Novelty Assessment Report

Paper: Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Transformer Probabilistic Models
PDF URL: https://openreview.net/pdf?id=5bfUqlOhAH
Venue: ICLR 2026 Conference Submission
Year: 2026
Report Generated: 2025-12-30

Abstract

Transformer-based models for amortized probabilistic inference, such as neural processes, prior-fitted networks, and tabular foundation models, excel at single-pass marginal prediction. However, many real-world applications require coherent joint distributions that capture dependencies between predictions. While purely autoregressive architectures efficiently generate such distributions, they sacrifice the flexible set-conditioning that makes these models powerful for meta-learning. Conversely, the standard approach to obtain joint distributions from set-based models requires expensive re-encoding of an updated context set at each autoregressive step. We introduce a causal autoregressive buffer that preserves the advantages of both paradigms. Our approach decouples context encoding from updating the conditioning set. The model processes the context once and caches it, while a dynamic buffer captures target dependencies: as targets are incorporated, they enter the buffer and attend to both the cached context and previously buffered targets. This enables efficient batched autoregressive generation and one-pass joint predictive density evaluation. Training seamlessly integrates set-based and autoregressive modes at minimal additional cost. Across synthetic functions, EEG signals, cognitive models, and tabular data, our method matches the predictive accuracy of strong baselines while delivering up to $20\times$ faster joint sampling.

Core Task Landscape

This paper addresses: **Efficient Joint Sampling and Density Evaluation for Transformer Probabilistic Models**

A total of **12 papers** were analyzed and organized into a taxonomy with **10 categories**.

Taxonomy Overview

The research landscape has been organized into the following main categories:

- **Autoregressive Inference Architectures for Probabilistic Transformers**
- **Uncertainty Quantification in Transformer Models**
- **Probabilistic Reasoning and Constraint Integration**
- **Generative Model Frameworks for Probability Transformation**
- **Diffusion-Based Probabilistic Transformers**
- **Probabilistic Knowledge State Tracking**

Complete Taxonomy Tree

- Efficient Joint Sampling and Density Evaluation for Transformer Probabilistic Models Survey Taxonomy
- Autoregressive Inference Architectures for Probabilistic Transformers
  - Causal Buffer Mechanisms for Set-Based Models ★ (2 papers)
  - [0] Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Transformer Probabilistic Models (Anon et al., 2026) View paper
  - [5] Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Tabular Foundation Models (C Hassan, 2025) View paper
  - Probabilistic Sequence Modeling with Transformers (2 papers)
  - [2] Probabilistic transformer for time series analysis (Binh Tang, 2021) View paper
  - [3] MsPF-Trans: A Generative Transformer for Multi-step Probabilistic Forecasting of Radar Pulse Repetition Interval Sequences (Zihao Wang, 2024) View paper
- Uncertainty Quantification in Transformer Models
  - Distribution-Generating Transformers (2 papers)
  - [6] Probabilistic Transformer Model for Uncertainty-Aware Learning (Phuong Anh Nguyen, 2025) View paper
  - [7] for Uncertainty-Aware Learning (PA Nguyen, 2025) View paper
  - Hierarchical Latent Probabilistic Transformers (1 papers)
  - [12] Probabilistic Transformer: Modelling Ambiguities and Distributions for RNA Folding and Molecule Design (Franke, 2022) View paper
- Probabilistic Reasoning and Constraint Integration (1 papers)
  - [1] Teaching probabilistic logical reasoning to transformers (Nafar, 2024) View paper
- Generative Model Frameworks for Probability Transformation (1 papers)
  - [4] Deep generative models as the probability transformation functions (Bondar Vitalii, 2025) View paper
- Diffusion-Based Probabilistic Transformers
  - Denoising Diffusion Transformers for Sequential Generation (1 papers)
  - [9] Speech-Driven Gesture Generation Using Transformer-Based Denoising Diffusion Probabilistic Models (Bowen Wu, 2024) View paper
  - Masked Latent Diffusion for Spatiotemporal Forecasting (1 papers)
  - [8] OmniCast: A Masked Latent Diffusion Model for Weather Forecasting Across Time Scales (Nguyen, 2025) View paper
  - Simulation-Based Inference with Diffusion Transformers (1 papers)
  - [11] SpatFormer: simulation-based inference with transformers for spatial statistics (H Tesso, n.d.) View paper

- Probabilistic Knowledge State Tracking (1 papers)
  - [10] A probabilistic generative model for tracking multi-knowledge concept mastery probability (Hengyu Liu, 2024) View paper

Narrative

Core task: efficient joint sampling and density evaluation for transformer probabilistic models. The field encompasses diverse approaches to building and deploying transformers that can both generate samples and evaluate likelihoods in a principled probabilistic manner. The taxonomy reveals several main branches: autoregressive inference architectures that focus on sequential generation with tractable densities, uncertainty quantification methods that estimate confidence and calibration, probabilistic reasoning frameworks that integrate logical constraints or structured knowledge, generative model frameworks that transform or compose probability distributions, diffusion-based probabilistic transformers that leverage score-based dynamics, and probabilistic knowledge state tracking for dynamic belief updates. Works such as Probabilistic Transformer Timeseries[2] and MsPF Trans[3] illustrate how transformers can be adapted to time-series forecasting with explicit uncertainty, while Autoregressive Tabular Foundation[5] demonstrates set-based autoregressive modeling for tabular data. These branches collectively address the challenge of making transformer outputs interpretable as proper probability distributions rather than point predictions.

A particularly active line of work centers on autoregressive inference architectures, where the goal is to maintain causal structure and efficient sampling without sacrificing density tractability. Efficient Autoregressive Inference[0] sits squarely within this branch, emphasizing causal buffer mechanisms for set-based models that enable joint sampling and density evaluation in a unified framework. This contrasts with diffusion-based approaches, which trade autoregressive simplicity for iterative refinement, and with uncertainty quantification methods like Probabilistic Transformer Uncertainty[6] and Uncertainty Aware Learning[7], which often focus on post-hoc calibration rather than architectural design for tractable likelihoods. Compared to Autoregressive Tabular Foundation[5], which also explores set-based autoregressive modeling, Efficient Autoregressive Inference[0] appears to prioritize computational efficiency and the interplay between sampling and density evaluation, addressing a core tension in probabilistic transformers: how to scale inference while preserving the mathematical rigor needed for downstream probabilistic reasoning.

Related Works in Same Category

The following **1 sibling papers** share the same taxonomy leaf node with the original paper:

1. Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Tabular Foundation Models

Authors: C Hassan, NRBS Loka, CY Li, D Huang | **Year/Venue**: 2025 | **URL**: View paper

Abstract

â¦ the same attention mechanisms as standard transformer neural processes and PFNs; our â¦ module for efficient joint sampling and prediction. Autoregressive joint density estimation. â¦

⚠ Similarity Notice

This paper appears to be a workshop or shortened version of the original paper. Both papers present the same causal autoregressive buffer mechanism for efficient joint sampling and density evaluation in transformer probabilistic models, with nearly identical technical approaches, figures, and experimental setups. The candidate paper focuses specifically on tabular foundation models (TabICL) while the original paper presents a broader application across multiple domains including synthetic functions, EEG signals, and cognitive models.

Contributions Analysis

Overall novelty summary. The paper introduces a causal autoregressive buffer mechanism that decouples context encoding from target generation in transformer-based probabilistic models. Within the taxonomy, it resides in the 'Causal Buffer Mechanisms for Set-Based Models' leaf, which contains only two papers total. This leaf sits under 'Autoregressive Inference Architectures for Probabilistic Transformers', indicating a relatively sparse research direction focused specifically on buffer-based approaches for set-conditioned meta-learning. The small population suggests this architectural pattern is not yet widely explored in the literature.

The taxonomy reveals neighboring work in 'Probabilistic Sequence Modeling with Transformers', which addresses temporal dynamics but without the set-conditioning flexibility emphasized here. Broader branches include 'Uncertainty Quantification in Transformer Models' (distribution-generating and hierarchical latent approaches) and 'Diffusion-Based Probabilistic Transformers' (denoising and masked latent methods). The scope notes clarify that standard autoregressive transformers without buffer mechanisms belong elsewhere, positioning this work at the intersection of set-based conditioning and efficient joint distribution modeling—a niche that appears underserved relative to diffusion or uncertainty quantification branches.

Among fifteen candidates examined, none clearly refute the three main contributions. The causal buffer mechanism was assessed against seven candidates with zero refutable overlaps, suggesting limited prior work on this specific architectural pattern. The unified training strategy examined one candidate with no refutations, and the applicability claim reviewed seven candidates, again with no clear precedents. This pattern indicates that within the limited search scope, the buffer-based decoupling approach and its training curriculum appear relatively unexplored, though the small candidate pool (fifteen total) means broader literature may contain relevant work not captured here.

Based on top-fifteen semantic matches and citation expansion, the work appears to occupy a sparse region of the design space. The taxonomy structure and contribution-level statistics suggest novelty in the buffer mechanism itself, though the limited search scope precludes definitive claims about the broader field. The analysis covers architecturally similar probabilistic transformers but may miss related work in adjacent areas like memory-augmented models or non-transformer set-based inference methods.

This paper presents **3 main contributions**, each analyzed against relevant prior work:

Contribution 1: Causal autoregressive buffer mechanism

Description: The authors propose a novel architectural component that separates the expensive encoding of static context from lightweight sequential prediction. The buffer allows targets to attend to both cached context and previously buffered targets through causal masking, eliminating redundant context re-encoding at each autoregressive step and reducing computational complexity from O(K(N+K)^2) to O(N^2+NK+K^2).

This contribution was assessed against **7 related papers** from the literature. Papers with potential prior art are analyzed in detail with textual evidence; others receive brief assessments.

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1. Sample-efficient Imitative Multi-token Decision Transformer for Real-world Driving

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Imitative Decision Transformer[16] focuses on autonomous driving with physics-informed networks and sequence modeling for vehicle control, not on general transformer probabilistic models or the specific architectural mechanism of decoupling context encoding from sequential prediction through a causal buffer.

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2. Causal Attention Transformer for Video Text Retrieval

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Causal Attention Retrieval[17] focuses on video-text retrieval using causal attention transformers for cross-modal alignment, not on autoregressive buffer mechanisms for transformer probabilistic models or sequential prediction tasks.

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3. The Buffer Mechanism for Multi-Step Information Reasoning in Language Models

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Buffer Mechanism Reasoning[14] focuses on symbolic multi-step reasoning in language models, not on separating context encoding from sequential prediction in transformer probabilistic models for amortized inference.

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4. Causal-SETR: A SEgmentation TRansformer Variant Based on Causal Intervention

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Causal SETR[18] focuses on semantic segmentation using causal intervention techniques in computer vision, not on transformer-based probabilistic models or autoregressive inference optimization for meta-learning tasks.

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5. Incremental tensor induction through unbounded pseudo-contextualization in pretrained language models

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Incremental Tensor Induction[13] focuses on unbounded pseudo-contextualization in pretrained language models using tensor induction mechanisms, not on separating context encoding from sequential prediction in transformer probabilistic models for amortized inference.

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6. Mogo: RQ Hierarchical Causal Transformer for High-Quality 3D Human Motion Generation

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Mogo Motion Generation[15] focuses on hierarchical residual quantization for motion generation, not on decoupling context encoding from sequential prediction in transformers. The architectural mechanisms serve entirely different purposes in different domains.

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7. Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Tabular Foundation Models

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Autoregressive Tabular Foundation[5] applies the buffer mechanism to tabular foundation models, whereas the original paper presents the buffer as a general architectural component for transformer probabilistic models across diverse domains (synthetic functions, EEG, cognitive models, tabular data).

Contribution 2: Unified training strategy with masked attention and buffer-size curriculum

Description: The authors develop a training approach that uses structured attention masks and a curriculum where 50% of targets attend only to context while 50% attend to context plus a variable-sized buffer prefix. This enables a single model to perform both efficient marginal predictions and accelerated autoregressive sampling without requiring separate training procedures.

This contribution was assessed against **1 related papers** from the literature. Papers with potential prior art are analyzed in detail with textual evidence; others receive brief assessments.

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1. Dual-Branch Attention-In-Attention Transformer for Single-Channel Speech Enhancement

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Dual Branch Speech[26] focuses on speech enhancement using dual-branch architecture for spectrum estimation, not on unified training strategies for transformer probabilistic models with masked attention and buffer-size curriculum for dual-mode inference.

Contribution 3: Broad applicability to transformer probabilistic models with substantial speedups

Description: The authors show their buffer mechanism can be integrated into various transformer-based probabilistic models such as neural processes, prior-fitted networks, and tabular foundation models. Experiments across synthetic functions, EEG signals, cognitive models, and tabular data demonstrate the method matches baseline predictive accuracy while providing significant computational speedups.

This contribution was assessed against **7 related papers** from the literature. Papers with potential prior art are analyzed in detail with textual evidence; others receive brief assessments.

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1. An Extendable, Efficient and Effective Transformer-based Object Detector

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Extendable Transformer Detector[23] focuses on object detection using vision transformers, not probabilistic inference or joint sampling in transformer probabilistic models like neural processes.

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2. Ensemble Large Language Models: A Survey. Information 2025, 16, 688

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Ensemble Large Language Models[24] is a survey paper focused on ensemble learning techniques for large language models in NLP tasks, not on accelerating joint sampling in transformer probabilistic models or neural processes architectures.

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3. Hybrid YOLOv9-DETR model for strawberry disease detection: A non-end-to-end object detection approach

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Hybrid YOLOv9-DETR[20] focuses on object detection for strawberry disease using a hybrid vision architecture combining YOLO and DETR models. This is fundamentally different from the original paper's work on accelerating joint sampling in transformer-based probabilistic models for meta-learning and Bayesian inference tasks.

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4. Dense Captioning with Joint Inference and Visual Context

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Dense Captioning Inference[25] addresses dense image captioning with joint localization and description, not transformer probabilistic models or meta-learning frameworks. The technical domains are fundamentally different.

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5. Transformer Based Bayesian Network Embedding for Efficient Multiple Probabilistic Inferences

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Bayesian Network Embedding[22] focuses on Bayesian network inference through graph embeddings and mutual information, not on transformer-based probabilistic models like neural processes or tabular foundation models. The technical approaches are fundamentally different.

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6. Transformers can do bayesian inference

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Transformers Bayesian Inference[19] focuses on training transformers to perform Bayesian inference via prior-data fitting for posterior predictive distributions, not on accelerating joint sampling in existing transformer probabilistic models through buffer mechanisms.

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7. Enabling Approximate Joint Sampling in Diffusion LMs

URL: View paper

Brief Assessment

Approximate Joint Sampling[21] focuses on accelerating masked diffusion language models through approximate joint token sampling, not transformer-based probabilistic models like neural processes or tabular foundation models. The technical approaches and application domains are fundamentally different.

Appendix: Text Similarity Detection

Textual similarity detection checked 15 papers and found 2 similarity segment(s) across 1 paper(s).

The following **1 paper(s)** were detected to have high textual similarity with the original paper. These may represent different versions of the same work, duplicate submissions, or papers with substantial textual overlap. Readers are advised to verify these relationships independently.

1. Efficient Autoregressive Inference for Tabular Foundation Models

Detected in: Core Task (sibling), Contribution: contribution_1

⚠ **Note**: This paper shows substantial textual similarity with the original paper. It may be a different version, a duplicate submission, or contain significant overlapping content. Please review carefully to determine the nature of the relationship.

References

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- [1] Teaching probabilistic logical reasoning to transformers View paper
- [2] Probabilistic transformer for time series analysis View paper
- [3] MsPF-Trans: A Generative Transformer for Multi-step Probabilistic Forecasting of Radar Pulse Repetition Interval Sequences View paper
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