gestures from raw images, with the top baseline reaching a Recover Rate of only 67.3% (Table 2). Our framework addresses this limitation by employing a two-step process: it first detects the pointing intent with high accuracy (87.2%–95.1%) before engaging a specialized 3D ray-casting pipeline. This explicit geometric modeling leads to consistent gains in task success, improving the Recover Rate by 3.1% to 6.6% for all evaluated VLMs. For both visuospatial tasks, this decompositional strategy allows our framework to surpass the performance of purely learned systems, resulting in a more robust solution.

Qualitative Results. Our qualitative analysis substantiates the quantitative results, demonstrating the framework’s practical robustness and efficiency. The core of our approach is an iterative, step-by-step process that systematically reduces ambiguity across modalities.

In textual dialogues, this manifests as significantly lower inference latency. By using targeted, minimal prompts each turn rather than a single monolithic one, complex disambiguation is resolved efficiently. This structured methodology proves equally effective in vision-centric tasks (Figure 3). Our framework reliably analyzes complex scenes like chessboards or fine-print menus—scenarios where monolithic baselines often fail due to unresolved visual ambiguity.

The framework’s advantage is most pronounced in resolving cross-modal pointing in cluttered environments (Figure 4). While baselines are often distracted by salient but incorrect objects, our method robustly grounds the user’s deictic reference. It first reconstructs the 3D pointing ray, intersects it with the scene using the depth map, and then generates a context-aware crop that isolates the target while preserving the vital hand-object relationship. This focused input en-

Model	(a) Vision-based Clarification			(b) Cross-Modal Pointing	
	Accuracy (%) \uparrow	Recover Rate (%) \uparrow		Accuracy (%) \uparrow	Recover Rate (%) \uparrow
		Strict	Loose		
gemini-2.5-pro (Google DeepMind 2025)	91.8	46.2	60.2	-	67.4
gemini-2.5-pro-Clarifier	95.4 (+ 3.6)	64.6 (+ 18.4)	75.8 (+ 15.6)	95.2	72.6 (+ 5.2)
GPT-4o (Hurst et al. 2024)	90.0	40.6	57.0	-	65.2
GPT-4o-Clarifier	92.4 (+ 2.4)	61.4 (+ 20.8)	73.6 (+ 16.6)	94.4	69.0 (+ 3.8)
Qwen2.5-VL (Bai et al. 2025)	86.6	35.4	53.2	-	57.8
Qwen2.5-VL-Clarifier	91.2 (+ 4.6)	47.4 (+ 12.0)	70.0 (+ 16.8)	92.4	64.4 (+ 6.6)
llava-v1.6 (Li et al. 2024)	84.8	36.6	41.6	-	53.6
llava-v1.6-Clarifier	89.8 (+ 5.0)	53.2 (+ 16.6)	52.8 (+ 11.2)	91.6	58.0 (+ 4.4)
InternVL 3.0 (Zhu et al. 2025)	83.2	35.6	59.6	-	51.6
InternVL 3.0-Clarifier	88.6 (+ 5.4)	50.2 (+ 14.6)	70.2 (+ 10.6)	93.6	57.8 (+ 6.2)
Llama 3.2 (Dubey et al. 2024)	82.6	35.6	51.6	-	50.2
Llama 3.2-Clarifier	85.4 (+ 2.8)	51.2 (+ 15.6)	64.6 (+ 13.0)	91.2	53.8 (+ 3.6)
MiniCPM-V (Yao et al. 2024)	81.6	31.6	48.8	-	47.0
MiniCPM-V-Clarifier	86.2 (+ 4.6)	43.6 (+ 12.0)	63.4 (+ 14.6)	88.2	52.0 (+ 5.0)
Molmo (Deitke et al. 2025)	80.0	37.6	48.6	-	48.4
Molmo-Clarifier	84.0 (+ 4.0)	52.8 (+ 15.2)	62.2 (+ 13.6)	87.2	51.6 (+ 3.2)

Table 2: Performance on Vision-based and Cross-Modal Pointing Clarification. The table compares baseline VLMs against the same models enhanced by our framework (suffixed with -Clarifier) on two egocentric tasks: (a) Evaluates corrective guidance for imperfect visual input. Here, Accuracy measures initial object identification, while Recover Rate (Strict/Loose) assesses the quality of the generated guidance. (b) Tests grounding of deictic queries via 3D pointing. Here, Accuracy (N/A for baselines) is our framework’s success in detecting pointing intent, and Recover Rate measures the final answer’s semantic accuracy.

ables the VLM to succeed where it would otherwise fail. We note that the primary failure mode occurs when monocular depth estimation is inaccurate for thin or reflective surfaces, causing the ray to pass through the intended object. A detailed gallery of qualitative comparisons is in the Appendix.

Ablation Studies

We conducted ablation studies to validate our key design choices and assess the sensitivity of our modular framework.

- **Object Detector Robustness:** We evaluated the framework’s sensitivity to the choice of object detector. While substituting our default model with Florence-2 (Xiao et al. 2024) caused a small decrease in performance (1% Accuracy, 3% Recover Rate), other models like YOLOE (Wang et al. 2025) and YOLO-World (Cheng et al. 2024) showed slightly larger drops (2% Accuracy, 5% Recover Rate). Nevertheless, the performance with all alternative detectors remained substantially higher than the baseline without our clarifier, indicating that our method consistently improves results regardless of the detector used.
- **Importance of Specialized Fingertip Detection:** To measure the impact of our custom fingertip detector, we substituted it with the standard MediaPipe library (Lugaresi, Tang et al. 2019). This led to a significant decrease in Pointing Success Accuracy (15%). This is because MediaPipe is not robust to the challenging hand views—often occluded or low-resolution in egocentric data, which confirms the need for our tailored approach.
- **Effective VLM Input Grounding:** Finally, as detailed in the Appendix, our context-aware cropping strategy for grounding VLM input proved more effective than alter-

native methods like point-based segmentation or using the full image (Guo, Wu et al. 2025), further justifying our specific design.

Collectively, these results highlight a key finding: while our framework provides a robust scaffold that is not overly sensitive to the choice of a general object detector, its peak performance critically relies on components specifically tailored to the challenges of egocentric vision, such as our specialized fingertip detector.

Conclusion

In this paper, we introduced a modular framework for resolving multimodal user intent ambiguity in egocentric vision. Our approach emulates a Chain-of-Thought process, decomposing complex and ambiguous queries into a sequence of simpler, verifiable sub-problems. These sub-problems are solved by specialized modules, including modules for textual analysis, visual quality assessment using a hybrid of a Vision-Language Model (VLM) and traditional algorithms, and 3D gesture grounding via ray-casting. A key result of our work is that this structured reasoning process significantly improves the performance of smaller language models (e.g., 7B models) on text intent disambiguation, making our approach practical for deployment on resource-constrained platforms, such as AR glasses. Our work shows that hybrid architectures, which combine the reasoning capabilities of large models with the precision of deterministic algorithms, present a promising direction for building more capable and reliable embodied AI. Future work will improve conversational efficiency and extend our approach to physically embodied agents that actively seek clarification.

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