Transformers for Time Series Forecasting

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ISF: Deep Learning for Forecasting
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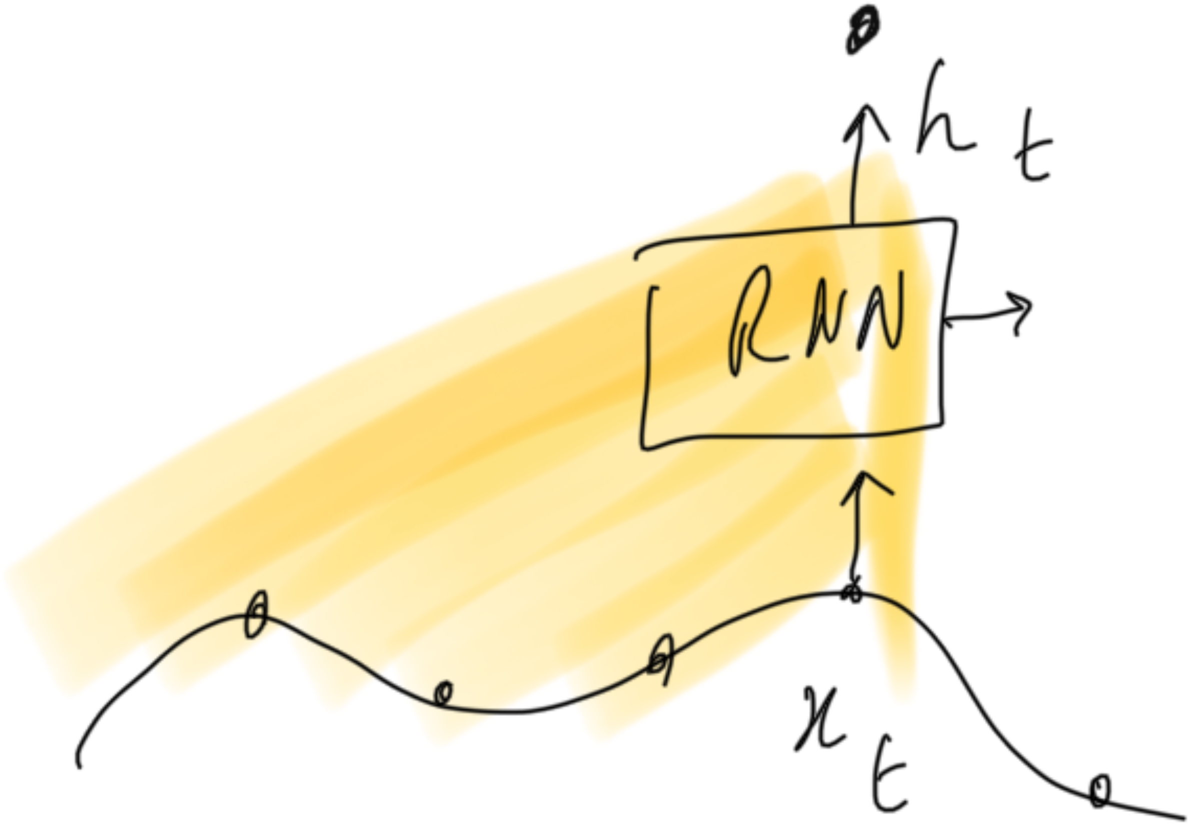
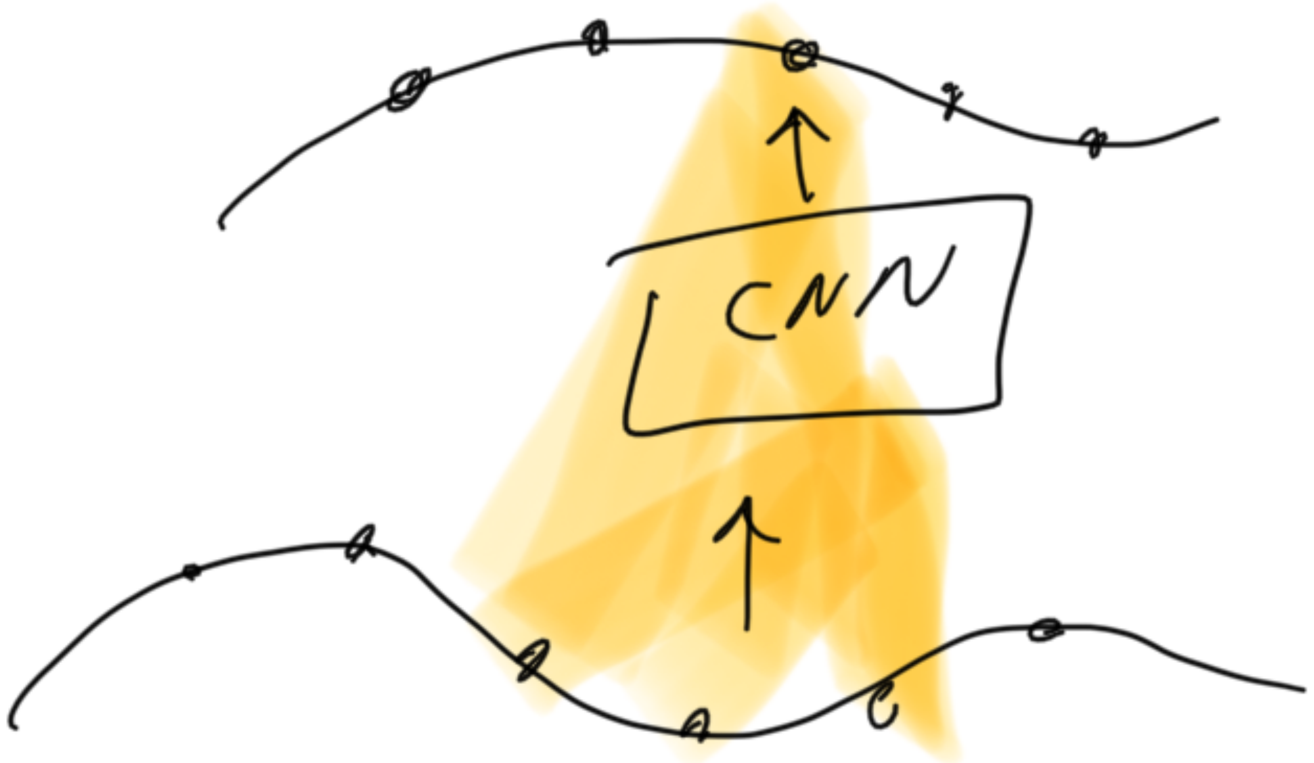
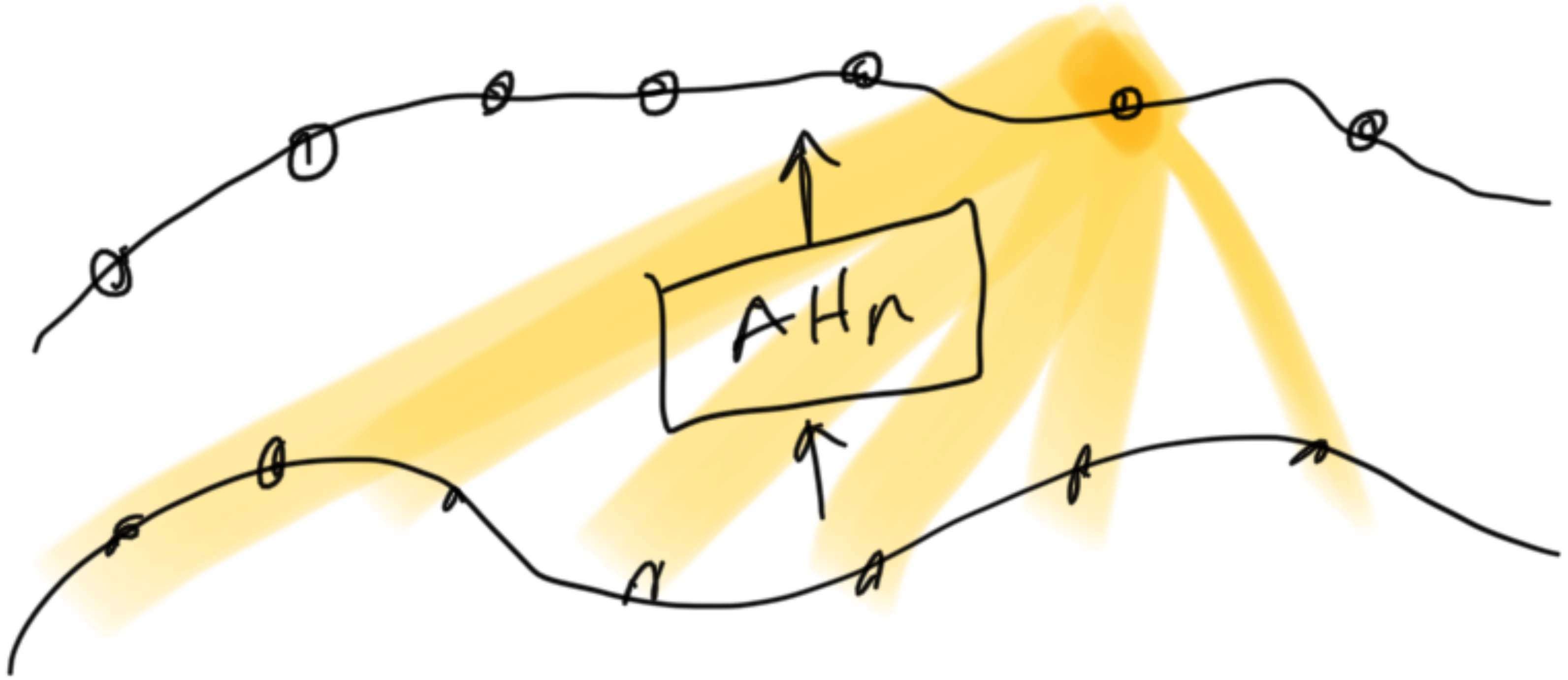
Neural Forecasting Models

1. Some aspect that learns a representation over history:
    - RNN
    - MLP, CNN
    - Attention/Transformer 👈🏻
    - GNNs etc.
2. Some aspect that models the emissions appropriately:
    - Point emissions
    - Probabilistic etc.


RNN
h_t
x_t


CNN


Attn

$$Y = \{\bar{vec}_1, \bar{vec}_2, \ldots \bar{vec}_N\}$$

$$\uparrow$$

$$\boxed{Attn}$$

$$\uparrow$$

$$X = \{vec_1, vec_2, \ldots vec_N\}$$

$vec_i \in \mathbb{R}^D$

$\bar{vec}_i \in \mathbb{R}^D$

$$X = \{\vec{x}_1, \vec{x}_2 \cdots, \vec{x}_N\} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times D}$$

$$E = \frac{X \cdot X^T}{\sqrt{(D)}} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$$

scaling → $\sqrt{(D)}$

Similarity score

$$A = \mathrm{softmax}(E, \dim = 1) \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$$

prob. weights

$$Y = A \cdot X \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times D}$$

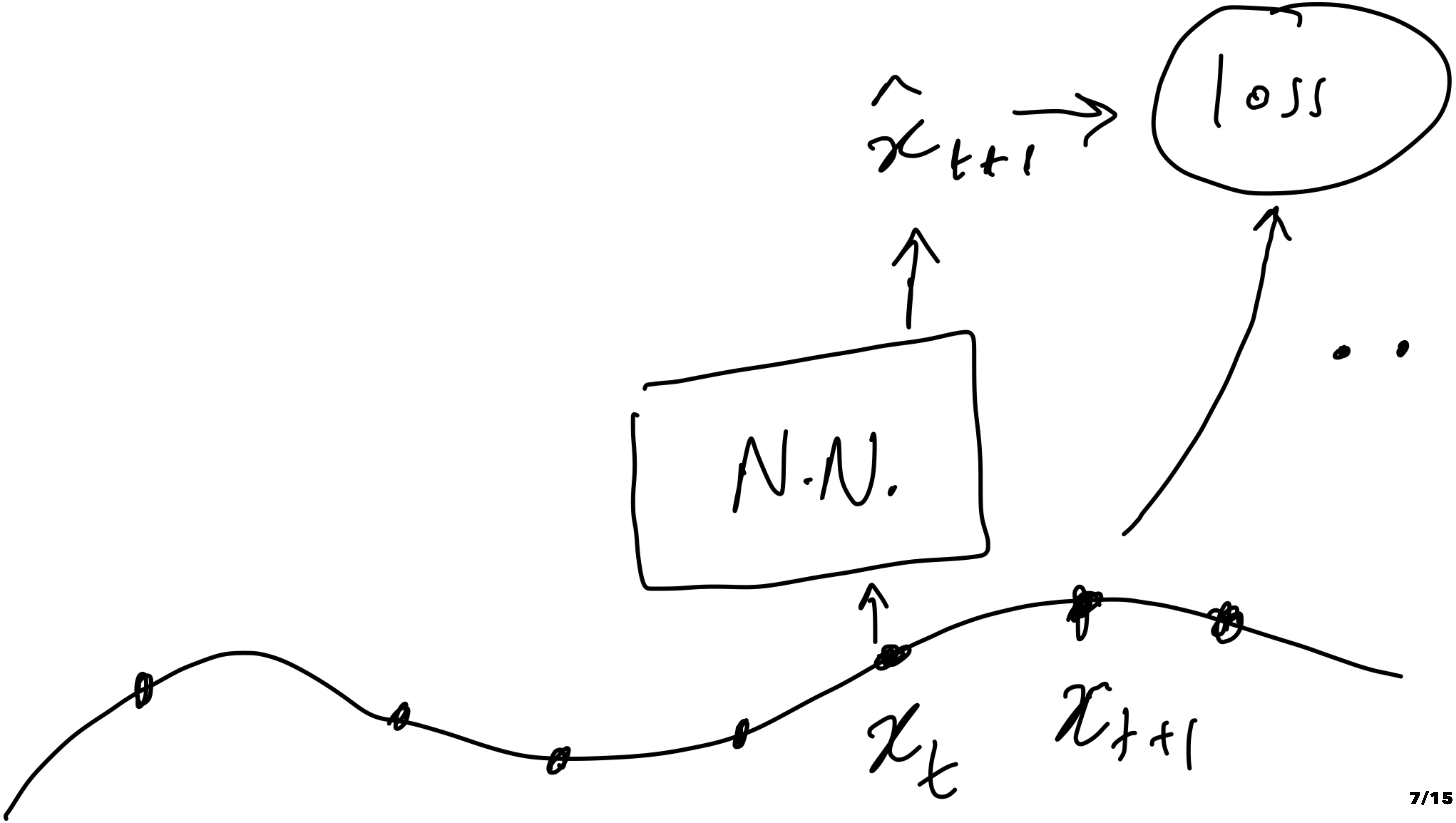
$$X = \{\vec{x}_1, \ldots, \vec{x}_N\} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times D}$$

Learnable: $Q_\theta(X)$; $K_\theta(X)$; $V_\theta(X)$: $\mathbb{R}^D \to \mathbb{R}^D$

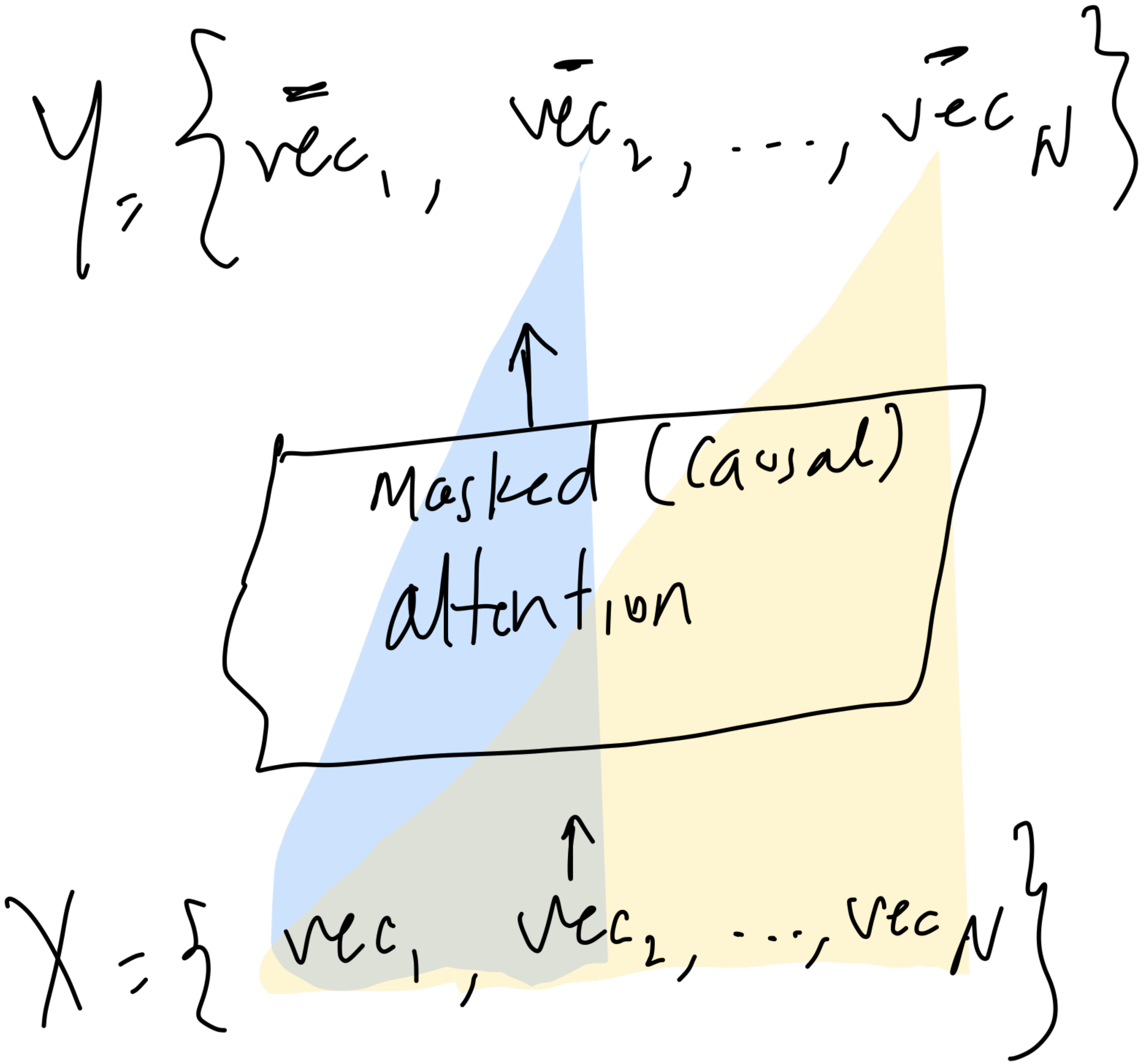
$$E = \frac{Q \cdot K^T}{\sqrt{(D)}}$$

$$A = \text{softmax}(E, \text{dim}=1)$$

$$Y = A \cdot V \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times D}$$



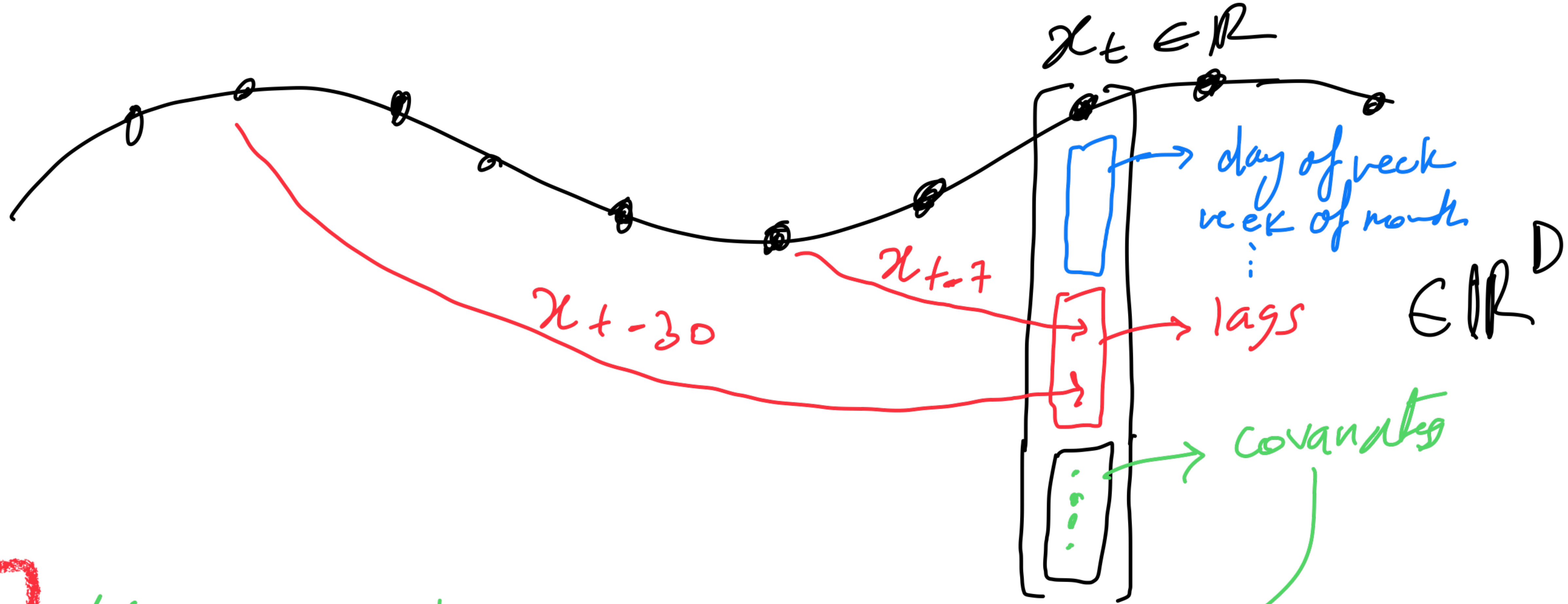
$\hat{x}_{t+1}$
loss
N.N.
...
x_t
x_{t+1}



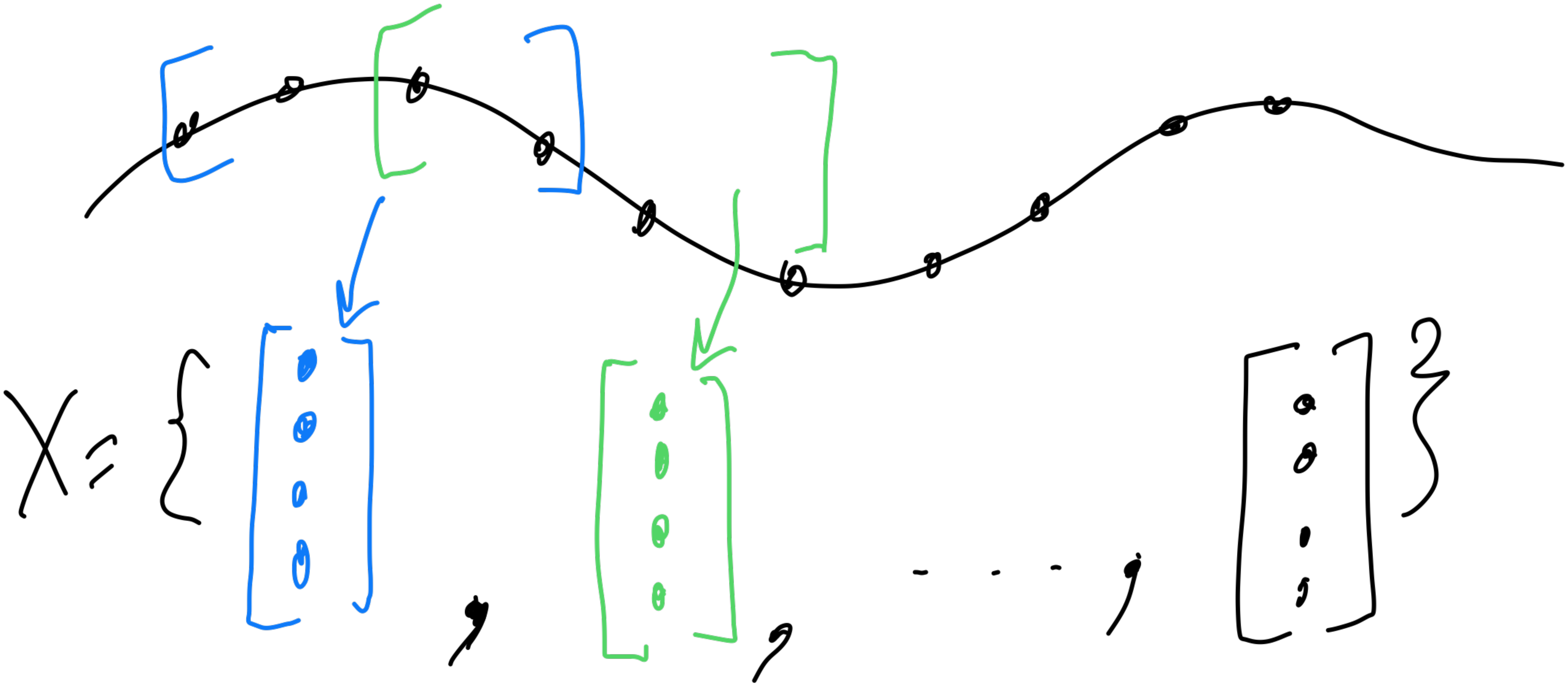
$$M = \begin{bmatrix} -\infty & -\infty & -\infty & \\ -\infty & -\infty & -\infty & 1 \\ -\infty & & & \\ \vdots & & & \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$$

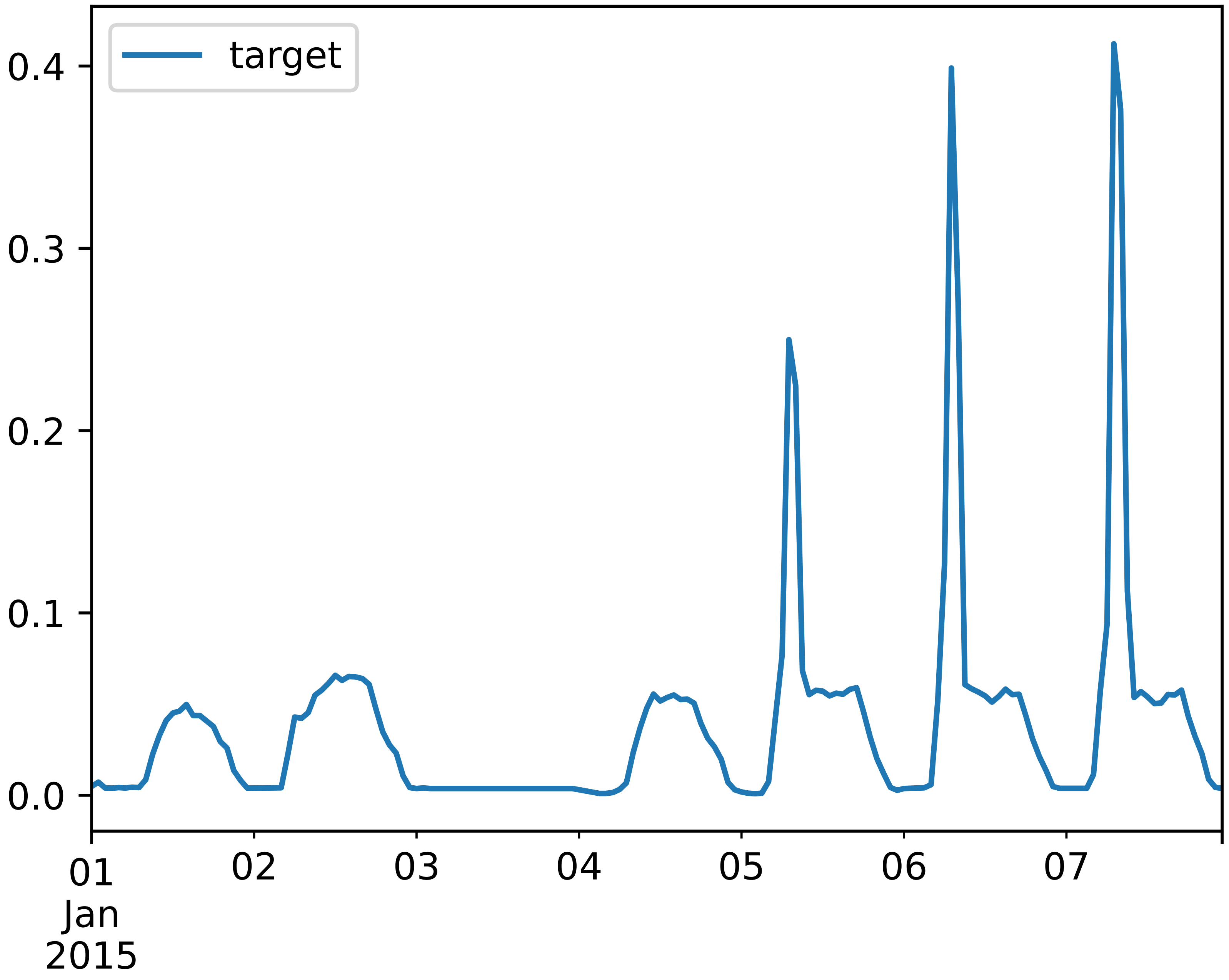
$$A = \text{softmax}(E \cdot M, d=1)$$

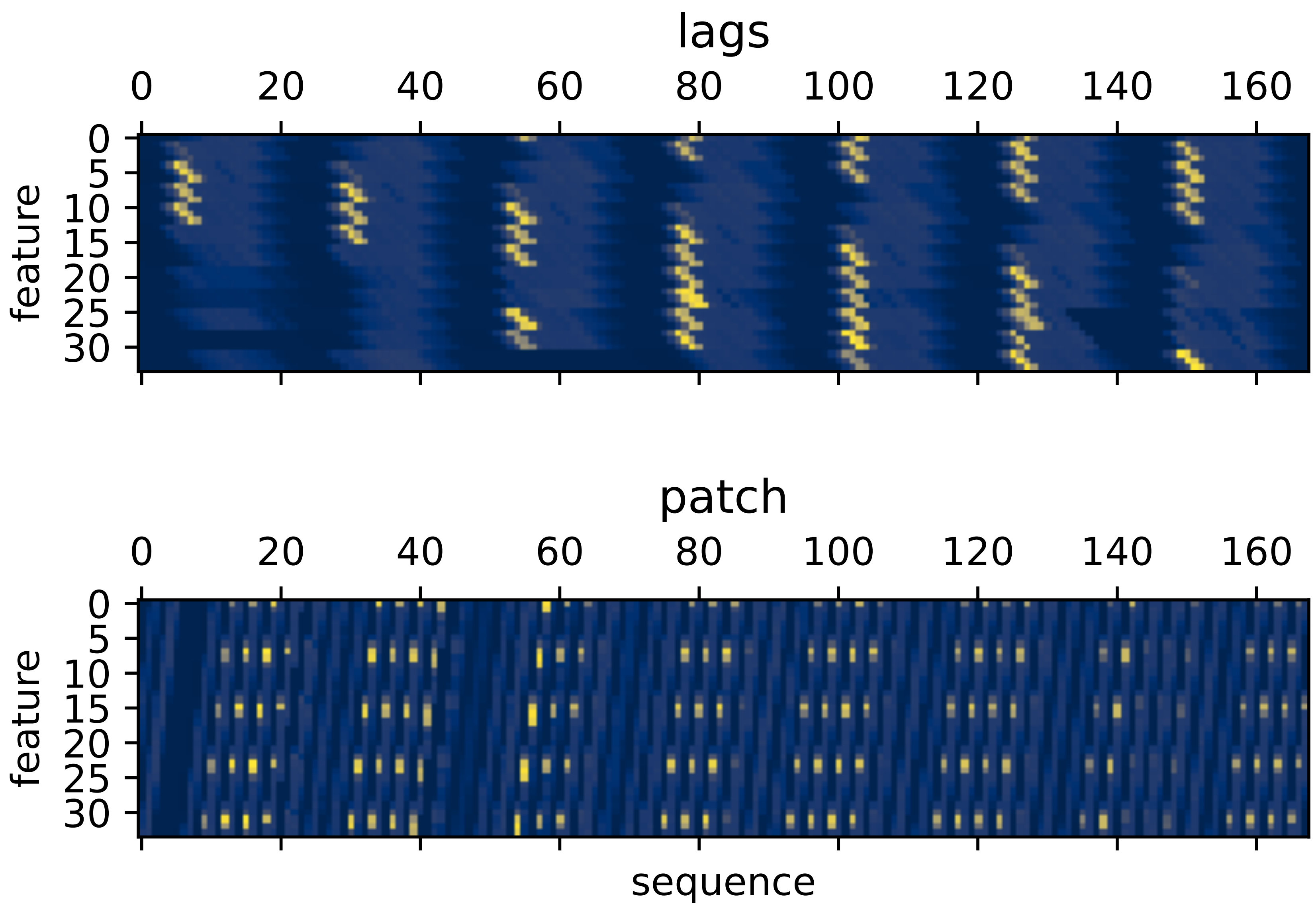
$$Y = A \cdot X$$

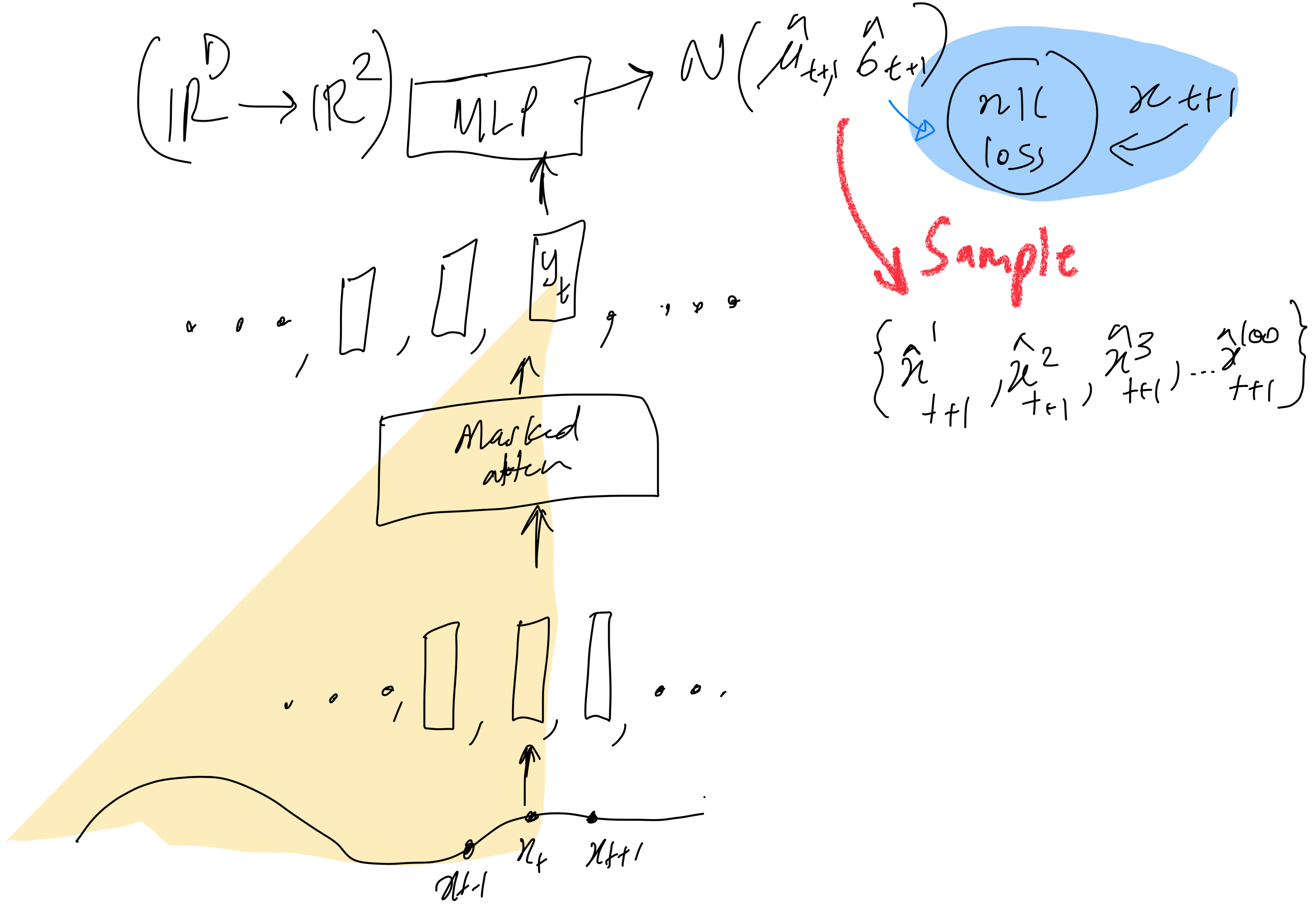


	real	cat.
static	μ, σ	item_id
dynamic	weather, price	?, ?

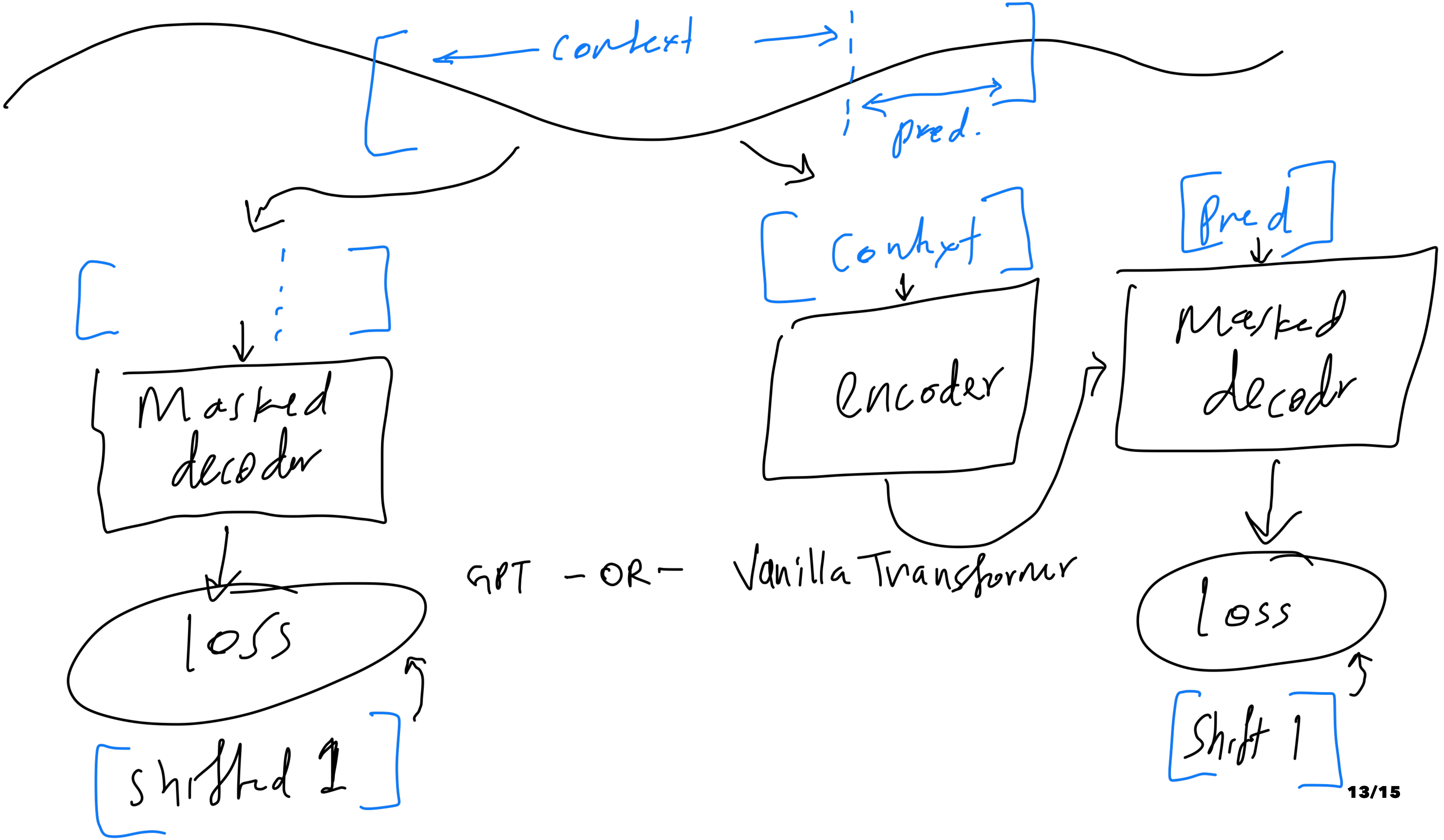

X =


target
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
01
Jan
2015
02
03
04
05
06
07


lags
patch
feature
sequence
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
0
5
10
15
20
25
30



$(\mathbb{R}^D \to \mathbb{R}^2)$
MLP
$N(\hat{\mu}_{t+1}, \hat{\sigma}_{t+1})$
nll loss
x_{t+1}
Sample
$\{\hat{x}^1_{t+1}, \hat{x}^2_{t+1}, \hat{x}^3_{t+1}, \ldots \hat{x}^{100}_{t+1}\}$
y_t
Masked atten
x_{t-1}
x_t
x_{t+1}



context
pred.
Masked decoder
loss
shifted 1
GPT -OR- Vanilla Transformer
context
encoder
pred
Masked decoder
loss
Shift 1

Pros/Cons

- 👍🏼 Can model temporal dependencies efficiently (number of parameters) without forgetting
- 👍🏼 Can handle nans naturally (similar to causal masking)
- 😿 Compute and memory is quadratic in number of input sequence size
- 😿 Auto-regressive inference can be restrictive for larger models due to need of many samples

Summary

- Transformers provide excellent inductive bias for forecasting
- Temporal covariates naturally serve as positional encoding
- Can potentially condition on any point in the past context window
- Fast to train and allows for auto-regressive sampling
- Naturally incorporate nans/missing data
- Code on Github: kashif/pytorch-transformer-ts