

# Visual Reference Resolution using Attention Memory for Visual Dialog

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Presented by,  
Siddhesh  
Anand

# Visual Dialog

Task that requires an AI agent to hold a conversation about visual content



White and red



No, something is there can't tell what it is



Yes, they are



Yes, magazines, books, toaster and basket, and a plate

A cat drinking water out of a coffee mug.

What color is the mug?

Are there any pictures on it?

Is the mug and cat on a table?

Are there other items on the table?

Why is this any different from Visual  
Question Answering?

# Key Challenge

Unlike VQA, where every question is asked independently, a visual dialog system needs to answer a sequence of **inter-dependent questions** about an input image.



White and red



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What color is the mug?

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# Key Challenge

Inter-dependent  
questions



Ambiguity in  
Questions



White and red



No, something is there can't tell what it is



Yes, they are



Yes, magazines, books, toaster and basket, and a plate

A cat drinking water out of a coffee mug.

What color is the mug?

Are there any pictures on it?

Is the mug and cat on a table?

Are there other items on the table?

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four

This can be answered by directly looking at the right regions of the image

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
2	How many brown digits are there among them?	one



# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
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# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
2	How many brown digits are there among <b>them</b> ?	one
3	What is the background color of the digit at the left of <b>it</b> ?	white
4	What is the style of <b>the digit</b> ?	flat
5	What is the color of the digit at the left of <b>it</b> ?	blue

**Visual Reference Resolution** is required to localize attention accurately in the presence of ambiguous expressions

# Problem Statement

Improve Visual Dialog by performing Visual Reference Resolution to remove ambiguity in questions

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
2	How many brown digits are there among <b>them</b> ?	one

To understand what **them** refers to, we need to look at the previous question

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
2	How many brown digits are there among <span>them?</span>	one

Using information from the previous region of importance is useful!

# Visual Reference Resolution



#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four
2	How many brown digits are there among <span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 0 2px;">them?</span>	one



Using information from the previous region of importance is useful!

Keep track of all the **previous regions of interest** using an **attention memory**

# Contributions

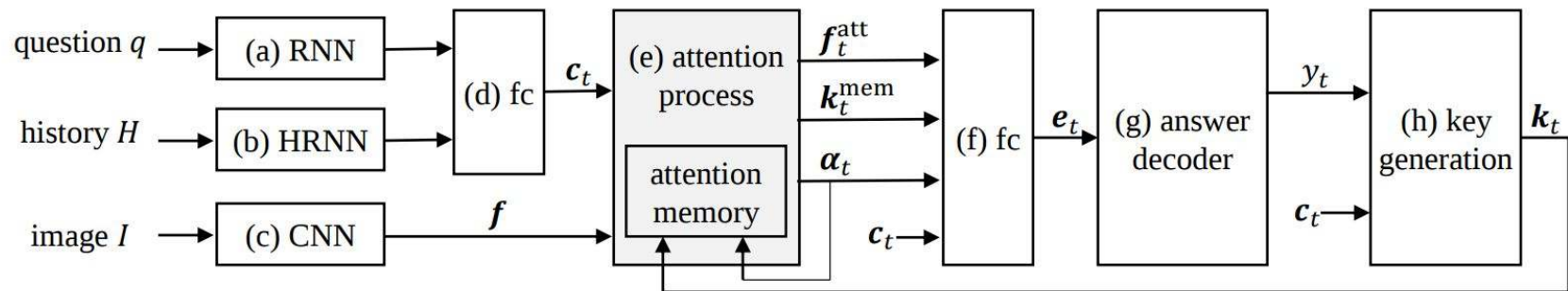
- Novel Attention Mechanism to resolve Visual References
  - Use **Associate Attention Memory** to keep track of previous regions of importance in the image
- Comprehensive Analysis of the capacity of the model
- State of the art performance on benchmark datasets

# Related Work

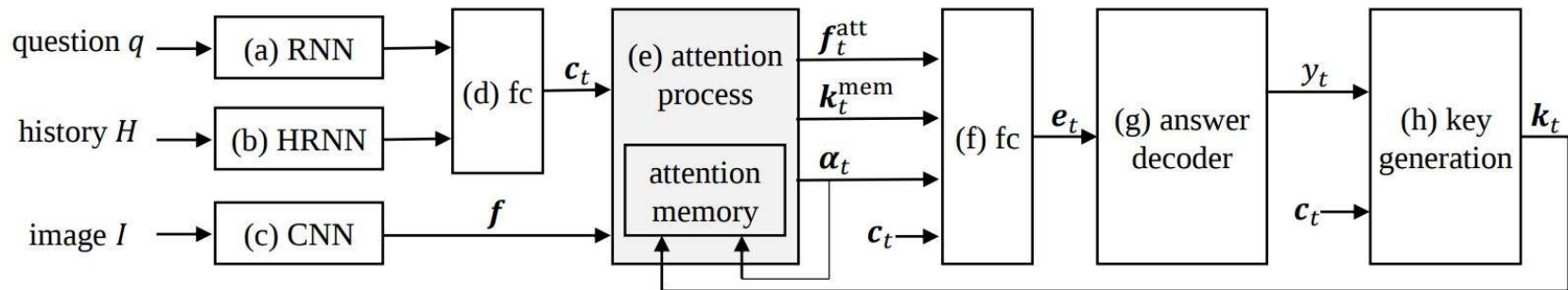
- **Visual Dialog**, Das et al., CVPR 2017
  - Used **Memory** to actively select the previous question in the history
- **Learning Cooperative Visual Dialog Agents with Deep Reinforcement Learning**, Das et al., ICCV 2017
  - Deep RL based approach
- **GuessWhat?! Visual object discovery through multi-modal dialogue**, Vries et al., CVPR 2017
  - Object discovery through a series of yes/no questions



# Model Overview



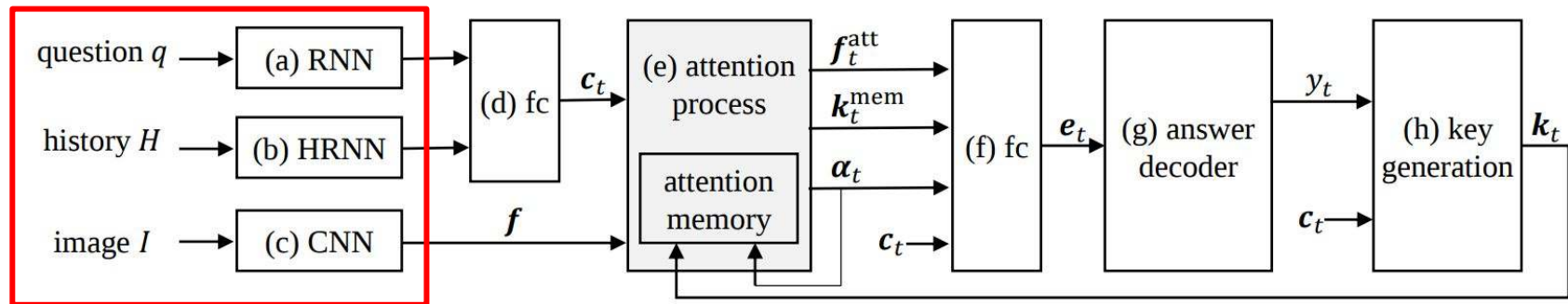
# Task



Predict an answer  $y_t$  at time  $t$  given

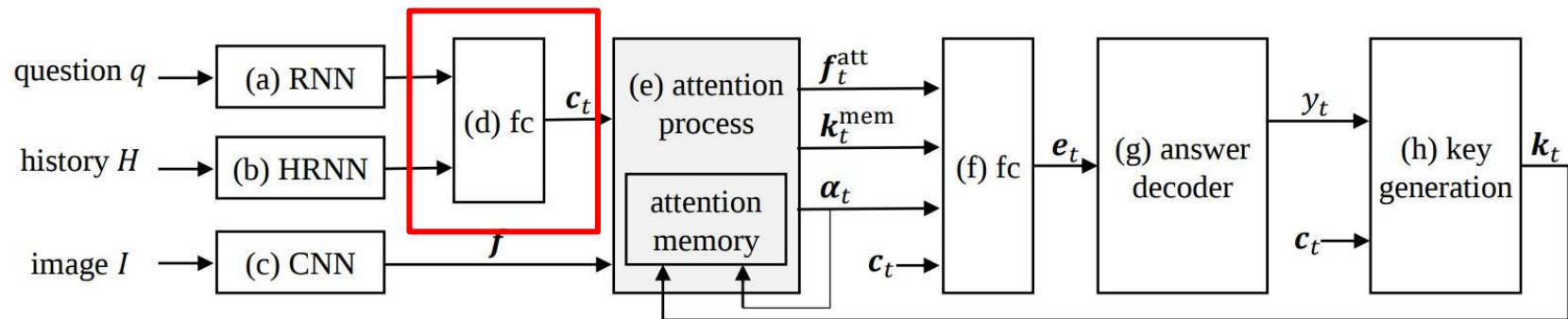
- input image  $I$ ,
- current question  $q_t$
- dialog history  $\mathbf{H} = \{(q_1, y_1), (q_2, y_2), \dots, (q_t, y_t)\}$

# Encoding



- LSTM to encode question  $y_t$
- CNN to extract to compute a feature map  $f$
- Hierarchical LSTM to encode the history
  - Encode the question and answer separately using LSTMs
  - Obtain a QA embedding by passing it through a **fc layer**
  - QA embedding is passed through another LSTM to get **history encoding**

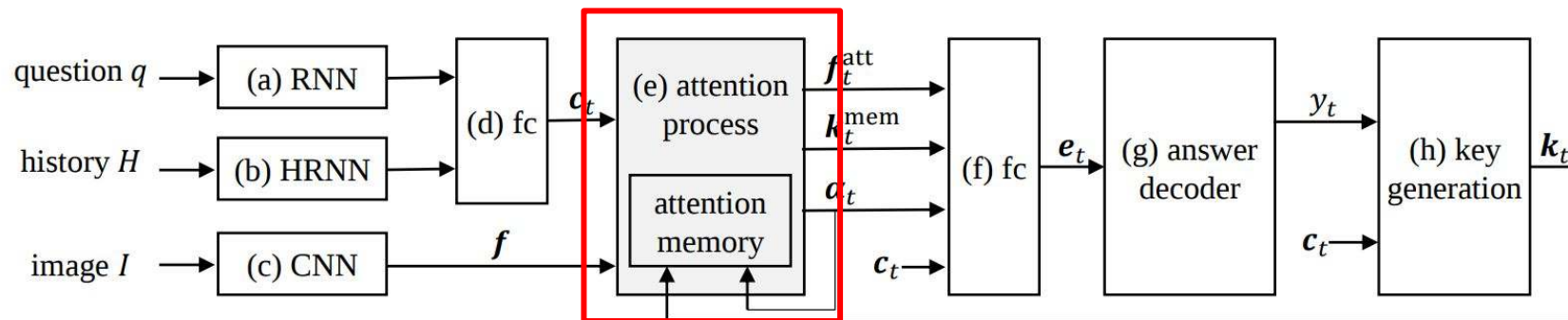
# Encoding



- **fc layer** to obtain a fused encoding of the history and question
  - This serves as a context embedding which will be helpful when looking at what region of the image to consider

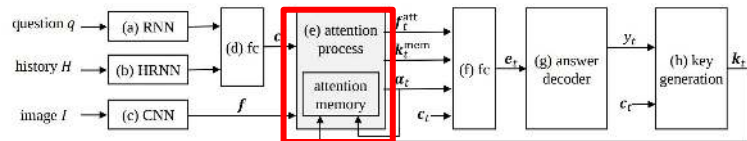
$$c_t = \text{fc}(\text{RNN}(q_t), \text{HRNN}(H))$$

# Attention



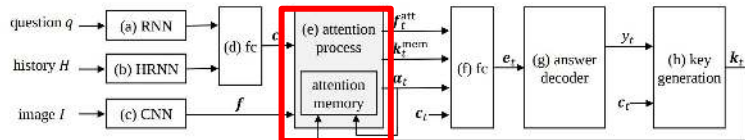
- **Two** types of attention that focus on different aspects
  - **Tentative Attention:** How important is the current question
  - **Associative Attention Memory:** How important are the previous questions

# Tentative Attention



- **Key Idea:** For certain questions, we can directly look at the image to figure out the answer

# Tentative Attention

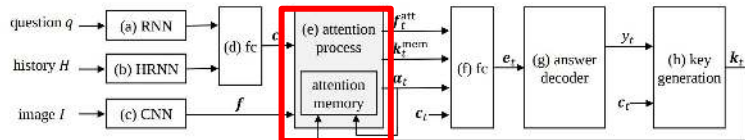


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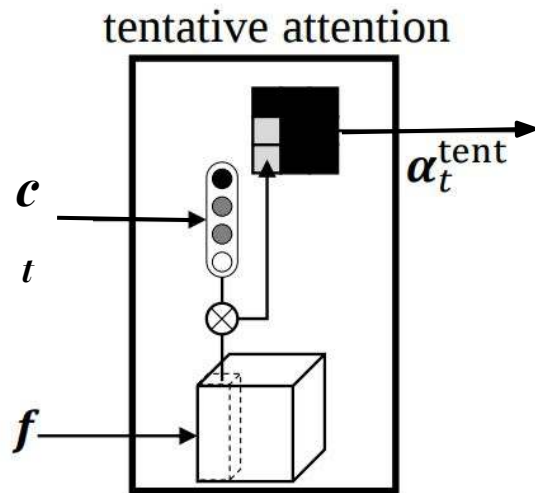
#	Question	Answer
1	How many 9's are there in the image?	four

# Tentative Attention



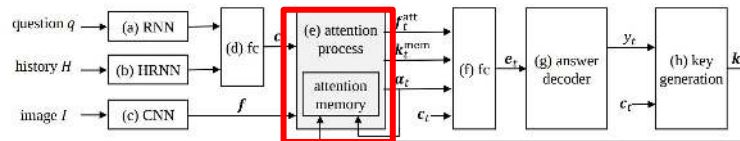
- **Key Idea:** For certain questions, we can directly look at the image to figure out the answer

$$s_{t,n} = (\mathbf{W}_c^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top (\mathbf{W}_f^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{f}_n)$$





# Tentative Attention

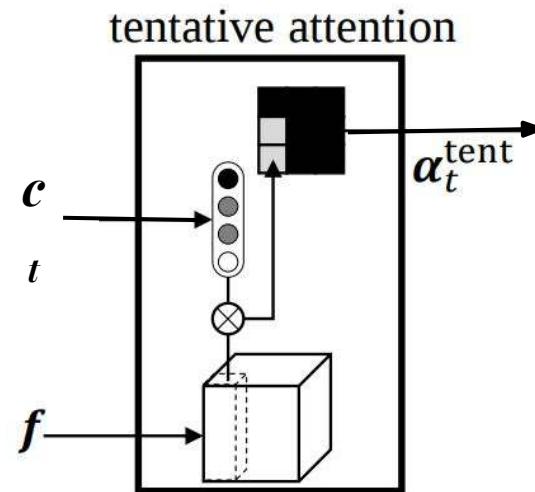


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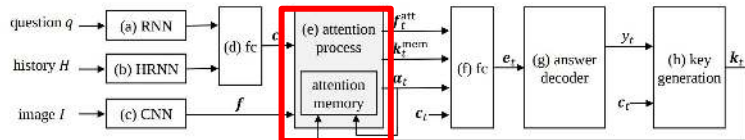
Projection of context vector into some space

$$s_{t,n} = (\mathbf{W}_c^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top (\mathbf{W}_f^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{f}_n)$$

Projection of image features vector into the same space



# Tentative Attention



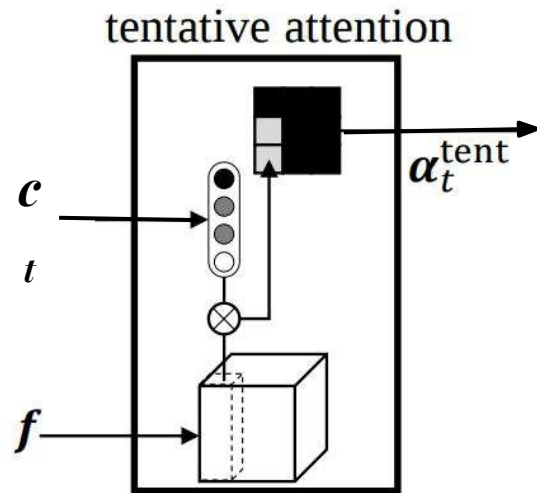
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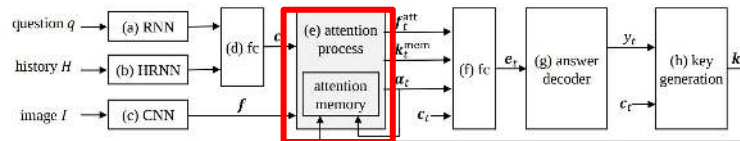
$$s_{t,n} = (\mathbf{W}_c^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top (\mathbf{W}_f^{\text{tent}} \mathbf{f}_n)$$

Projection of image features vector into the same space

$$\alpha_t^{\text{tent}} = \text{softmax}(\{s_{t,n}, 1 < n < N\})$$



# Attention Memory

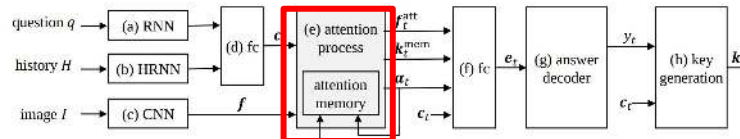


- **Key Idea:** Explicitly store the image attentions obtained in the past

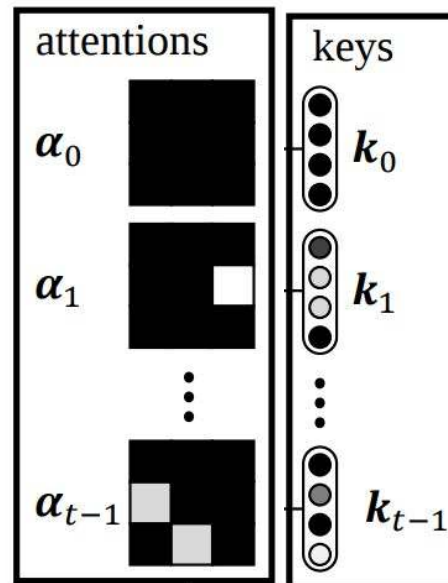


#	Question	Answer
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2	How many brown digits are there among them?	one

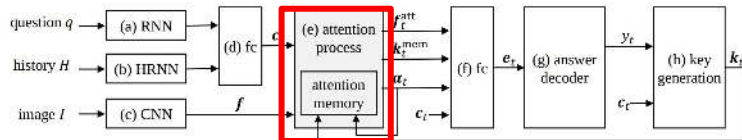
# Attention Memory



- **Key Idea:** Explicitly store the image attentions obtained in the past
- Every item in the memory is a **(attention, key)** pair
  - $\alpha_t$  is the attention map at time  $t$
  - $\mathbf{k}$  is the key which captures the dialog history (including answers) so far

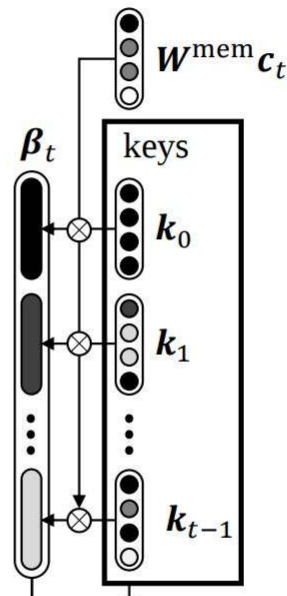


# Attention Memory

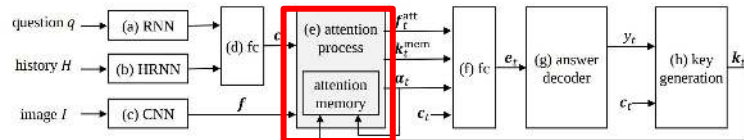


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$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$



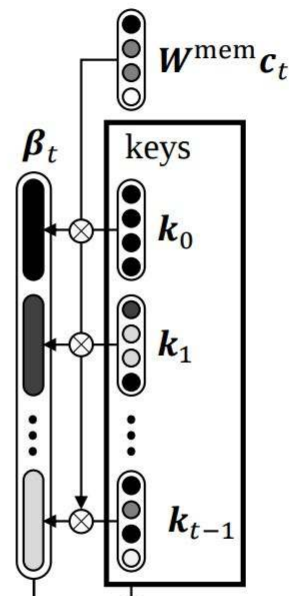
# Attention Memory



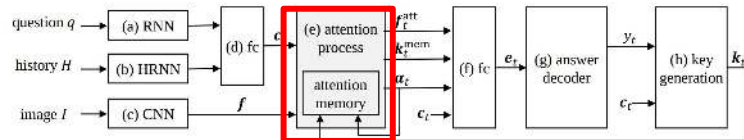
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Projection of context vector into some space

$$m_{t,\tau} = (\overbrace{\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t}^{\text{Projection of context vector into some space}})^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$



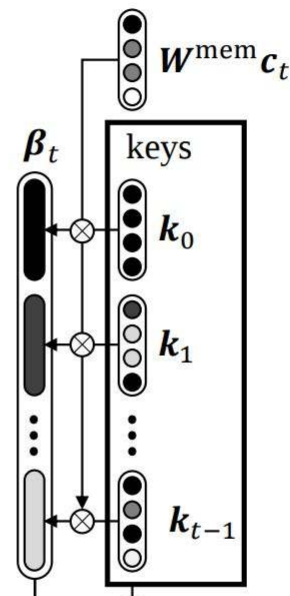
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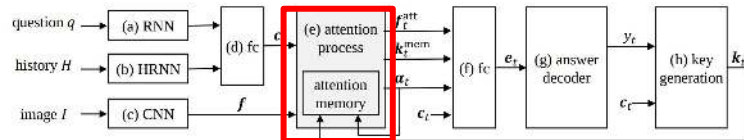
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Projection of context  
vector into some space

$$m_{t,\tau} = \underbrace{(\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top}_{\text{Similarity with each key}} \mathbf{k}_\tau$$



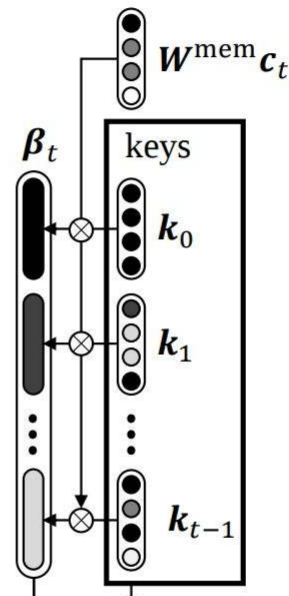
# Attention Memory



Projection of context  
vector into some space

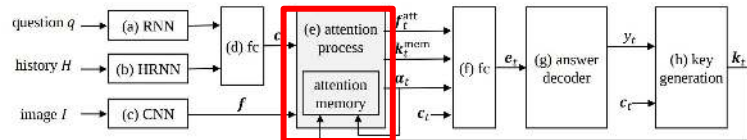
$$m_{t,\tau} = \underbrace{(\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top}_{\text{Similarity with each key}} \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

- **Intuition:** How similar is my current context to each of the previous responses



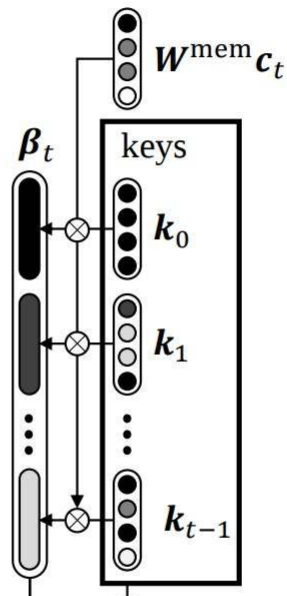


# Attention Memory

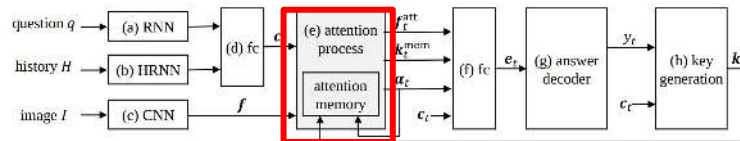


$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

$$\beta_t = \text{softmax}(\{m_{t,\tau}, 0 < \tau < t-1\})$$



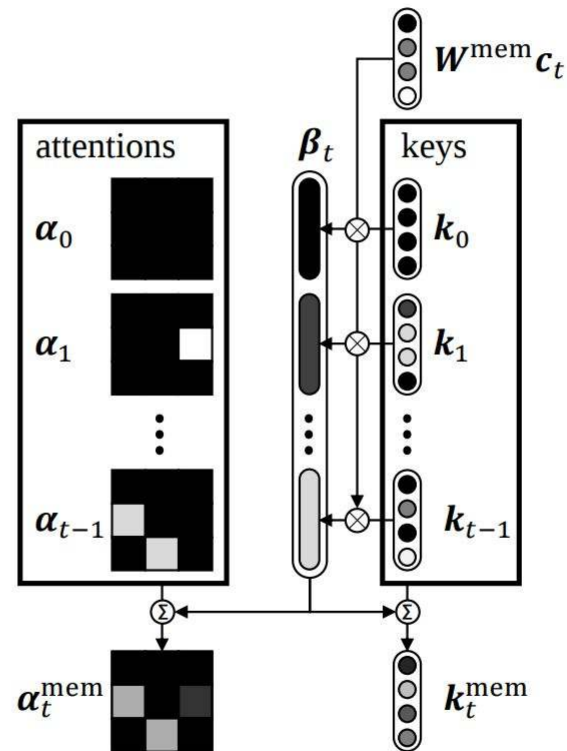
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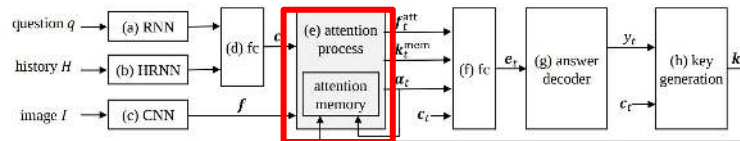
$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

$$\beta_t = \text{softmax}(\{m_{t,\tau}, 0 < \tau < t-1\})$$

$$\alpha_t^{\text{mem}} = \sum_{\tau=0}^{t-1} \beta_{t,\tau} \alpha_\tau \quad \mathbf{k}_t^{\text{mem}} = \sum_{\tau=0}^{t-1} \beta_{t,\tau} \mathbf{k}_\tau$$



# Attention Memory



$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

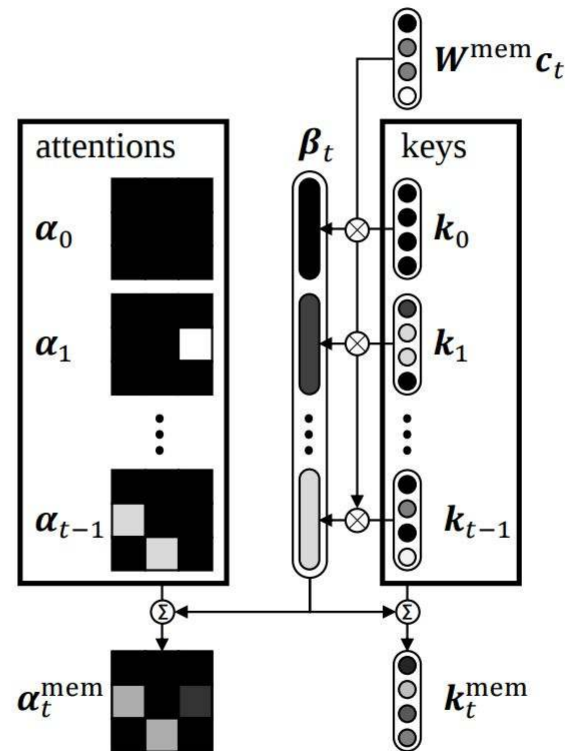
$$\beta_t = \text{softmax}(\{m_{t,\tau}, 0 < \tau < t-1\})$$

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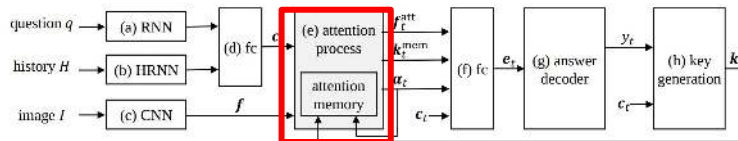
Convex combination of  
attention maps

$$\mathbf{k}_t^{\text{mem}} = \sum_{\tau=0}^{t-1} \beta_{t,\tau} \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

Convex combination of  
keys

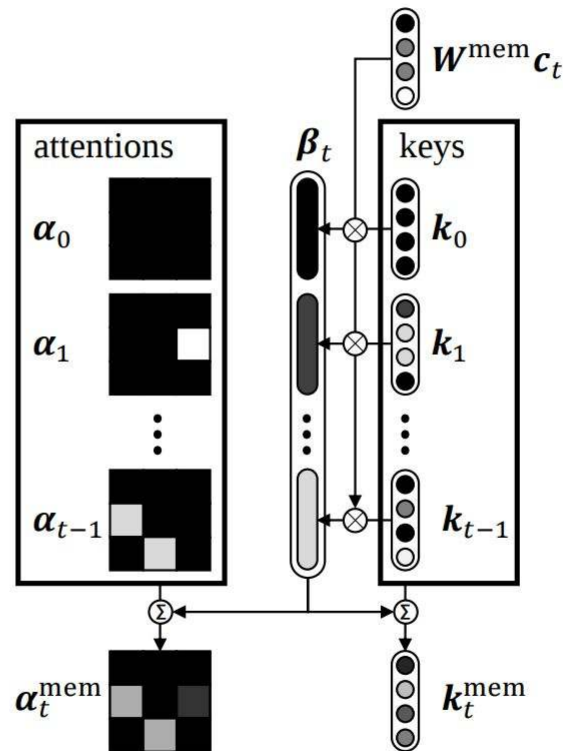


# Sequential Dialog

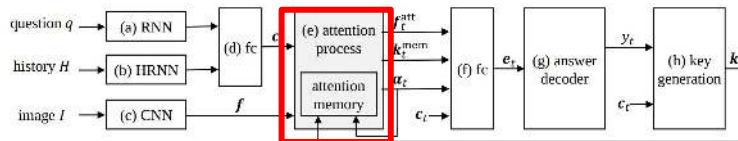


- **Key Idea:** Questions in a dialog have a sequential structure
- Questions that are recent might be more relevant

$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$



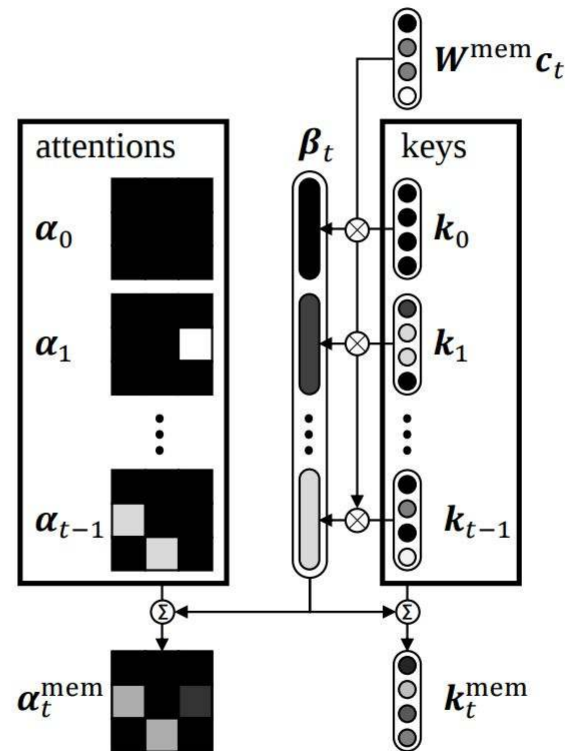
# Sequential Dialog



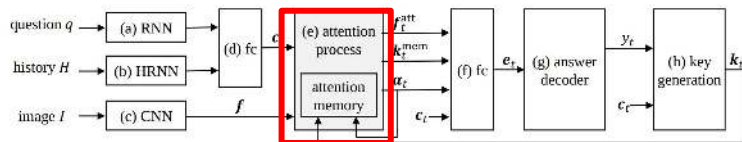
- **Key Idea:** Questions in a dialog have a sequential structure
- Questions that are recent might be more relevant

$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

Gives all keys equal weight  
irrespective of recency



# Sequential Dialog

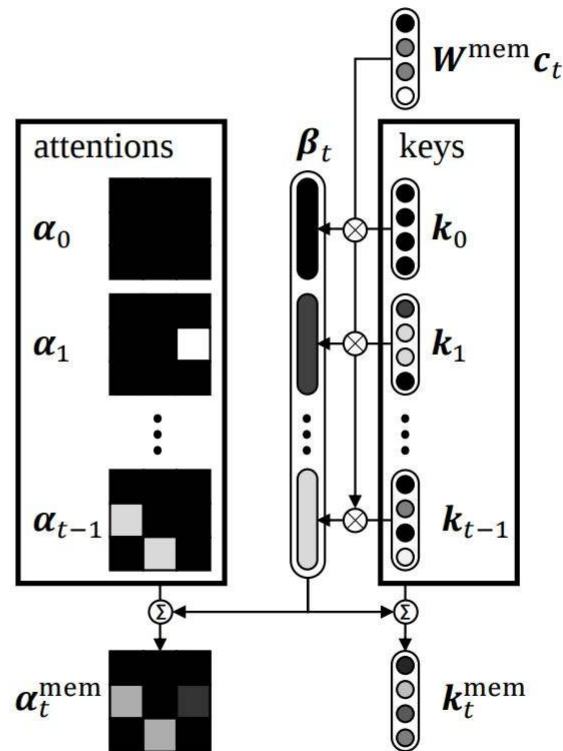


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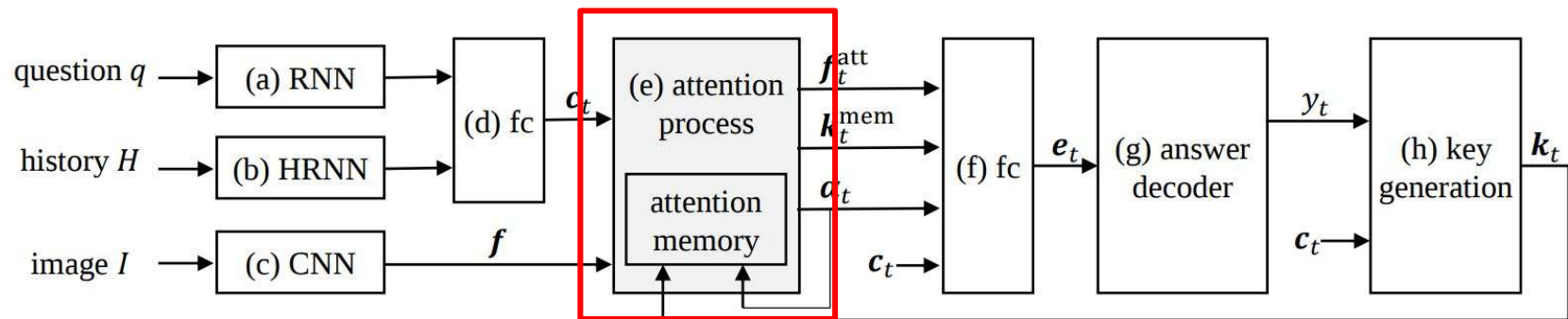
$$m_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau$$

$$m'_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau + \theta (t - \tau)$$

$\theta$  is a learnable parameter weighting the relative time distance

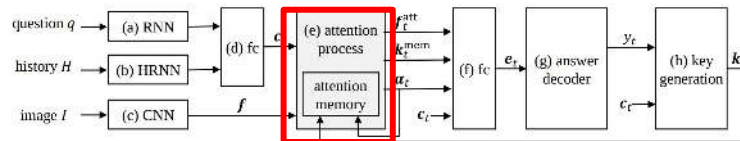


# Dynamic Attention Combination



- Combine the **tentative** and **memory attention** to get an attention map for the current question

# Dynamic Combination

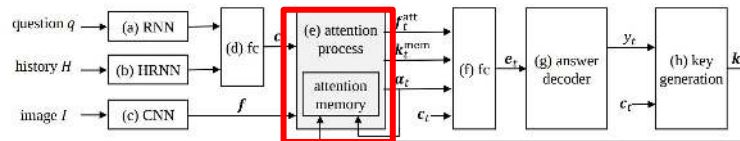


$$\alpha_t(c_t) = \text{softmax} (W^{\text{DPL}} (c_t) \cdot \underbrace{\gamma(\alpha_t^{\text{tent}}, \alpha_t^{\text{mem}})}_{\text{Output of a Convolution Layer}})$$

Output of a  
Convolution Layer



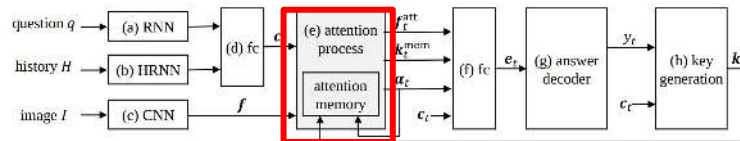
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$$\alpha_t(c_t) = \text{softmax} \left( \mathbf{W}^{\text{DPL}} (c_t) \cdot \underbrace{\gamma(\alpha_t^{\text{tent}}, \alpha_t^{\text{mem}})}_{\text{Output of a Convolution Layer}} \right)$$

$c_t$  layer

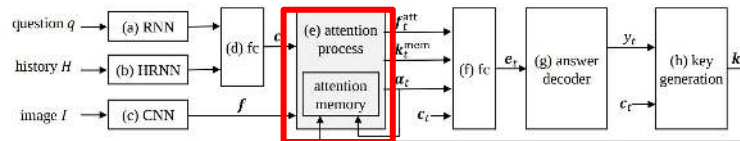
# Dynamic Combination



$$\alpha_t(c_t) = \text{softmax} \left( \underbrace{W^{\text{DPL}}(c_t)}_{\text{dynamic combination}} \cdot \gamma(\alpha_t^{\text{tent}}, \alpha_t^{\text{mem}}) \right)$$

If this is simply learned as a parameter, the merging process would not depend on the question

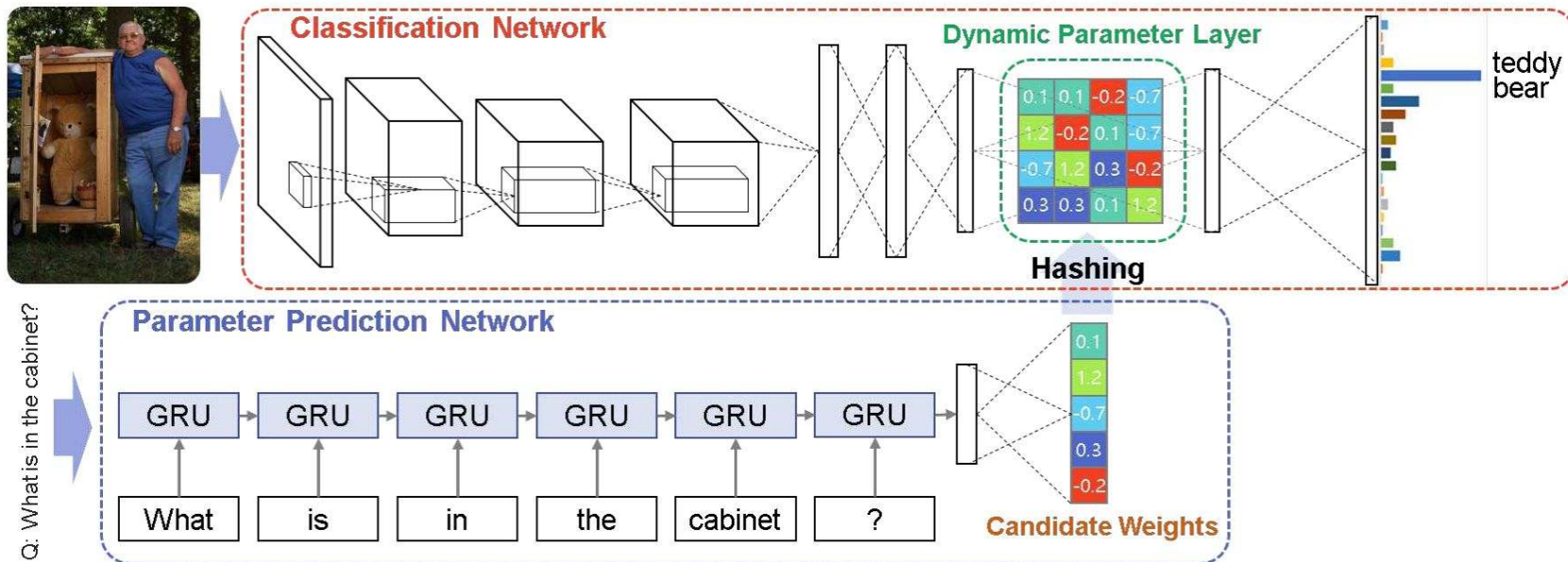
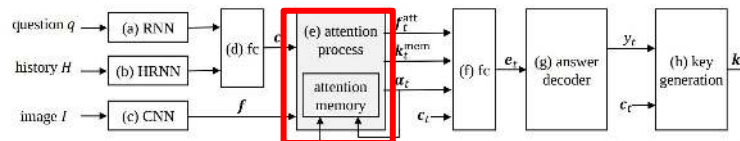
# Dynamic Combination



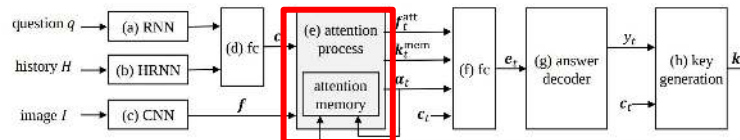
$$\alpha_t(c_t) = \text{softmax} (W^{\text{DPL}} (c_t) \cdot \gamma(\alpha_t^{\text{tent}}, \alpha_t^{\text{mem}}))$$

- **Key Idea:** Dynamically generate the weight matrix of the fc layer depending on the question

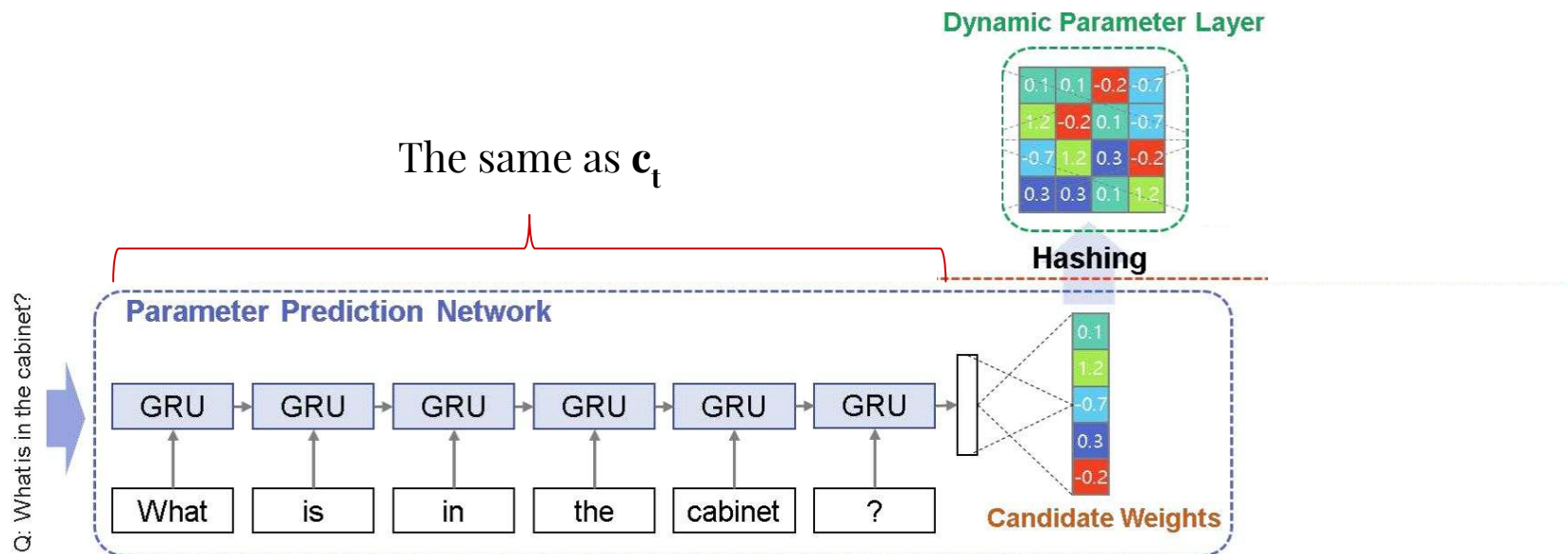
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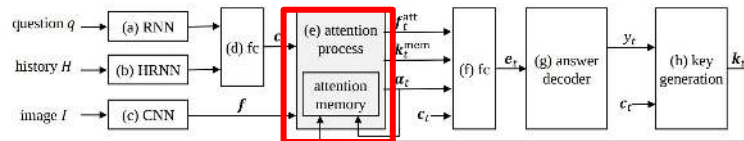
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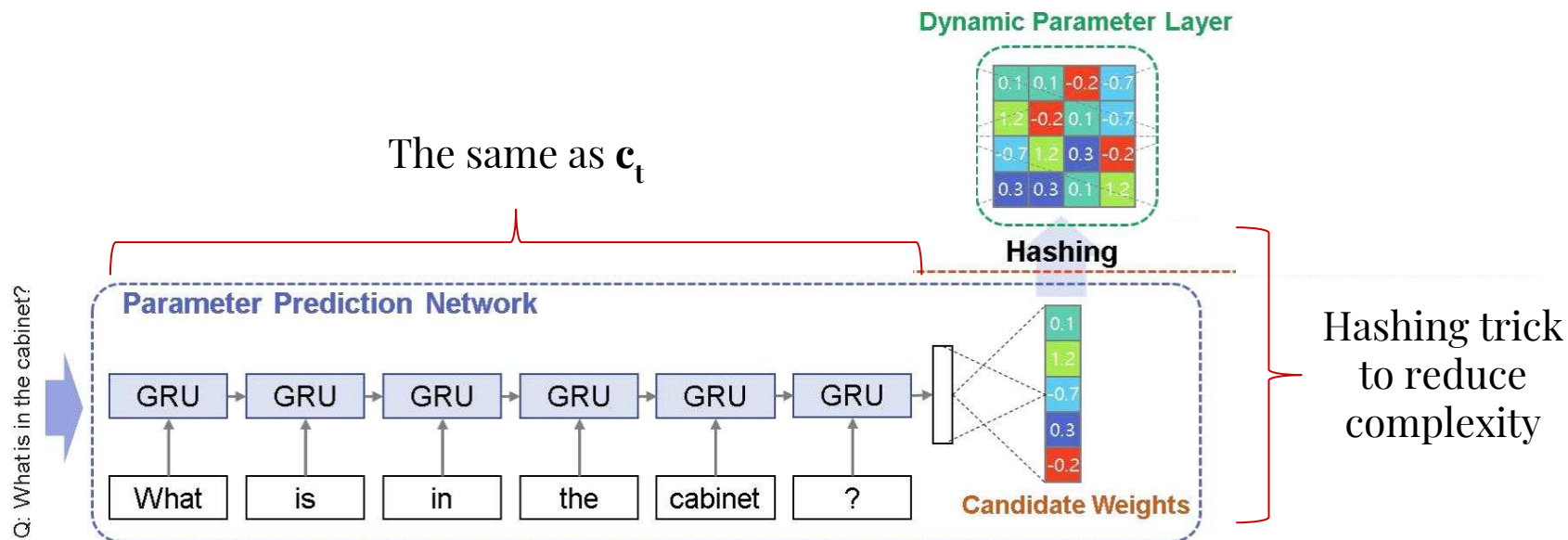
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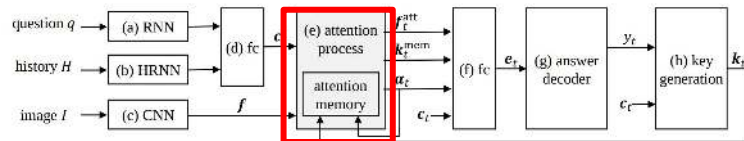
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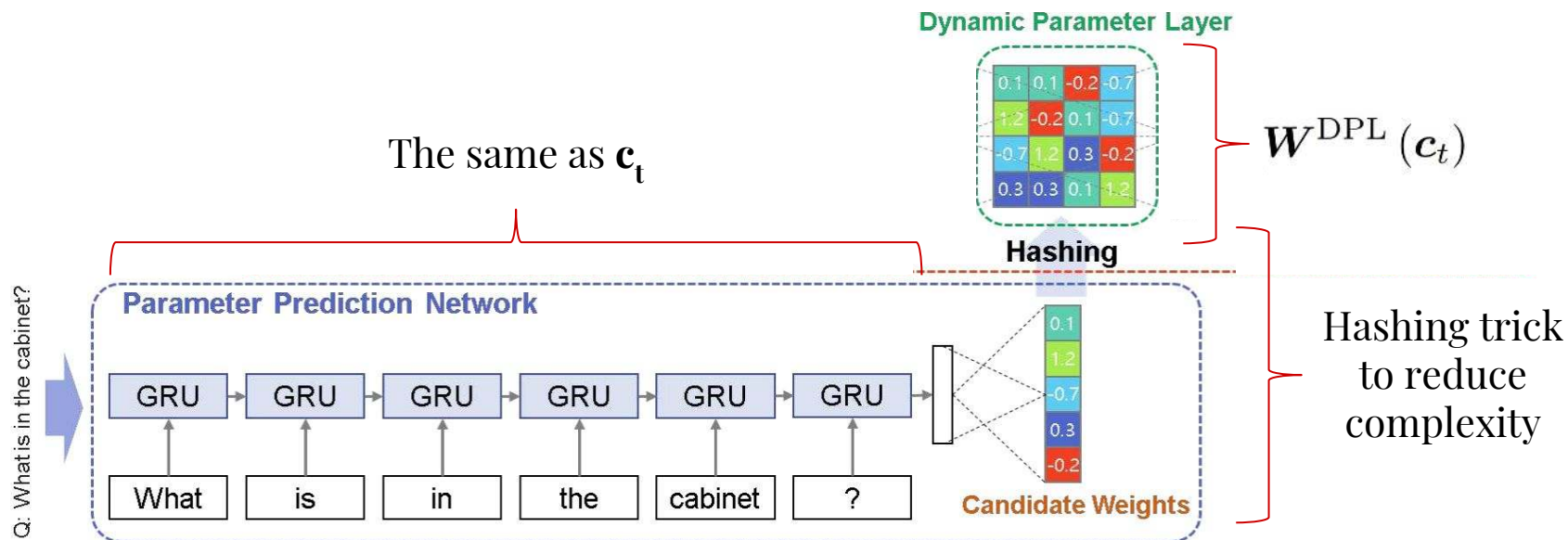
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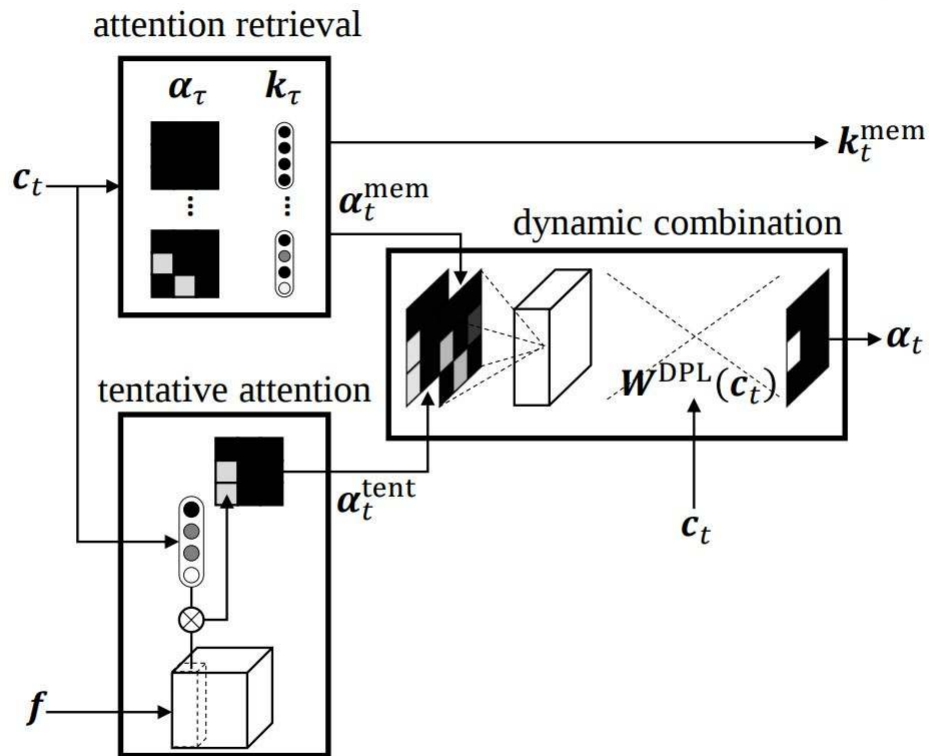
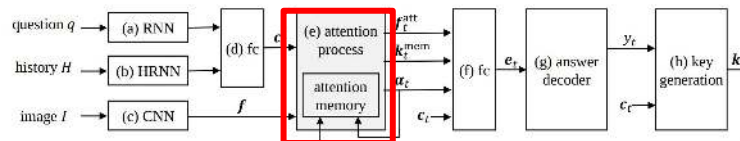
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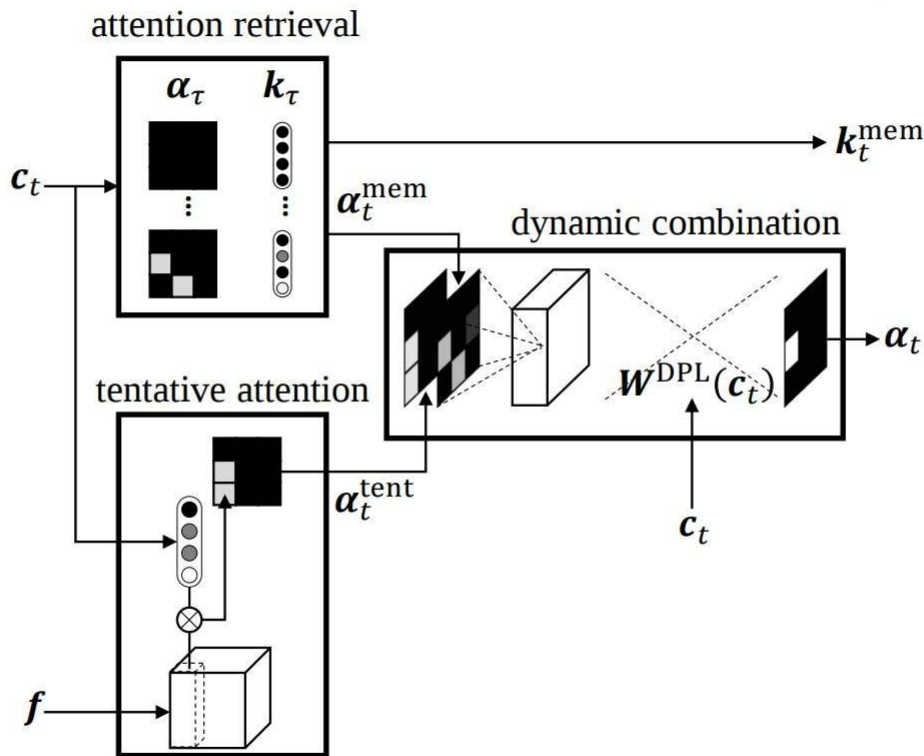
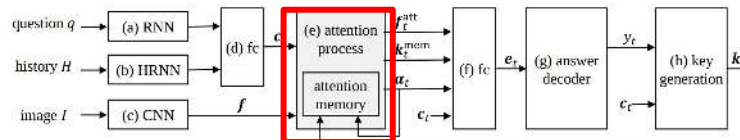


# Final Overview





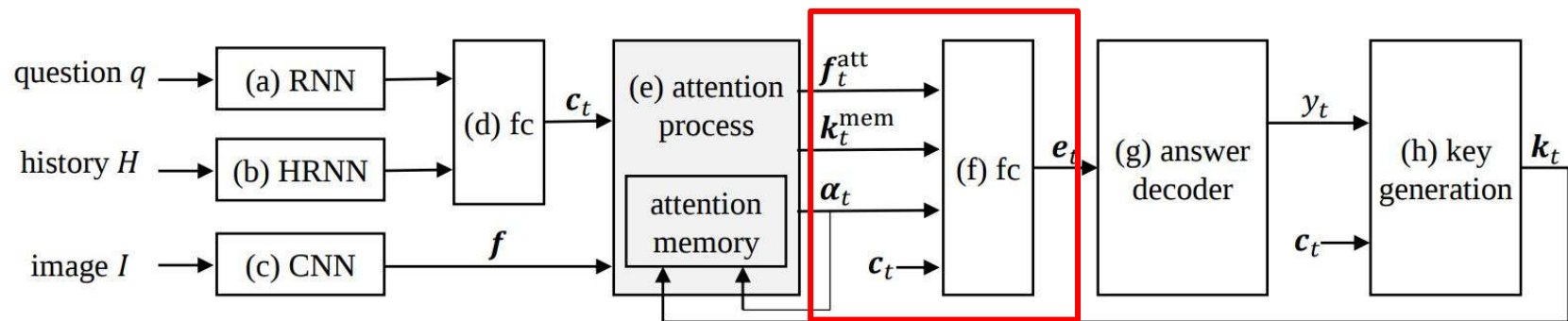
# Final Overview



$$f_t^{\text{att}} = [\alpha_t(c_t)]^\top \cdot f$$

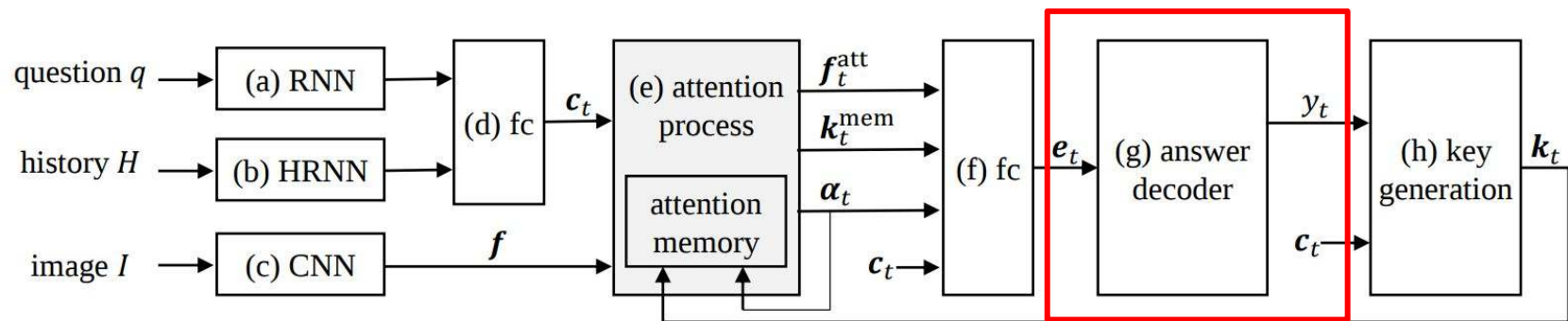
Convex Combination of  
Image Features

# Final Encoding Generation



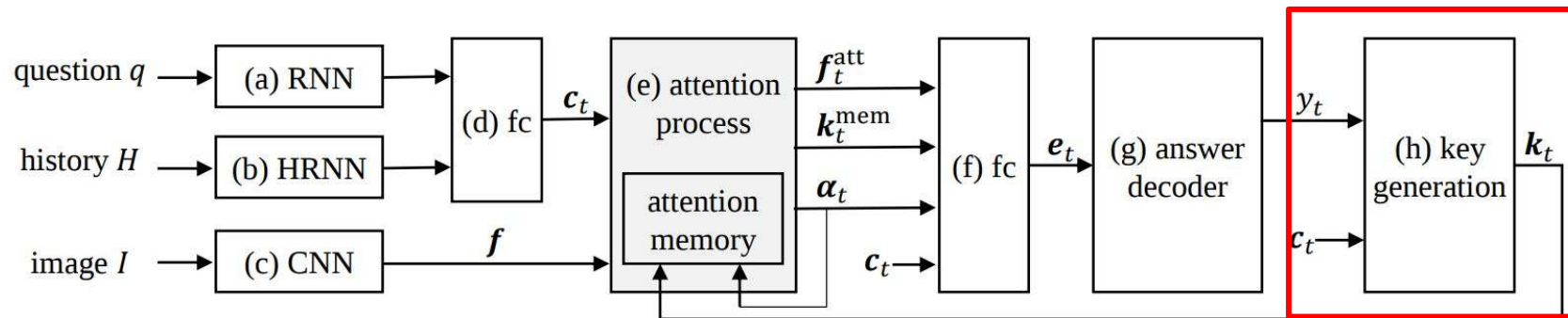
- Combine **attended image feature embedding**, **context embedding**, **attention map** and **retrieved key**
  - Intuition is that additional information might be helpful
- $e_t$  is the final encoding

# Decoder



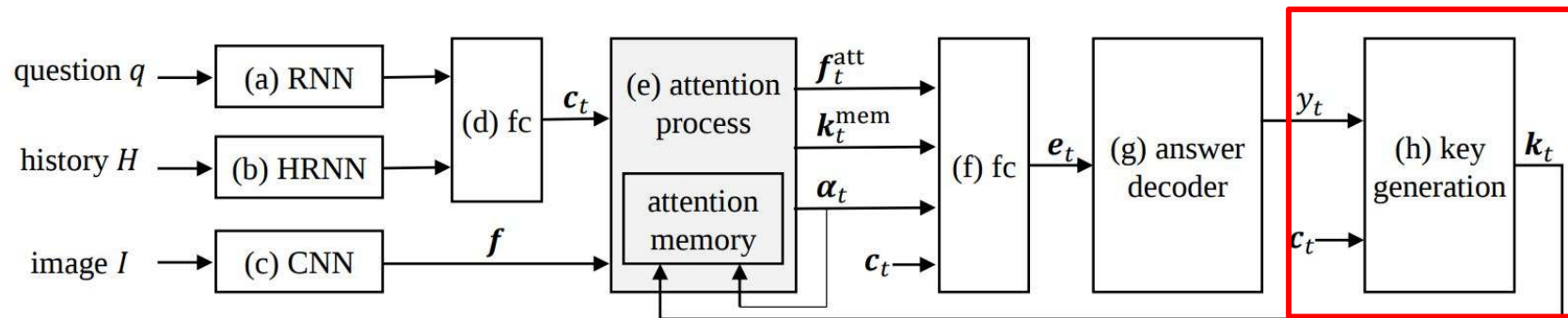
- $e_t$  is used as the hidden state of the LSTM that generates the output  $y_t$

# Key Generation



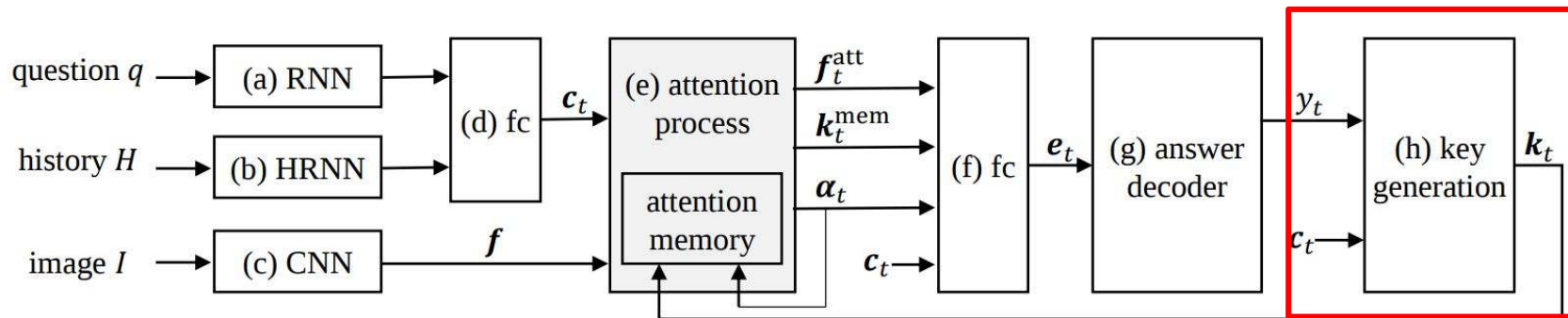
- Answer embedding  $\mathbf{a}_t$  is generated by passing  $\mathbf{y}_t$  through a LSTM

# Key Generation



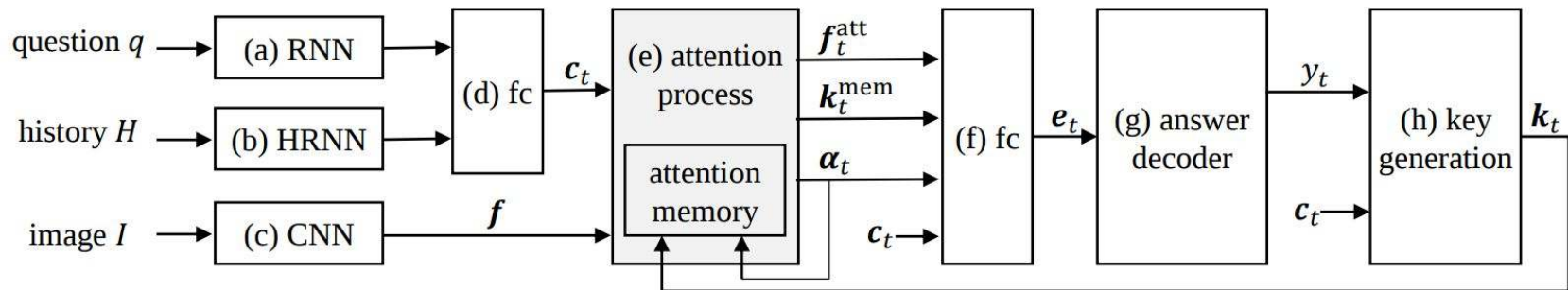
- Answer embedding  $\mathbf{a}_t$  is generated by passing  $\mathbf{y}_t$  through a LSTM
- Answer embedding  $\mathbf{a}_t$  and context embedding  $\mathbf{c}_t$  are combined using a **fc layer** to obtain key  $\mathbf{k}_t$

# Key Generation



- Answer embedding  $\mathbf{a}_t$  is generated by passing  $\mathbf{y}_t$  through a LSTM
- Answer embedding  $\mathbf{a}_t$  and context embedding  $\mathbf{c}_t$  are combined using a **fc layer** to obtain key  $\mathbf{k}_t$
- The key-attention pair  $(\mathbf{k}_t, \alpha_t)$  is added to the memory

# Training



- Since all the modules of the network are fully differentiable, the entire network can be trained end-to-end by standard gradient-based learning algorithms

# Experiments

- MNIST Dialog
  - To measure the ability to resolve visual references
  - Contains ambiguous expressions and strong inter-dependencies
- VisDial
  - Performance in real world dataset



# MNIST Dialog

- 4x4 grid of MNIST digits
- Each digit has 4 attributes
  - color(5)
  - bgcolor(5)
  - number(10)
  - style(2)
- Questions
  - Counting
  - Attribute
- Answers
  - Single word



# Implementation details

- Word embedding (32 x 1)
- Hidden state (64 x 1)
- 4 Convolution layer (3 x 3)
- Pooling layer (2 x 2)
- 512 weight candidates for dynamic parameters
- Cross entropy loss

# Baseline - LF



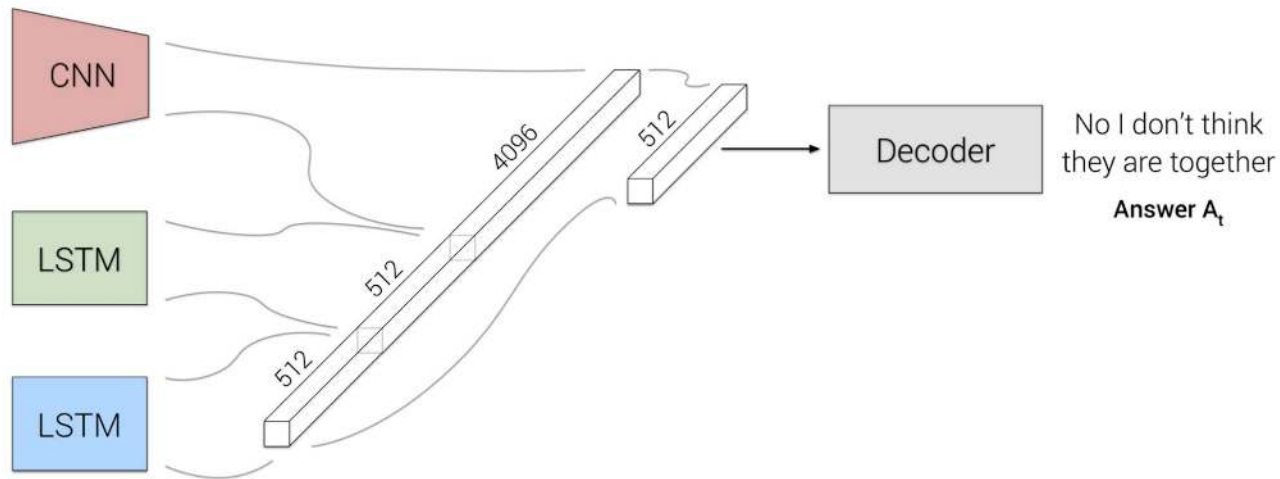
Image I

Do you think the woman is with him?

Question  $Q_t$

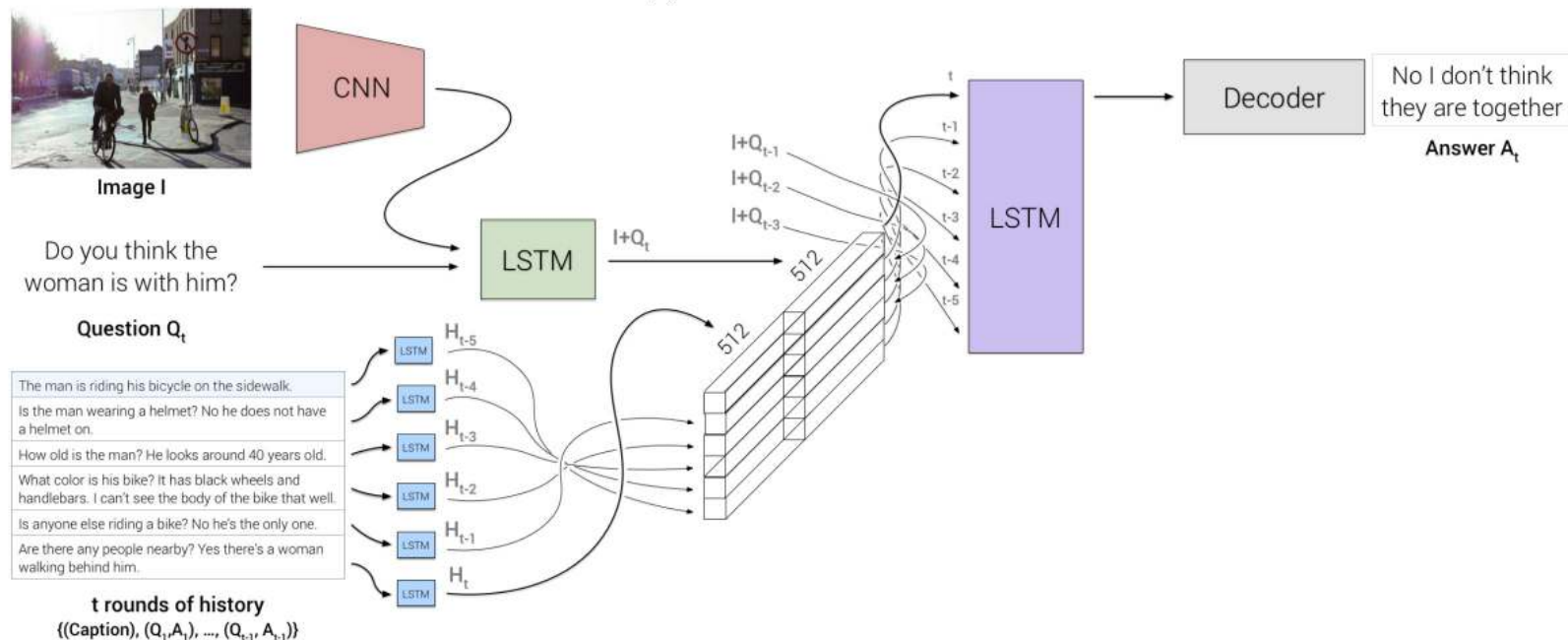
The man is riding his bicycle on the sidewalk. Is the man wearing a helmet? No he does not have a helmet on. ... Are there any people nearby? Yes there's a woman walking behind him.

$t$  rounds of history  
(concatenated)



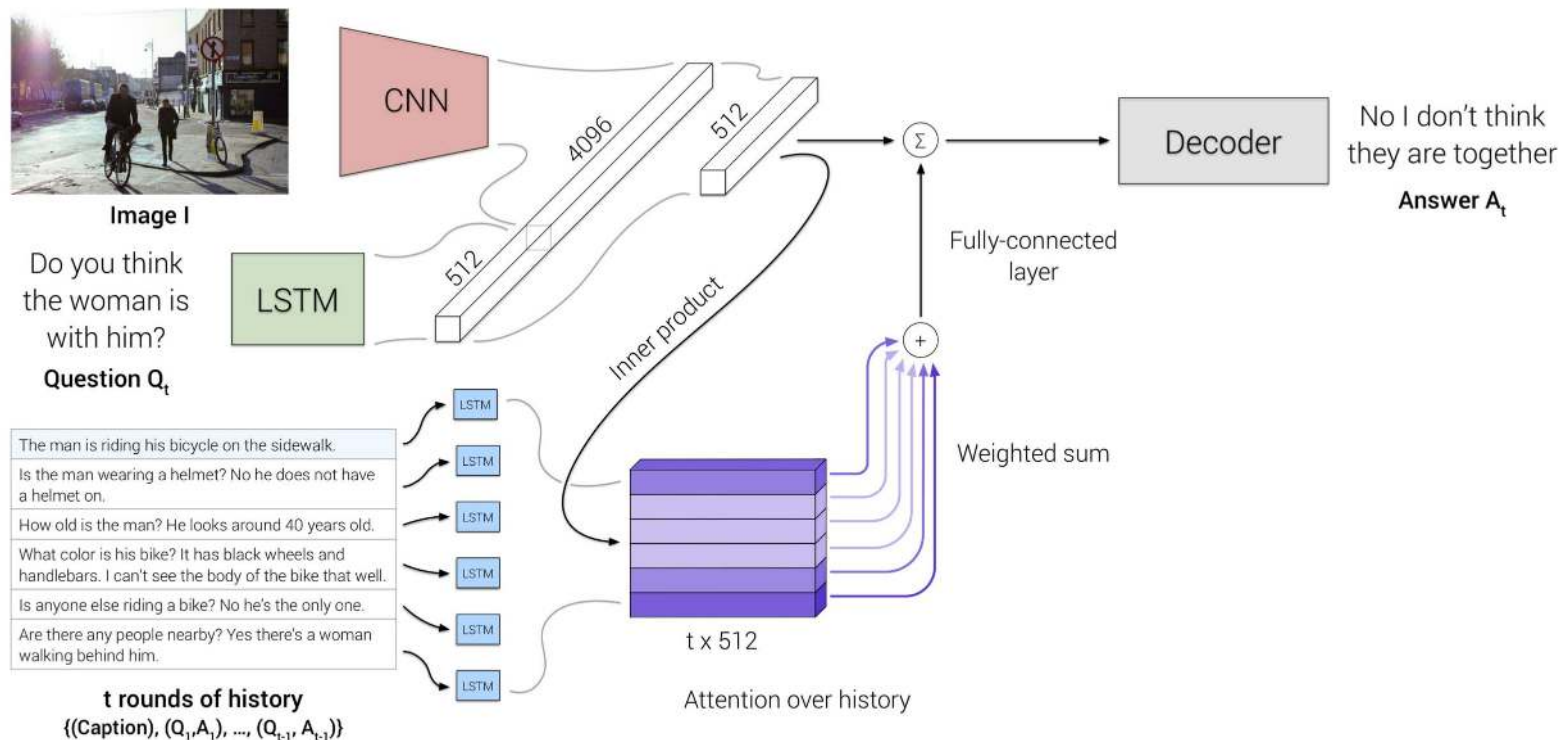
(a) Late Fusion Encoder

# Baseline - HRE



(b) Hierarchical Recurrent Encoder

# Baseline - MNE



(c) Memory Network Encoder

# Results

Basemodel	+H	+SEQ	Accuracy
I	–	–	20.18
Q	–	–	36.58
	✓	–	37.58
LF I	✓	–	45.06
HRE I	✓	–	49.10
MN I	✓	–	48.51
ATT	–	–	62.62
	✓	–	79.72
AMEM	–	–	87.53
	✓	–	89.20
	–	✓	90.05
	✓	✓	<b>96.39</b>

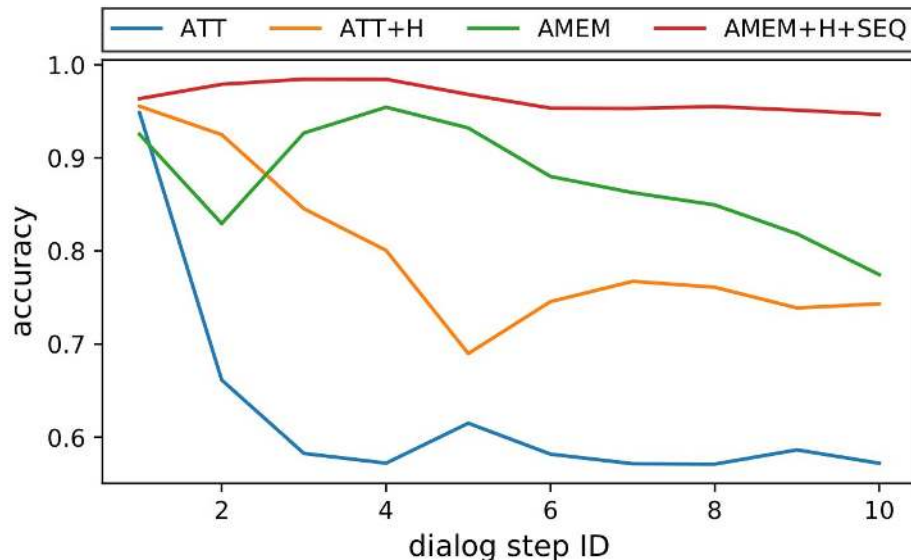


Figure 4: **Results on MNIST Dialog.** Answer prediction accuracy [%] of all models for all questions (left) and accuracy curves of four models at different dialog steps (right). +H and +SEQ represent the use of history embeddings in models and addressing with sequential preference, respectively.

# Semantic interpretability

<b>History:</b>	Are there any 9's in the image ?	three
	How many digits in a yellow background are there among them ?	one
	What is the color of the digit ?	red
	What is the color of the digit at the right of it ?	blue
	What is the style of the blue digit ?	flat
<b>Current QA:</b>	What is the color of the digit at the right of it ?	violet






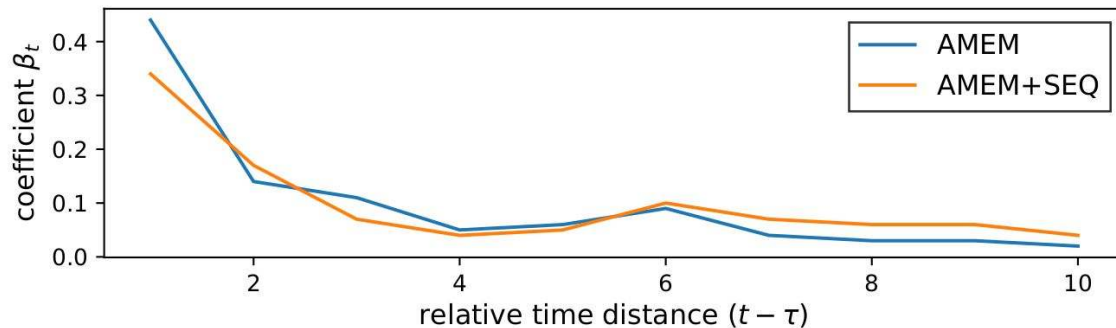
Input image	Retrieved attention from memory	Final attention	Manually modified retrieved attention	Final attention
				
	Predicted answer: violet		Predicted answer: green	

Figure 7: **Qualitative analysis on MNIST Dialog.** Given an input image and a series of questions with their visual grounding history, we present the memory retrieved and final attentions for the current question in the second and third columns, respectively. The proposed network correctly attends to target reference and predicts correct answer. The last two columns present the manually modified attention and the final attention obtained from the modified attention, respectively. Experiment shows consistency of transformation between attentions and semantic interpretability of our model.

# Parameter analysis

- $\theta$  is consistently negative
  - Model prefers recent elements
- $\beta_t$  also shows similar trend
  - Without bias  $\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}}$  puts too much focus on recent information

$$m'_{t,\tau} = (\mathbf{W}^{\text{mem}} \mathbf{c}_t)^\top \mathbf{k}_\tau + \theta (t - \tau)$$





# Parameter analysis

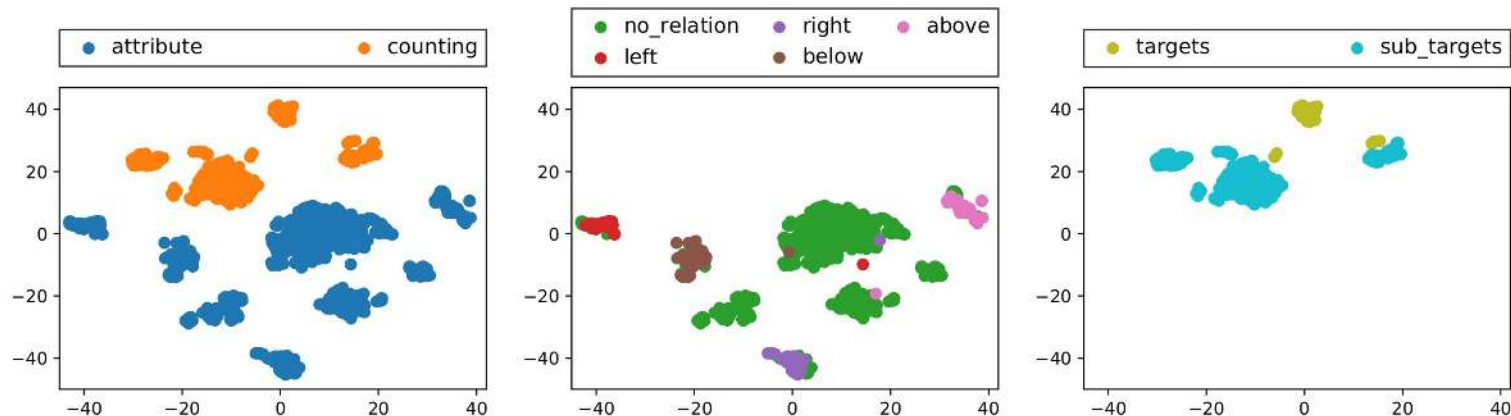


Figure 6: **Characteristics of dynamically predicted weights for attention combination.** Dynamic weights are computed from 1,500 random samples at dialog step 3 and plotted by t-SNE. Each figure presents clusters formed by different semantics of questions. (left) Clusters generated by different question types. (middle) Subclusters formed by types of spatial relationships in attribute questions. (right) Subclusters formed by ways of specifying targets in counting questions; cluster sub\_targets contains questions whose current target digits are included in the targets of the previous question.

# VisDial

- MS-COCO images + Caption + 10 Questions
  - Each question with 100 candidate answers
- Compared to MNIST Dialog
  - Answers are free form text
  - Contains fewer ambiguous expressions

# Implementation details

- The initial history is constructed with the image caption
- Feature map extracted from conv5 layer of VGG-16 trained on ImageNet
- LSTM
  - Share weights for question and caption
  - Separate weight matrix for answers
- Word embedding (64 x 1) and Hidden state (128 x 1)
  - These dimensions are significantly lower than baseline models

# Results

Table 1: **Experimental results on VisDial.** We show the number of parameters, mean reciprocal rank (MRR), recall@ $k$  and mean rank (MR). +H and ATT indicate use of history embeddings in prediction and attention mechanism, respectively.

Model	+H	ATT	# of params	MRR	R@1	R@5	R@10	MR
Answer prior [1]	–	–	n/a	0.3735	23.55	48.52	53.23	26.50
LF-Q [1]	–	–	8.3 M (3.6x)	0.5508	41.24	70.45	79.83	7.08
LF-QH [1]	✓	–	12.4 M (5.4x)	0.5578	41.75	71.45	80.94	6.74
LF-QI [1]	–	–	10.4 M (4.6x)	0.5759	43.33	74.27	83.68	5.87
LF-QIH [1]	✓	–	14.5 M (6.3x)	0.5807	43.82	74.68	84.07	5.78
HRE-QH [1]	✓	–	15.0 M (6.5x)	0.5695	42.70	73.25	82.97	6.11
HRE-QIH [1]	✓	–	16.8 M (7.3x)	0.5846	44.67	74.50	84.22	5.72
HREA-QIH [1]	✓	–	16.8 M (7.3x)	0.5868	44.82	74.81	84.36	5.66
MN-QH [1]	✓	–	12.4 M (5.4x)	0.5849	44.03	75.26	84.49	5.68
MN-QIH [1]	✓	–	14.7 M (6.4x)	0.5965	45.55	76.22	85.37	5.46
SAN-QI [10]	–	✓	n/a	0.5764	43.44	74.26	83.72	5.88
HieCoAtt-QI [15]	–	✓	n/a	0.5788	43.51	74.49	83.96	5.84
AMEM-QI	–	✓	<b>1.7 M (0.7x)</b>	0.6196	48.24	78.33	87.11	4.92
AMEM-QIH	✓	✓	2.3 M (1.0x)	0.6192	48.05	78.39	87.12	4.88
AMEM+SEQ-QI	–	✓	<b>1.7 M (0.7x)</b>	<b>0.6227</b>	<b>48.53</b>	<b>78.66</b>	<b>87.43</b>	<b>4.86</b>
AMEM+SEQ-QIH	✓	✓	2.3 M (1.0x)	0.6210	48.40	78.39	87.12	4.92

# Strengths

- Novel attention mechanism which exploits visual attention history
- Achieves state-of-the-art performance with reduced number of parameters

# Weaknesses

- MNIST Dialog dataset is not very representative of general visual dialog questions
- Should have evaluated performance over more ambiguous questions

# Potential extensions

- Are You Talking to Me? Reasoned Visual Dialog Generation through Adversarial Learning, Qi Wu et al, arXiv:1711.07613
  - Uses a combination of RL and GAN
  - Generates more human like answers
  - But does not use attention
- Use reinforcement learning approach
  - For example, Q-bot and A-bot
- Some combination of Attention, GAN and RL
- Use module networks for solving complex visual references

