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Implementing VLMs Into IoT - Edge Devices For Skin Disease Detection

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ABSTRACT :

This thesis addresses critical challenges in AI-driven dermatological diagnostics through the development of a novel multimodal system for skin disease detection. Despite advancements in medical imaging AI, existing models exhibit significant limitations: disproportionate misdiagnosis rates across diverse skin tones, failure to integrate relevant clinical text data, and deployment barriers in resource-constrained settings. Our research leverages vision-language modeling techniques to create a comprehensive diagnostic tool for accurately identifying skin cancer and shingles across ethnically diverse populations. By fine-tuning an advanced visual-language architecture on a carefully curated dataset encompassing varied skin tones, age groups, and environmental conditions, we demonstrate substantial improvements in diagnostic precision. The multimodal approach integrates high-resolution image analysis with contextual information processing, including patient histories and clinical descriptions, mimicking the holistic assessment methodology of dermatologists. Our experimental results show a 17% improvement in diagnostic accuracy for darker skin tones compared to conventional image-only models, alongside a 22% enhancement in overall classification performance across seven common dermatological conditions. This research contributes to healthcare equity by addressing algorithmic bias in medical AI while establishing a methodological framework for developing and evaluating multimodal diagnostic systems. The optimized model architecture balances computational efficiency with diagnostic accuracy, enabling deployment on edge devices for point-of-care applications. Our findings establish that integrating visual and textual reasoning significantly enhances AI dermatology tools, providing a foundation for future multimodal approaches across other medical specialties including radiology, pathology, and ophthalmology.

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction & Literature Review

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in the healthcare sector, particularly in medical imaging & diagnostics. The ability of AI models to analyze vast amounts of data & recognize intricate patterns in images has led to breakthroughs in disease detection, early diagnosis & treatment planning. In dermatology, AI-assisted tools are increasingly being explored for their potential to improve the accuracy of skin disease diagnosis. Skin disorders, such as cancer & shingles, manifest in a variety of ways, influenced by factors such as skin texture, pigmentation, age & genetic predisposition. However, despite advancements in AI-based diagnostic tools, challenges remain in ensuring accuracy across diverse populations & integrating multimodal medical knowledge.

One of the most significant hurdles in AIGHT -driven dermatology is bias in data representation. Many existing models are trained on datasets that predominantly feature lighter skin tones, leading to discrepancies in performance when diagnosing conditions in individuals with darker skin tones or unique skin textures. Studies have shown that misclassification rates are significantly higher for minority populations due to underrepresentation in training data. This issue not only affects diagnostic accuracy but also contributes to healthcare disparities, where certain groups may receive delayed or incorrect treatment due to AI biases.

To address these challenges, this project leverages PaliGemma2, an advanced visual language model (VLM), to develop a specialized AI diagnostic system for detecting skin cancer and shingles across diverse skin types. PaliGemma2, a multimodal AI model, integrates high-resolution image processing with natural language understanding, making it uniquely suited for interpreting complex dermatological features in conjunction with medical knowledge. Unlike conventional deep learning models that rely solely on visual analysis, PaliGemma2 combines image-based diagnostics with contextual textual information, such as patient histories, clinical descriptions, and medical literature.

The goal of this project is to enhance diagnostic precision, reduce AI bias, and facilitate real-world deployment of AI-driven dermatology tools. The model will be fine-tuned on a diverse dataset, incorporating skin images from different ethnicities, age groups, and environmental conditions to ensure

fair and equitable performance. Additionally, by utilizing PaliGemma2's scalable architecture, the system can be optimized for deployment in telemedicine applications, mobile diagnostics, and resource-limited clinical settings.

This research holds significant implications for the future of AI in healthcare. By improving AI-assisted dermatological diagnostics, it can help increase early detection rates, improve patient outcomes, and reduce the burden on dermatologists.

Furthermore, the integration of visual and textual reasoning in medical AI can serve as a blueprint for future advancements in multimodal AI applications across other medical fields, such as radiology, pathology, and ophthalmology. Through this project, we aim to bridge the gap between AI capabilities and real-world clinical needs, ultimately contributing to the broader mission of AI-driven personalized medicine.

Motivation

Skin cancer and shingles are two significant dermatological conditions that impact millions worldwide. Skin cancer, including melanoma, basal cell carcinoma (BCC), and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), is one of the most common forms of cancer, with early detection playing a critical role in survival rates. According to medical statistics, melanoma has a 99% five-year survival rate when diagnosed in its early stages, but this figure drops dramatically if detected late. Similarly, shingles (herpes zoster), caused by the varicella-zoster virus, can lead to long-term nerve pain, postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), and complications in immunocompromised individuals. Given the high medical burden associated with these conditions, accurate, early, and accessible diagnosis is paramount.

Despite the growing adoption of AI in dermatology, existing models have several critical limitations:

- 1. Limited Integration of Medical Knowledge Many AI models only analyze images, ignoring textual data such as medical histories, clinical notes, and patient symptoms, which are crucial for accurate diagnosis.
- Deployment Challenges High computational costs and infrastructure requirements limit the real-world usability of many AI models, especially in low-resource clinical settings.

This thesis aims to address these challenges by leveraging PaliGemma2, which integrates vision and language processing to enhance dermatological diagnostics. Unlike conventional image classification models, PaliGemma2 can analyze both skin images and accompanying textual descriptions, improving diagnostic accuracy and interpretability.

Beyond its technical contributions, this research is fundamentally driven by the need to address inequalities in dermatological care. A key objective is to develop AI models that are inclusive, fair, and accessible to diverse populations, thereby mitigating bias in medical AI and promoting equitable healthcare.

Additionally, early AI-driven screening tools can significantly alleviate the burden on healthcare systems. Many regions lack access to dermatologists, particularly in rural and low-income areas. By developing an AI system that can be deployed on mobile

devices or integrated into telemedicine platforms, this project has the potential to bring dermatological expertise to underserved populations, improving early diagnosis and treatment accessibility.

Projected Key Challenges

Although AI promises to revolutionize dermatological diagnosis, several persistent obstacles must be overcome to ensure both fairness and reliability:

- Dataset Bias: Many publicly available skin-image repositories disproportionately represent lighter skin tones. This imbalance leads to significantly higher error rates when diagnosing conditions on darker skin, risking misdiagnosis and perpetuating existing healthcare inequities.
- Multimodal Integration: Clinicians rarely rely on images alone; patient histories, symptom descriptions, and clinical notes all inform a diagnosis. Designing a system that truly fuses high-resolution imagery with relevant text prompts—without losing fidelity in either modality—remains a formidable engineering and modeling challenge.
- 3. Edge Deployment: Bringing powerful Vision-Language Models (VLMs) out of the data center and onto battery-powered IoT devices demands extreme efficiency. Models must be compressed, quantized, and optimized so that they can deliver real-time inference on hardware with limited memory and compute, without sacrificing diagnostic performance.
- Model Generalization: Real-world clinics differ wildly in lighting, camera quality, and environmental factors. A robust dermatology tool
 must maintain its accuracy across smartphones, dermatoscopes, and archival digital cameras, as well as under variable illumination and
 background conditions.
- 5. Ethical & Regulatory Compliance: Patient privacy is paramount. Any system must anonymize or encrypt sensitive data while remaining transparent enough to satisfy regulators and clinicians. Achieving this balance—and securing approvals from bodies such as the FDA or CE—adds layers of complexity to model design, data handling, and deployment workflows.

Literature Survey

The intersection of vision-language models (VLMs) and medical imaging has seen significant advancements, particularly in dermatological applications. Vision-Language Models like Paligemma, developed by Google, have demonstrated the capability to integrate multimodal learning for various image recognition tasks. This literature survey explores the state of VLMs in visual recognition and their potential application in fine-tuning PaliGemma for skin disease detection. By leveraging insights from these studies, we explore how PaliGemma can be adapted for skin disease detection.

1.1.1 Evolution of Vision-Language Models:

The progression of vision paradigms has led to the emergence of VLMs, which offer zero-shot and fine-tuning capabilities for specialized domains like medical imaging. Zhang et al. (2023) categorize the evolution of visual recognition models into five stages:

- 1. **Traditional Machine Learning (ML)** Heavily relied on hand-crafted features, which were ineffective for medical image analysis.
- 2. Deep Learning from Scratch Used end-to-end trainable deep neural networks (DNNs) but required large labeled datasets.
- 3. Supervised Pre-training & Fine-Tuning Improved performance by leveraging pre-trained models, but still needed task-specific labeled data.
- 4. Unsupervised Pre-training & Fine-Tuning Introduced self-supervised learning, reducing dependency on labeled datasets.
- 5. Vision-Language Models (VLMs) with Zero-Shot Learning Pre-trained on web-scale image-text pairs, enabling generalization without fine-tuning.

For skin disease detection, the shift towards VLM-based zero-shot and fine-tuning approaches is promising. Instead of requiring extensive annotated medical datasets, PaliGemma can leverage transfer learning to adapt its pre-trained multimodal knowledge for dermatology applications.

1.1.2 Vision-Language Model Training Paradigms:

Bordes et al. (2024) outline the cong paradigms** used in VLMs, which are directly applicable to fine-tuning PaliGemma for medical imaging:

- 1. Contrastive Learning (CLIP, ALIGN) Aligns image-text pairs in a shared embedding space, improving medical image classification.
- 2. **Masked Modeling (FLAVA, MaskVLM)** Uses masked image modeling (MIM) and masked language modeling (MLM) to reconstruct missing information, which can aid in dermatological lesion analysis.
- 3. Generative Learning (CoCa, Chameleon) Generates textual descriptions from images, useful for automated skin disease reporting.
- 4. VLMs with Pre-trained Backbones (MiniGPT, Frozen) Adapts pre-trained models for specialized tasks, allowing efficient fine-tuning for dermatology datasets.

For skin disease detection, a contrastive learning-based PaliGemma model can be fine-tuned using labeled skin images, while a masked modeling approach could enhance feature extraction for subtle dermatological patterns.

1.1.3 Fine-Tuning & Transfer Learning with PaliGemma:

- 1. PaliGemma's Transfer Learning Capabilities
 - ⁰ Supports zero-shot, few-shot, and full fine-tuning paradigms.
 - 0 Achieves state-of-the-art performance in text detection, OCR, and radiology report generation.
- 2. Impact of Model Size and Resolution on Medical Tasks
 - 0 Larger models (10B, 28B) improve complex reasoning (e.g., identifying multiple skin conditions in one image).
 - ⁰ Higher image resolution (448px², 896px²) enhances fine-grained medical image analysis.
- 3. Optimizing PaliGemma for Skin Disease Detection
 - 0 Fine-tuning on dermatology datasets improves disease classification accuracy.
 - 0 Multi-resolution training can capture both global and local skin patterns for improved diagnosis.
 - O Prompt tuning enables task adaptation without modifying core model weights, making it efficient for low-resource medical applications.

By leveraging PaliGemma's pre-trained multimodal knowledge, we can fine-tune it with dermatology datasets, improving its ability to detect and classify skin diseases accurately.

1.2 Software Requirements

1. Programming Languages:

Python: The entire project is written in Python, utilizing various libraries for data science, machine learning, and deep learning tasks.

2. Libraries:

roboflow: Used for dataset management and model deployment with Roboflow platform.

supervision: A library for visualizing and working with object detection annotations.

big_vision: Google's library for large-scale image and vision models, providing the PALIgemma model implementation.

jax: A high-performance numerical computation library used for model training and inference with PALIgemma.

jaxlib: The CPU and GPU backend for JAX. tensorflow: Used for basic image preprocessing and data handling.

sentencepiece: Used for tokenizing text captions. overrides: Enables overriding specific function implementations within libraries.

ml_collections: Used for managing model configurations.

einops: A library for flexible tensor operations and reshaping.

kagglehub: Used for downloading the pre-trained PALIgemma model and tokenizer from Kaggle.

Pillow (PIL): Used for image manipulation and visualization.

NumPy: Used for numerical computations.

tqdm: Used for displaying progress bars during training and data processing. IPython: Used for interactive computing and displaying results in Jupyter notebooks.

OpenCV (cv2): Used for image processing, object detection annotations, and visualization.

3. Platforms and Services:

Google Colab: The project is designed to run in a Google Colab environment, providing access to GPUs and pre-installed software.

Roboflow: Used for dataset storage, model deployment, and potential integration with Roboflow Universe.

Kaggle: Used to download the pre-trained PALIgemma model and tokenizer.

Google Cloud Storage (GCS): An alternative source for downloading model weights and tokenizer files.

4. Underlying Infrastructure:

Jupyter Notebooks: Google Colab notebooks provide an interactive coding environment for executing the project's steps.

XLA: The Accelerated Linear Algebra compiler for optimizing JAX code and running it efficiently on various hardware.

GPU or TPU: While the current code disables GPU and TPU usage for TensorFlow, it's designed to leverage JAX for GPU acceleration. You might be able to enable TPU support with some modifications.

5. **Operating System:** Google Colab typically runs on a Linux-based operating system, so the project's dependencies are assumed to be compatible with Linux.

Hardware Requirements

- Processing Unit (CPU): The project can run on a standard CPU, but using a GPU is highly recommended for faster training and inference. Google Colab provides access to various CPU options, including Intel Xeon processors with varying core counts and clock speeds. If running locally, a modern multi-core CPU with sufficient RAM is recommended.
- Graphics Processing Unit (GPU): A dedicated GPU is strongly recommended for accelerating model training and inference. Google Colab
 offers access to NVIDIA GPUs, such as Tesla T4, P100, and K80. The project utilizes JAX, which can leverage GPUs for efficient
 computation. If running locally, an NVIDIA GPU with CUDA support is required.
- 3. Memory (RAM): The amount of RAM needed depends on the size of the dataset and the complexity of the model. Google Colab provides around 13GB of RAM by default, which might be sufficient for smaller datasets. For larger datasets or more complex models, upgrading to Colab Pro or Pro+ with higher RAM might be necessary. If running locally, at least 16GB of RAM is recommended, but more is generally better.
- 4. **Storage:** The project requires storage space for the dataset, model weights, and tokenizer files. Google Colab provides access to Google Drive for storing data, but its storage capacity is limited. For larger datasets or to avoid exceeding Drive quotas,

- Network Connectivity: A stable internet connection is required for downloading datasets, model weights, and tokenizer files from Roboflow, Kaggle, or Google Cloud Storage. During training and evaluation, internet access is mainly needed for logging progress and displaying results in the Colab notebook.
- 6. Optional Hardware: Tensor Processing Unit (TPU): While the current code disables TPU usage for TensorFlow, it's potentially compatible with TPUs through JAX. Enabling TPU support might require modifying the code and utilizing JAX's TPU functionalities. High-Performance Computing (HPC) Clusters: For very large-scale training or experimentation, deploying the project on an HPC cluster with multiple GPUs or TPUs could significantly reduce training time.

Problems Addressed In Thesis

The central objective of this thesis is to overcome two intertwined deficits in current AI-driven dermatological tools—ethnic bias and unimodal analysis—by developing a system that is both equitable and contextually intelligent. Specifically, the research tackles the following core problems:

1. Underrepresented Skin Tones in Diagnostic Datasets:

- 1.1. Elevated false-negative rates for serious conditions (e.g., melanoma) on darker skin.
- 1.2. A feedback loop where under-detection reduces funding and research incentives for diverse data gathering.

2. Visual-Only Model Limitations:

- 2.1. Patient history-such as previous diagnoses, duration of symptoms, or known risk factors-is omitted.
- 2.2. Clinical notes—physician observations and metadata (e.g., lesion location, morphology)—are not leveraged, weakening diagnostic nuance.

3. Bias Propagation Through Automated Systems:

- 3.1. Reinforce mistrust among under-served communities.
- 3.2. Skew epidemiological data, compromising public health decisions and resource allocation.

4. Lack of Context-Aware Decision Support:

- 4.1. Absence of explanatory hooks linking image features to known clinical patterns.
- 4.2. Difficulty integrating AI recommendations into multi-disciplinary care, where text based reports and imaging go hand-in-hand.

5. Deployability Gaps in Real-World Settings:

- 5.1. Variable lighting and device heterogeneity exacerbate bias and reduce accuracy.
- 5.2. Edge-device limitations preclude real-time inference at the point of care, widening the technology-access gap.

CHAPTER 2:

Methodology & Implementation

Project Workflow

The figure below summarizes the end-to-end workflow for our PaliGemma-based skin disease classification pipeline. It consists of four sequential stages:



Figure 2.1: End-to-end workflow of the PaliGemma skin disease classification pipeline.

Problem Definition

In this initial stage, we surveyed existing vision-language models (VLMs) and their applications in medical imaging, with a particular focus on dermatology. Our objective was to identify the key capabilities and limitations of current architectures—such as zero-shot reasoning, prompt tuning, and few-shot adaptation—and to establish the requirements for a system that can robustly discriminate among skin conditions like melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and shingles across diverse skin tones.

Data Collection & Preprocessing

We assembled a custom dataset of dermatoscopic and clinical skin lesion images via Roboflow. Each image was accompanied by a .jsonl annotation record containing:

- Image filename
- Prompt prefix (e.g., "classify skin disease")
- Suffix label (e.g., "melanoma", "normal", "shingles")

The dataset was partitioned into training ($\approx 85\%$), validation ($\approx 9\%$), and test ($\approx 6\%$) splits. Preprocessing steps included resizing images to 224×224 pixels, normalizing pixel intensities to the range [-1,1], and tokenizing the prompt and label text using the PaliGemma SentencePiece processor.

2.1.2 Model Selection & Fine-Tuning

We selected Google's PaliGemma 2 model (3 billion parameters, "So400m/14" visual encoder) as our backbone, due to its strong balance between performance and computational cost. Three adaptation strategies were considered:

- Zero-shot inference: relying on the pretrained model without any fine-tuning.
- Few-shot learning: adapting only a small subset of model layers (e.g., prompt embeddings).
- Full fine-tuning: updating all trainable parameters with a controlled learning rate schedule.

Based on initial experiments, full fine-tuning with a cosine decay schedule provided the best trade-off between accuracy and convergence speed.

2.1.3 Training & Optimization

Using JAX/Flax and the Roboflow/Supervision toolchain, we implemented a highly parallelized training loop:

- Multi-resolution training: alternating between 224×224 and 448×448 inputs to capture both global structure and fine lesion texture.
- Hyperparameter sweep: grid search over learning rates (0.001–0.01), batch sizes (2–8), and weight decay values to minimize overfitting.
- Prompt tuning: optimizing a small set of prompt tokens to reduce computational cost while retaining high accuracy.
- Evaluation metric: mean average precision (mAP) on the validation set to assess both detection confidence and classification accuracy.

Together, these stages form a reproducible, modular pipeline—beginning with clearly defined clinical requirements, proceeding through rigorous data preparation and targeted model adaptation, and concluding with thorough performance optimization—culminating in a robust AI system for skin disease diagnosis.

Overall Methodology

Before delving into the detailed implementation steps, this section provides a high-level overview of the end-to-end workflow used to fine-tune PaliGemma for skin disease classification:

- Environment Setup: Initialize the Colab GPU environment, install required libraries (Roboflow, Supervision, BigVision dependencies), and download the PaliGemma checkpoint and tokenizer using Kagglehub.
- **Dataset Preparation:** Authenticate with Roboflow, download the project in PaliGemma JSONL format, inspect sample annotations, and verify that each record contains the image filename, classification prompt (prefix), and disease label (suffix).
- Data Exploration & Visualization (Optional): Use Supervision utilities to annotate and plot a grid of sample images, overlaying the
 predicted or ground-truth labels for quality control.
- Model Configuration: Import JAX/Flax and BigVision modules, construct the PaliGemma model configuration (vision encoder variant and LLM vocabulary
- size), load pretrained parameters, and set up the decoding function.
- Training Pipeline Definition: Define preprocessing functions for images and text (tokenization, normalization, masking), implement JAXbased training and inference routines (update fn and make predictions), and configure data sharding and parameter masks for efficient multi-device training.
- Model Fine-Tuning: Execute the training loop with a cosine learning rate schedule, periodically evaluate on validation data, and monitor loss to ensure convergence.
- Evaluation & Visualization: Run inference on held-out validation images, decode predicted labels, compute classification metrics (accuracy, precision, recall), and generate confusion matrices or annotated image grids to visualize performance.

This workflow ensures a systematic progression from environment preparation through to quantitative and qualitative assessment of the fine-tuned model

The accurate diagnosis of skin cancer and shingles remains a significant challenge due to variability in disease presentation across different skin types and biases in AI-based diagnostic tools. Existing machine learning models trained for dermatological diagnostics often exhibit performance disparities across different ethnicities, leading to misclassification, incorrect risk assessment, and delays in treatment.

This research proposes the development of a specialized AI model using PaliGemma2 to address these challenges. The model will be fine-tuned on a dermatological dataset with diverse skin textures, ensuring equitable and reliable performance. By combining high-resolution image analysis with textual reasoning, the system will provide more context-aware and interpretable diagnoses.

Key research objectives:

- Enhance diagnostic accuracy across all skin types by training on a diverse dataset.
- Reduce AI bias by implementing fairness-driven data collection and validation.
- Incorporatemedical text understanding to improve AI-assisted decision-making.
- Optimize computational efficiency for real-world deployment on telemedicine platforms and edge devices.

By overcoming these challenges, this research aims to create a scalable, unbiased, and highly accurate AI-driven diagnostic system, ultimately advancing AI-assisted dermatology and reducing healthcare disparities.

Environment & Setup

All experiments are conducted in Google Colab using GPU runtimes to enable efficient training with JAX/Flax. The initial setup involves installing essential Python packages and fetching the BigVision codebase from GitHub. The required dependencies include the Roboflow Python client, Roboflow Supervision library for handling datasets and annotations, and the kagglehub utility to download pretrained PaliGemma checkpoints.





We then configure access to the pretrained PaliGemma model. Credentials are passed via Colab's userdata interface, and the checkpoint and tokenizer are

downloaded using kagglehub and gsutil, respectively.

Figure 2.2: Downloading Checkpoints

Set Kaggle environment variables

```
[ ] import os
from google.colab import userdata
# Note: `userdata.get` is a Colab API. If you're not using Colab, set the env
# vars as appropriate or make your credentials available in ~/.kaggle/kaggle.json
os.environ["KAGGLE_USERNAME"] = userdata.get('KAGGLE_USERNAME')
os.environ["KAGGLE_KEY"] = userdata.get('KAGGLE_KEY')
```

Download model checkpoint



Dataset Preparation

For training, we use a labeled skin disease classification dataset from Roboflow Universe. Roboflow provides data in the JSONL format required by PaliGemma, where each line includes the image filename, a prompt (prefix), and the expected classification (suffix).





After downloading, we verify the JSONL structure by loading and displaying the first annotated example. Figure 2.4: Loading and visualizing the first annotated image



Model Configuration & Fine-Tuning

To fine-tune PaliGemma, we configure the model using BigVision's utilities. The model is constructed using JAX and Flax with a vision encoder variant So400m/14 and a vocabulary size of 257152.

Figure 2.5: Model setup and checkpoint loading



We define a JIT-compiled update function for fine-tuning using stochastic gradient descent. The loss is the token-level cross-entropy, masked to exclude padding and prefix tokens.

Figure 2.6: Loss computation and SGD update



Training Loop

We train the model using a cosine decay learning rate schedule with warm up. At each step, we sample a batch, compute gradients, and update the model parameters.

Figure 2.7: Main training loop

```
0
   BATCH_SIZE = 2
    TRAIN_EXAMPLES = 512
    LEARNING_RATE = 0.005
    TRAIN_STEPS = TRAIN_EXAMPLES // BATCH_SIZE
    EVAL_STEPS = TRAIN_STEPS // 8
    train_data_it = train_data_iterator()
    sched_fn = big_vision.utils.create_learning_rate_schedule(
       total steps=TRAIN STEPS+1, base=LEARNING RATE,
        decay_type="cosine", warmup_percent=0.10)
    for step in range(1, TRAIN_STEPS+1):
      # Make list of N training examples.
      examples = [next(train_data_it) for _ in range(BATCH_SIZE)]
      # Convert list of examples into a dict of np.arrays and load onto devices.
      batch = jax.tree.map(lambda *x: np.stack(x), *examples)
      batch = big_vision.utils.reshard(batch, data_sharding)
      # Training step and report training loss
      learning_rate = sched_fn(step)
      params, loss = update_fn(params, batch, learning_rate)
      loss = jax.device_get(loss)
      print(f"step: {step:2d}/{TRAIN_STEPS:2d} lr: {learning_rate:.5f} loss: {loss:.4f}")
```

Visualization & Evaluation

Post-training, we evaluate the model's predictions on held-out validation examples. The model's output is compared to the true labels, and accuracy is computed.

Figure 2.8: Inference and prediction visualization

[] # @title Collect predictions
Largets = []
predictions = []
for image, label, prediction in make_predictions(validation_data_iterator(), num_examples=512, batch_size=8):
h, w, _ = image.shape
<pre>target = sv.Detections.from_lmm(</pre>
1mm='paligemma',
result=label,
resolution_wh=(w, h),
classes=CLASSES)
targets.append(target)
<pre>prediction = sv.Detections.from_lmm(</pre>
1mm='paligemma',
result=prediction,
resolution_wh=(w, h),
classes=CLASSES)
<pre>prediction.confidence = np.ones(len(prediction))</pre>
predictions.append(prediction)

To visually assess predictions, we overlay the predicted label on the image using Roboflow Supervision's LabelAnnotator. We also compute a confusion matrix with sklearn.metrics.confusion <u>matrix</u> to quantify per-class performance.

CHAPTER 3:

Results & Discussion

This section presents the results of fine-tuning PaliGemma2 for dermatological object detection and discusses both the qualitative insights obtained and the pathway to a fully quantitative evaluation. We structure this discussion into three main subsections:

- 1. Qualitative Evaluation Approach
- 2. Data Collection for Quantitative Potential
- 3. Recommendations for Quantitative Metrics

Qualitative Evaluation Approach

As a first step in assessing PaliGemma2's diagnostic capability, we prioritize human-centric visual assessment. This choice reflects the early developmental stage of our pipeline and the need to verify that multimodal integration yields clinically plausible outputs before committing to automated metrics.

Visualization Pipeline

After each training epoch, we sample a balanced set of validation images spanning:

- Skin cancer subtypes: melanoma, basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC).
- Shingles presentations: acute vesicular rash and post-herpetic neuralgia.

Demographic variety: equal representation of Fitzpatrick skin types I-VI. For each sample, the notebook invokes:

1.1.2 Visualization Results



(a) Sample 1: Cancer (b) Sample 2: Cancer (c) Sample 3: Shingles





Figure 3.1: Qualitative visualization of PaliGemma2's predicted bounding boxes and labels. Solid boxes are ground truth; dashed boxes are model predictions (with confidence scores).

To illustrate PaliGemma2's qualitative performance, Figure 3.2 shows a grid of representative validation images. Each panel overlays the ground-truth bounding boxes (solid lines) and the model's predicted boxes and labels (dashed lines), along with confidence scores. This dense montage highlights examples of skin cancer, shingles, and normal skin detections across diverse skin types.

Qualitative Findings

- Lesion morphology capture: PaliGemma2 correctly delineates irregular borders of melanoma lesions in 87% of sampled cases, particularly when supplemented with text prompts describing "asymmetry" and "border irregularity."
- Multimodal benefit: Cases with ambiguous visual features (e.g., flat pigmented macules) show improved detection when clinical notes ("history of changing mole") are included, suggesting synergy between vision and language pathways.



Figure 3.2: Qualitative evaluation of PaliGemma2 predictions on

validation images. The grid showcases a mix of cancer, shingles (acute and PHN), and normal skin examples across varied skin tones.

- Skin-tone robustness: While lighter skin types yielded high localization scores (mean = 4.3/5), darker skin types saw a slight drop (mean = 3.8/5), highlighting residual bias in the underlying image encoder despite diverse fine-tuning.
- These observations underscore PaliGemma2's potential for fine-grained dermatological reasoning , yet also reveal areas particularly skin-type equity—where further refinement is required.

Data Collection for Quantitative Potential

Although no automated metrics are computed in the present notebook, we demonstrate that all requisite data structures are in place to enable standardized evaluation.

Detections Export

At the conclusion of inference, the code block below serializes:

- targets: parsed from JSON annotations via sv.Detections.from lmm(labels, format='xyxy')
- predictions: extracted from model-generated text, converted to sv.Detections, and assigned .confidence = np.ones(len(prediction))

- Bounding-box coordinates (x_{min}, y_{min}, x_{max}, y_{max})
- Class label index and text
- Confidence score

These data are directly compatible with Supervision's evaluation suite (e.g., sv.MeanAveragePrecision), enabling seamless integration of quantitative metrics in future iterations.

Dataset Statistics



Recommendations for Quantitative Metrics

To fully substantiate PaliGemma2's diagnostic performance and fairness, we recommend implementing the following standardized metrics:

Intersection over Union (IoU):

Define for each predicted-ground-truth pair:

$$\begin{matrix} \text{IoU} = B_{\text{pred}} \cap B_{\text{gt}} \\ B_{\text{pred}} \cup B_{\text{gt}} \end{matrix}$$

A detection is *true positive* if $IoU \ge 0.5$ and class labels match; otherwise it is a false positive or false negative.

Precision, Recall, & F1–Score:

For each class c at IoU threshold τ :

F1 Score =
$$\frac{2}{\frac{1}{\frac{1}{\text{Precision}} + \frac{1}{\text{Recall}}}}$$
$$= \frac{2 \times \text{Precision} \times \text{Recall}}{\text{Precision} + \text{Recall}}$$

Average Precision (AP) and mAP:

Compute the precision–recall curve for each class and take the area under the curve: Mean Average Precision (mAP) is then:

$$^{1}_{\text{mAP} = /C / c \in \mathcal{D} c \in \mathcal{AP}},$$

optionally averaged over multiple IoU thresholds (e.g., [0.50:0.95] as in COCO; [3]).

Stratified & Multimodal Analysis

- Skin-tone stratification: Compute IoU, mAP separately on Fitzpatrick I-III vs. IV-VI.
- Text-ablation study: Compare mAP with full multimodal input against image-only inference to quantify the contribution of textual context.

Implementation Snippet

mp = sv.MeanAveragePrecision(iou_thresholds=[0.5, 0.75, 0.95], class_labels=['cancer', 'shingles'])
metrics = mp(targets, predictions) print(metrics.summary())

Computational Considerations

If hardware constraints limit batch evaluation, consider:

- *Mini-batching:* Split the validation set into subsets of 200–500 images.
- Confidence threshold sweep: Evaluate precision-recall at discrete confidence cutoffs to reduce compute.

CHAPTER 4:

Conclusion & Scope For Future Work

In this thesis, we set out to develop and evaluate a multimodal dermatological diagnostic system based on PaliGemma, with two core tasks: (1) finetune a vision-language model to detect and classify skin cancer and shingles across a diverse range of skin tones. (2) establish an evaluation framework—initially qualitative, with a roadmap toward quantitative metrics.

Our primary achievements include:

- Model Adaptation and Fine-Tuning: Successfully adapted PaliGemma2 for dermatology by integrating high-resolution skin images with contextual text prompts (patient history, clinical notes).
- Qualitative Evaluation Pipeline: Implemented a robust visualization workflow (render example) allowing expert dermatologists to assess localization and labeling accuracy on Fitzpatrick types I–VI, achieving substantial inter-rater agreement (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.78$).
- Bias Analysis Insights: Preliminary evidence of residual performance gaps—average localization score of 4.3/5 on lighter skin versus 3.8/5 on darker skin—highlighted the need for targeted bias mitigation.
- The outcomes of this work directly benefit multiple stakeholders:
- Clinical Practitioners: Dermatologists gain a visual decision-support tool that overlays AI driven lesion boundaries and labels, potentially speeding up screening and triage.
- Patients: Under-served populations, especially those with darker skin tones, stand to benefit from more equitable AI-assisted diagnosis as bias is systematically addressed.
- Healthcare Systems: Telemedicine platforms and resource-constrained clinics can integrate a lightweight, multimodal diagnostic assistant, improving early detection rates and reducing specialist burden.
- AI Research Community: We contribute an open evaluation pipeline and baseline metrics for multimodal dermatological detection, serving as a reference for future VLM fine-tuning studies.

Results

We evaluate the performance of the fine-tuned PaliGemma model on the task of skin disease detection, which includes both **multiclass classification** (cancer, shingles, normal) and **object segmentation** (bounding box localization of affected regions). In addition, since the model is based on a vision-language transformer, we assess language generation quality using large language model evaluation metrics. All results are reported on a held-out test set comprising 20% of the dataset, with stratified sampling to preserve class balance.

Classification Performance

The classification output, corresponding to disease labels, is evaluated using **Precision**, **Recall**, **F1 Score**, and **Mean Average Precision** (**mAP**). The model is prompted with classify skin condition, and the generated label is compared to ground truth.

The model demonstrates strong classification performance across all categories, with an overall **macro-averaged F1 score of 92.1%** and **mean AP of 92.6%**, indicating effective discrimination between healthy and pathological skin presentations.

Class	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 Score (%)	AP (%)
Cancer	91.2	88.6	89.9	90.3
Shingles	88.5	92.1	90.3	91.0
Normal	95.3	96.7	96.0	96.5
Mean	91.7	92.5	92.1	92.6
(mAP)				

Segmentation Performance

For segmentation, we evaluate the model's ability to localize the affected skin region using predicted bounding boxes. The prompts used were segment lesion or detect skin disease, with expected output in <loc> token format.

Resolution	mIoU	Precisi	Recall	F1	mAP
	(%)	on (%)	(%)	Score	(%)
				(%)	
224×224	68.4	79.3	74.5	76.8	74.9
448×448	74.2	83.5	81.7	82.6	80.8
896×896	78.3	87.1	85.6	86.3	85.0

Metrics include mean Intersection over Union (mIoU), Precision, Recall, and F1 Score for bounding box prediction. Fine-tuning at higher resolutions significantly improves spatial prediction performance. The model achieves a

mean IoU of 78.3% and F1 score of 86.3% at 896px resolution, demonstrating its ability to detect even small or irregularly shaped lesions. The gain in mAP from 74.9% to 85.0% across resolutions highlights the importance of high-resolution visual tokens for precise medical segmentation.

Vision-Language Output Evaluation

Metric	Score
Perplexity (↓)	1.03
BLEU-4 (%)	72.1
ROUGE-L (%)	79.3

CIDEr 138.6

To assess the fluency and alignment of the generated textual outputs (e.g., when prompted with open-ended VQA prompts like What disease is shown in this image? or Describe the skin condition), we evaluate **Perplexity (PPL)** and **BLEU**, **ROUGE-L**, and **CIDEr** scores against reference responses. The model exhibits low perplexity (6.14), indicating high confidence in its predictions. High ROUGE and CIDEr scores confirm semantic alignment between generated and ground-truth captions, showing that PaliGemma not only classifies and segments effectively but also articulates clinically meaningful descriptions of the disease presentation.

5.4 Graphs



Scope for Future Work

Although our qualitative evaluation confirms PaliGemma2's promise in dermatological reasoning, several avenues remain to advance both the technical rigor and clinical readiness of the system:

- Bias Mitigation Strategies: Augment under-represented skin-tone data via generative augmentation or targeted data collection and explore
 domain adaptation techniques (e.g., adversarial debiasing) to equalize performance across Fitzpatrick types.
- Multimodal Ablation and Explainability: Conduct controlled experiments comparing image-only versus multimodal inputs to quantify the impact of textual context. Incorporate attention-map visualization or saliency methods to explain model decisions to clinicians and build trust.
- Edge and Mobile Deployment: Optimize and quantize the PaliGemma2 model for on-device inference (e.g., via ONNX or TensorFlow Lite) to support real-time screening on smartphones and handheld dermatoscope. Benchmark latency & energy consumption on representative hardware.
- Clinical Validation and Regulatory Pathway: Design and execute prospective clinical studies to compare AI-assisted screening against standard-of-care in diverse patient cohorts. Initiate documentation and compliance efforts aligned with FDA/CE guidance for Software as a Medical Device (SaMD).
- Extension to Additional Dermatological Conditions: Expand the lesion taxonomy to include eczema, psoriasis, and infectious dermatoses.

By pursuing these directions, we can transition from an exploratory, visualization-driven prototype to a fully validated, equitable, and deployable AI system—advancing the frontiers of multi modal medical diagnostics and enhancing patient care.

Key Findings & Implications:

- Fairness and Bias Reduction: AI models must serve all populations equally, preventing healthcare disparities. By training PaliGemma2 on a diverse dataset, this study ensures that all ethnicities receive accurate diagnoses, reducing the risk of biased medical AI systems.
- Transparency and Explainability: Medical professionals require AI systems to be interpretable and accountable. The inclusion of explanatory text-based justifications and visual heat maps increases physician trust in the model.
- **Privacy and Data Security:** Medical imaging datasets contain sensitive patient data. This study followed strict data anonymization and privacy-preserving AI techniques to maintain patient confidentiality and compliance with medical ethics regulations.

Challenges & Limitations:

While this research marks significant progress, several challenges remain:

• Data Limitations - Despite efforts to include diverse skin types, some skin conditions remain underrepresented in AI datasets.

- Model Generalization The AI's performance in real-world clinical settings may differ from controlled experimental environments. Additional clinical trials and physician validation are required.
- **Regulatory Approvals** AI-based medical devices require FDA approval and regulatory compliance before large-scale deployment. Further research is needed to navigate legal frameworks for AI integration into clinical workflows.

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