

Transformers and ViT

CSE 849 Deep Learning
Spring 2025

Zijun Cui

Project 3

- It requires considerable time from your end.
- **Plan ahead and Start early.**

Class Schedule Update

- We will begin *Generative Modeling* immediately after the *Transformer* lectures. Topics on *Graph Neural Networks* will be moved to the end of the course. This change ensures that you learn about *Diffusion Models* in time for Project 4.

3/24	17 Transformer and ViT We are here	18 Transformer Case Study: LLMs
3/31	19 Probabilistic Deep Learning and Generative modeling	20 Generative Modeling
4/7	21 Diffusion Models 1	22 Diffusion Models 2 Project 4 Out; Project 3 Due
4/14	23 Diffusion Models Applications and Bayesian Deep Learning	24 Bayesian Deep Learning and Deep PGM
4/21	25 Graph Neural Network	No Class
4/28	Final Exam Week	Final Exam Week Project 4 Due on Wednesday, April 30th.

I plan to have **no class on Thursday, April 24**, to give you more time to focus on Project 4

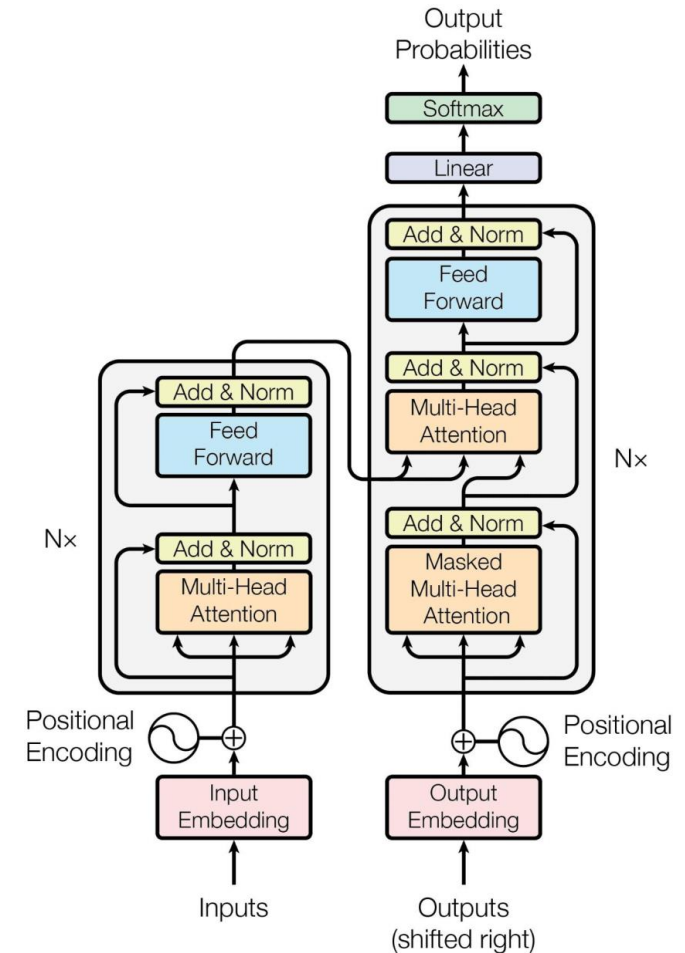
- I have updated syllabus in Piazza accordingly.

Now let's continue from the last lecture and finish Transformer Architecture

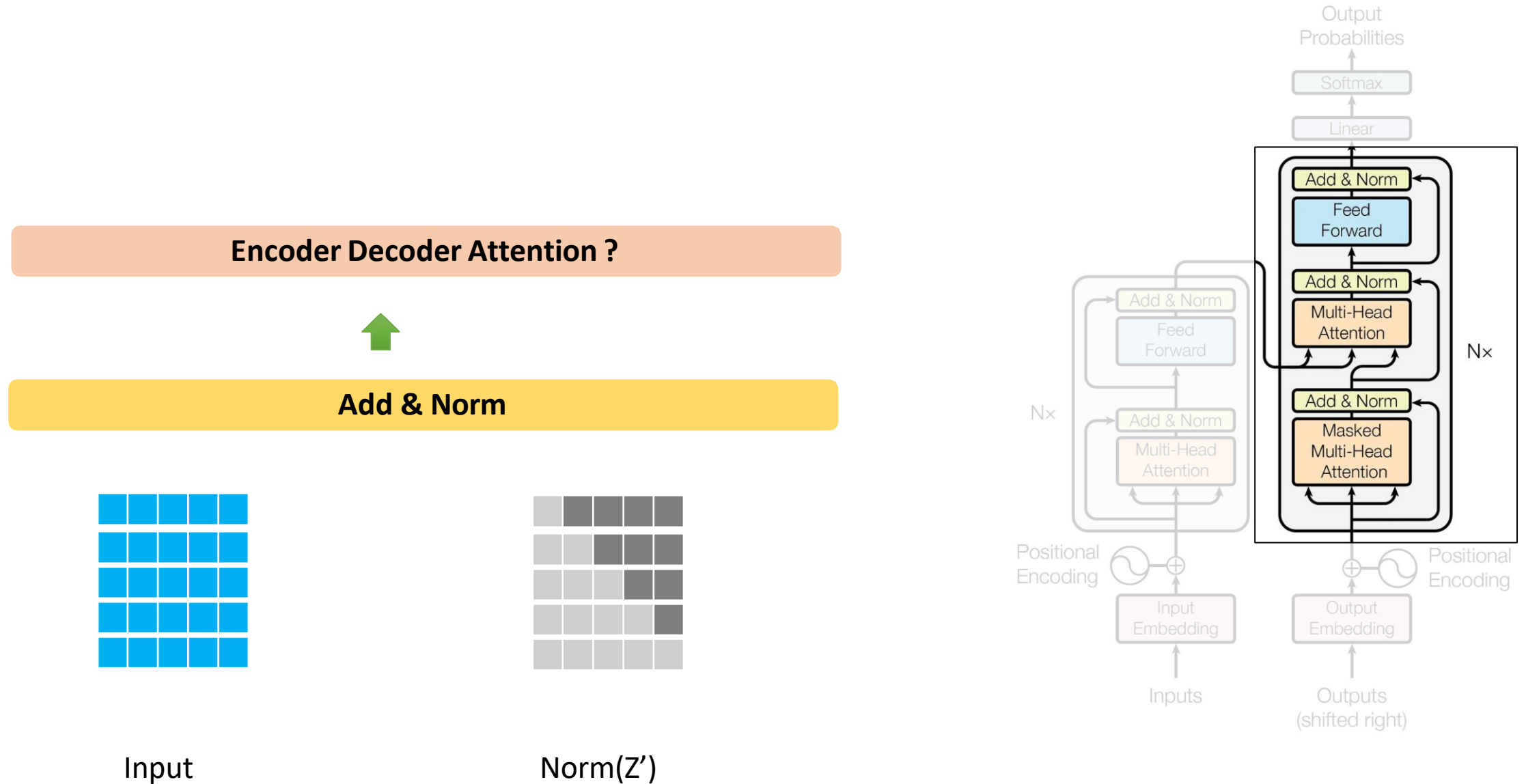
Transformers

- ✓ Tokenization
- ✓ Input Embeddings
- ✓ Position Encodings
- ✓ Query, Key, & Value
- ✓ Attention
- ✓ Self Attention
- ✓ Multi-Head Attention
- ✓ Feed Forward
- ✓ Add & Norm
- ✓ Encoders

- ✓ Masked Attention
 - Encoder Decoder Attention
 - Linear
 - Softmax
 - Decoders
 - Encoder-Decoder Models



Encoder Decoder Attention



Encoder Decoder Attention

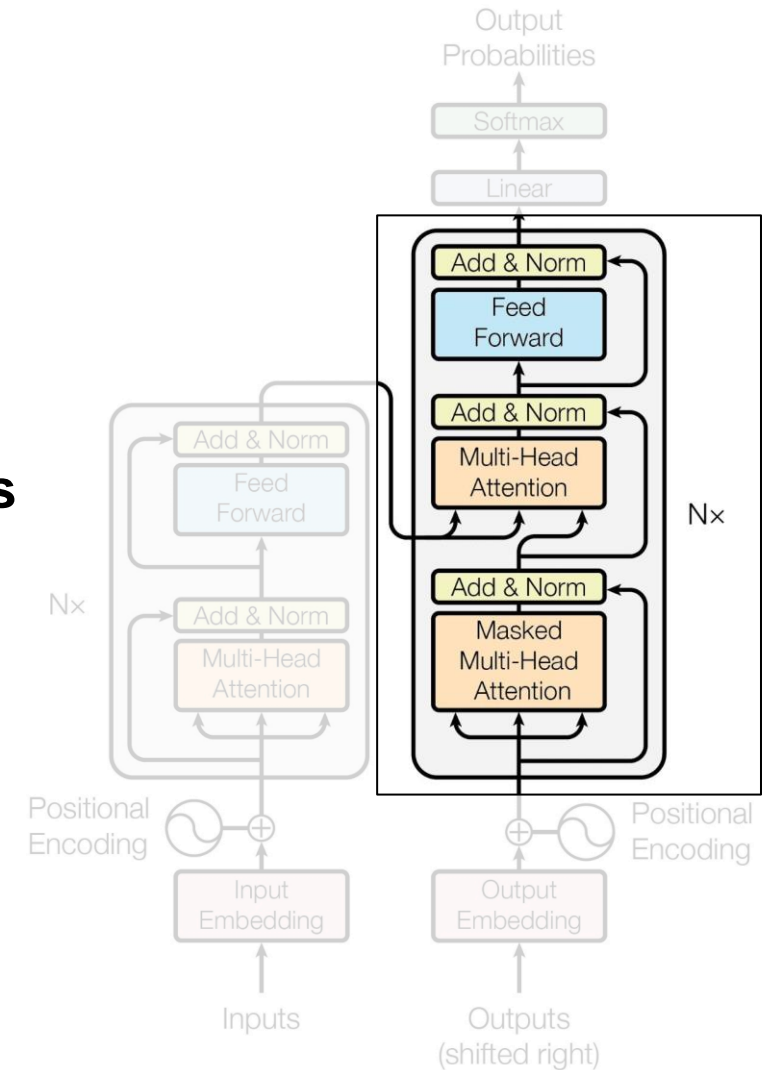
Encoder

Keys from **Encoder Outputs**
Values from **Encoder Outputs**

Decoder

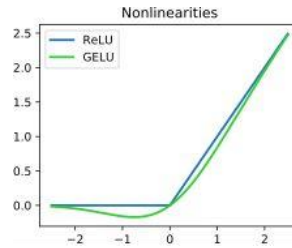
Queries from **Decoder Inputs**

NOTE: Every decoder block receives the same FINAL encoder output

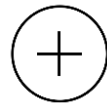
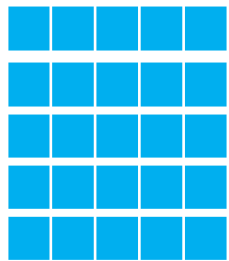


Encoder Decoder Attention

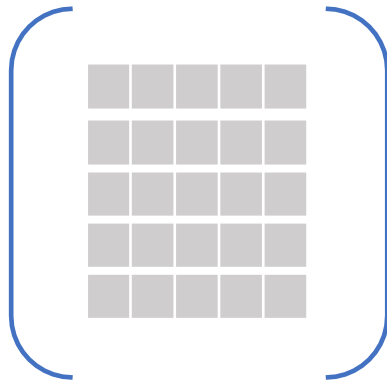
- Non Linearity
- Complex Relationships
- Learn from each other



Feed Forward

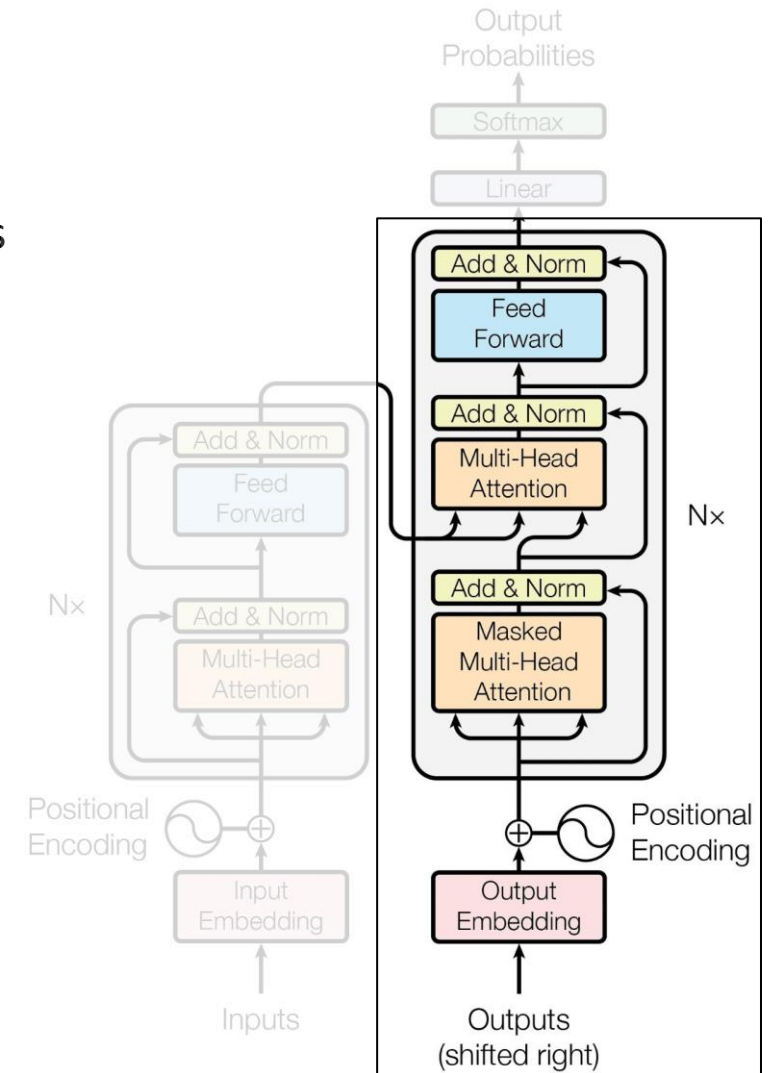


Residuals

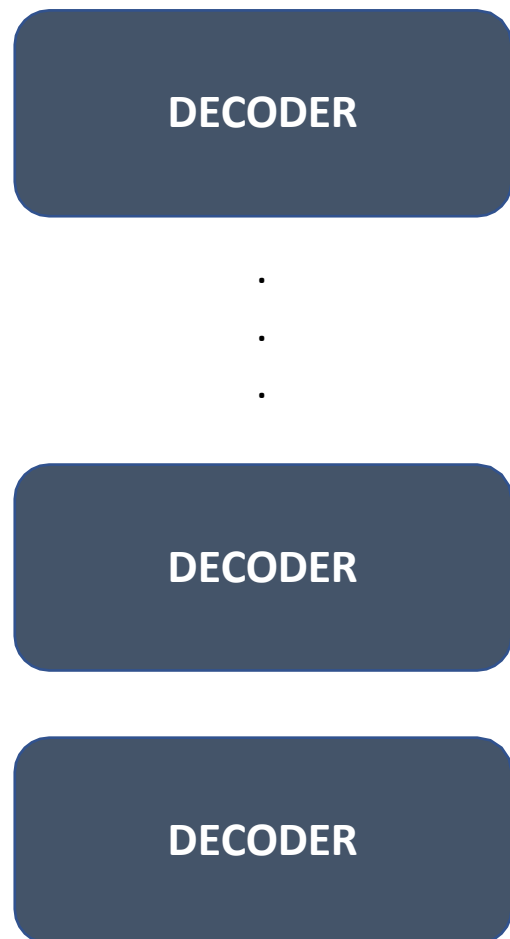


Norm(Z'')

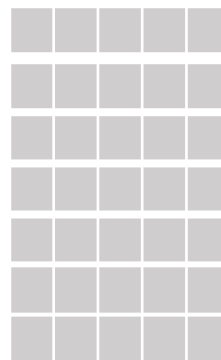
Add n Norm Decoder Self Attn



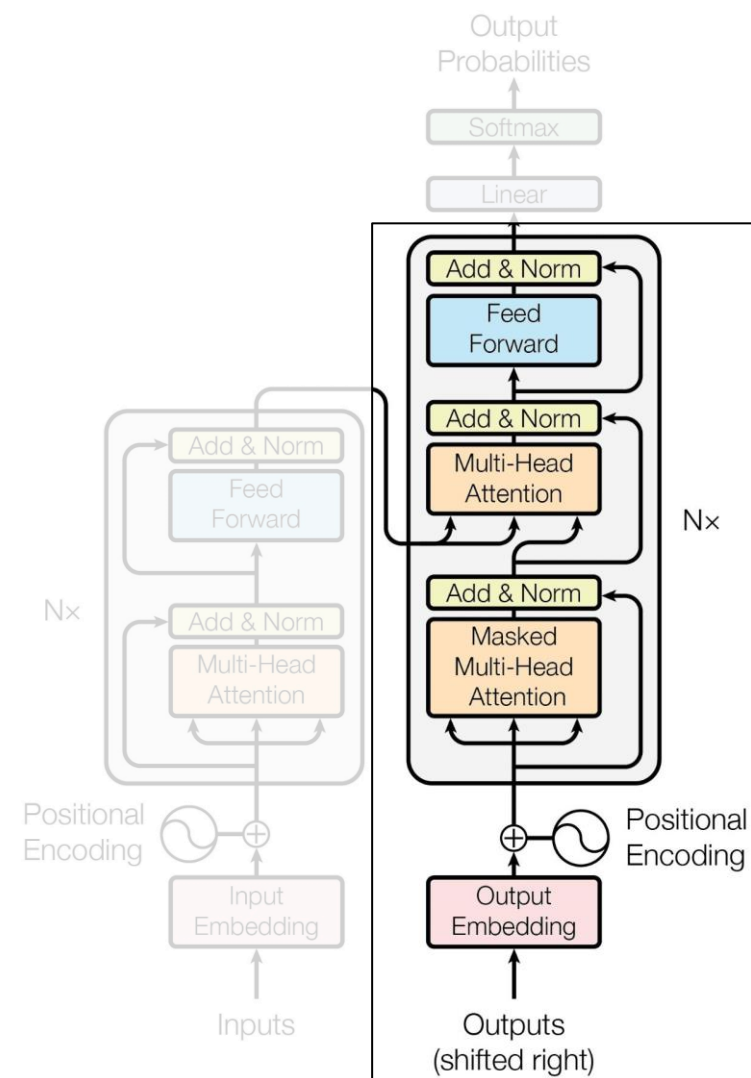
Decoder



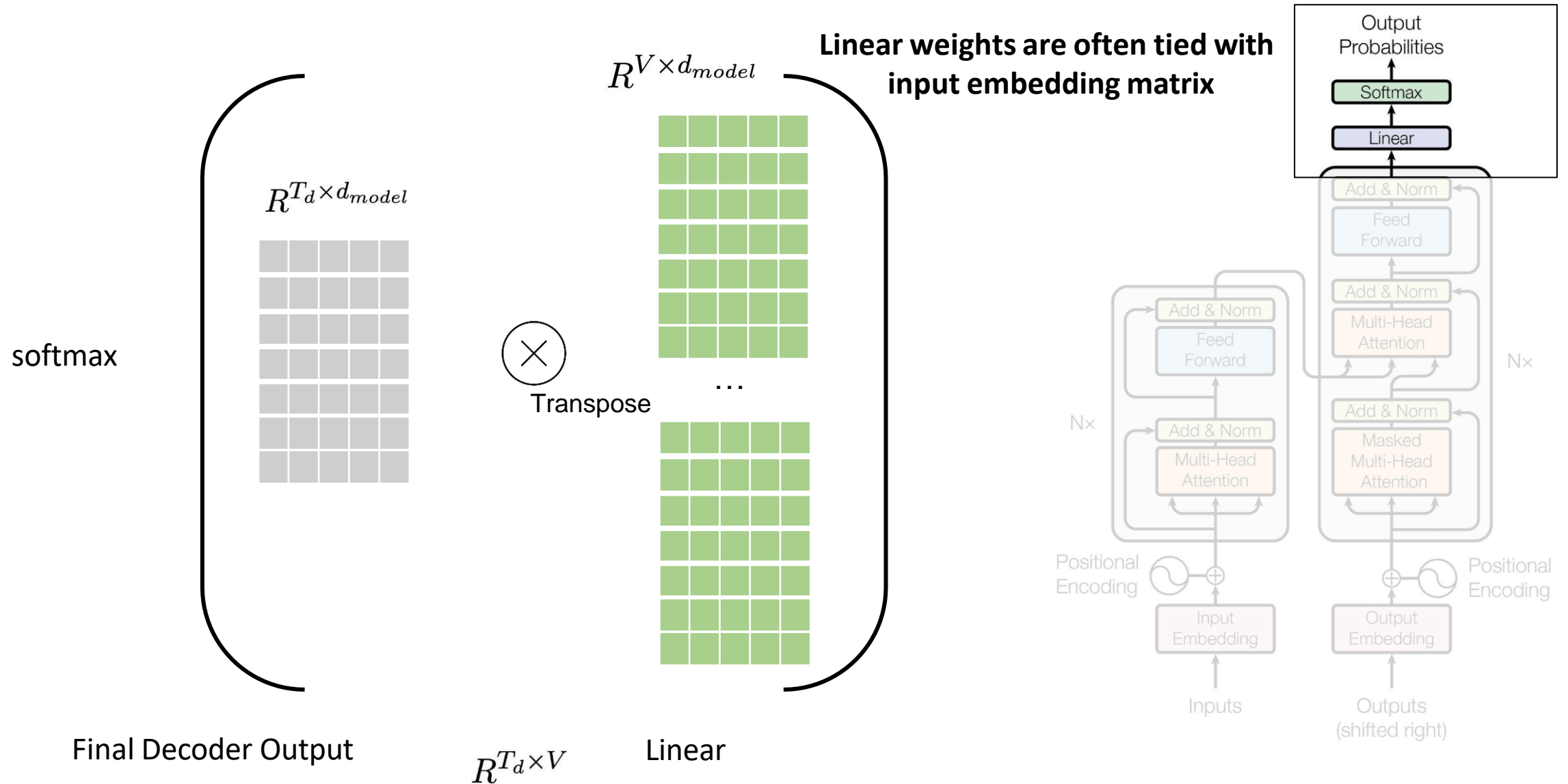
$$R^{T_d \times d_{model}}$$



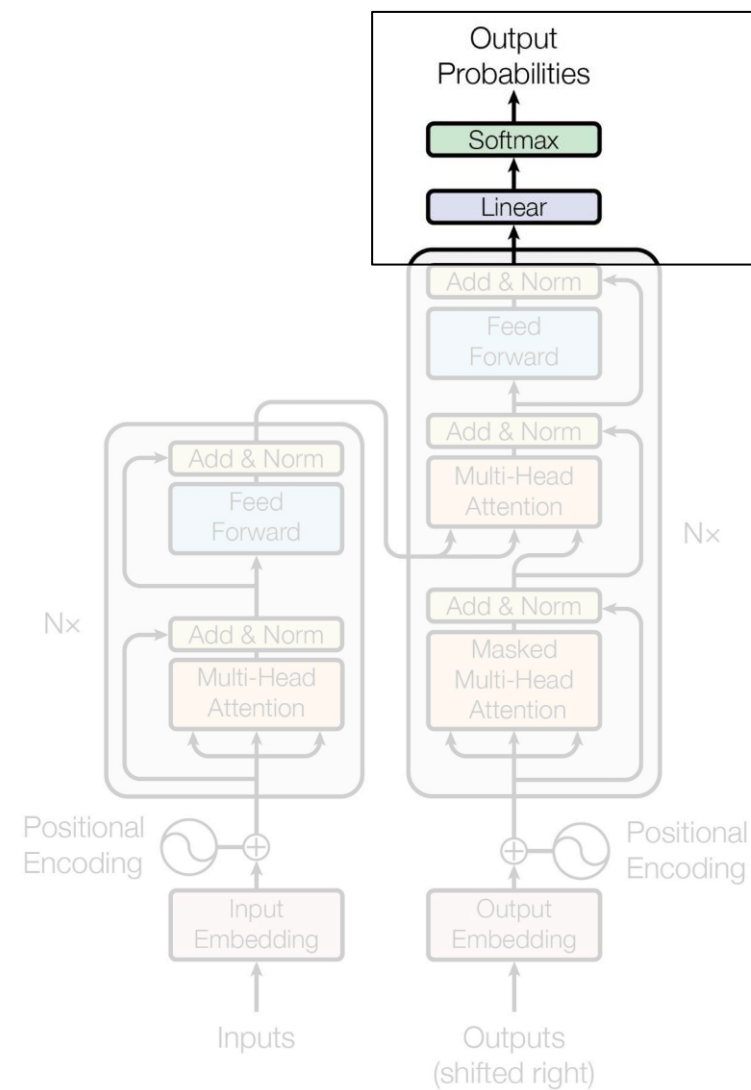
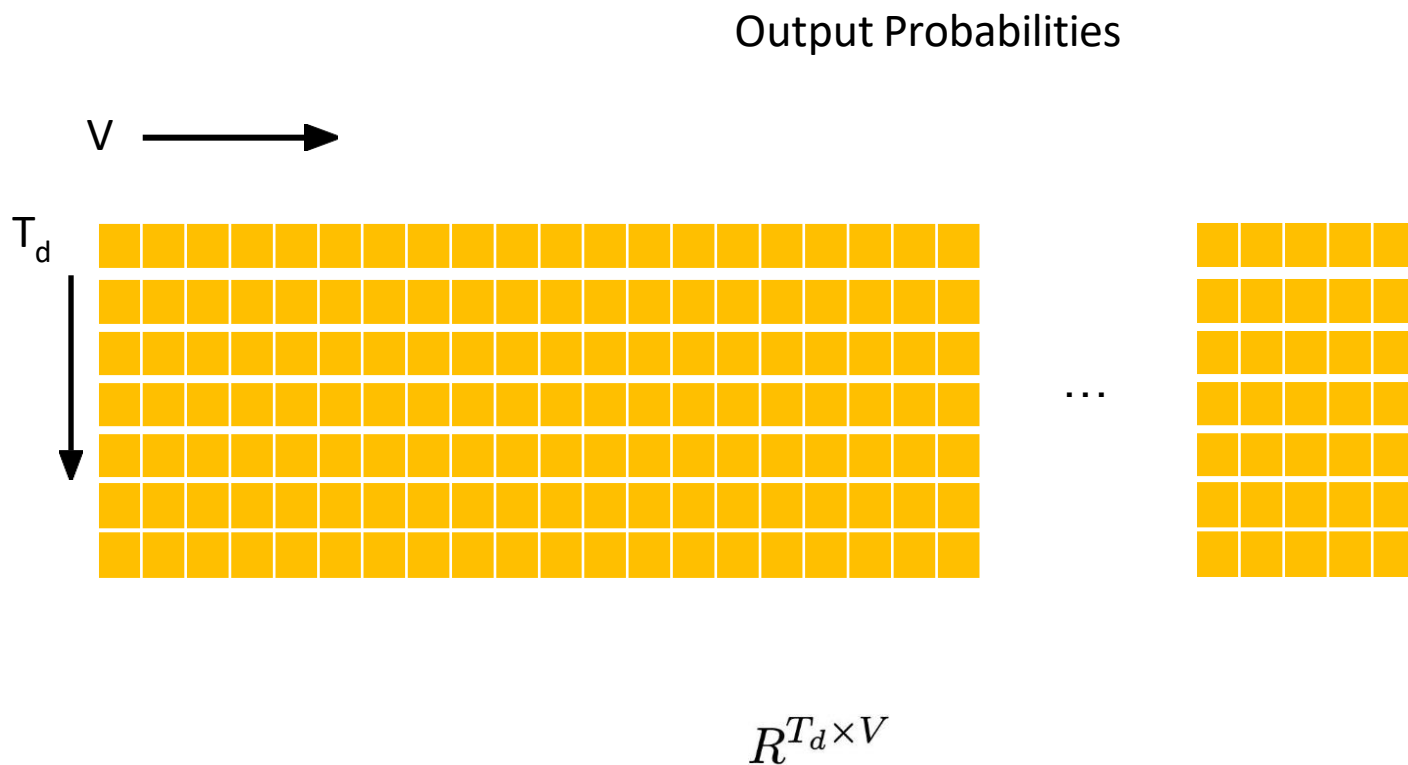
Decoder output



Linear

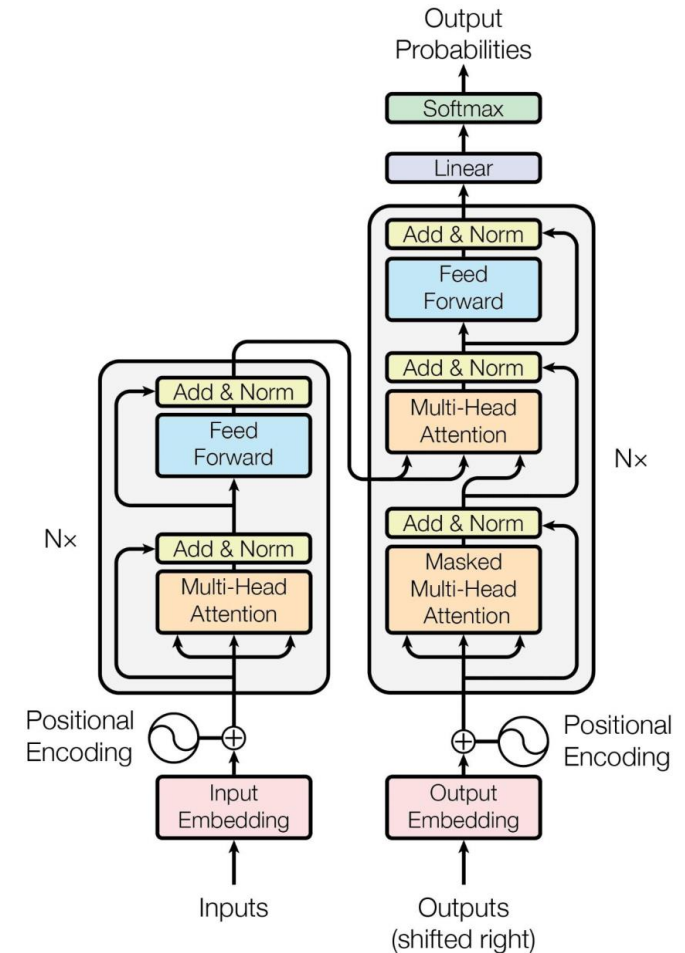


Softmax



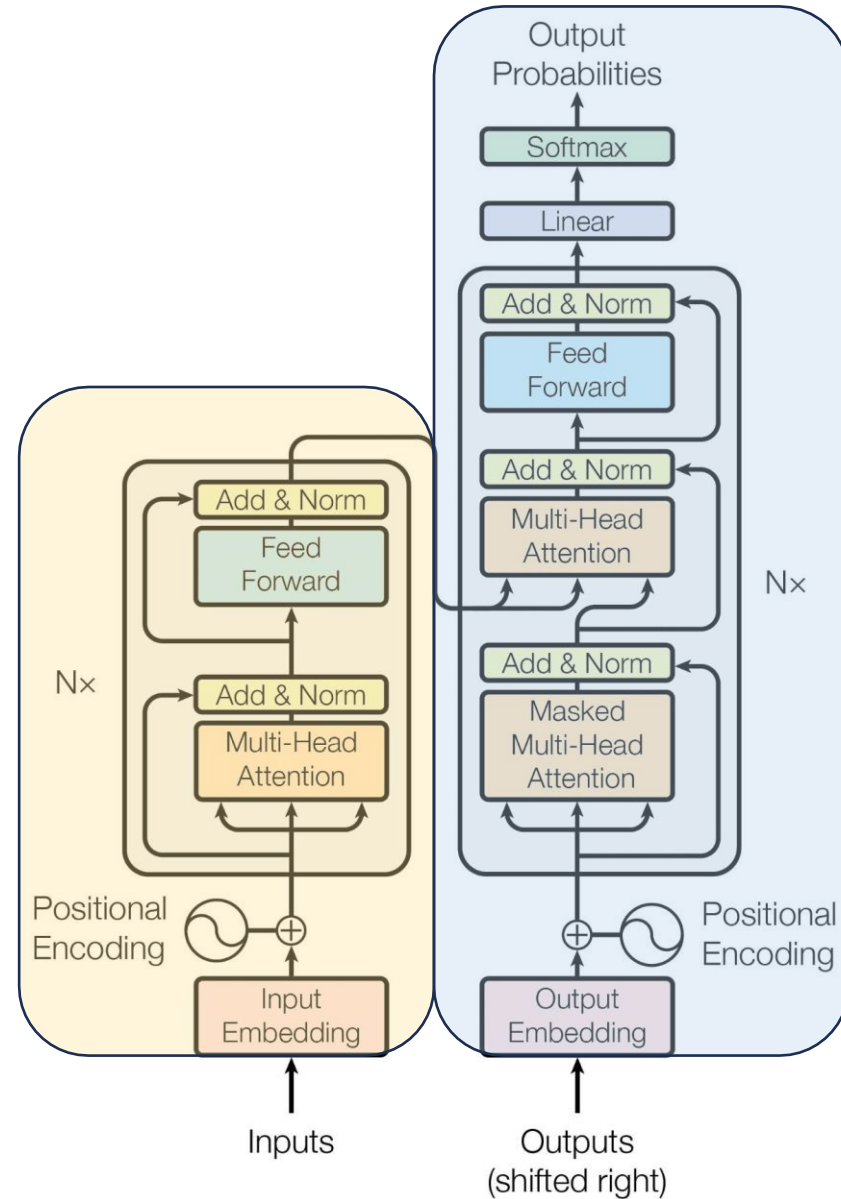
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 - Encoder-Decoder Models



Transformers

Representation

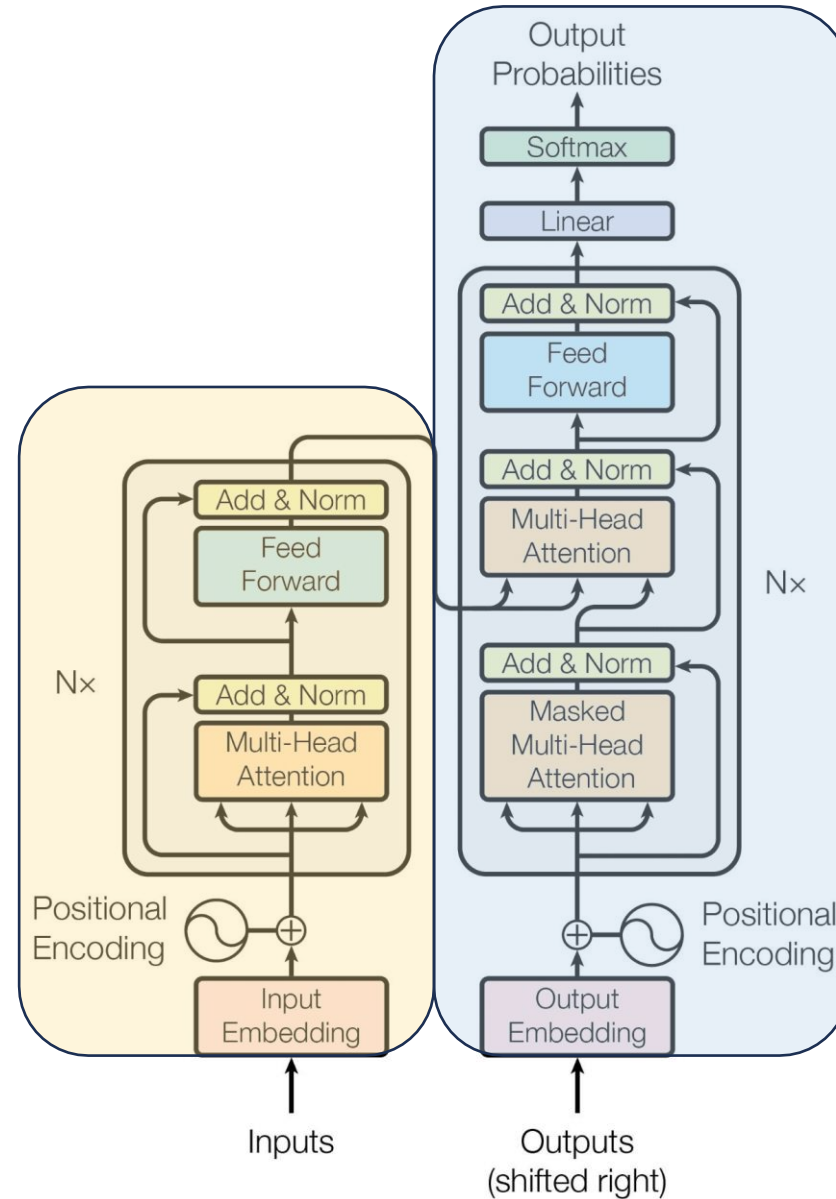


Generation

Transformers

Input – input tokens
Output – hidden states

Representation



Input – output tokens and hidden states
Output – output tokens

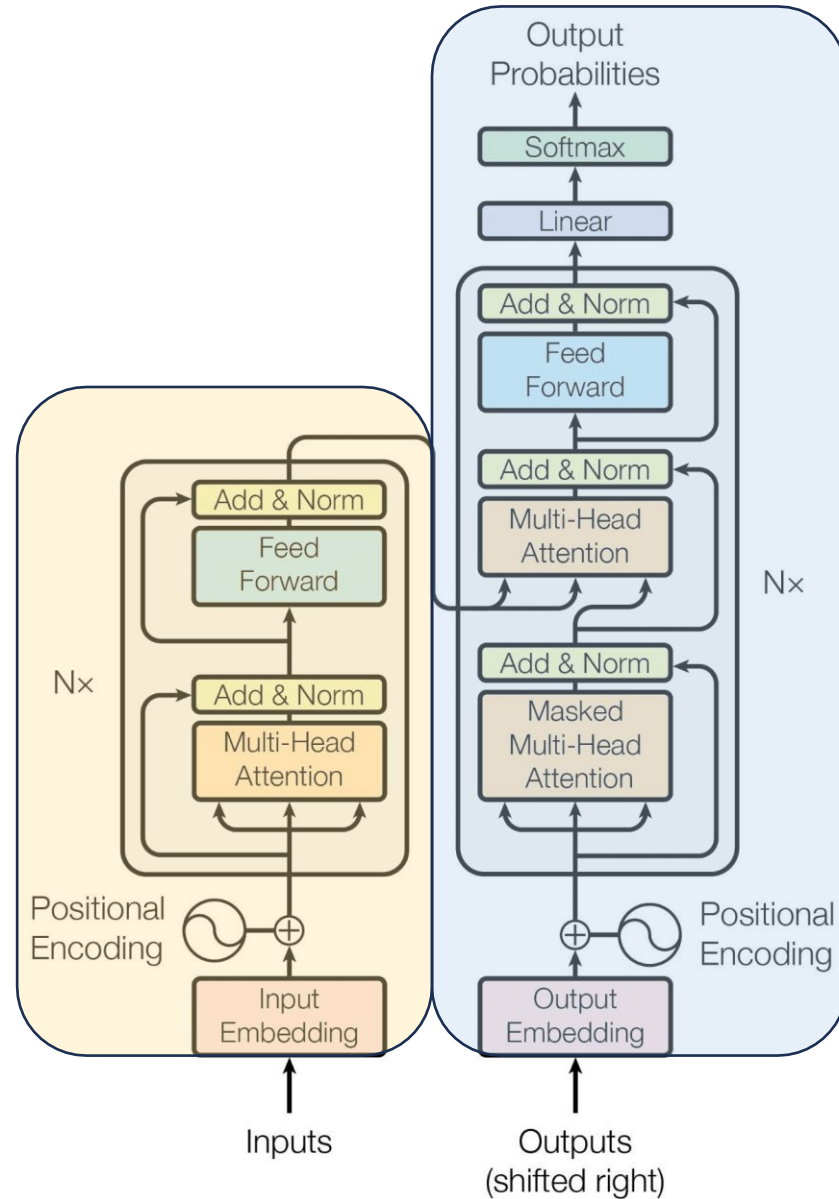
Generation

Transformers

Input – input tokens
Output – hidden states

Model can see all timesteps

Representation



Input – output tokens and hidden states

Output – output tokens

Model can only see previous timesteps

Generation

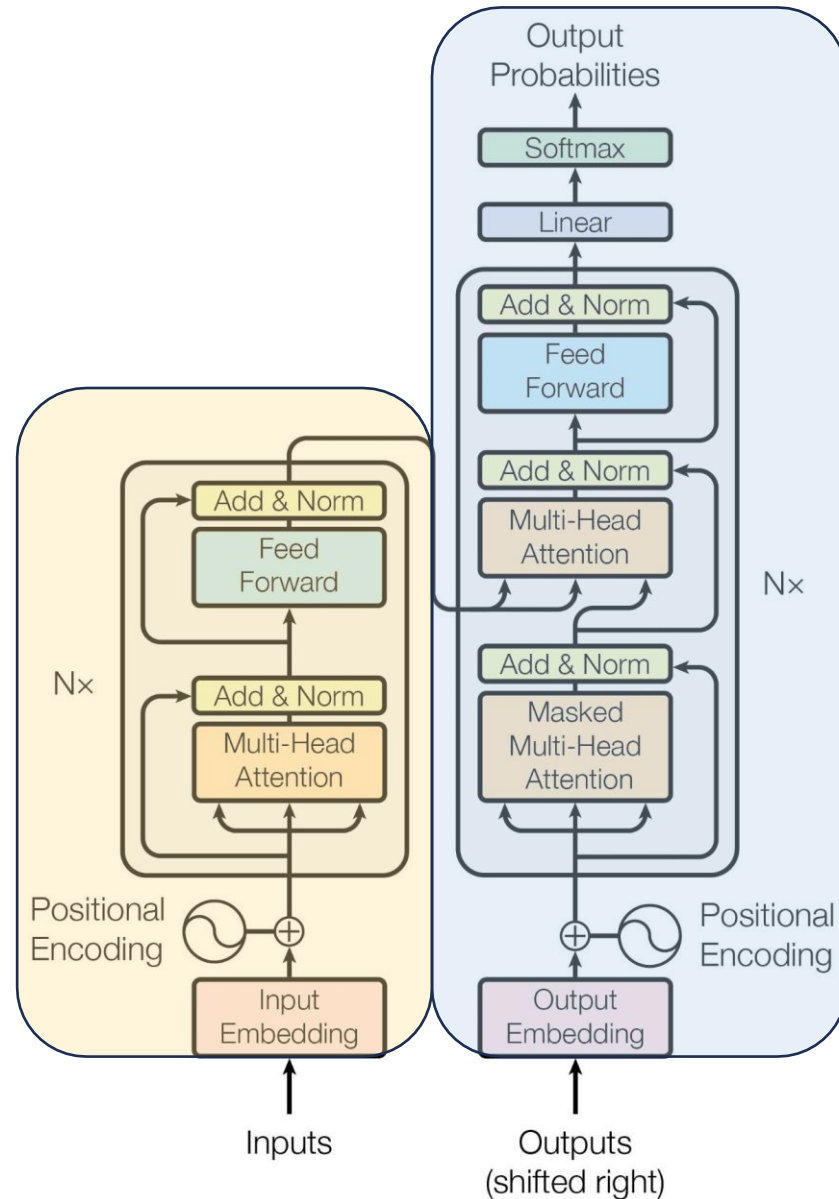
Transformers

Input – input tokens
Output – hidden states

Model can see all timesteps

Does not usually output tokens, so
no inherent auto-regressivity

Representation



Input – output tokens and hidden states

Output – output tokens

Model can only see previous
timesteps

Model is auto-regressive with
previous timesteps' outputs

Generation

Transformers

Input – input tokens

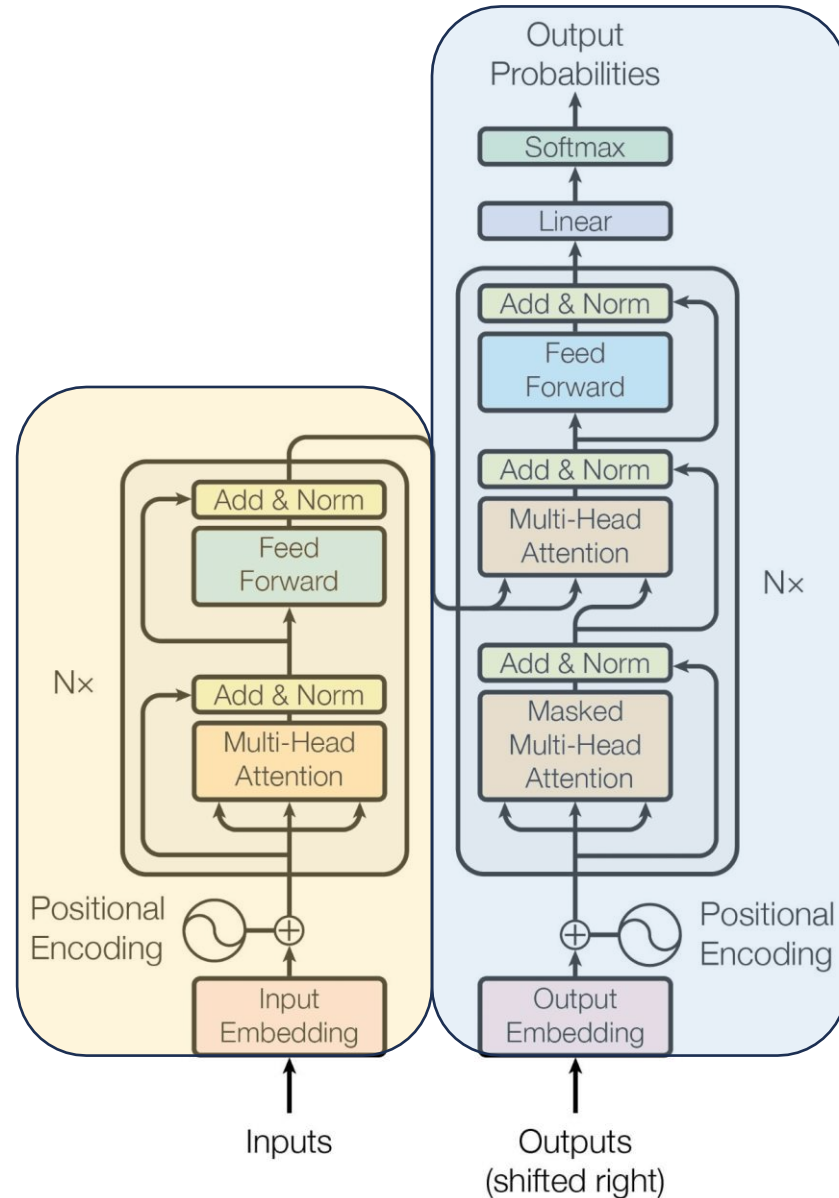
Output – hidden states

Model can see all timesteps

Does not usually output tokens, so no inherent auto-regressivity

Can also be adapted to generate tokens by appending a module that maps hidden state dimensionality to vocab size

Representation



Input – output tokens and hidden states

Output – output tokens

Model can only see previous timesteps

Model is auto-regressive with previous timesteps' outputs

Can also be adapted to generate hidden states by looking before token outputs

Generation

Transformers

- ✓ Tokenization
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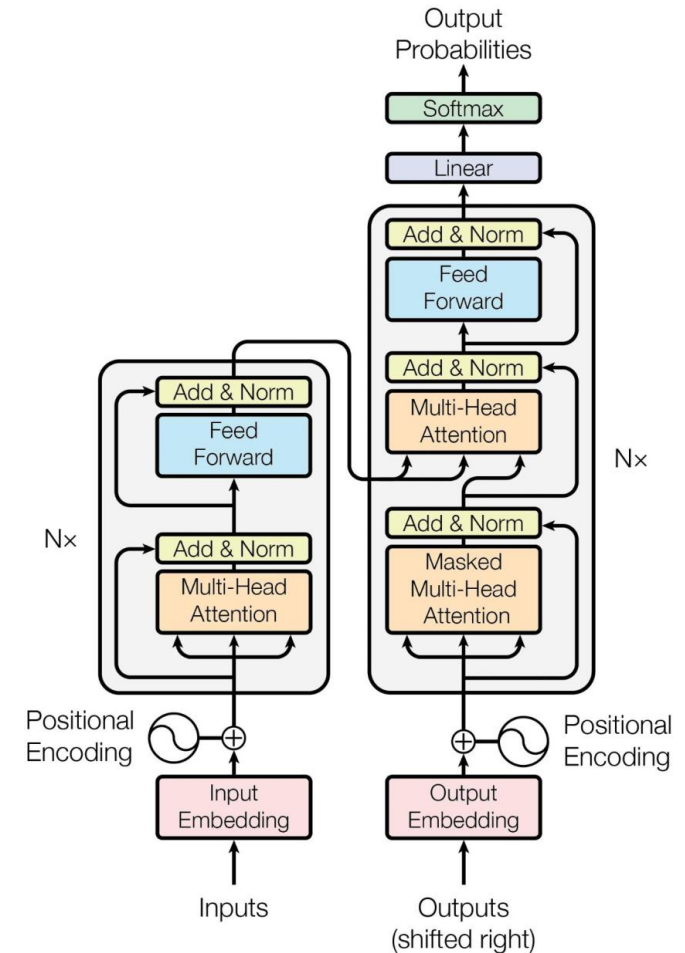


Table of contents

✓ The Transformer Architecture

1. **Pre-training and Fine-tuning**
2. Transformer Applications
3. Case study - Large Language Models

How to train and fine-tune transformers

1. Training



```
graph LR; A[1. Training] --> B[2. Inference]
```

2. Inference

How to train and fine-tune transformers

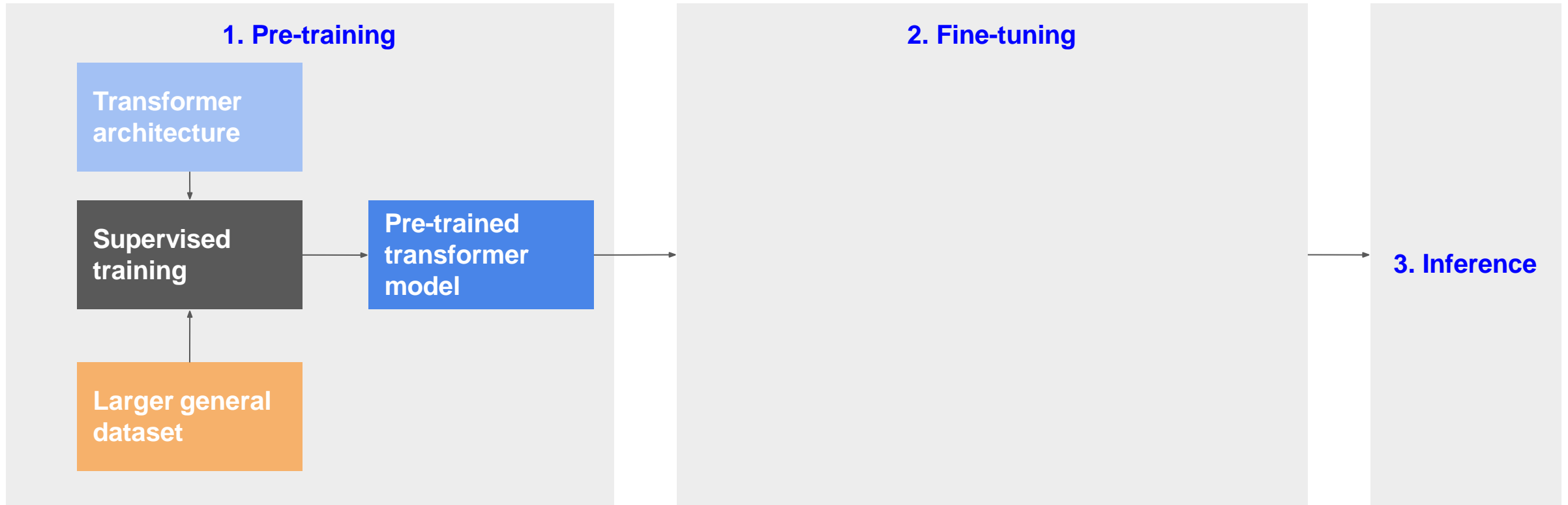
1. Pre-training

2. Fine-tuning

3. Inference



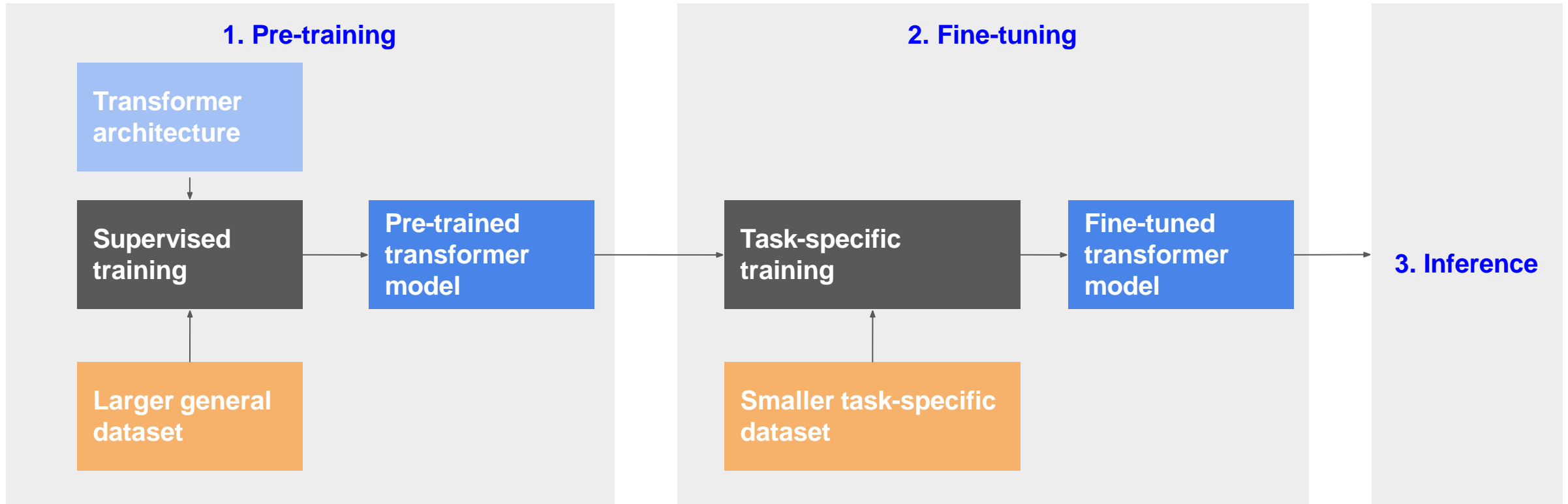
How to train and fine-tune transformers



Lots of data, learn general things. May serve as a parameter initialization.

Usually requires significant computational resources and time.

How to train and fine-tune transformers



Lot's of data, learn general things. May serve as a parameter initialization.

Usually requires significant computational resources and time.

Adaptation to the specific task.

Potentially less computationally intensive.

Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning Techniques

LoRA (Lower-Rank Adaptation)

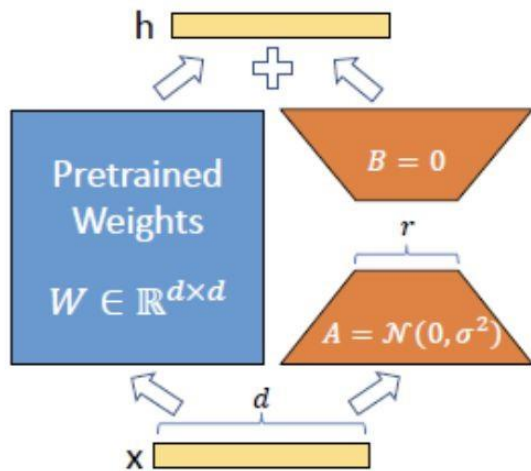
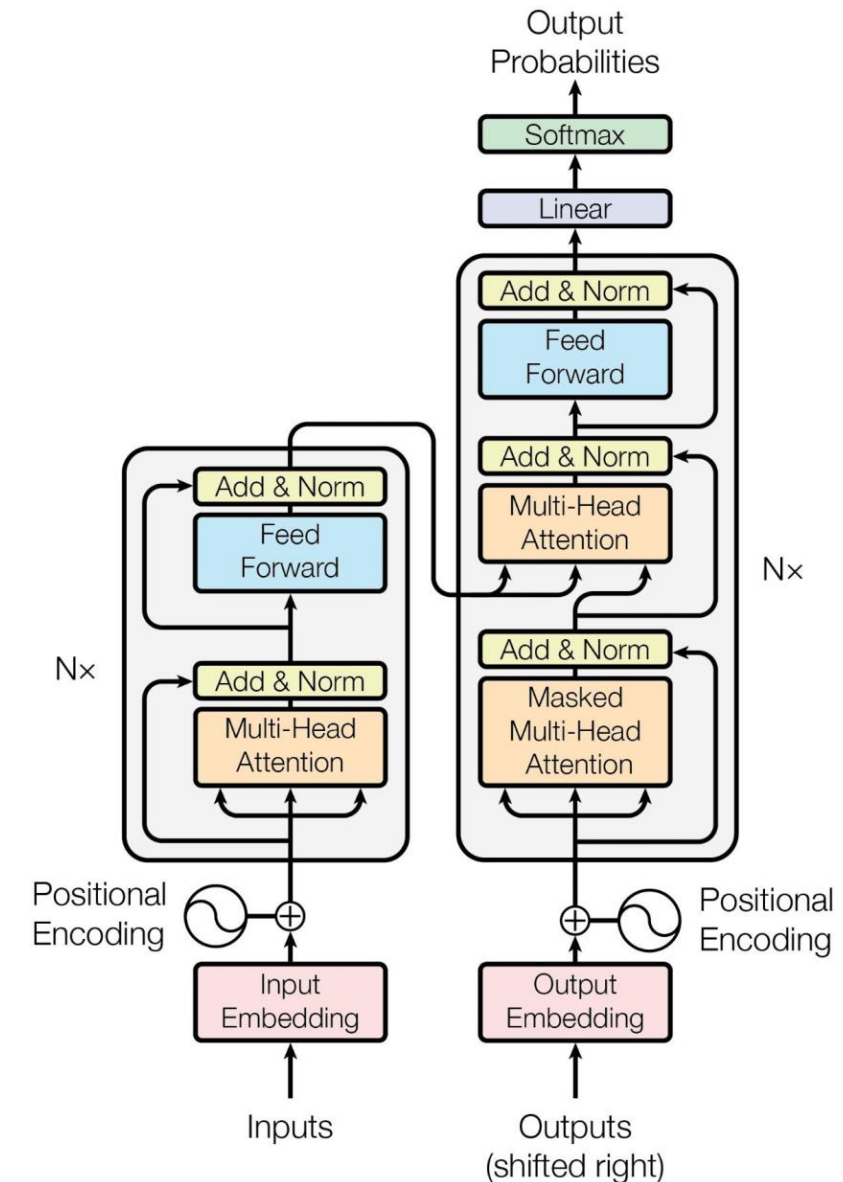


Figure 1: Our reparametrization. We only train A and B .



Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning Techniques

Can be applied to:

- 1.Attention layers (Q/K/V projections)
- 2.Feed-forward layers (as shown)
- 3.Anywhere with large linear projections

LoRA (Lower-Rank Adaptation)

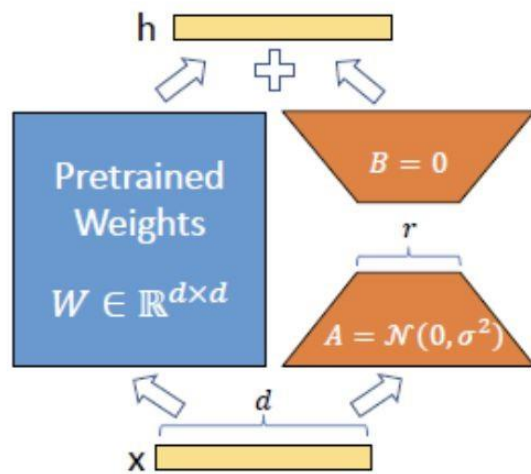
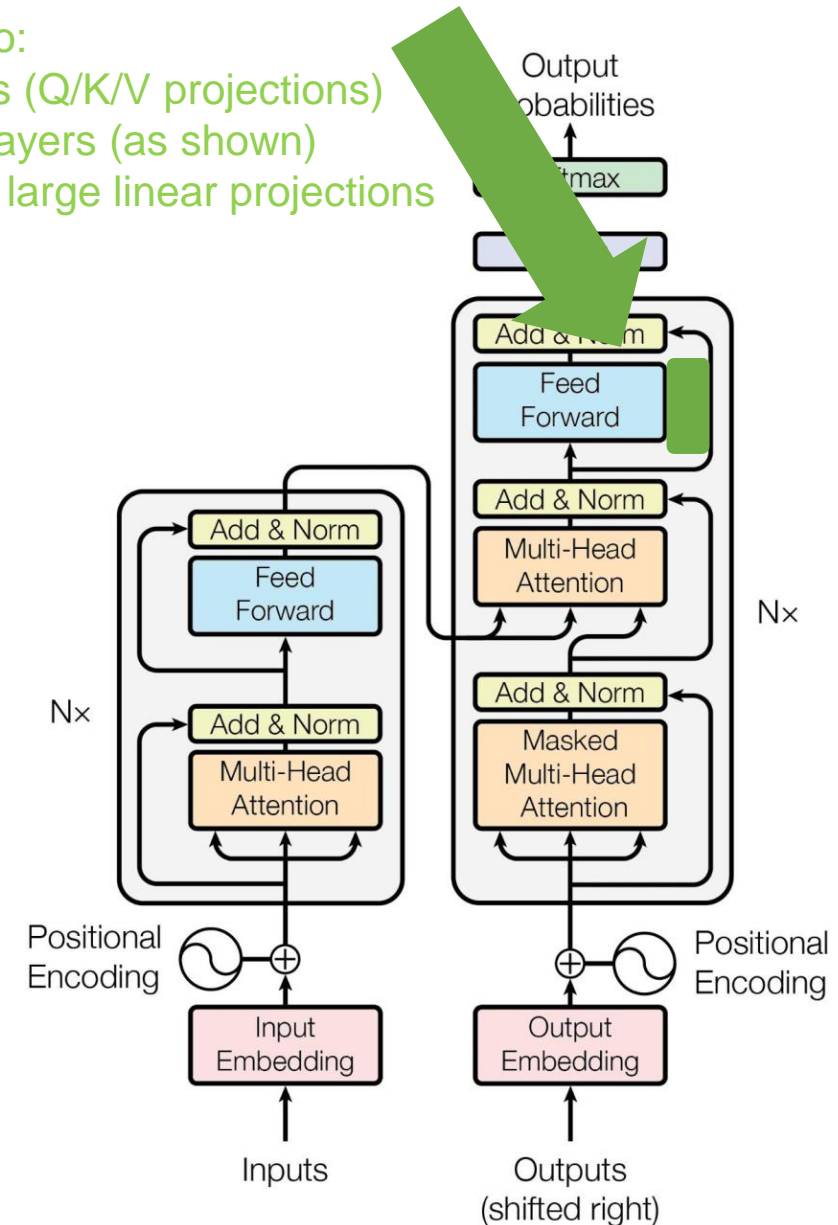


Figure 1: Our reparametrization. We only train A and B .

BitFit

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Q}^{m,\ell}(\mathbf{x}) &= \mathbf{W}_q^{m,\ell} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}_q^{m,\ell} \\ \mathbf{K}^{m,\ell}(\mathbf{x}) &= \mathbf{W}_k^{m,\ell} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}_k^{m,\ell} \\ \mathbf{V}^{m,\ell}(\mathbf{x}) &= \mathbf{W}_v^{m,\ell} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}_v^{m,\ell} \end{aligned}$$

Finetune only the additive bias terms \mathbf{b}



LoRA: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2106.09685>

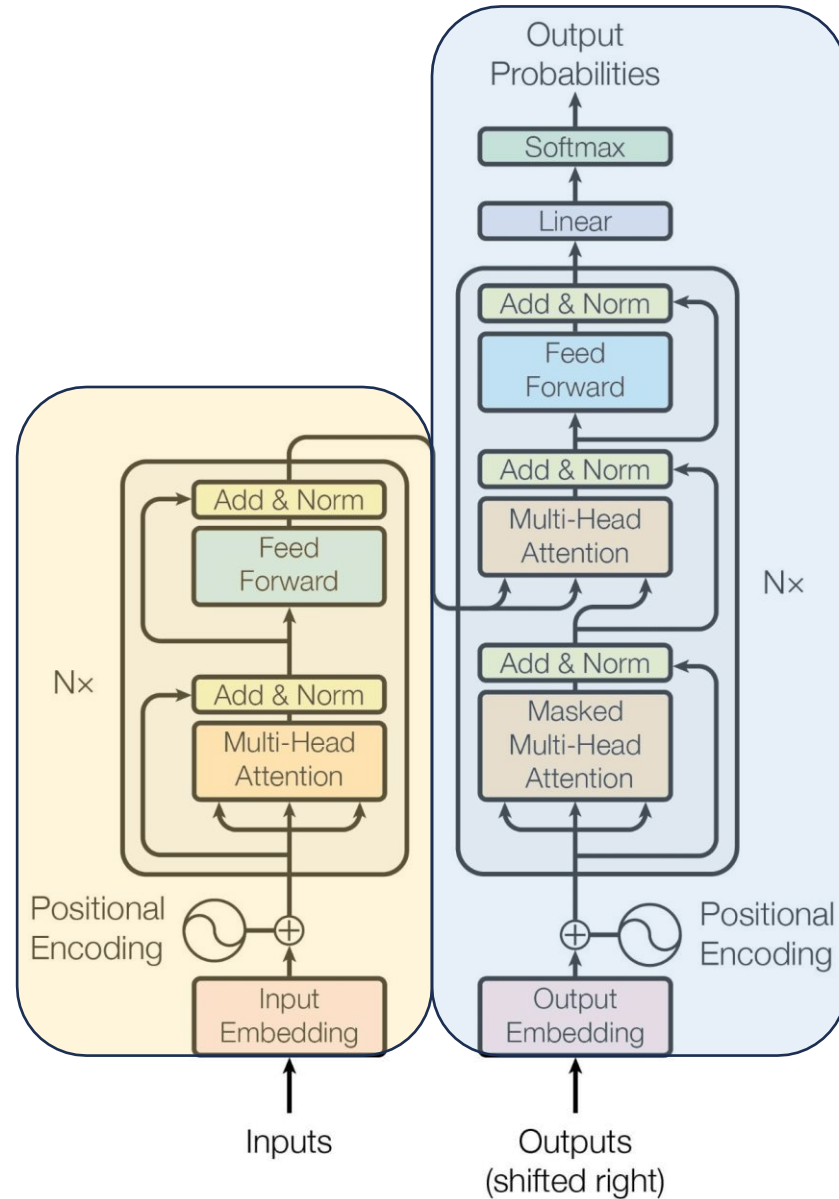
BitFit: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2106.10199>

Table of contents

- ✓ **The Transformer Architecture**
- ✓ **Pre-training and Fine-tuning**
- **Transformer Applications: ViT**
- Case study - Large Language Models

Transformers

**Representation /
Encoder**



**Generation /
Decoder**

Data Modalities

✓ Language

- **Vision**
- Audio
- ... and many other modalities (e.g., biological/physiological signals, etc.)
- Multimodal (>2 data modalities)

Computer Vision

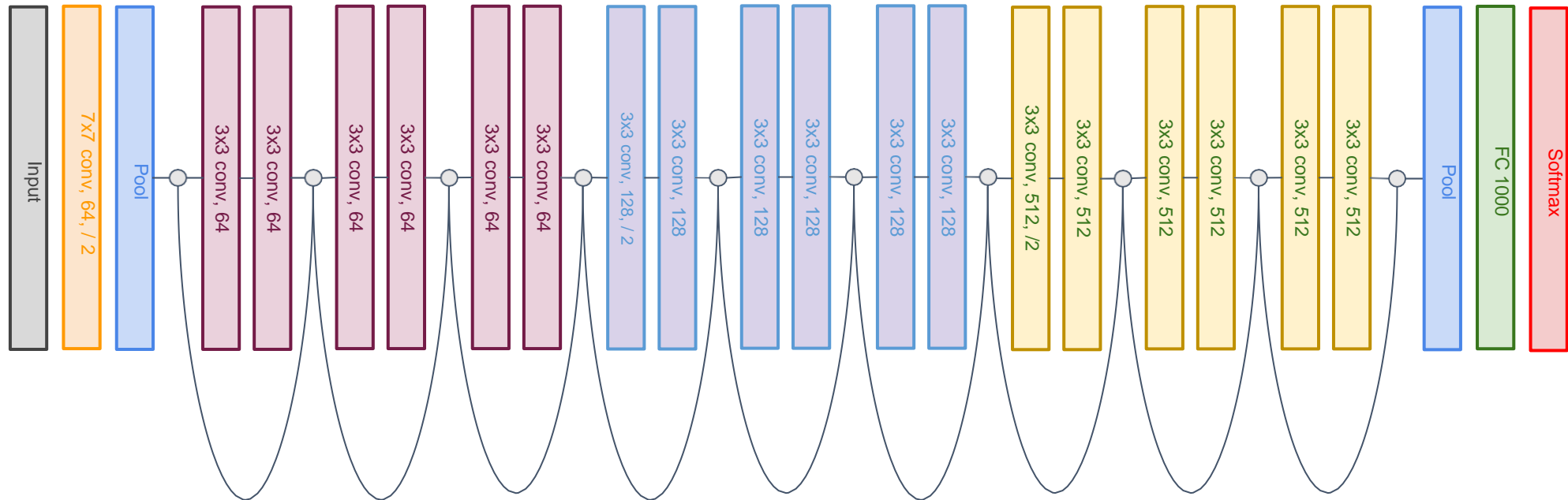
1. In computer vision convolutional architectures remain largely dominant.
2. Inspired by NLP successes, multiple works try introducing combining CNN-like architectures with self-attention or replacing the convolutions entirely.
3. However, they faced challenges with performance and scaling.
4. Key breakthrough - Vision Transformer (ViT) released in 2020

Use Attention / Transformers for Vision

- Earlier attempts
- Vision Transformer (ViT)

Idea #1: Add attention to existing CNNs

Start from standard CNN architecture (e.g. ResNet)



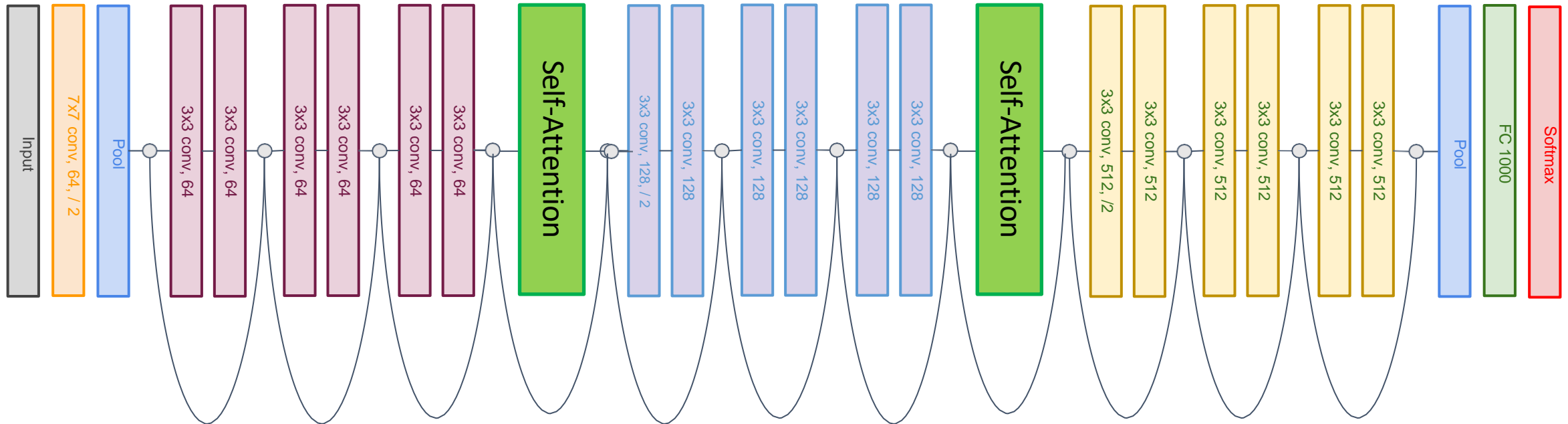
Zhang et al, "Self-Attention Generative Adversarial Networks", ICML 2018

Wang et al, "Non-local Neural Networks", CVPR 2018

Idea #1: Add attention to existing CNNs

Start from standard CNN architecture (e.g. ResNet)

Add Self-Attention blocks between existing ResNet blocks



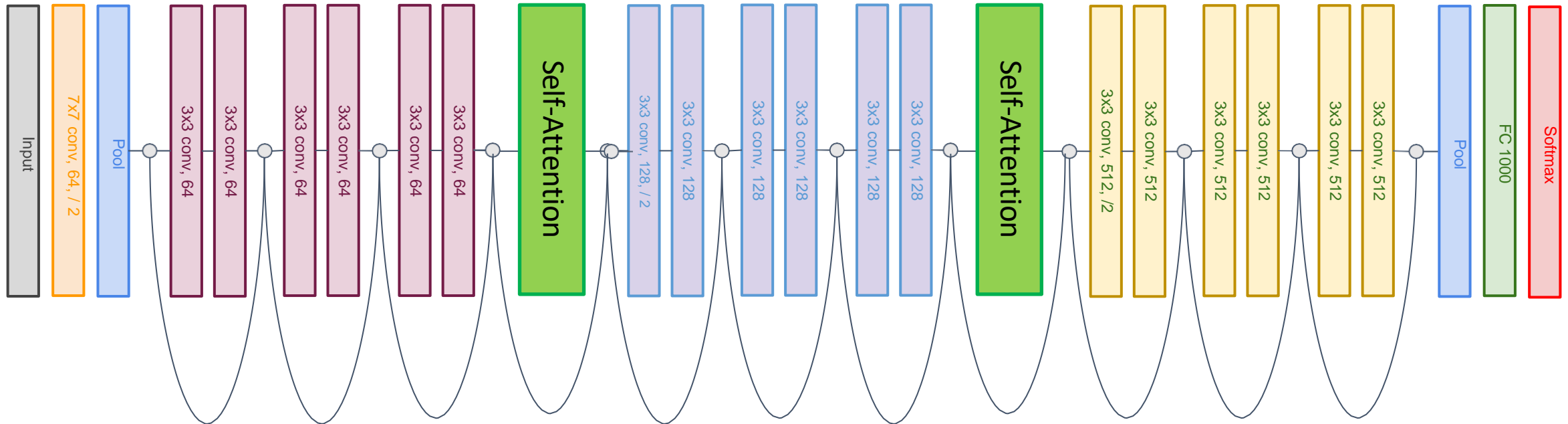
Zhang et al, "Self-Attention Generative Adversarial Networks", ICML 2018

Wang et al, "Non-local Neural Networks", CVPR 2018

Idea #1: Add attention to existing CNNs

Model is still a CNN! Start from standard CNN architecture (e.g. ResNet)

Can we replace
convolution entirely? Add Self-Attention blocks between existing ResNet blocks

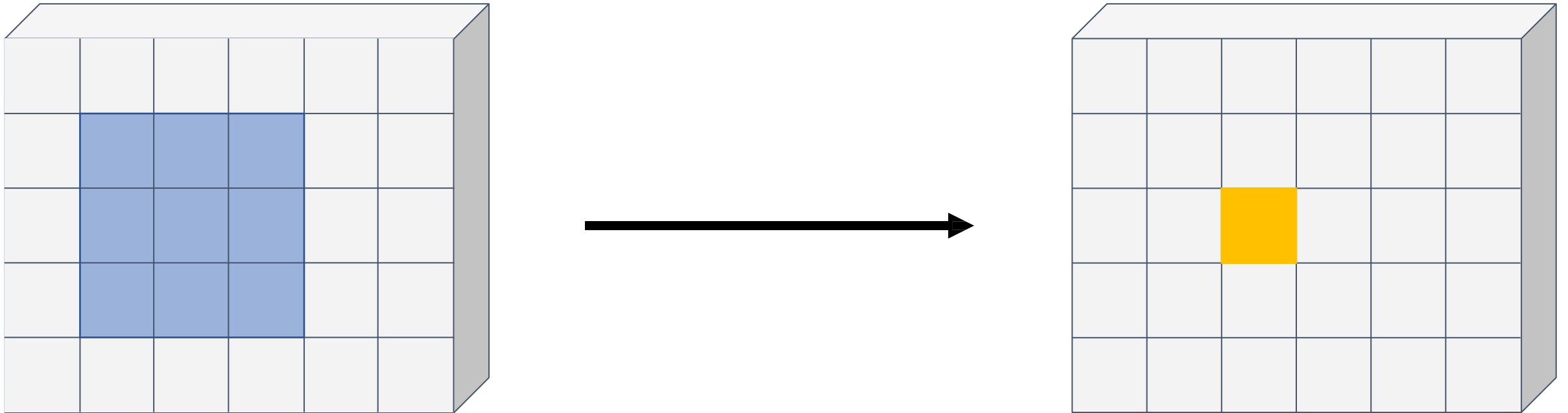


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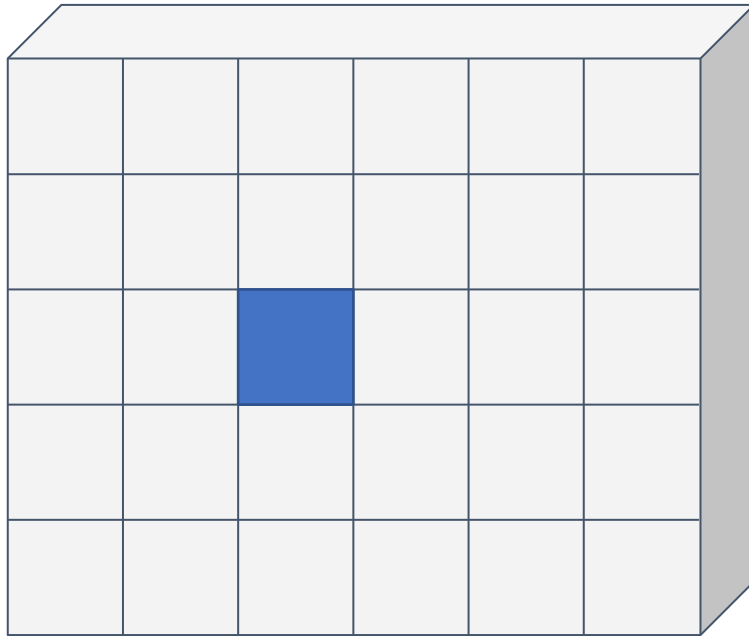
Idea #2: Replace Convolution with “Local Attention”

Convolution: Output at each position is inner product of conv kernel with receptive field in input

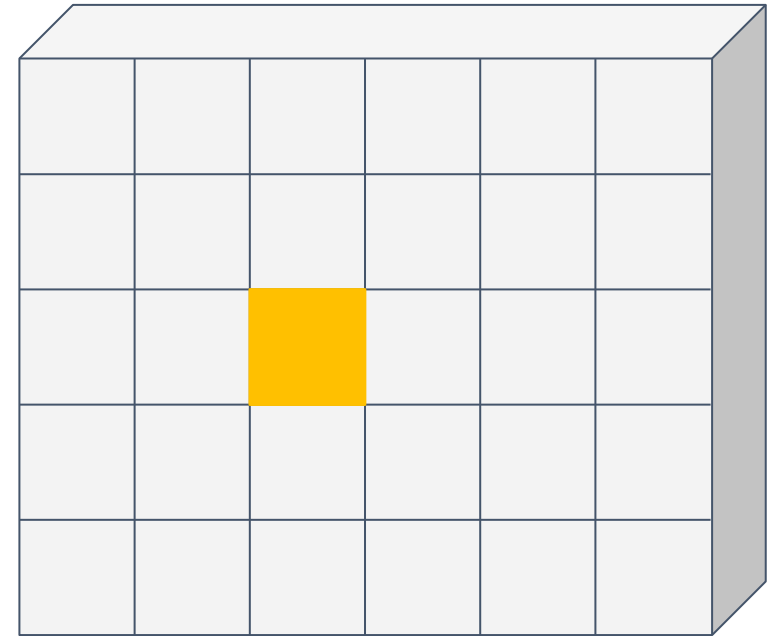


Idea #2: Replace Convolution with “Local Attention”

Map center of receptive field to query



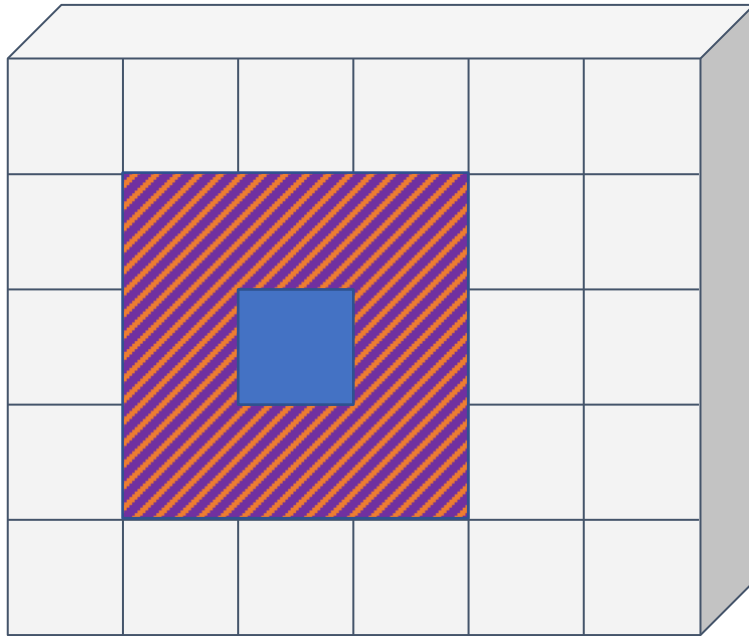
Query: D_Q



Idea #2: Replace Convolution with “Local Attention”

Map center of receptive field to **query**

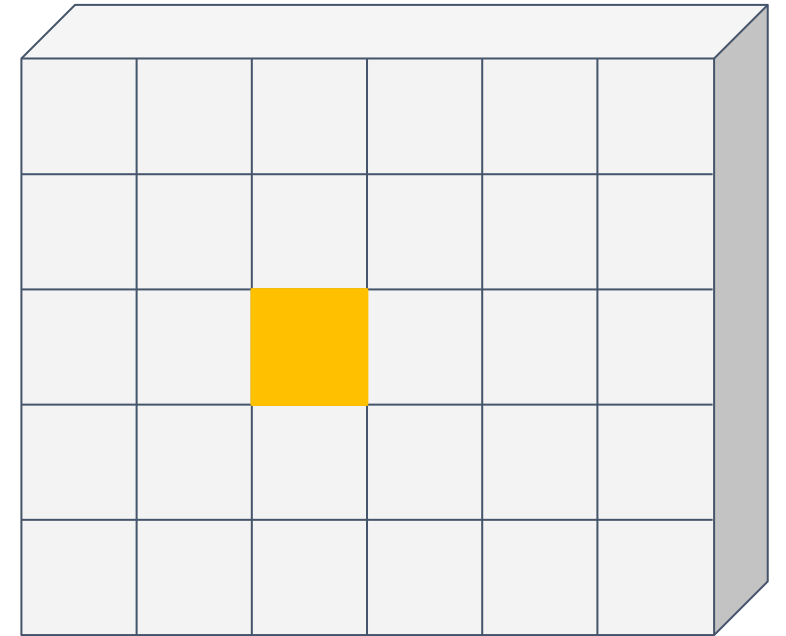
Map each element in receptive field to **key** and **value**



Query: D_Q

Keys: $R \times R \times D_Q$

Values: $R \times R \times C'$

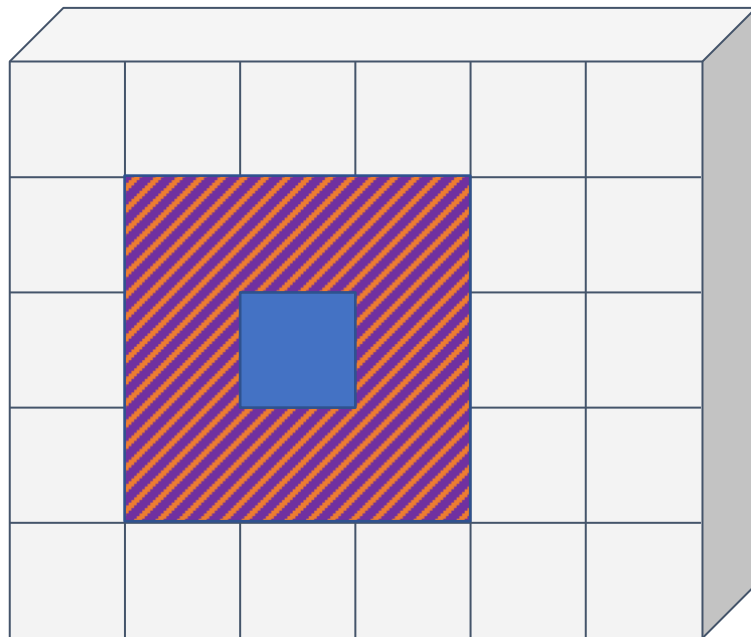


Idea #2: Replace Convolution with “Local Attention”

Map center of receptive field to **query**

Map each element in receptive field to **key** and **value**

Compute **output** using attention



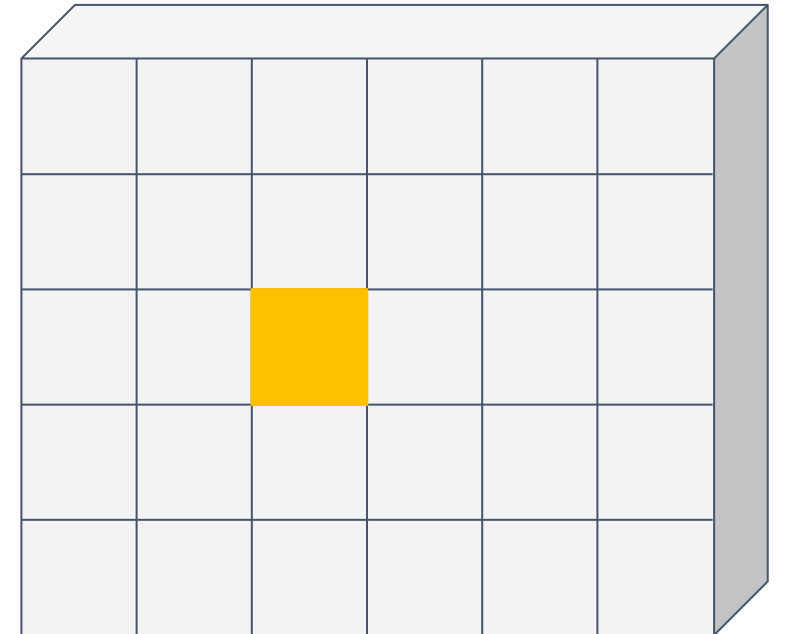
Query: D_Q

Keys: $R \times R \times D_Q$

Values: $R \times R \times C'$

Output: C

↓
↑
Attention



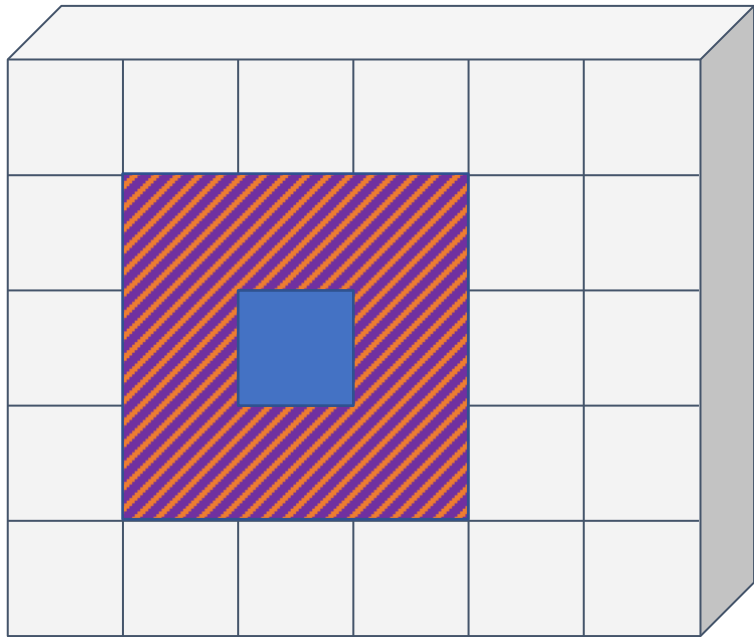
Idea #2: Replace Convolution with “Local Attention”

Map center of receptive field to **query**

Map each element in receptive field to **key** and **value**

Compute **output** using attention

Replace all conv in ResNet with local attention



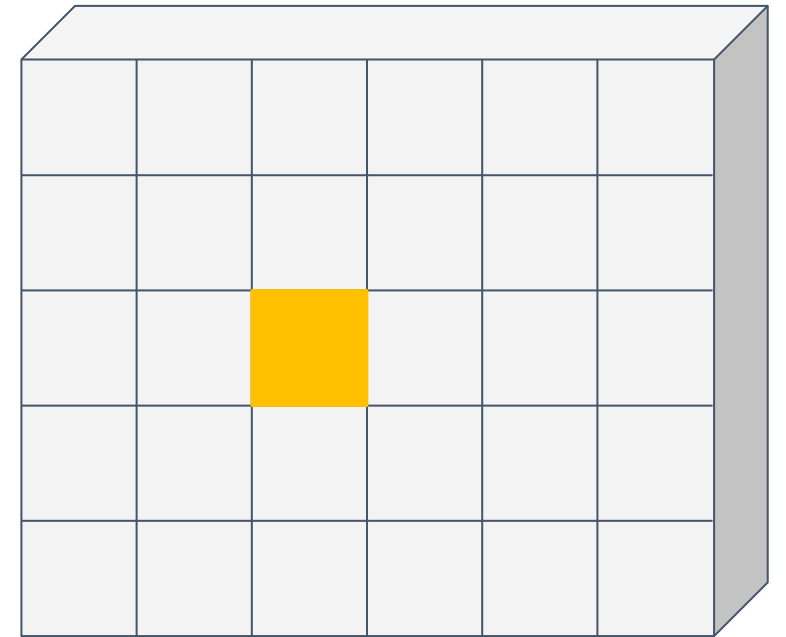
Query: D_Q

Keys: $R \times R \times D_Q$

Values: $R \times R \times C'$

Output: C

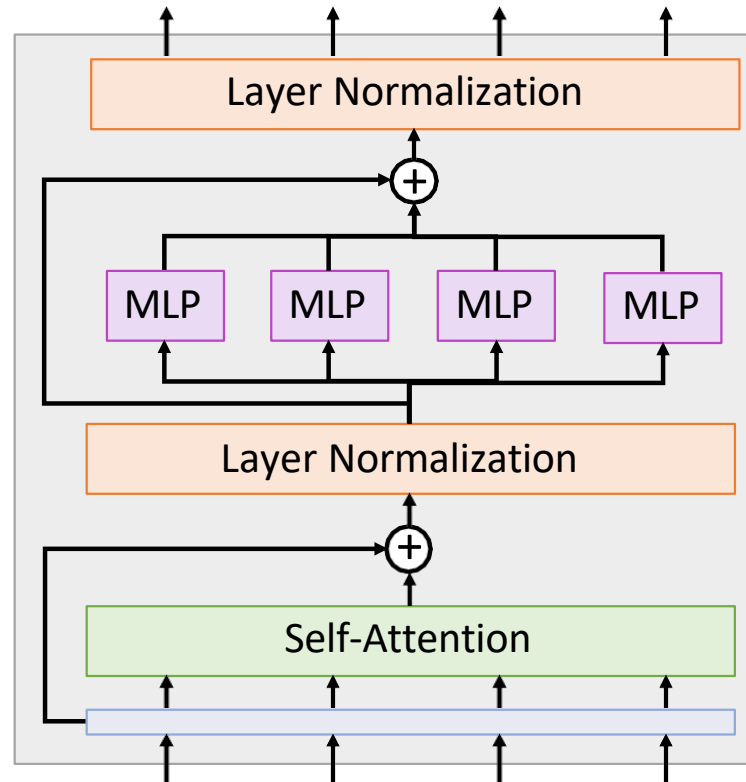
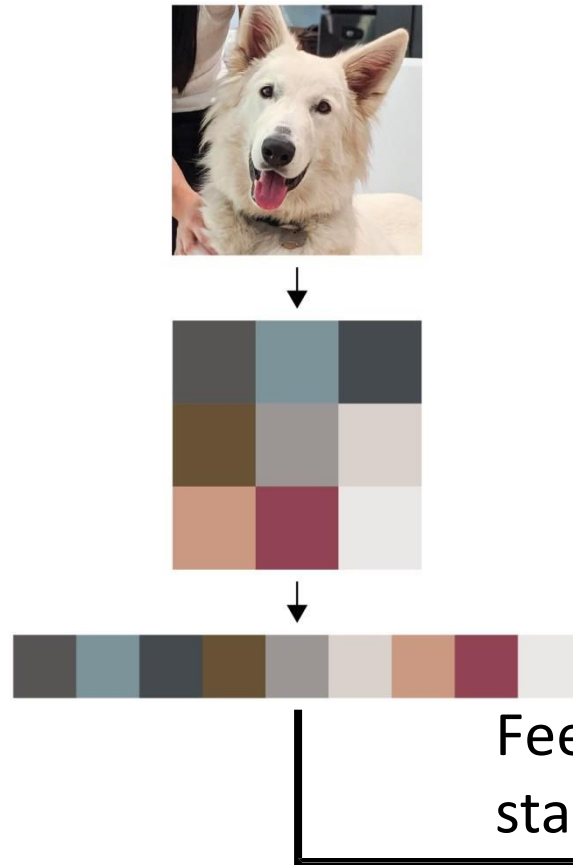
↓
↑
Attention



Lots of tricky details, hard to implement, only marginally better than ResNets

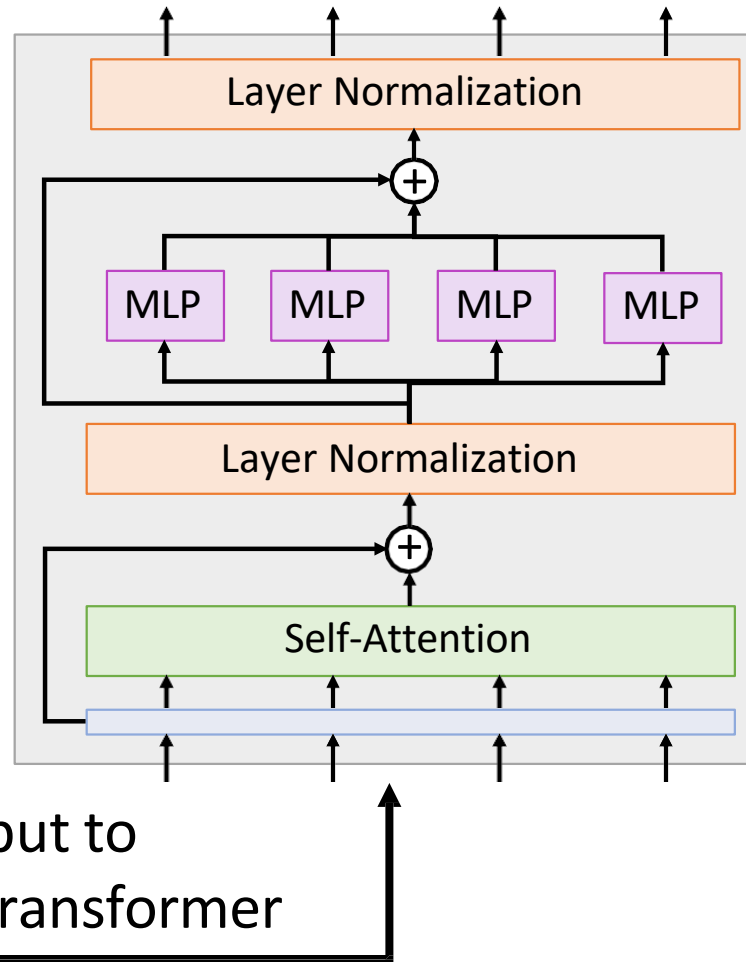
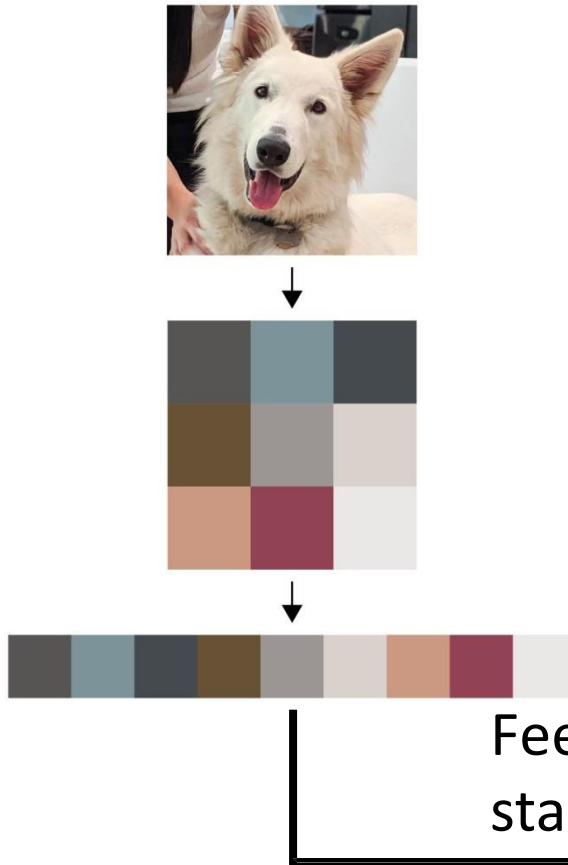
Idea #3: Standard Transformer on Pixels

Treat an image as a set of pixel values



Idea #3: Standard Transformer on Pixels

Treat an image as a set of pixel values



Problem: Memory use!

$R \times R$ image needs R^4 elements per attention matrix

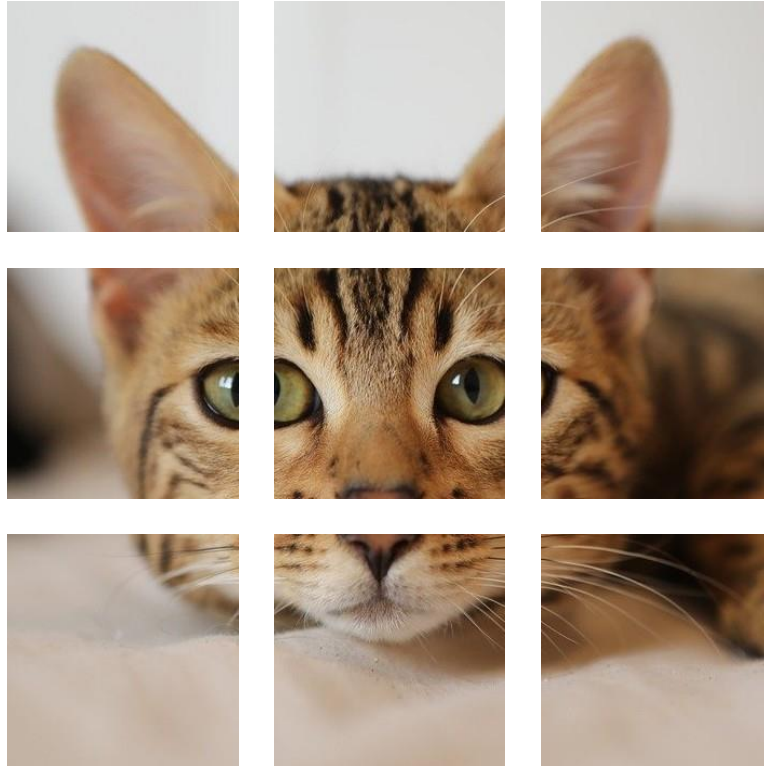
$R=128$, 48 layers, 16 heads per layer takes 768GB of memory for attention matrices for a single example...

Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches



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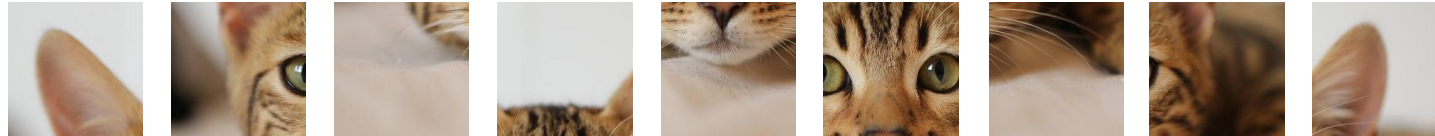
Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches



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Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches

N input patches, each
of shape 3x16x16

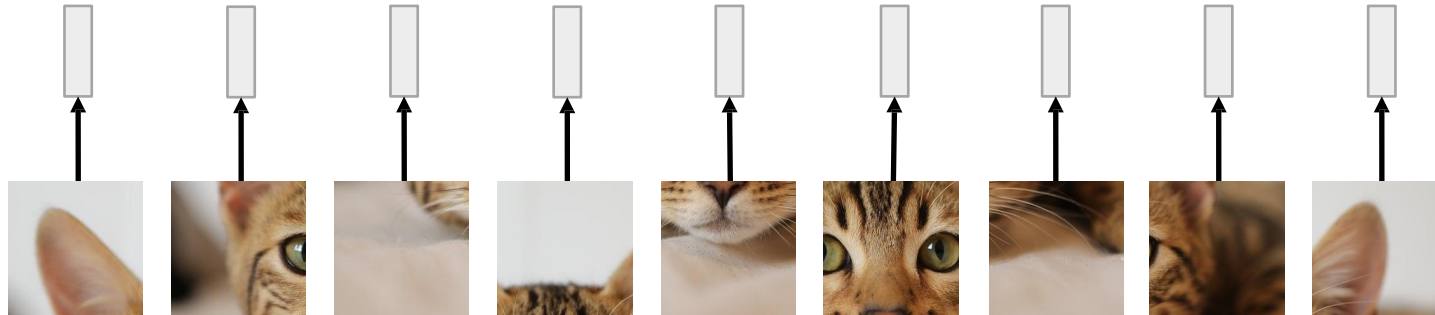


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Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches

Linear projection to
D-dimensional vector

N input patches, each
of shape 3x16x16



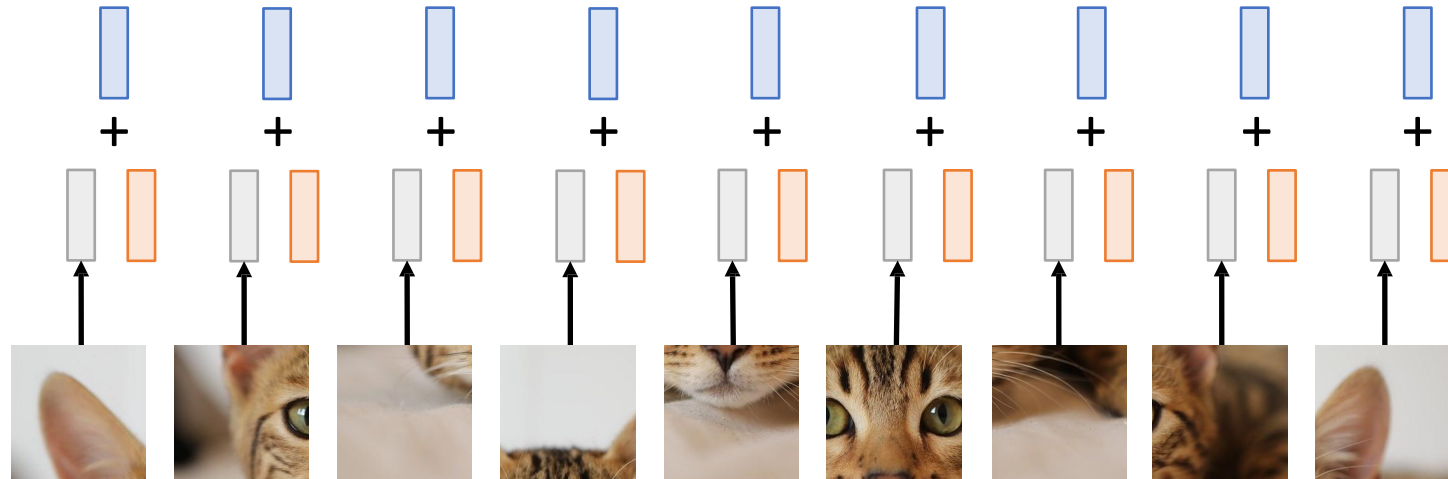
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Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches

Add positional
embedding: learned D-
dim vector per position

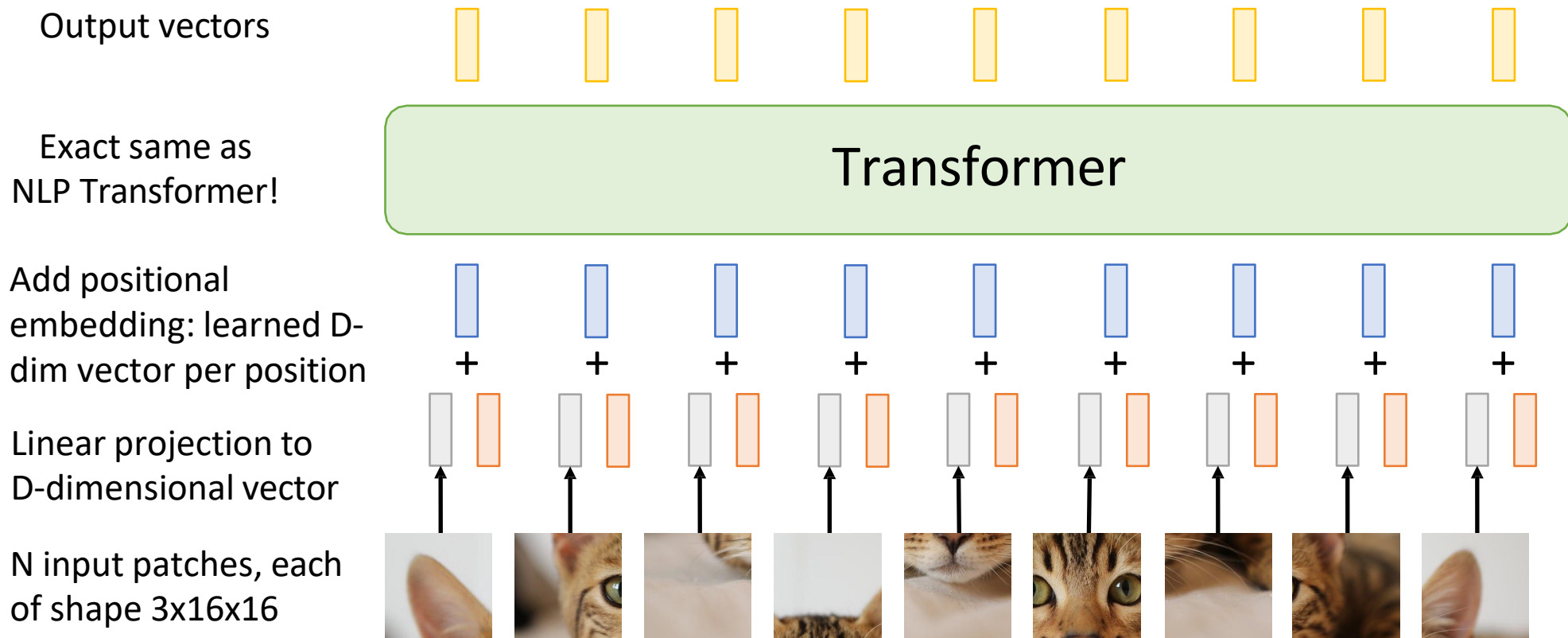
Linear projection to
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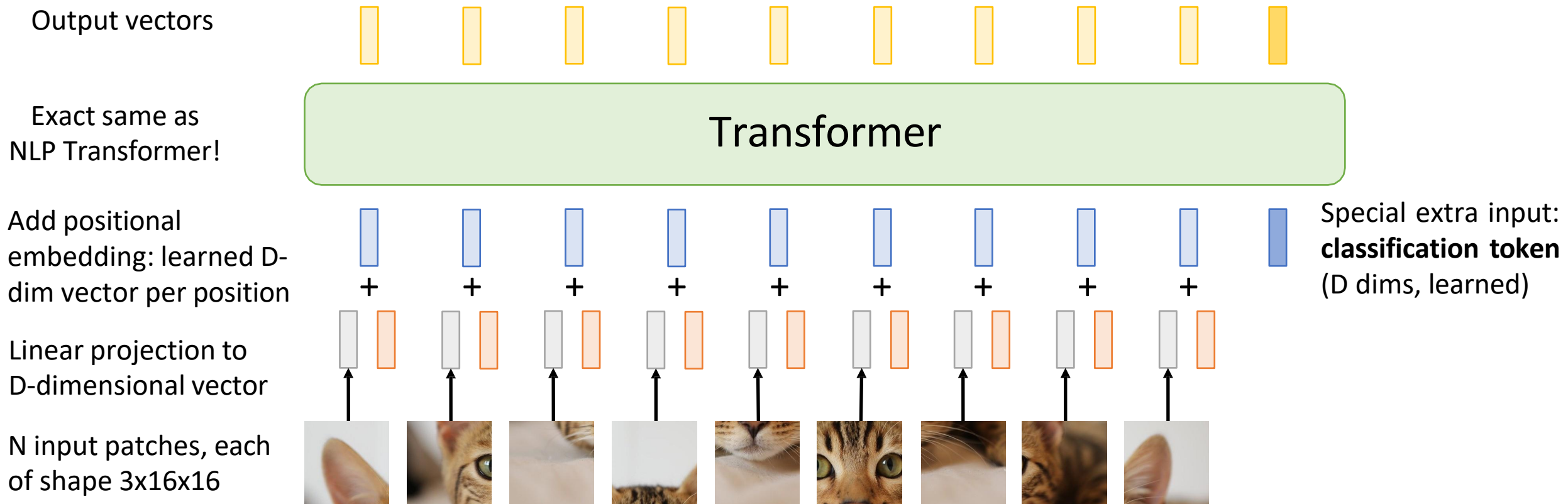
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Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches



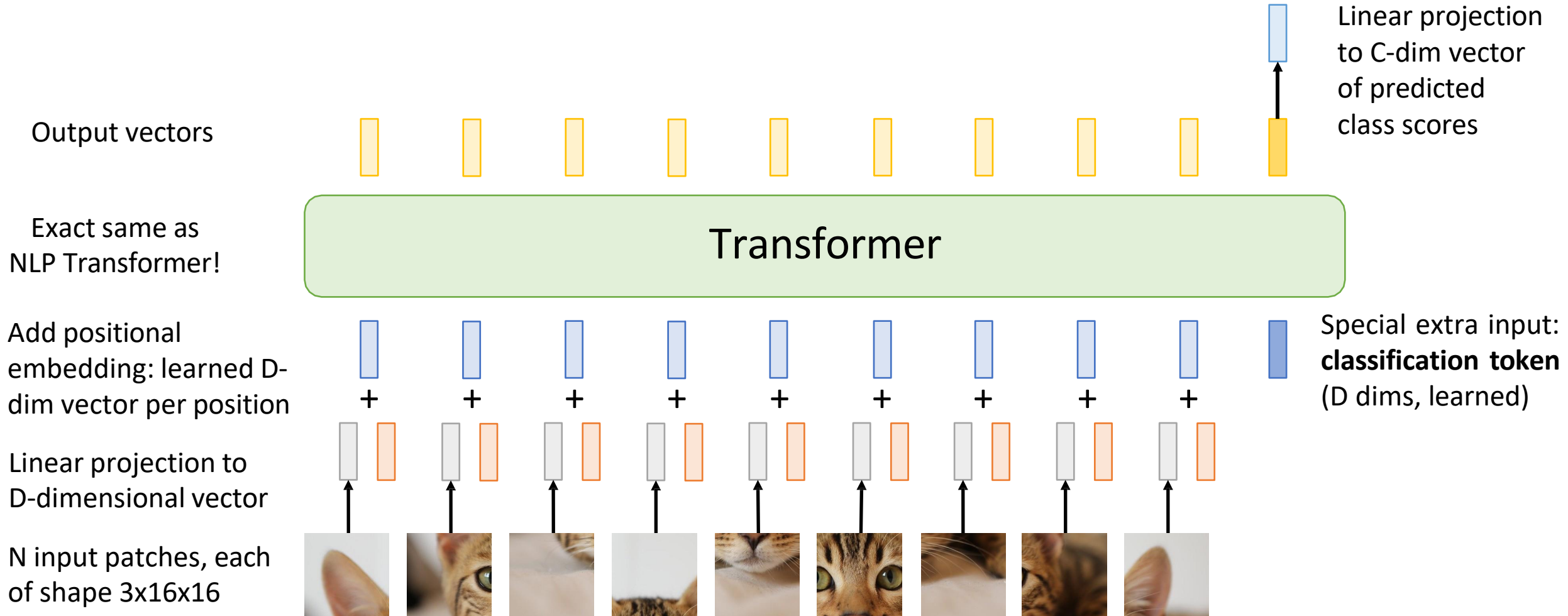
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Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches



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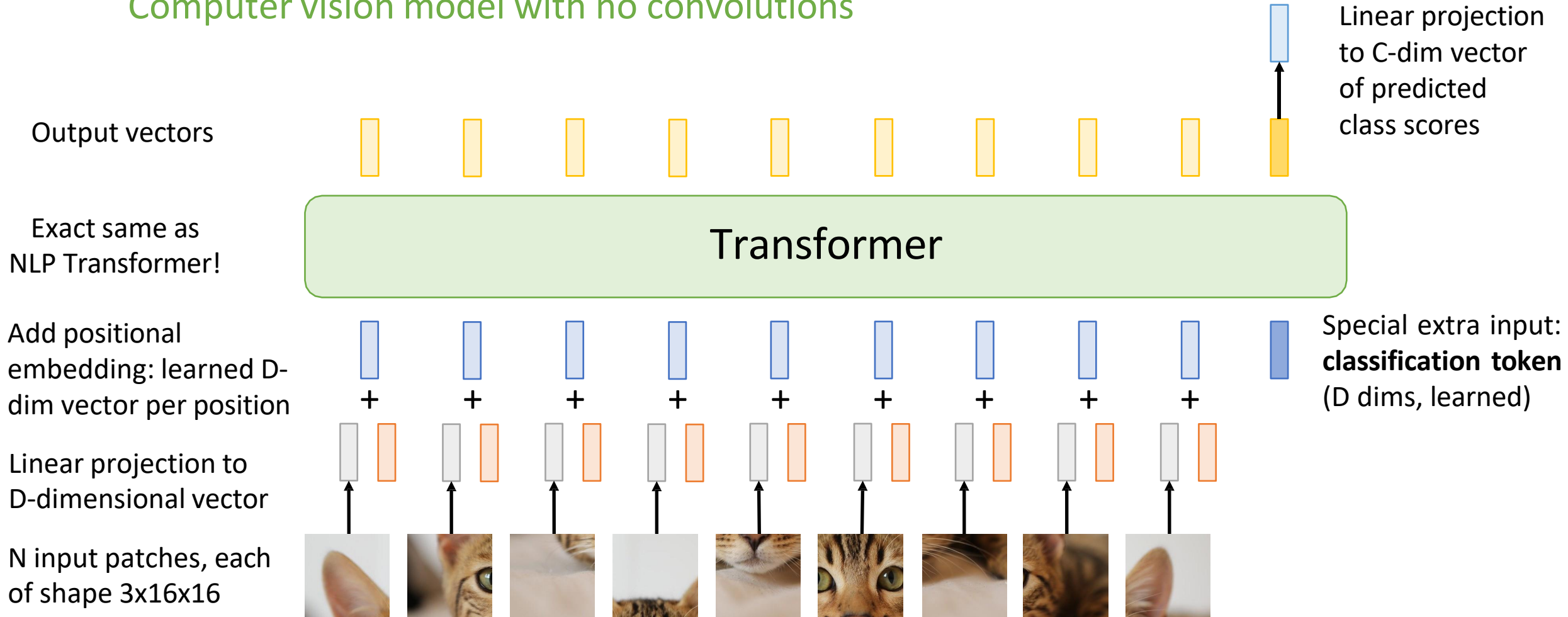
Idea #4: Standard Transformer on Patches



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Vision Transformer (ViT)

Computer vision model with no convolutions

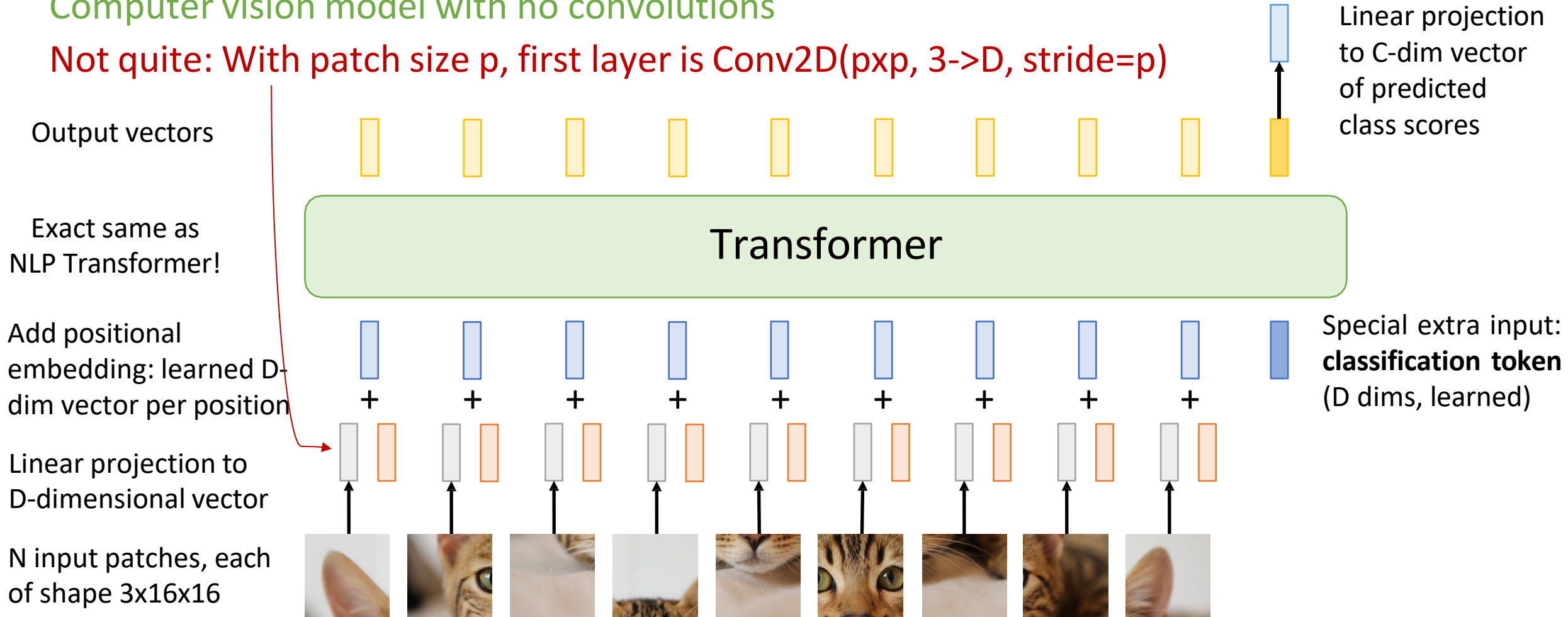


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Vision Transformer (ViT)

Computer vision model with no convolutions

Not quite: With patch size p , first layer is $\text{Conv2D}(p \times p, 3 \rightarrow D, \text{stride}=p)$

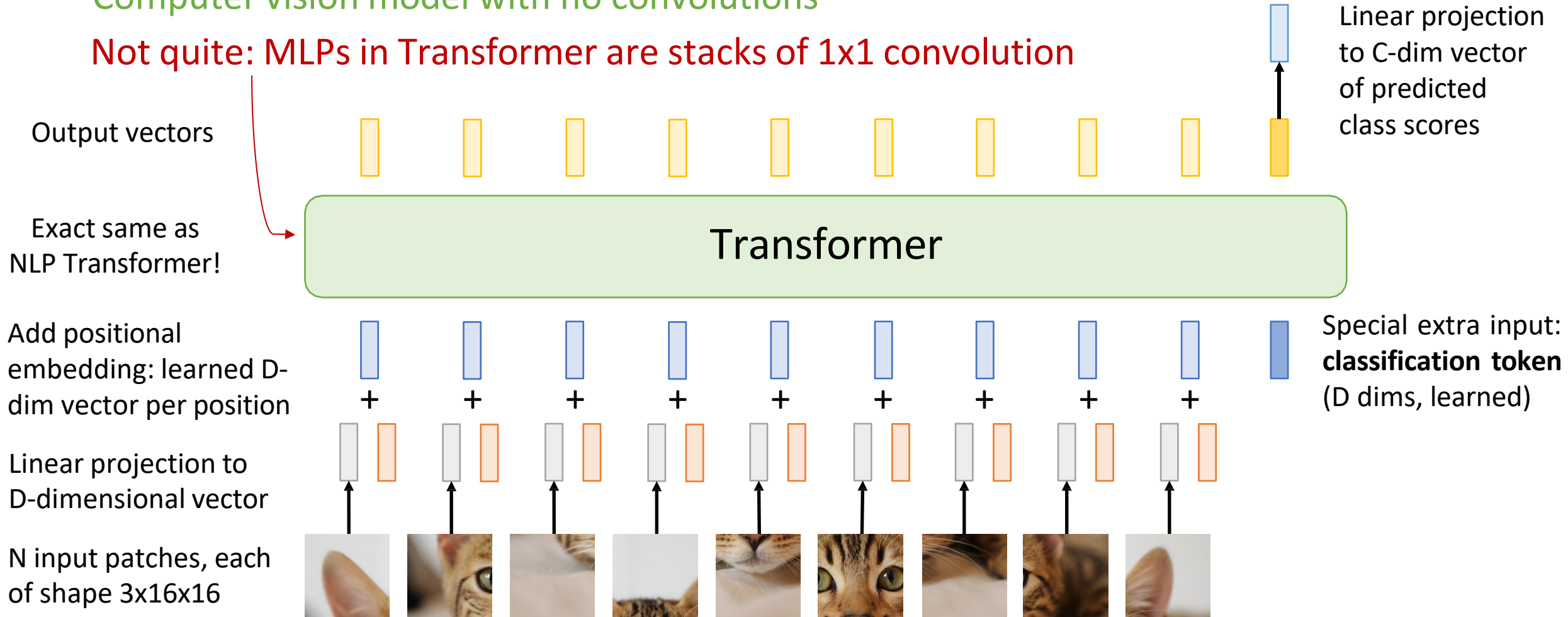


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Vision Transformer (ViT)

Computer vision model with no convolutions

Not quite: MLPs in Transformer are stacks of 1x1 convolution



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Vision Transformer (ViT)

In practice: take 224x224 input image,
divide into 14x14 grid of 16x16 pixel
patches (or 16x16 grid of 14x14 patches)

Each attention matrix has $14^4 = 38,416$
entries, takes 150 KB
(or 65,536 entries, takes 256 KB)

(drop classification token here for simplicity)

Output vectors



Linear projection
to C-dim vector
of predicted
class scores

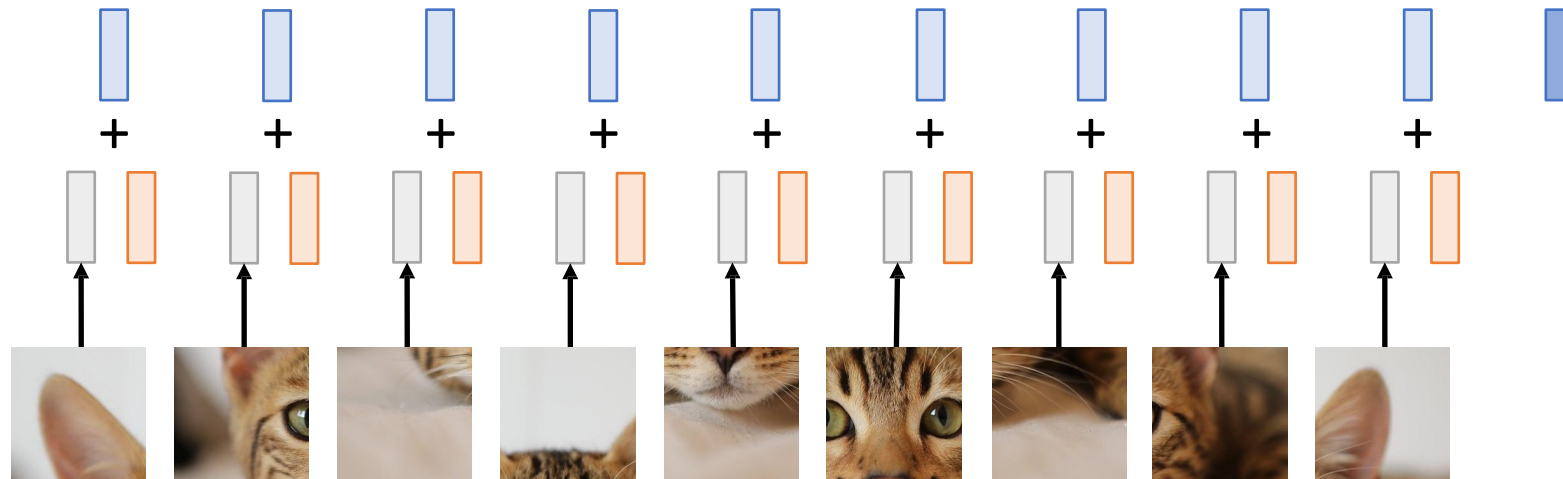
Exact same as
NLP Transformer!

Transformer

Add positional
embedding: learned D-
dim vector per position

Linear projection to
D-dimensional vector

N input patches, each
of shape 3x16x16



Special extra input:
classification token
(D dims, learned)

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Vision Transformer (ViT)

In practice: take 224x224 input image,
divide into 14x14 grid of 16x16 pixel
patches (or 16x16 grid of 14x14 patches)

With 48 layers, 16 heads per
layer, all attention matrices
take 112 MB (or 192MB)

Output vectors



Linear projection
to C-dim vector
of predicted
class scores

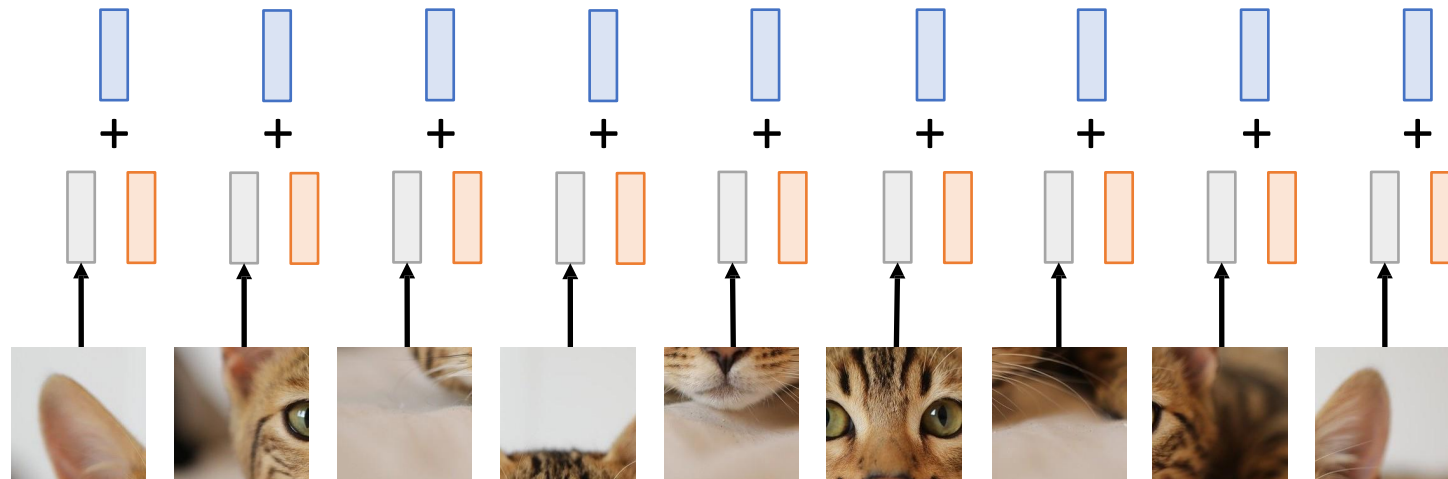
Exact same as
NLP Transformer!

Transformer

Add positional
embedding: learned D-
dim vector per position

Linear projection to
D-dimensional vector

N input patches, each
of shape 3x16x16



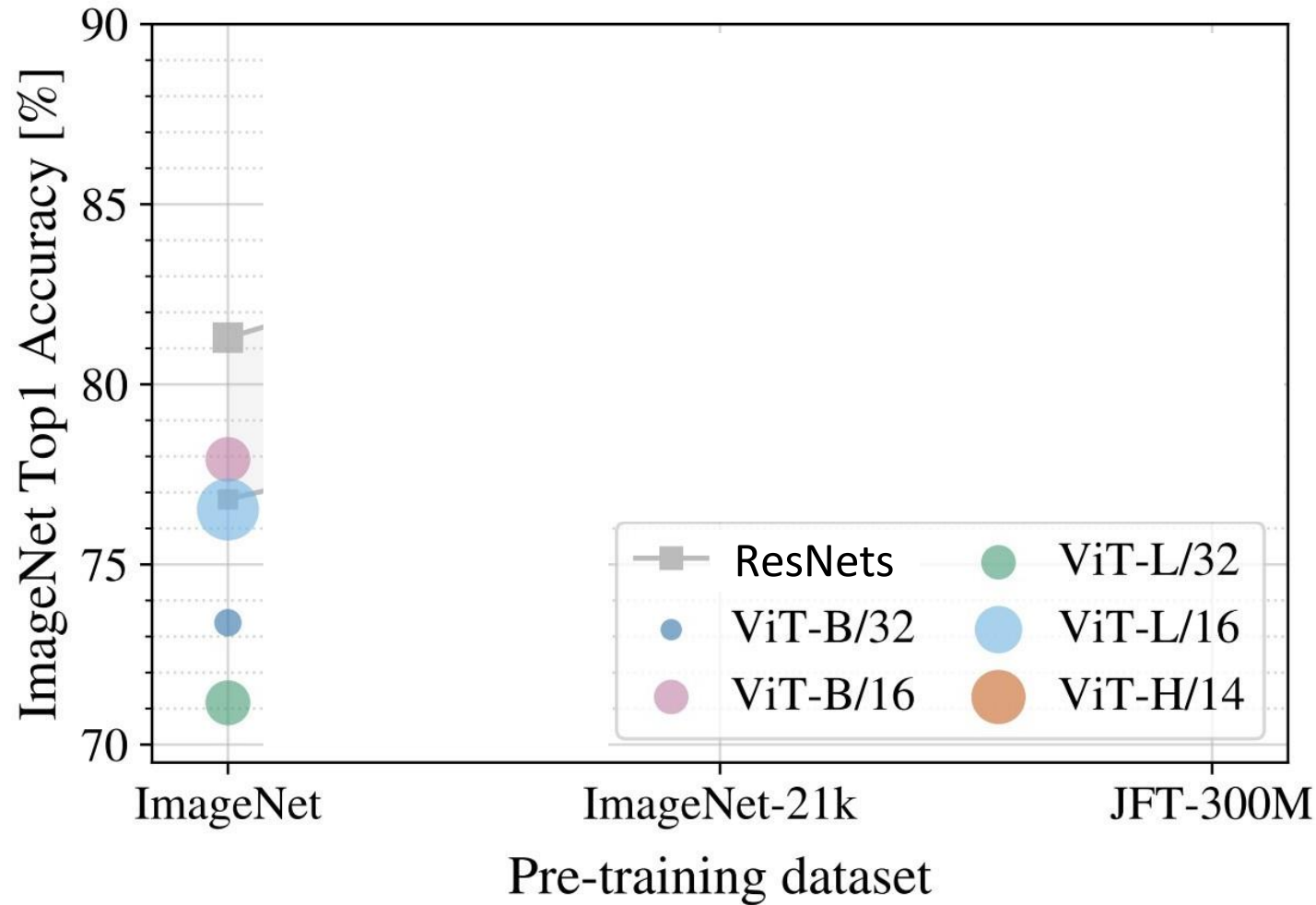
Special extra input:
classification token
(D dims, learned)

[Cat image](#) is free for commercial
use under a [Pixabay license](#)

Vision Transformer (ViT) vs ResNets

Recall: ImageNet dataset has 1k categories, 1.2M images

When trained on ImageNet, ViT models perform worse than ResNets



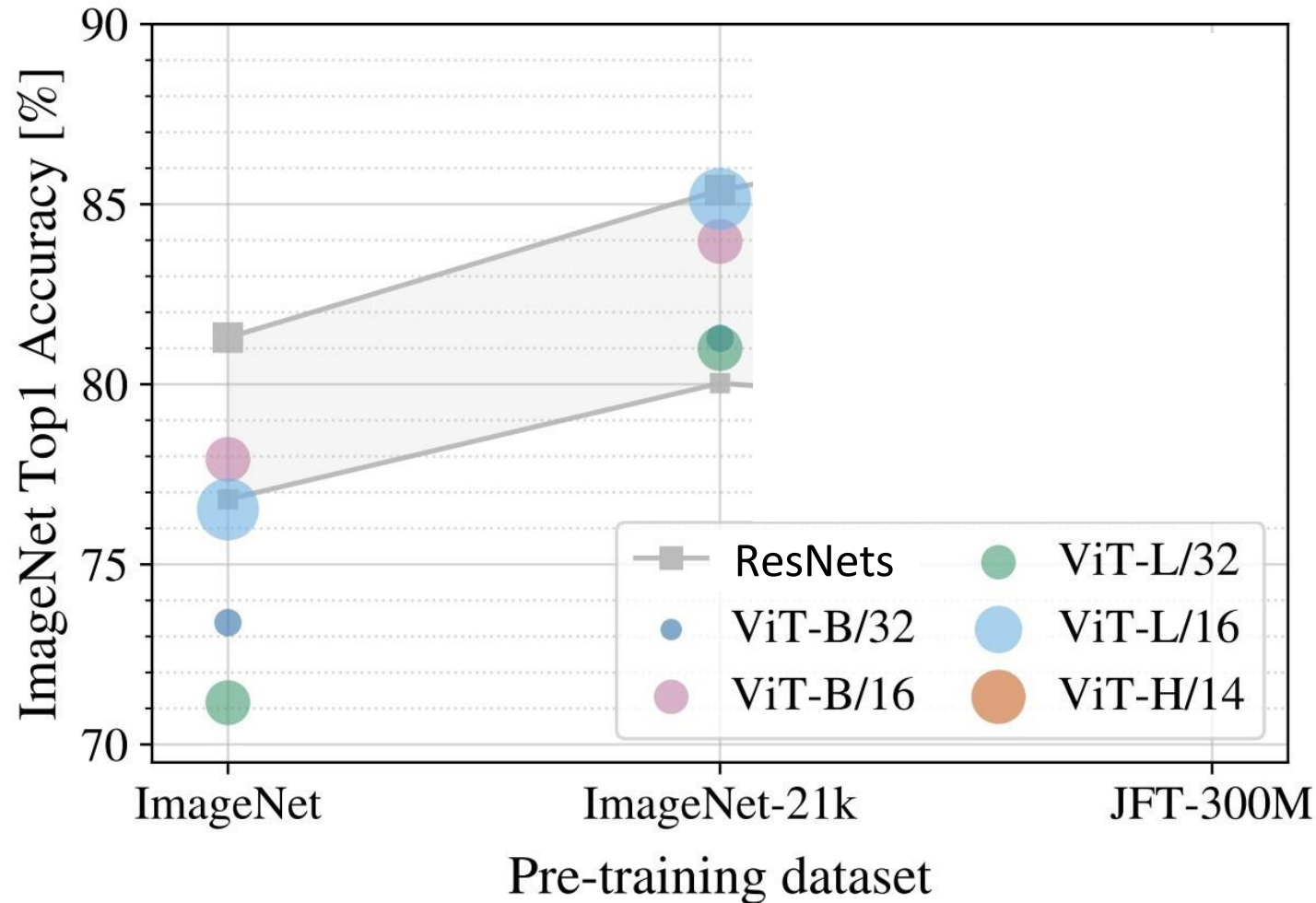
B = Base
L = Large
H = Huge

/32, /16, /14 is patch size; smaller patch size is a bigger model (more patches)

Vision Transformer (ViT) vs ResNets

ImageNet-21k has 14M images with 21k categories

If you pretrain on ImageNet-21k and fine-tune on ImageNet, ViT does better: big ViTs match big ResNets



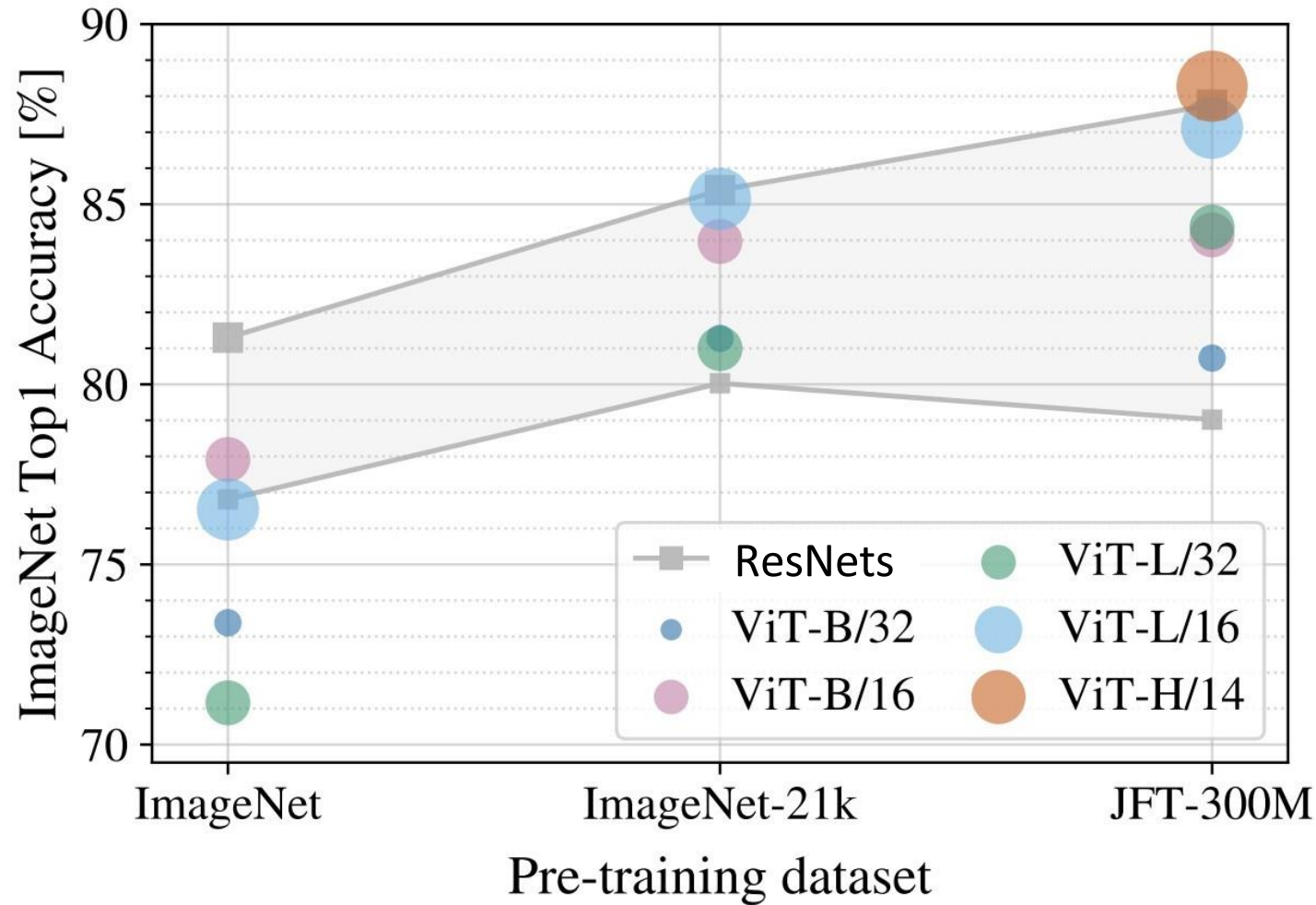
B = Base
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Vision Transformer (ViT) vs ResNets

JFT-300M is an internal Google dataset with 300M labeled images

If you pretrain on JFT and finetune on ImageNet, large ViTs outperform large ResNets



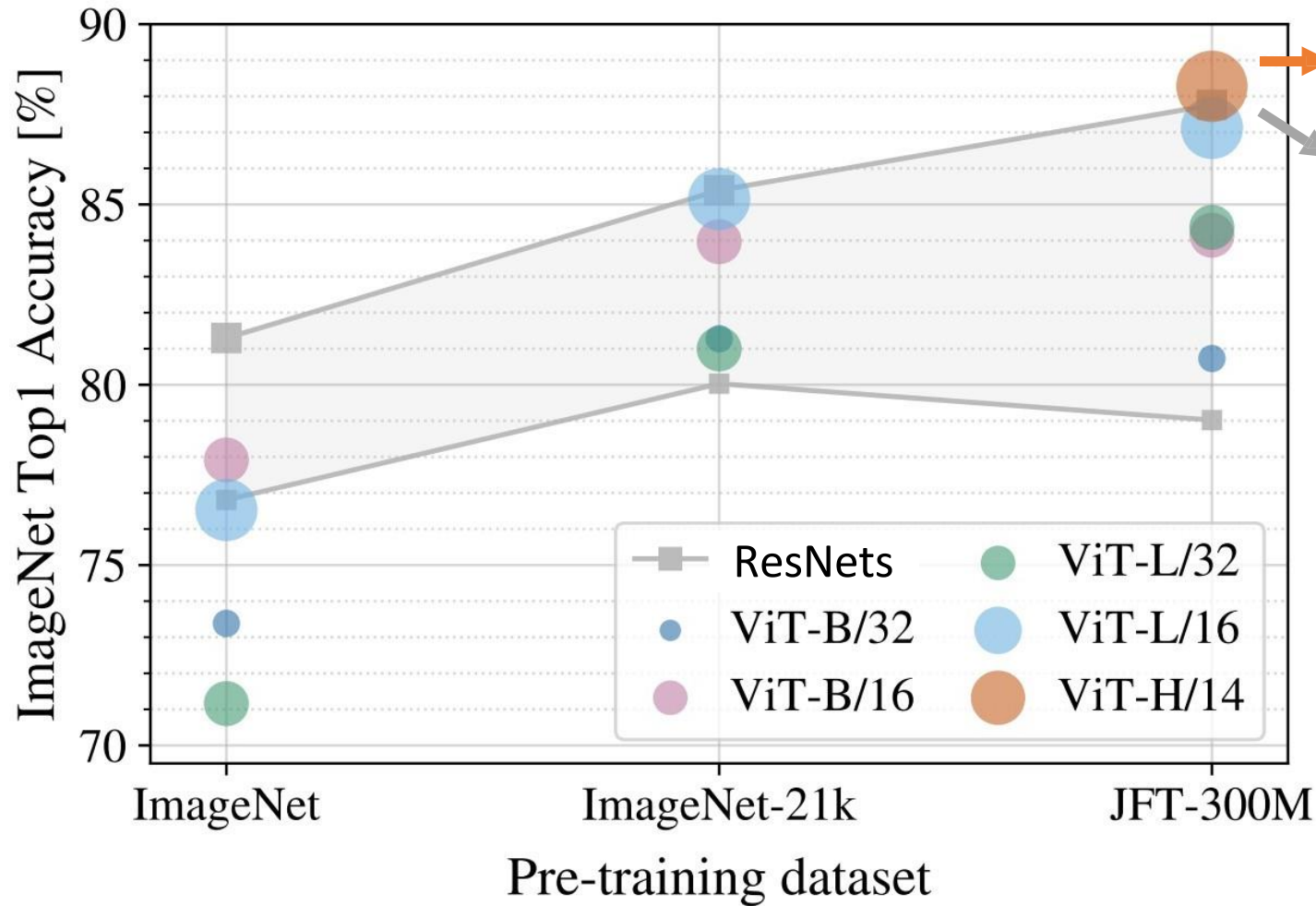
B = Base
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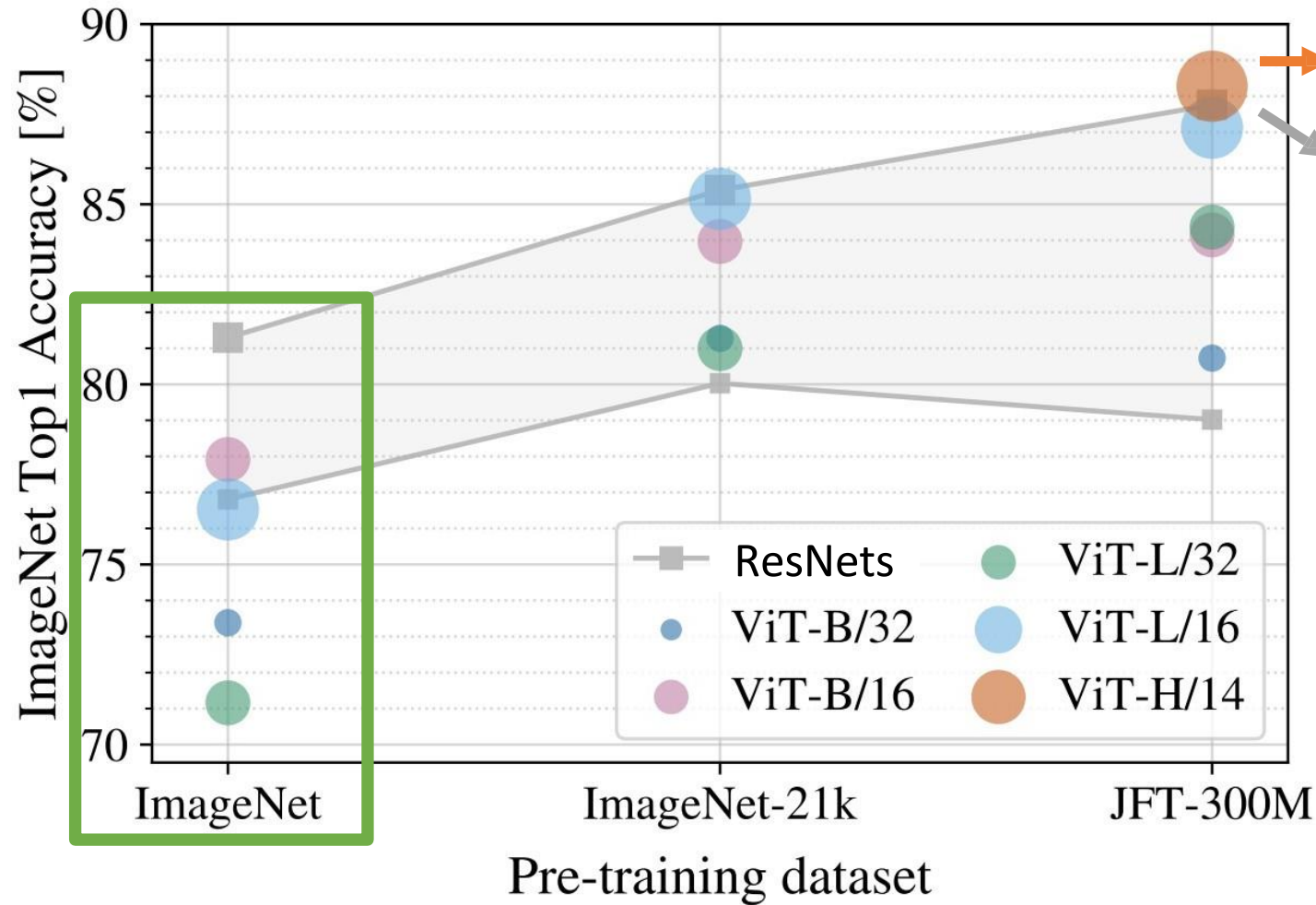
ViT: 2.5k TPU-v3 core days of training

ResNet: 9.9k TPU-v3 core days of training

ViTs make more efficient use of GPU / TPU hardware (matrix multiply is more hardware-friendly than conv)

Vision Transformer (ViT) vs ResNets

How can we improve the performance of ViT models on ImageNet?



ViT: 2.5k TPU-v3 core days of training

ResNet: 9.9k TPU-v3 core days of training

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Improving ViT: Augmentation and Regularization

Regularization for ViT models:

- Weight Decay
- Stochastic Depth
- Dropout (in FFN layers of Transformer)

Data Augmentation for ViT models:

- MixUp
- RandAugment

Improving ViT: Augmentation and Regularization

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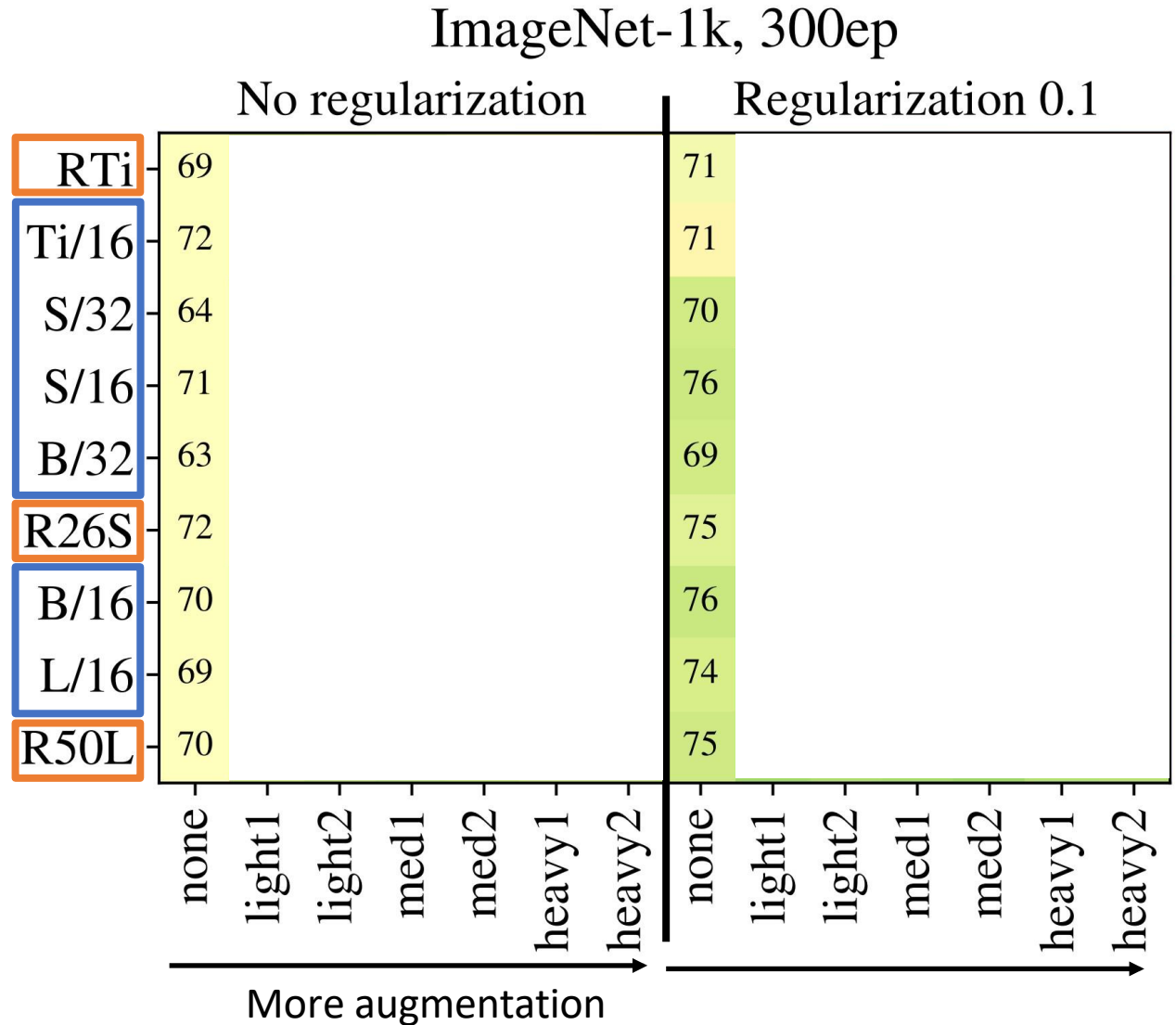
- MixUp
- RandAugment

Adding regularization is
(almost) always helpful

Hybrid models:
ResNet blocks,
then ViT blocks

ViT models:
Ti = Tiny
S = Small
B = Base
L = Large

Original Paper:
77.9
76.53



Improving ViT: Augmentation and Regularization

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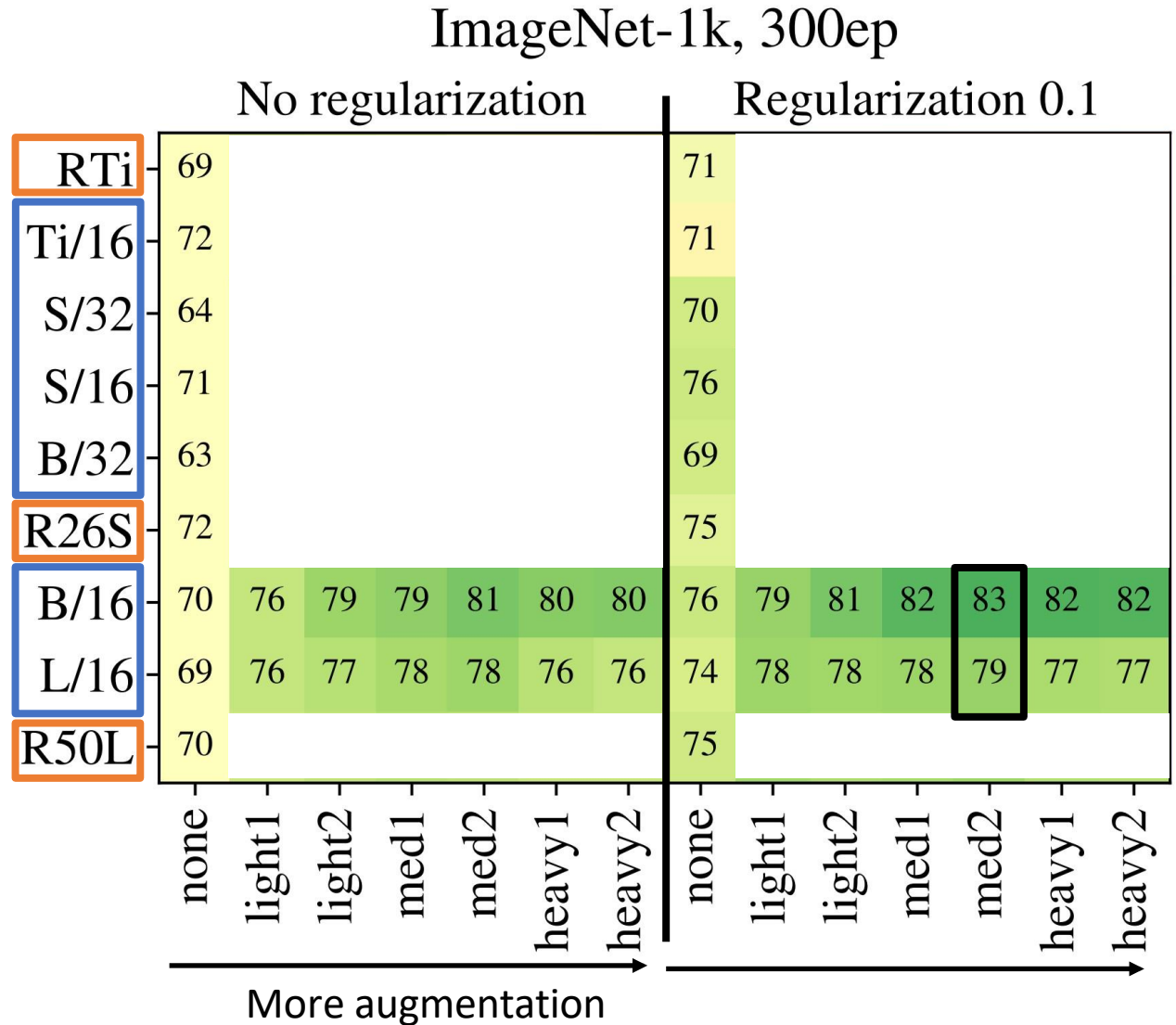
- MixUp
- RandAugment

Regularization +
Augmentation gives
big improvements
over original results

Hybrid models:
ResNet blocks,
then ViT blocks

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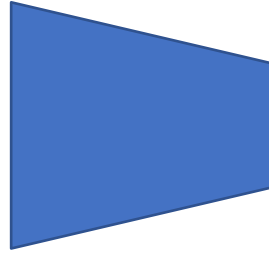
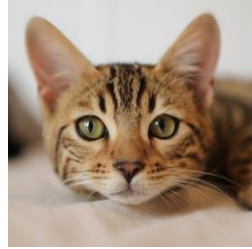
Lots of other
patterns in
full results

ImageNet-1k, 300ep

		No regularization							Regularization 0.1						
		No regularization							Regularization 0.1						
		none	light1	light2	med1	med2	heavy1	heavy2	none	light1	light2	med1	med2	heavy1	heavy2
RTi		69	73	73	72	70	69	68	71	70	67	65	63	62	61
Ti/16		72	76	75	75	74	72	71	71	72	68	65	63	63	62
S/32		64	71	76	76	76	74	74	70	72	72	71	71	69	68
S/16		71	77	79	81	82	80	80	76	79	80	79	79	77	77
B/32		63	70	73	75	76	75	76	69	74	77	77	78	77	77
R26S		72	76	78	79	80	80	80	75	78	81	82	82	81	81
B/16		70	76	79	79	81	80	80	76	79	81	82	83	82	82
L/16		69	76	77	78	78	76	76	74	78	78	78	79	77	77
R50L		70	75	76	77	77	76	76	75	78	78	78	79	77	77
		More augmentation →							→						

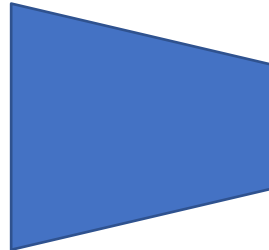
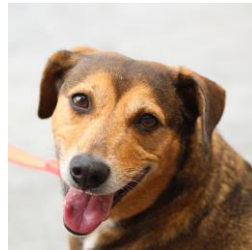
Improving ViT: Distillation

Step 1: Train a teacher CNN on ImageNet

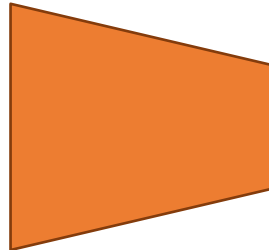
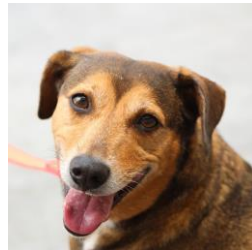


$P(\text{cat}) = 0.9$
 $P(\text{dog}) = 0.1$ → Cross Entropy Loss ← GT label: Cat

Step 2: Train a student ViT to match ImageNet predictions from the teacher CNN (and match GT labels)



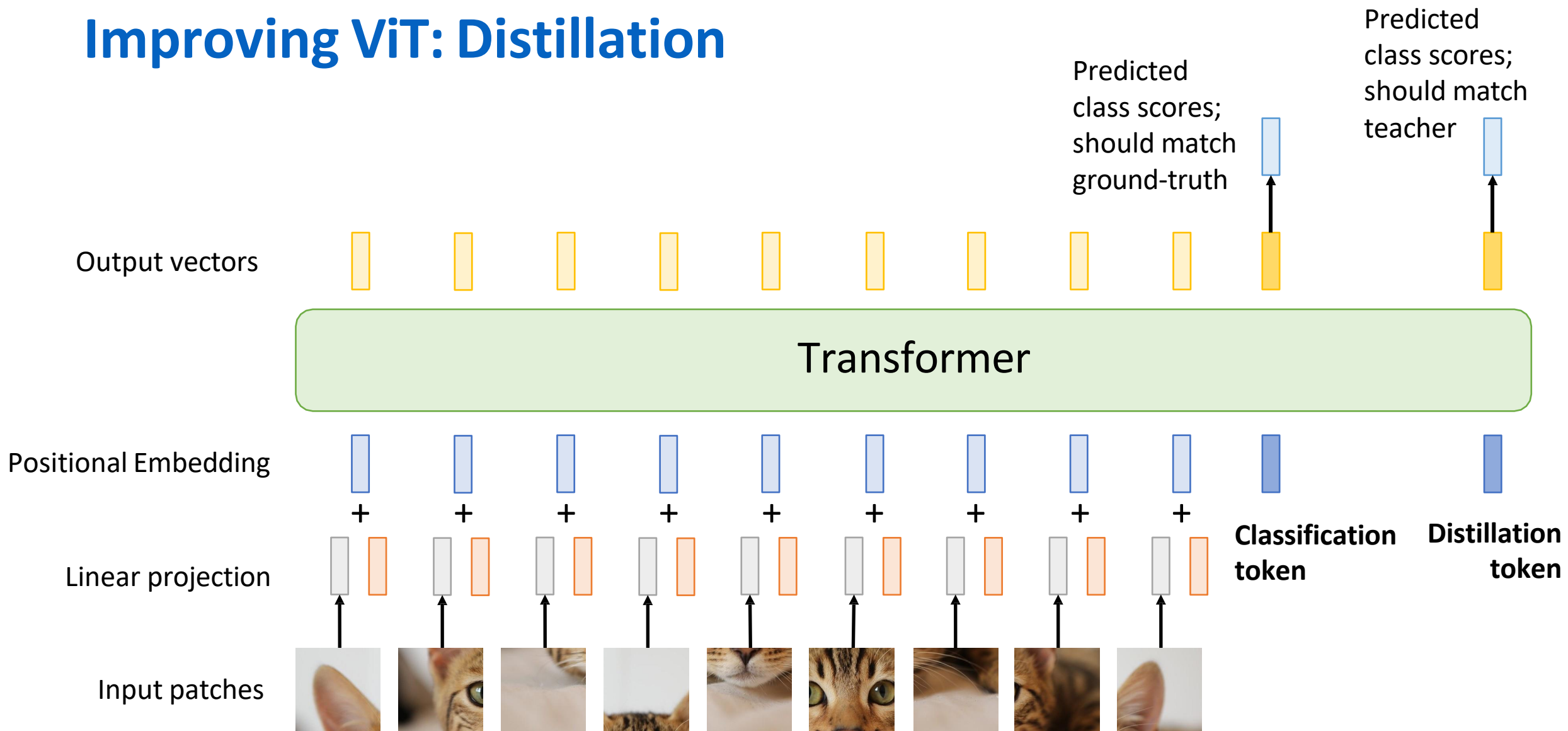
$P(\text{cat}) = 0.1$
 $P(\text{dog}) = 0.9$ → KL Divergence Loss



$P(\text{cat}) = 0.2$
 $P(\text{dog}) = 0.8$ → Cross Entropy Loss ← GT label: Dog

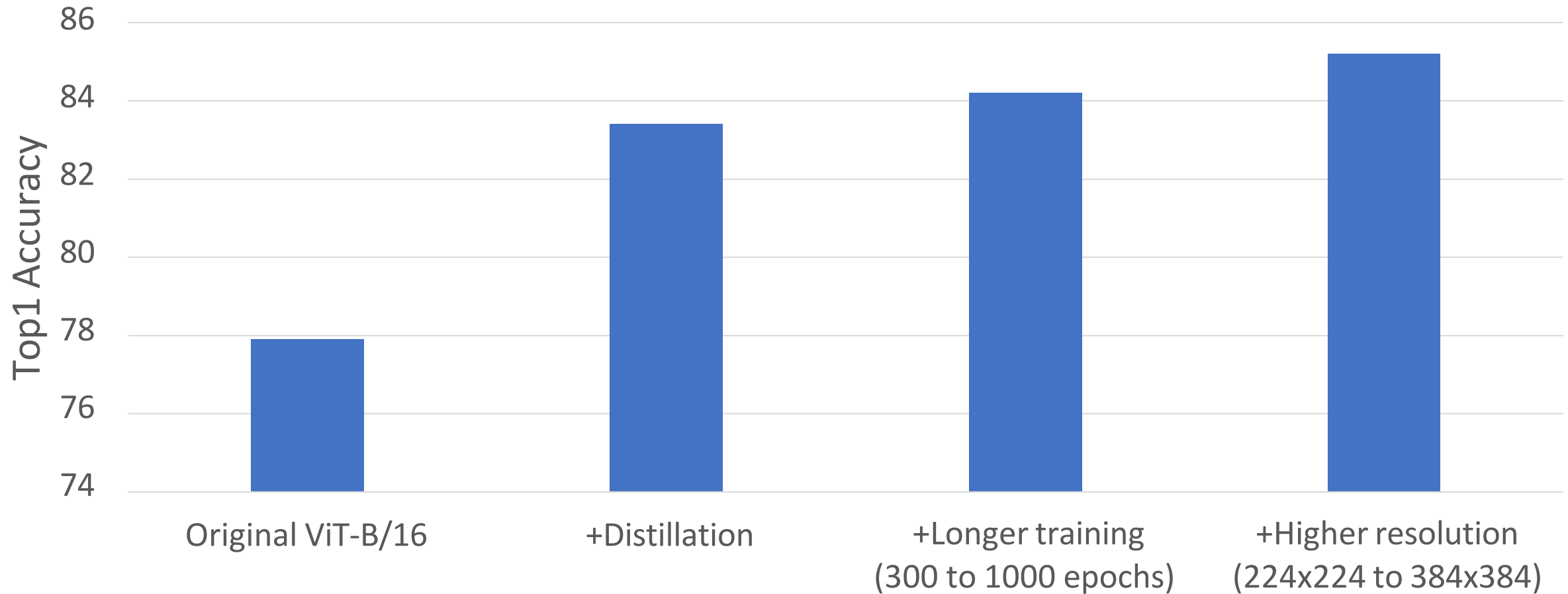


Improving ViT: Distillation



Improving ViT: Distillation

ViT-B/16 on ImageNet

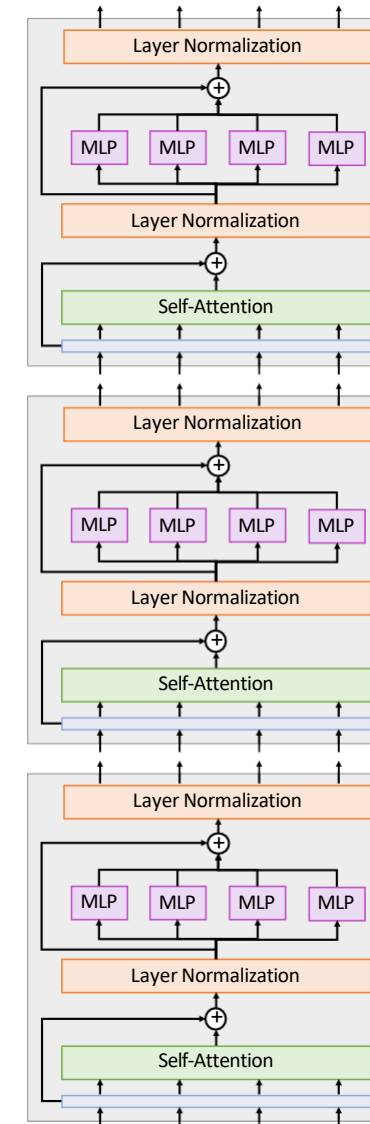
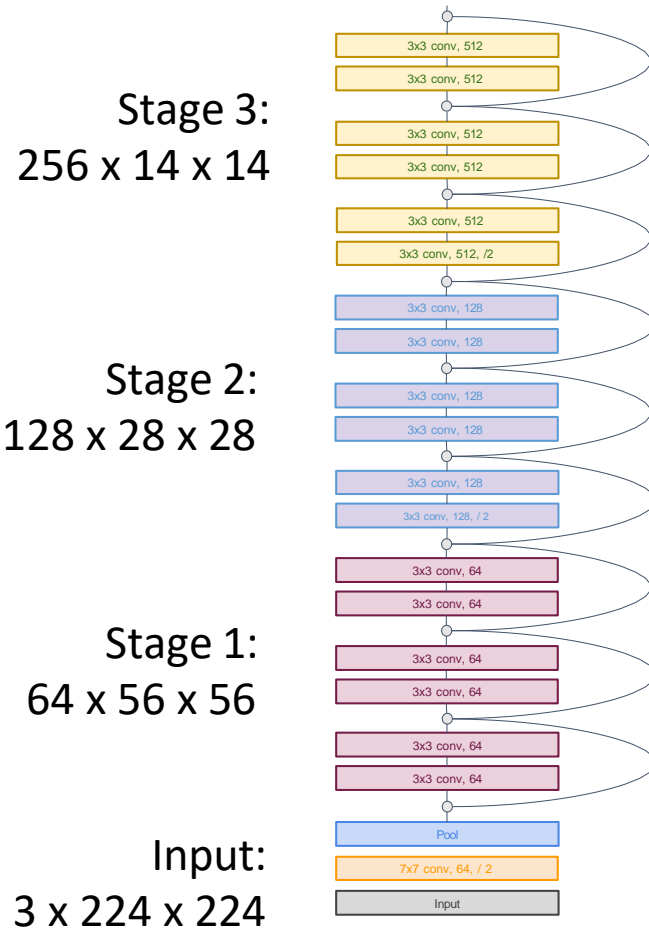


ViT vs CNN

In most CNNs (including ResNets), **decrease** resolution and **increase** channels as you go deeper in the network (Hierarchical architecture)

Useful since objects in images can occur at various scales

In a ViT, all blocks have same resolution and number of channels (Isotropic architecture)



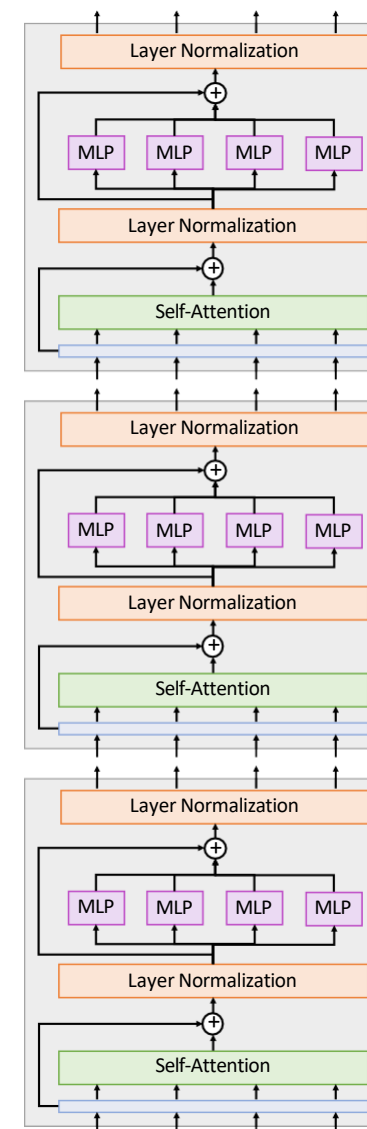
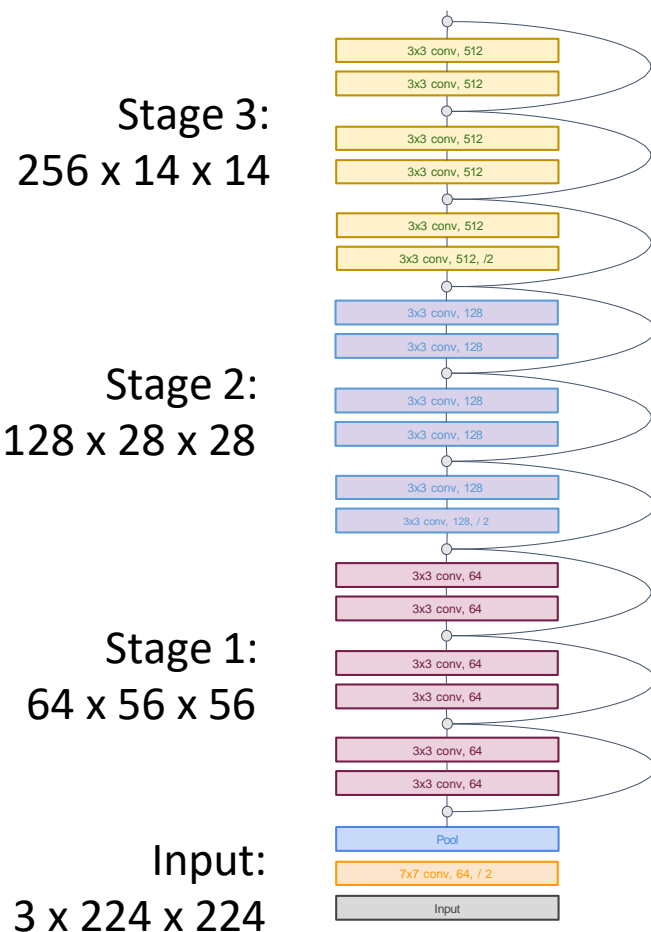
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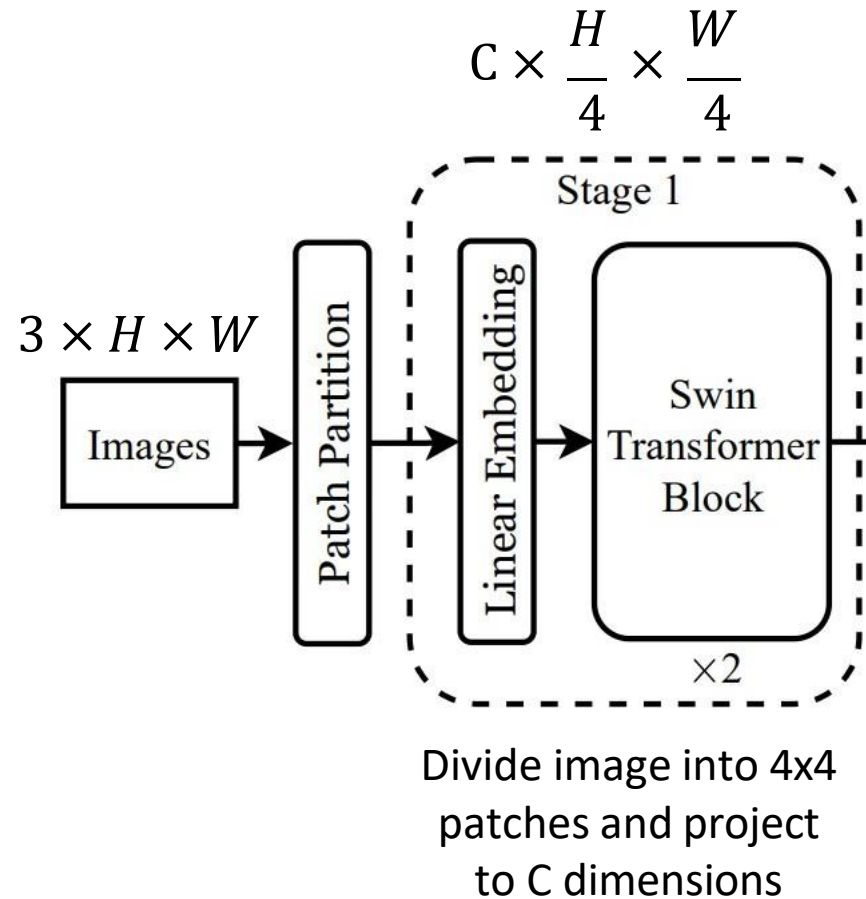
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In a ViT, all blocks have same resolution and number of channels (Isotropic architecture)

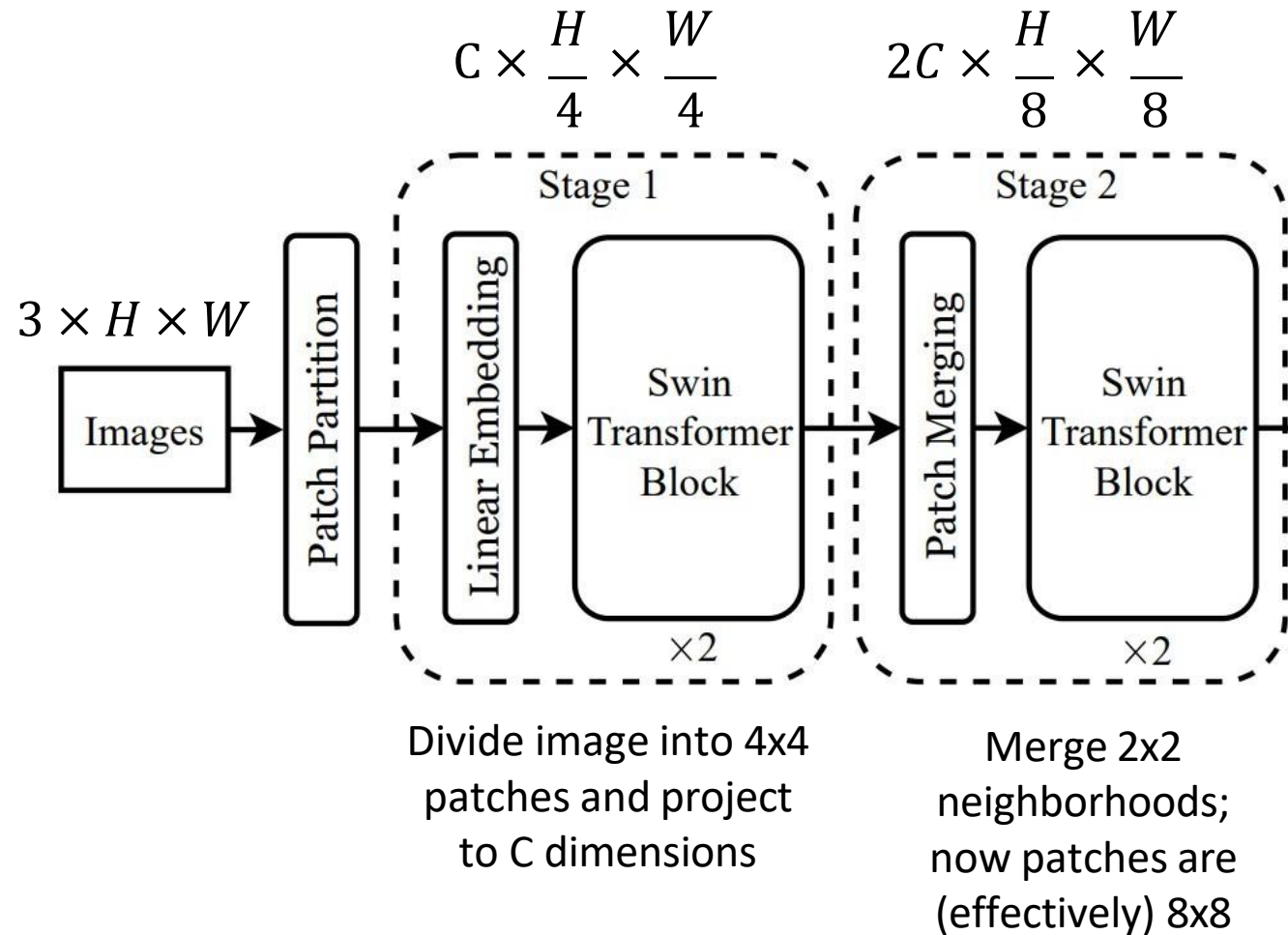
Can we build a **hierarchical** ViT model?



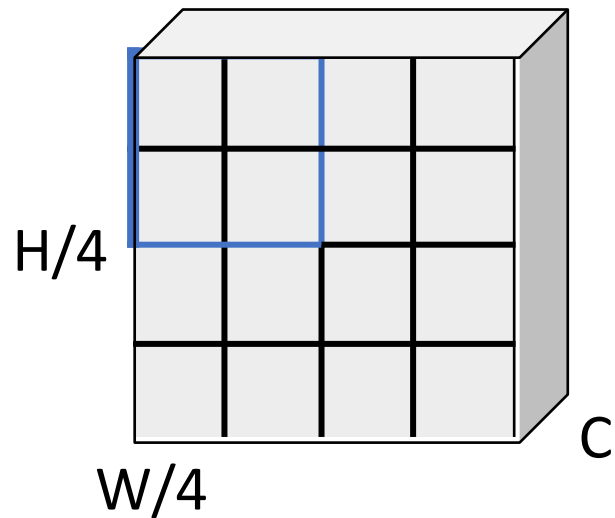
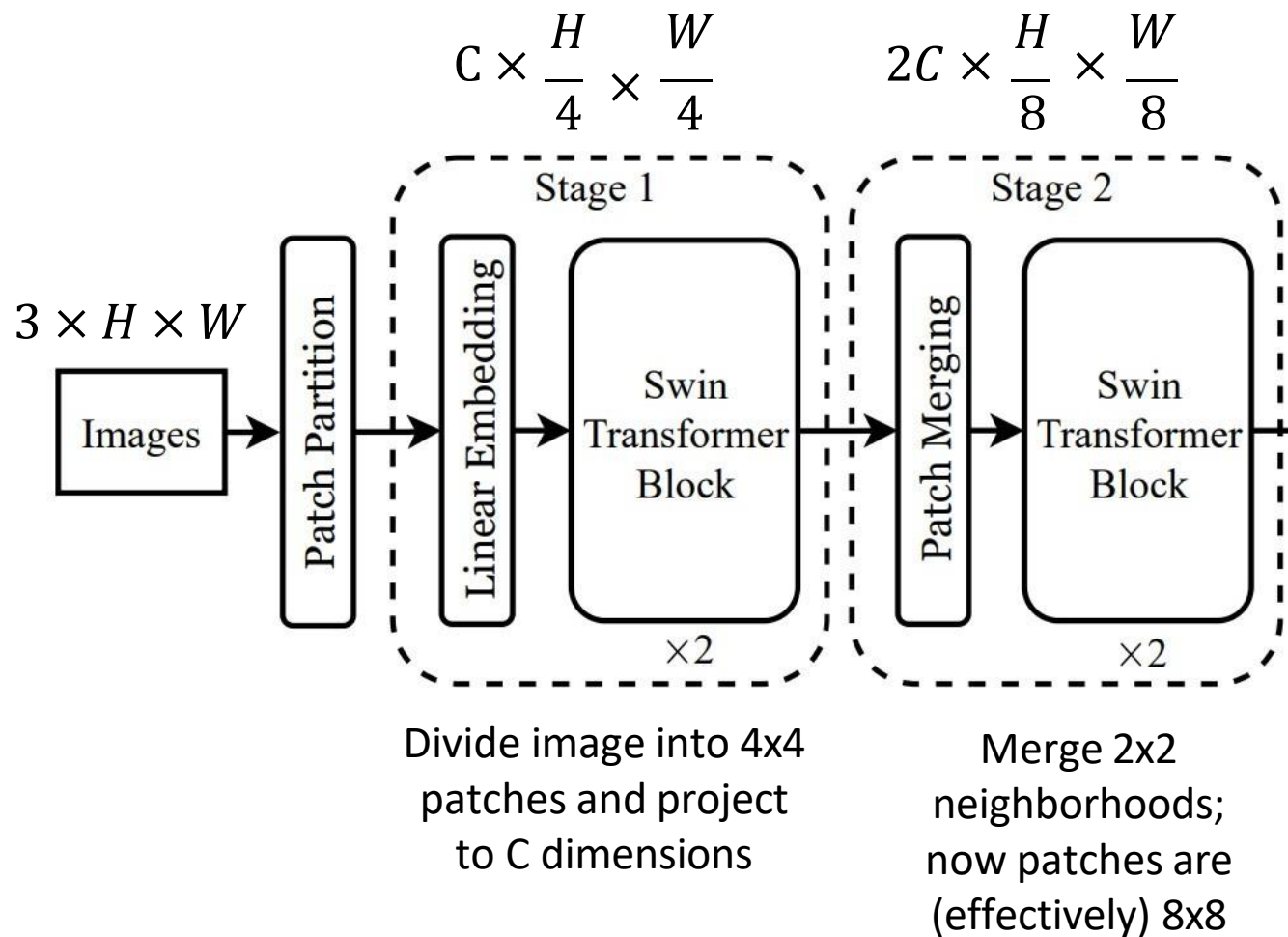
Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer



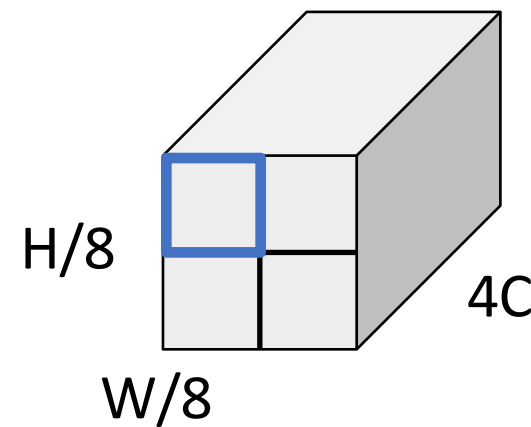
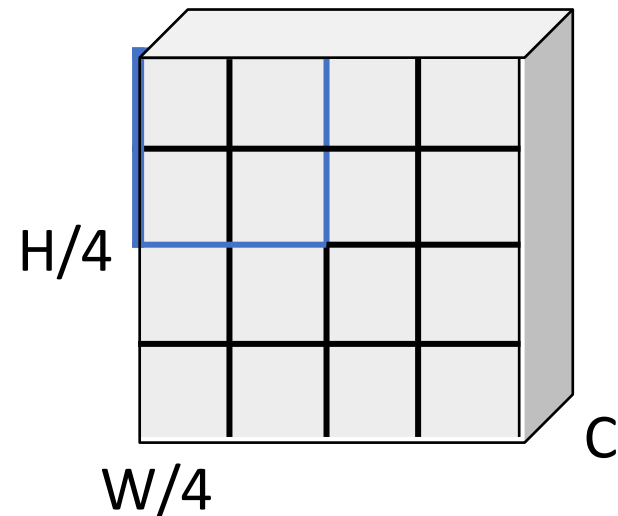
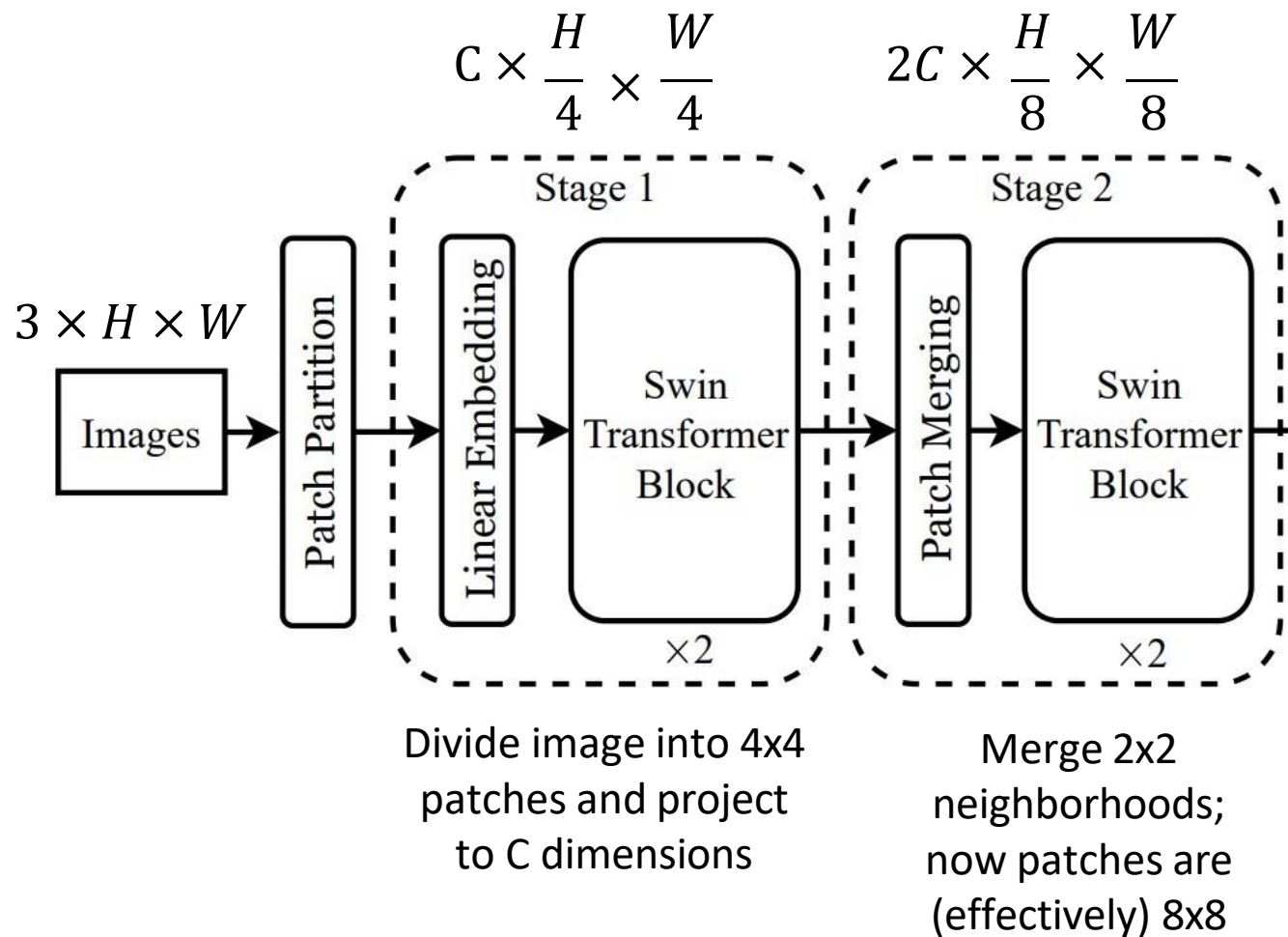
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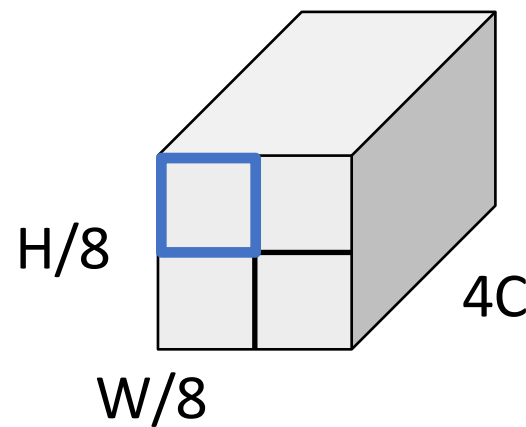
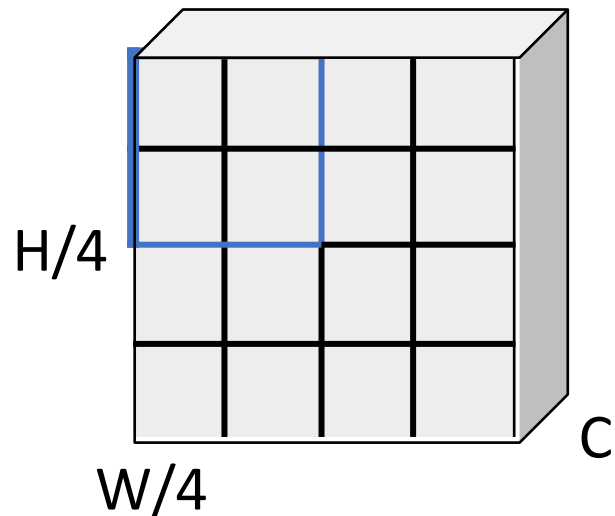
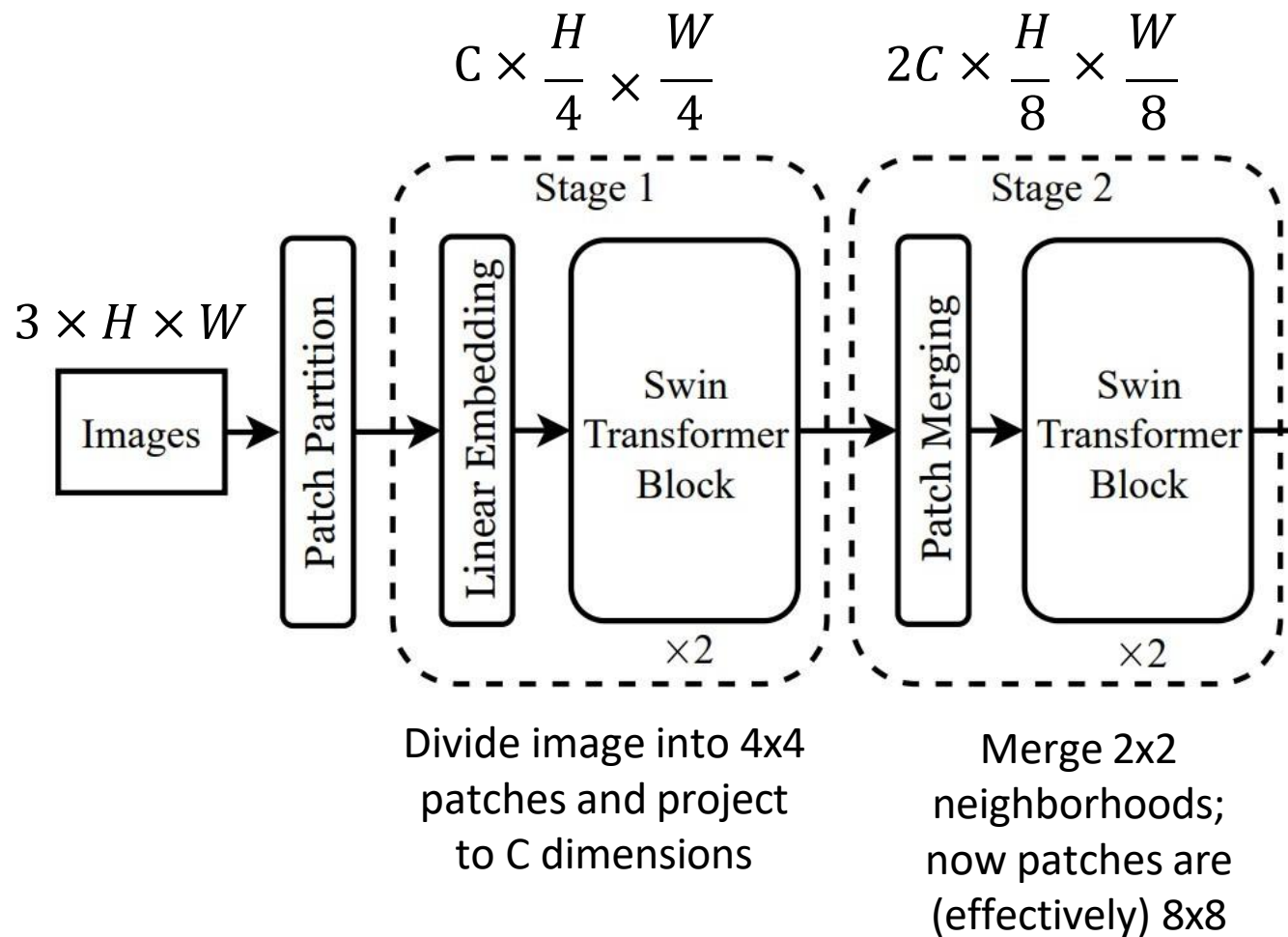


Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer

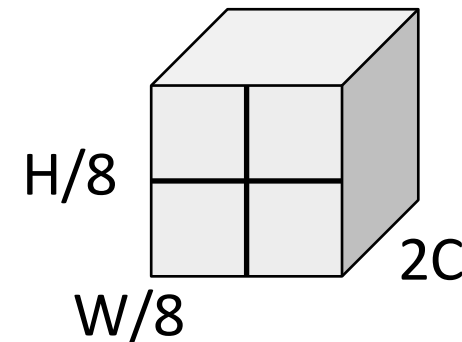


Concatenate groups of 2×2 features

Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer

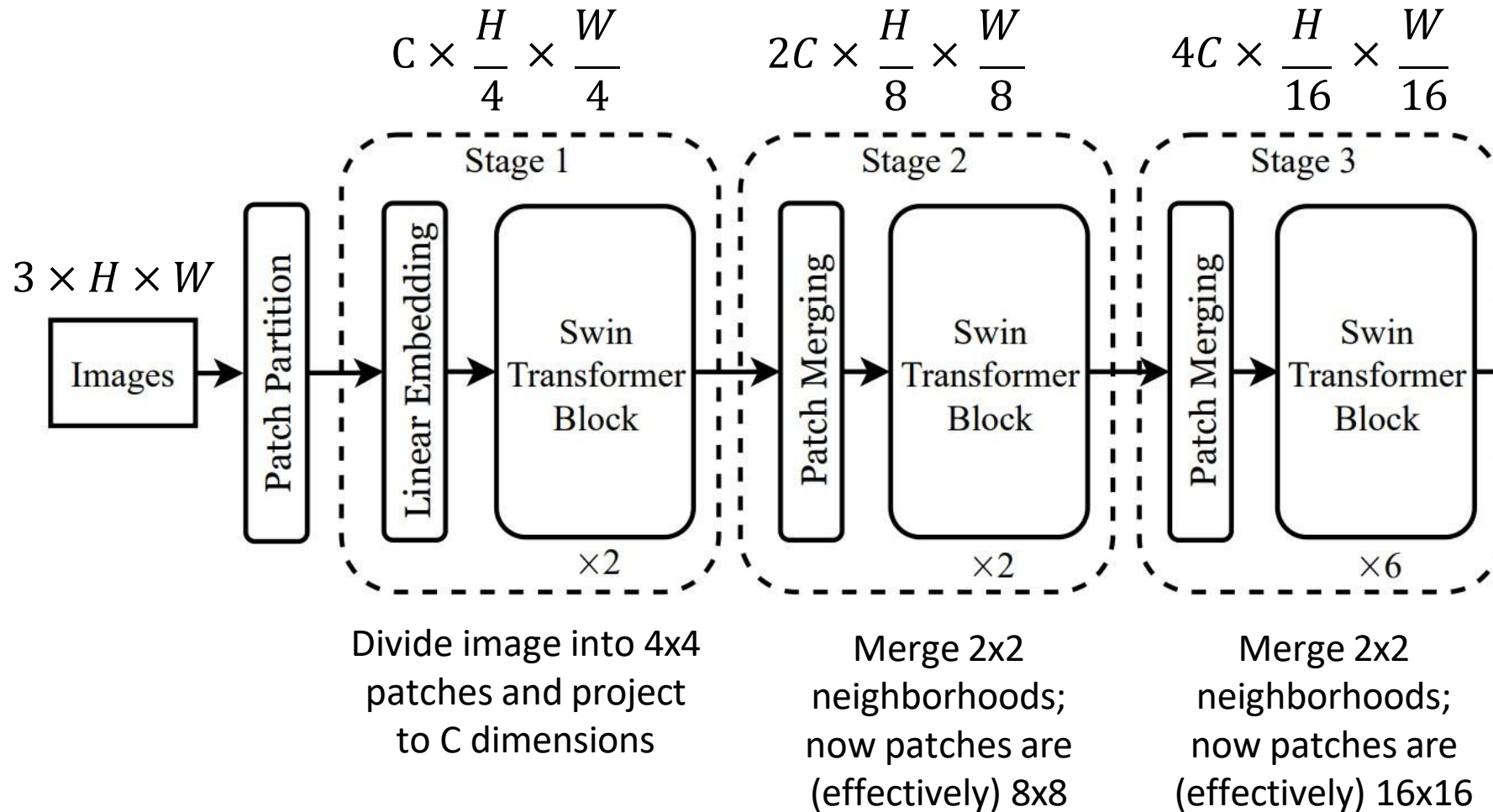


Concatenate groups of 2×2 features

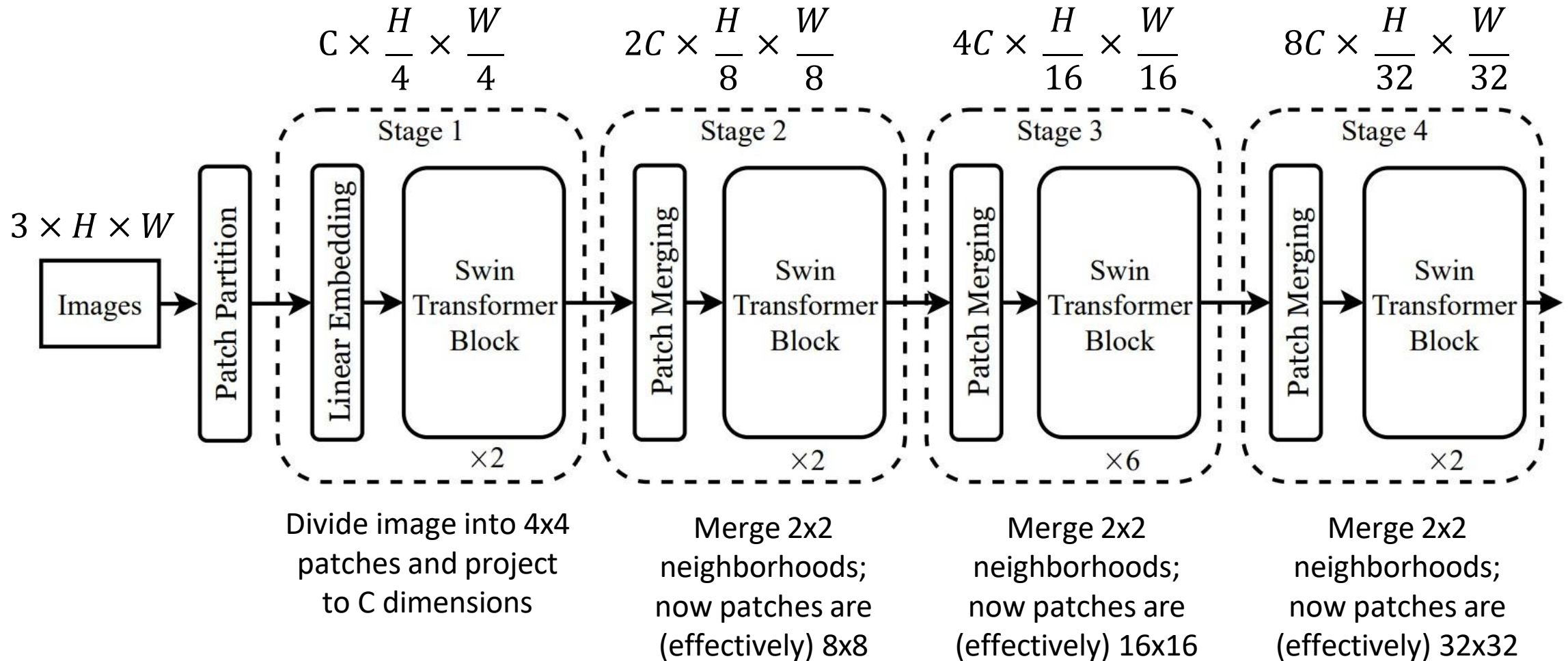


Linear projection from $4C$ to $2C$ channels (1x1 conv)

Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer

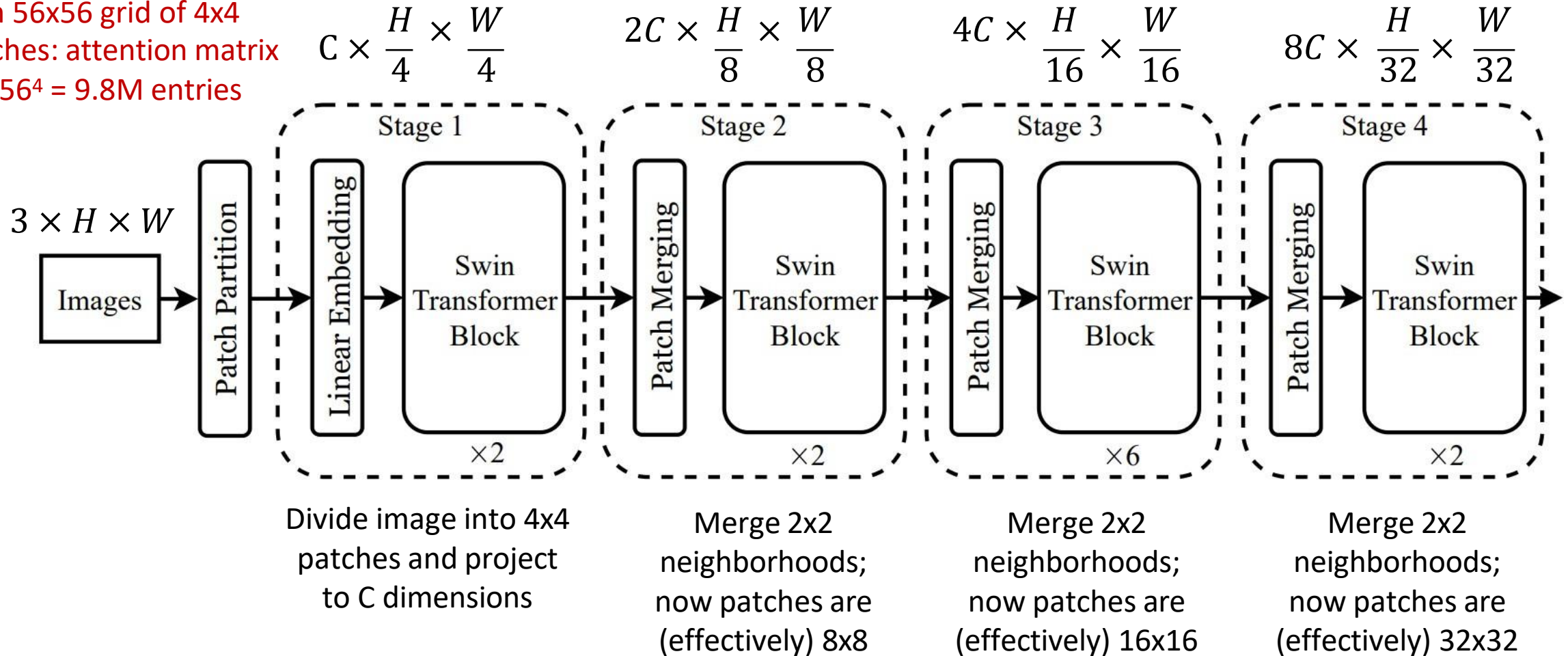


Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer



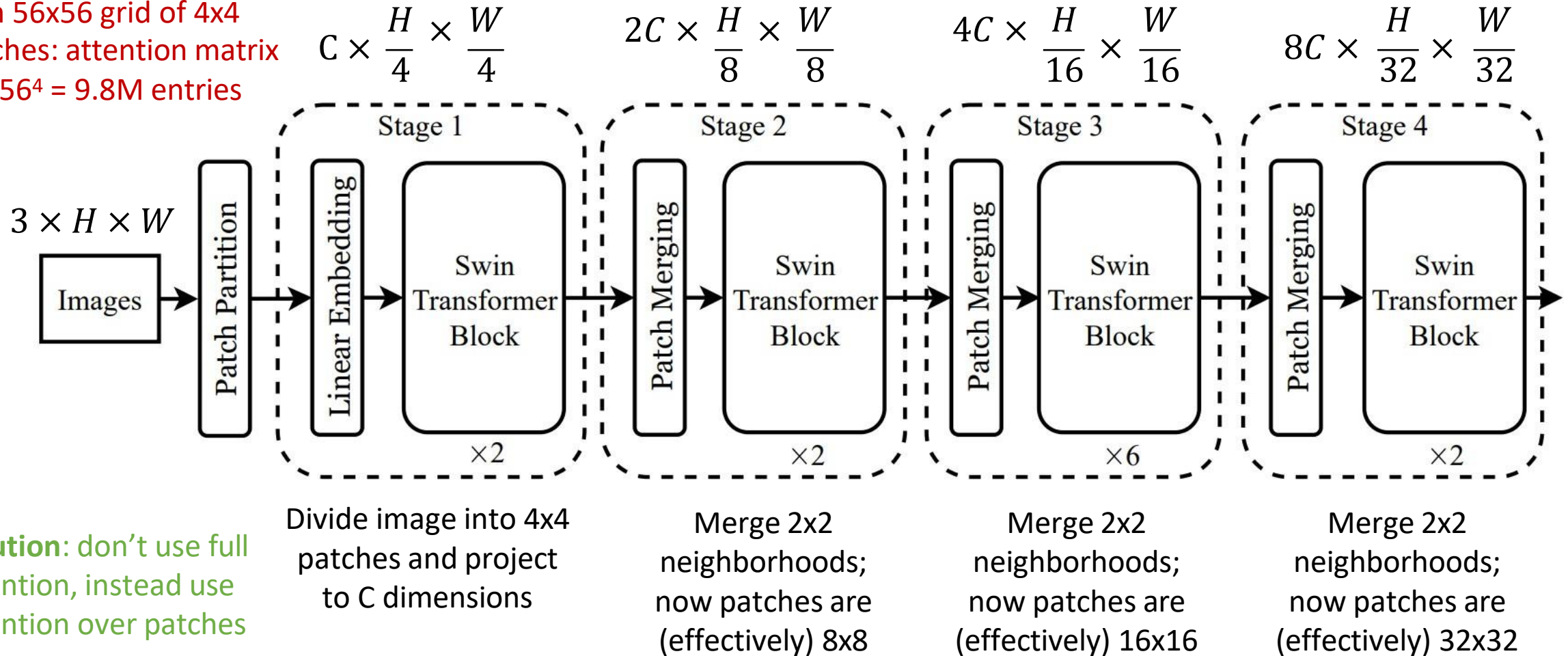
Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer

Problem: 224x224 image
with 56x56 grid of 4x4
patches: attention matrix
has $56^4 = 9.8\text{M}$ entries



Hierarchical ViT: Swin Transformer

Problem: 224x224 image
with 56x56 grid of 4x4
patches: attention matrix
has $56^4 = 9.8\text{M}$ entries



Swin Transformer: Window Attention



With $H \times W$ grid of **tokens**, each attention matrix is H^2W^2 – **quadratic** in image size

Rather than allowing each **token** to attend to all other tokens, instead divide into **windows** of $M \times M$ tokens (here $M=4$); only compute attention within each window

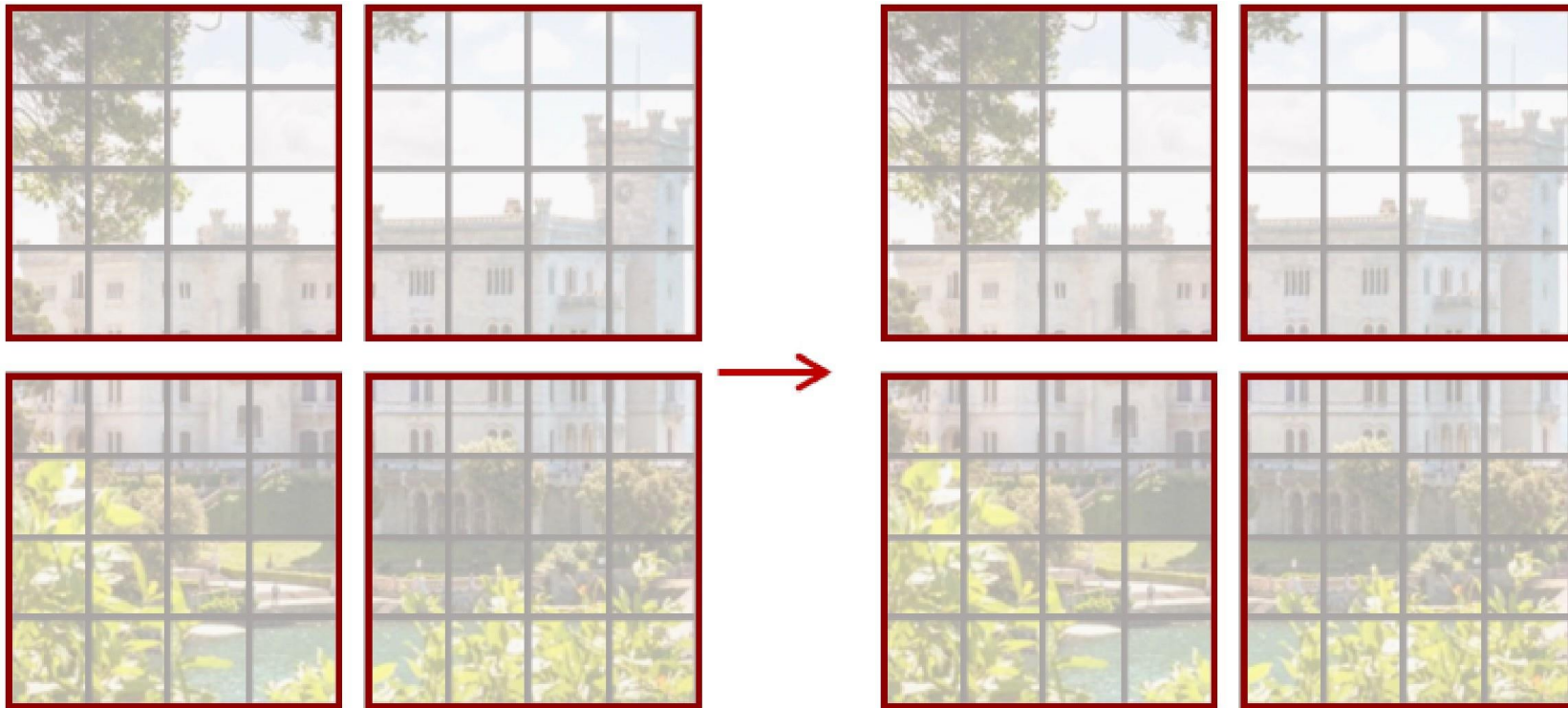
Total size of all attention matrices is now:
 $M^4(H/M)(W/M) = M^2HW$

Linear in image size for fixed M !

Swin uses $M=7$ throughout the network

Swin Transformer: Window Attention

Problem: tokens only interact with other tokens within the same window; no communication across windows

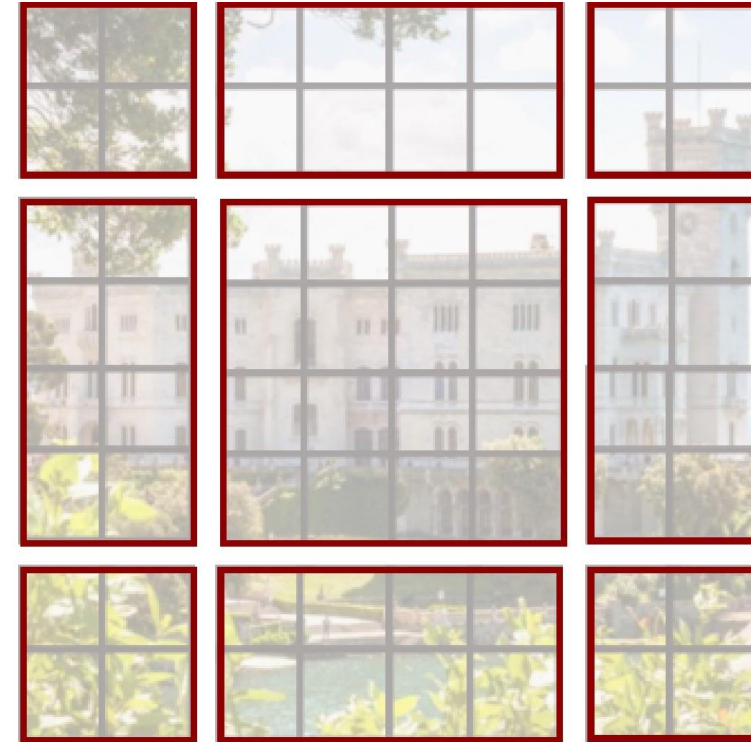


Swin Transformer: Shifted Window Attention

Solution: Alternate between normal windows and shifted windows in successive Transformer blocks



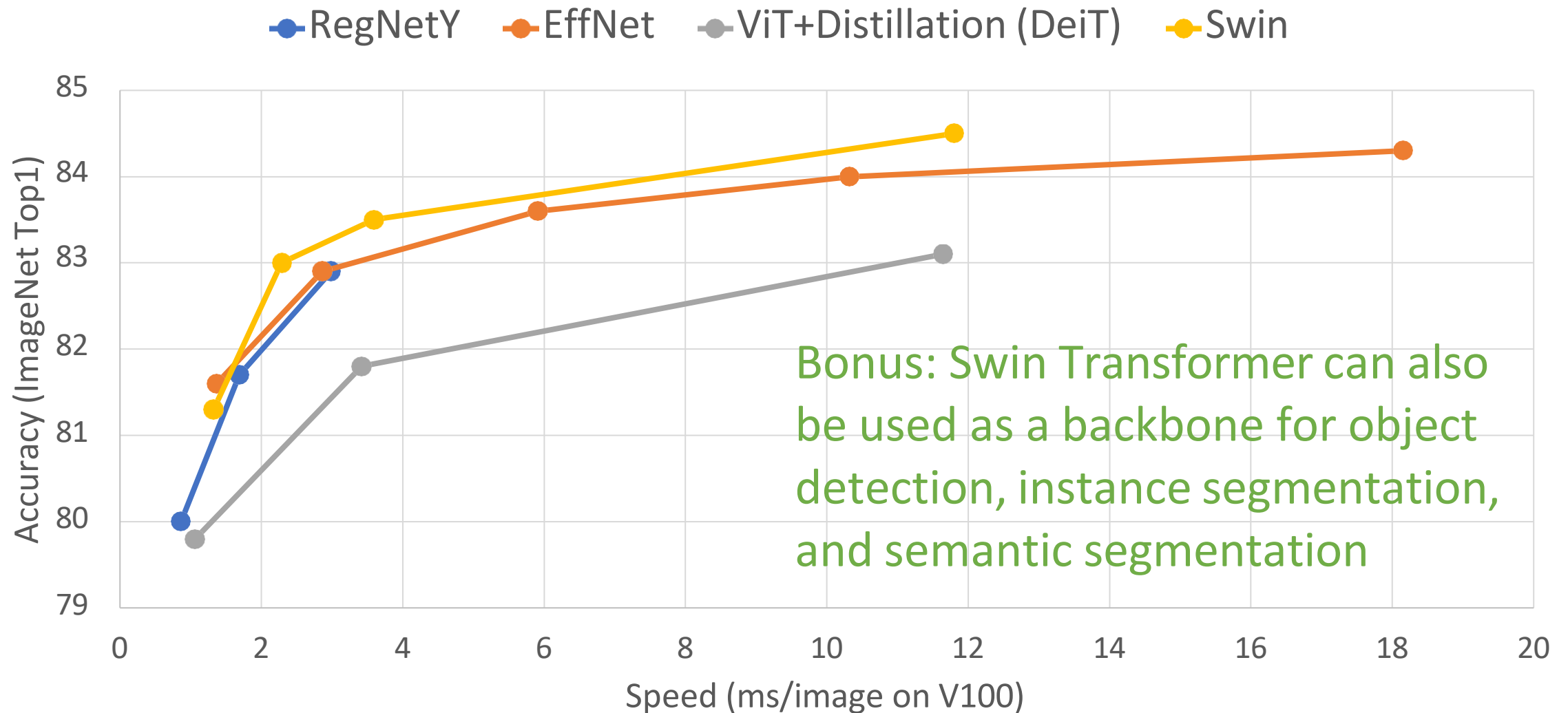
Block L: Normal windows



Block L+1: Shifted Windows

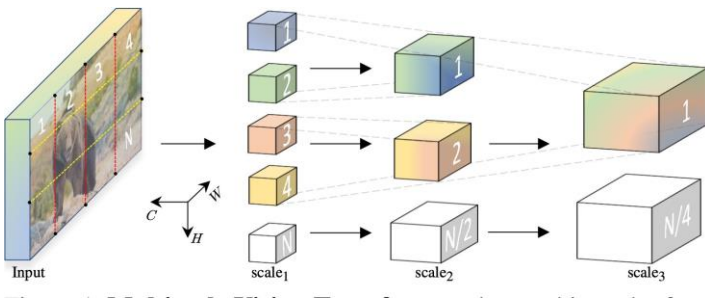
Ugly detail:
Non-square
windows at
edges and
corners

Swin Transformer: Speed vs Accuracy



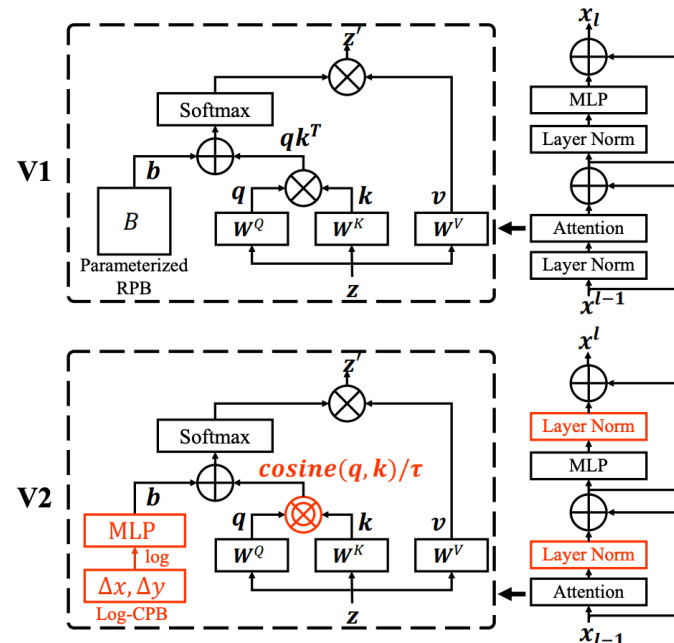
Other Hierarchical Vision Transformers

MViT



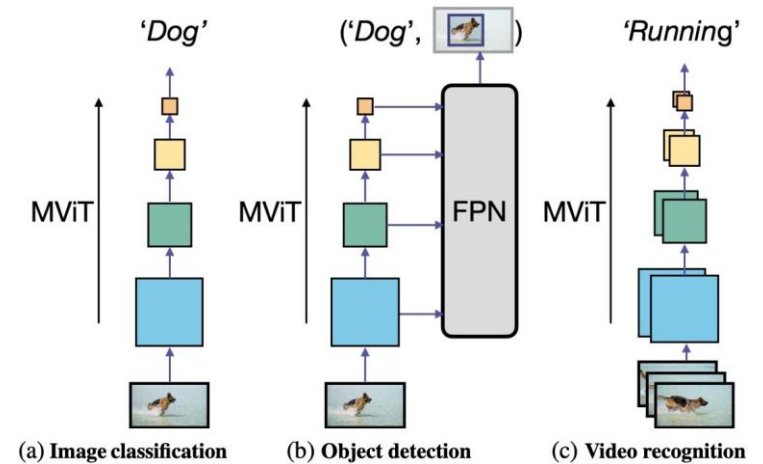
Fan et al, "Multiscale Vision Transformers", ICCV 2021

Swin-V2



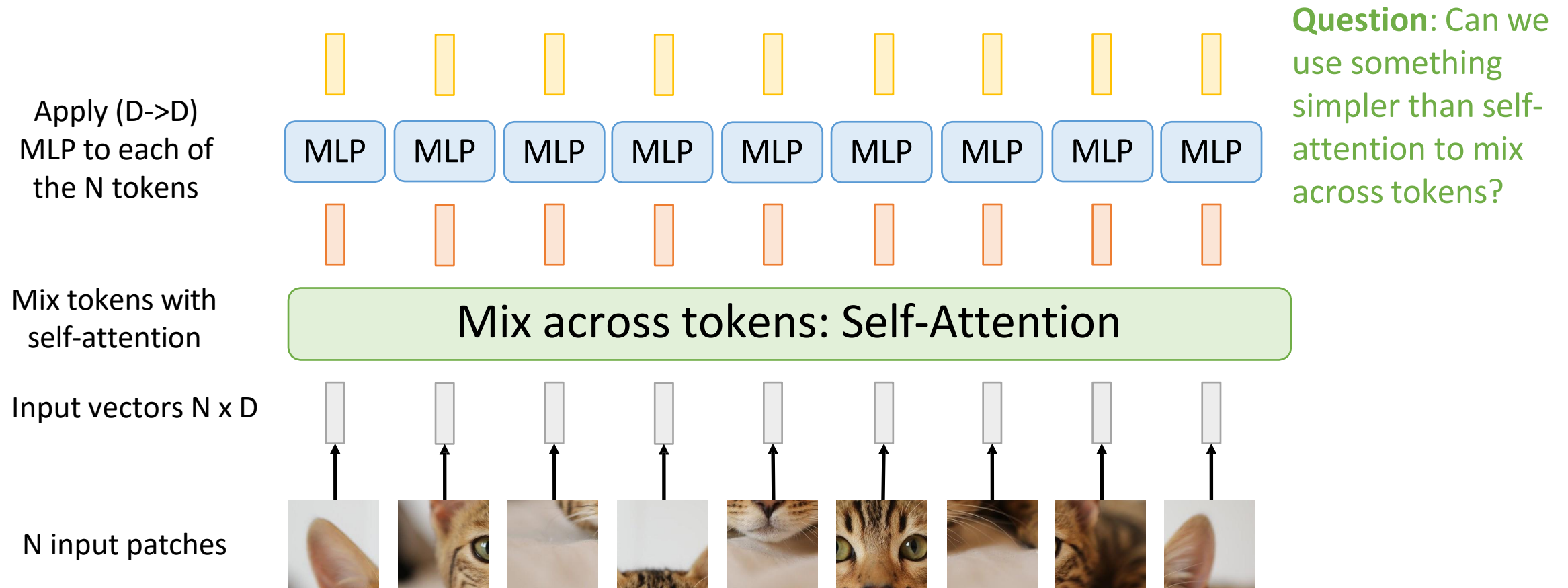
Liu et al, "Swin Transformer V2: Scaling up Capacity and Resolution", CVPR 2022

Improved MViT

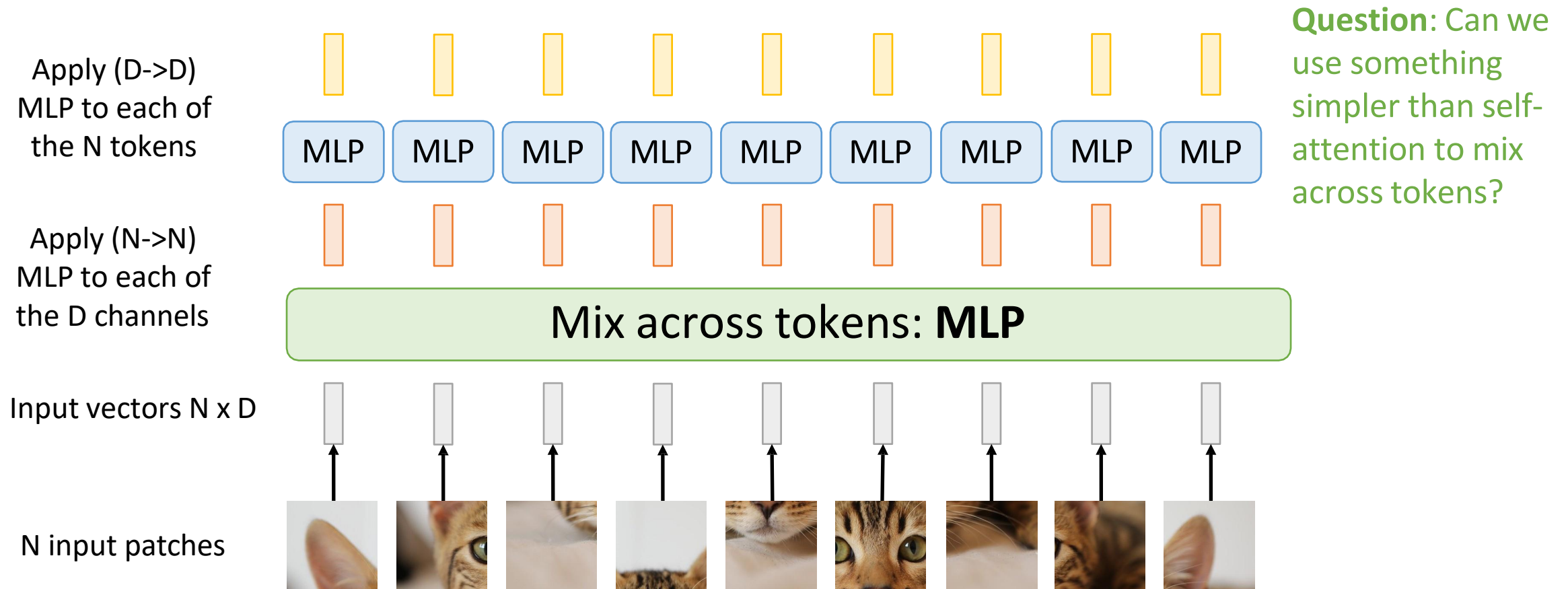


Li et al, "Improved Multiscale Vision Transformers for Classification and Detection", arXiv 2021

Vision Transformer: Another Look



MLP-Mixer: An All-MLP Architecture



Question: Can we use something simpler than self-attention to mix across tokens?

MLP-Mixer: Many concurrent and followups

Touvron et al, “ResMLP: Feedforward Networks for Image Classification with Data-Efficient Training”, arXiv 2021, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2105.03404>

Tolstikhin et al, “MLP-Mixer: An all-MLP architecture for vision”, NeurIPS 2021, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2105.01601>

Liu et al, “Pay Attention to MLPs”, NeurIPS 2021, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2105.08050>

Yu et al, “S2-MLP: Spatial-Shift MLP Architecture for Vision”, WACV 2022, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2106.07477>

Chen et al, “CycleMLP: A MLP-like Architecture for Dense Prediction”, ICLR 2022, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2107.10224>

Data Modalities

✓ Language

✓ Vision

- Audio
- ... and many other modalities (e.g., biological/physiological signals, etc.)
- Multimodal (>2 data modalities)

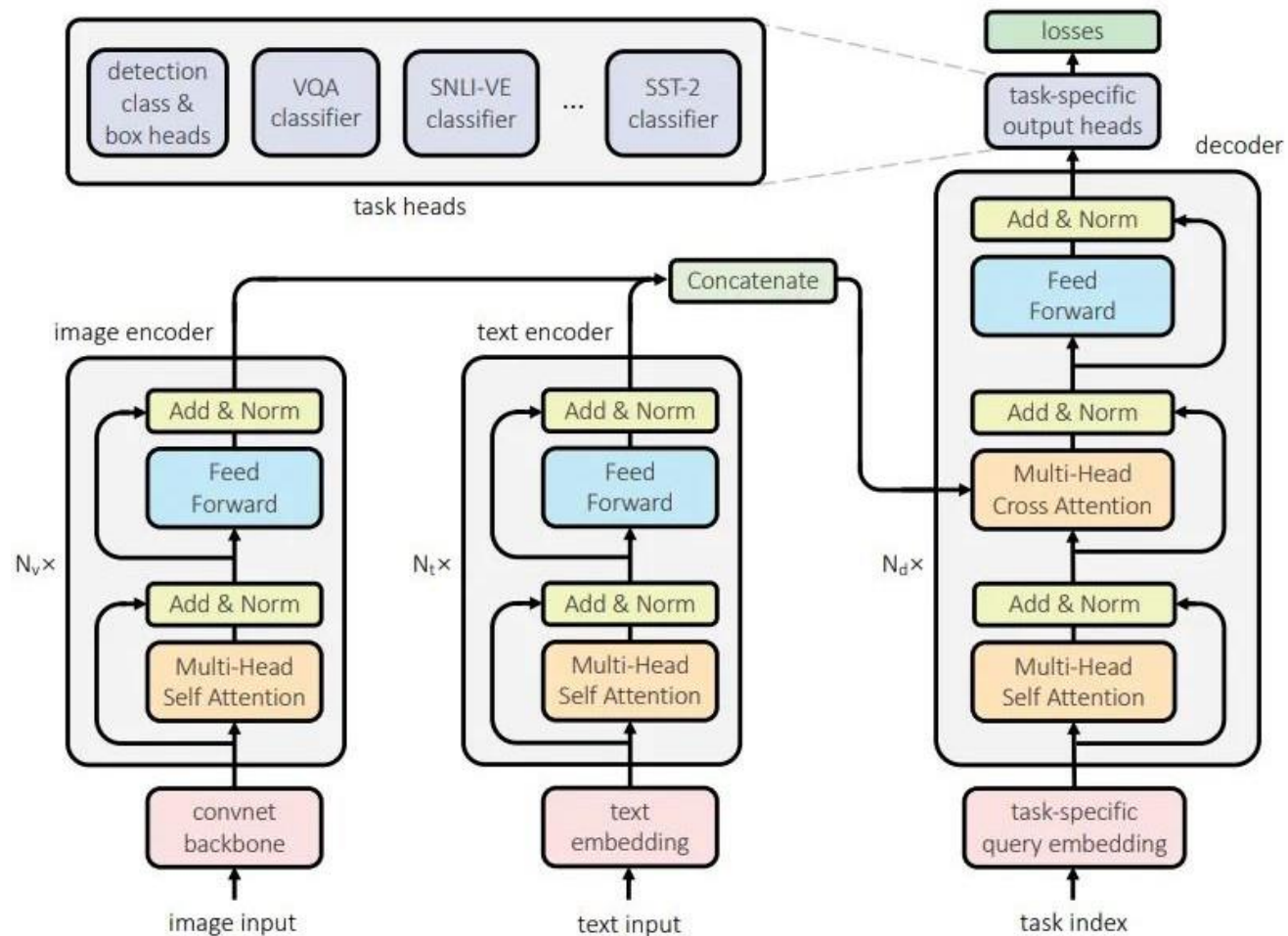
Audio

- Similar to the computer vision but with spectrograms instead of images.
- Exists as encoder-decoder variants or as an encoder-only variant with CTC loss.
- Could be augmented with the CNN.

[Conformer: Convolution-augmented Transformer for Speech Recognition](#)

[AST: Audio Spectrogram Transformer](#)

Multimodal Transformer - UniT

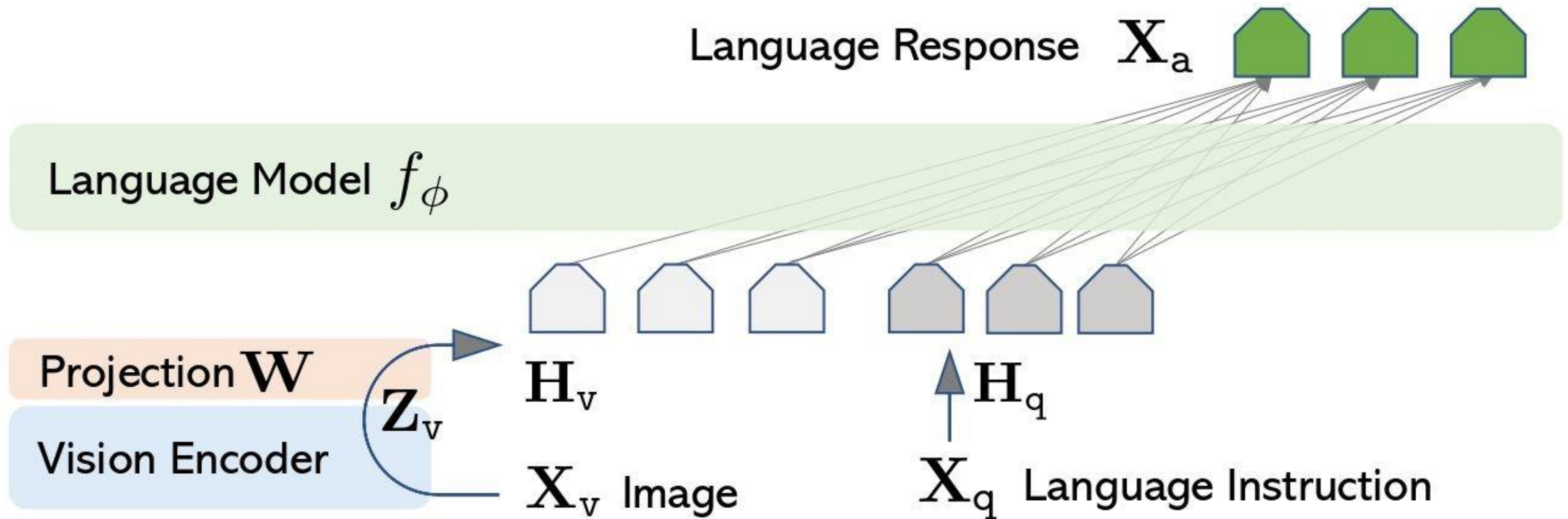


1. UniT handles 7 tasks ranging from object detection to vision-and language reasoning and natural language understanding.

2. Components:

- An image encoder to encode the visual inputs.
- A text encoder to encode the language inputs.
- A joint decoder with per-task query embedding.
- Task-specific heads to make the final outputs for each task.

Multimodal Transformer - LLaVA



Multimodal Transformer - LLaVA

Start a new conversation, and the history is cleared.



User

Do you know who drew this painting?



The painting depicts a dog in a humorous situation, where it appears to be wearing a woman's dress and standing in front of a landscape. Although the artist of the painting is not explicitly identified, it could be a reference to the famous artist Da Vinci, known for his artistic works, including the Mona Lisa. The painting is likely a creative and comical take on the traditional portrait style, replacing a human figure with a dog dressed in a woman's clothing, making it an interesting and amusing visual piece.