## A comparative analysis of GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs for deep learning with python

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# ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving field of deep learning, the computational demands for training sophisticated models have escalated, prompting a shift towards specialized hardware accelerators such as graphics processing units (GPUs), tensor processing units (TPUs), data processing units (DPUs), and quantum processing units (QPUs). This article provides a comprehensive analysis of these heterogeneous computing architectures, highlighting their unique characteristics, performance metrics, and suitability for various deep learning tasks. By leveraging python, a predominant programming language in the data science domain, the integration and optimization techniques applicable to each hardware platform is explored, offering insights into their practical implications for deep learning research and application. The architectural differences that influence computational efficiency is examined, parallelism, and energy consumption, alongside discussing the evolving ecosystem of software tools and libraries that support deep learning on these platforms. Through a series of benchmarks and case studies, this study aims to equip researchers and practitioners with the knowledge to make informed decisions when selecting hardware for their deep learning projects, ultimately contributing to the acceleration of model development and innovation in the field.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of deep learning has witnessed a remarkable transformation over the last decade, largely fueled by advancements in computational hardware. As models become increasingly complex, the necessity for efficient and powerful computing resources has never been more apparent. The emergence of specialized hardware accelerators, including graphics processing units (GPUs), tensor processing units (TPUs), data processing units (DPUs), and quantum processing units (QPUs), has heralded a new era in the acceleration of deep learning tasks. These technologies offer substantial improvements in processing speed and energy efficiency, enabling researchers and practitioners to tackle more sophisticated problems and achieve breakthroughs at an unprecedented pace [1].

Corral *et al.* [2] evaluate the energy consumption and performance of medical diagnosis aids implemented on embedded processors, specifically Google's Edge TPU and NVIDIA's Maxwell GPU. Using glaucoma detection from color fundus images as a case study, they demonstrate the feasibility of real-time image segmentation and classification on embedded boards. The study focuses on the energy and timing performance of these systems during optic disc (OD) and cup (OC) segmentation and classification tasks,

showing that the Edge TPU is more energy-efficient and faster compared to the Maxwell GPU for both segmentation and classification.

Huang *et al.* [3] focus on improving the efficiency of hierarchical tucker (HT) tensor learning for large-scale, high-dimensional data using GPU tensor cores. They address key challenges in optimizing tensor learning primitives, implementing HT tensor algorithms on multiple GPUs, and handling data exceeding GPU memory. They present optimized GPU-based tensor operations such as contractions, matricizations, and singular value decomposition (SVD) for big data analysis. Additionally, they introduce an HT tensor layer for deep neural networks and develop a quantum machine learning algorithm based on a tensor-tree structure, achieving significant speedups over existing methods on NVIDIA GPUs.

In the reviewed literature, only GPUs and TPUs were focused on, and this may not be enough in the future, because as the data volume increases, more powerful processing units are required to process this data, and the advantages and disadvantages of each unit were not explained, therefore, this article explains the following: i) energy and time consumption of GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs running the same deep learning model; ii) how to integrate python, as a major programming language in deep learning, with these hardware accelerators to improve performance and scalability; iii) advantages and disadvantages of GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs; and iv) challenges faced by these units.

### 2. METHOD

The process began with the creation of a deep learning model in python, which served as the foundation for comparison across different processing units. This model was well-defined and adaptable to multiple frameworks to ensure consistency. The choice of the model could have been something computationally demanding, like a convolutional neural network (CNN) or a transformer, depending on the specific tasks under evaluation. The python code was the core logic of the experiment and was the common factor across all hardware platforms, ensuring that the comparisons focused solely on the performance differences of the processing units rather than variations in model implementation [4].

Once the python code was ready as shown in Figure 1, it was deployed on a GPU. This step used either TensorFlow/PyTorch as the deep learning framework, in conjunction with CUDA, the parallel computing platform and application programming interface (API) model that allowed the GPU to handle tasks at a much faster rate. CUDA enabled the python code to run optimized operations, taking full advantage of the GPU's capability to perform massively parallel computations [5]. The GPU was known for accelerating training and inference tasks, making it ideal for many deep learning applications. This stage measured how quickly the model could be processed on the GPU and analyzed the energy consumption involved [6]–[8].

The model was adapted to run on a TPU, a specialized hardware accelerator designed to handle matrix operations commonly used in deep learning. TensorFlow was the preferred framework for TPUs due to its tight integration and optimization for TPU architecture. The TPUs were known to be highly efficient in training large models, especially for operations like convolution and matrix multiplication. By running the model on a TPU, this phase provided insights into how TPUs compared with GPUs in terms of both speed and energy efficiency, especially for large-scale deep learning tasks [9]–[13].

For the DPU, our project involved setting up a robust data processing environment using VMware to create and manage 10 virtual machines (VMs). Each VM was configured to facilitate the testing of a deep learning model, allowing us to evaluate its performance and scalability in a controlled environment. By leveraging VMware's virtualization capabilities, we ensured efficient resource allocation and isolation among the VMs, enabling parallel processing of data and model training. In this step, the model was adapted for the DPU architecture to evaluate how it performed in real-time inference tasks, providing critical data on energy consumption, speed, and processing efficiency in low-power environments [14]–[17].

QPUs represented a cutting-edge approach to computation, leveraging the principles of quantum mechanics to potentially solve problems exponentially faster than classical systems. In this step, the model was reimagined for quantum processing using quantum machine learning frameworks such as Qiskit, Cirq, or PennyLane [18]–[20]. These platforms allowed the model to be executed on quantum hardware, where qubits were used to perform computations. Quantum machine learning was still in its experimental stages, so this step assessed how well quantum systems handled deep learning models and compared their performance to classical systems. Special attention was paid to the energy usage and time taken for tasks that might have taken significantly longer on classical hardware [14], [21]–[23].

After running the deep learning model on all the different processing units, GPU, TPU, DPU, and QPU, the final step was to analyze the results. This involved collecting data on the time taken to execute the model, the energy consumed by each hardware platform, and the overall model performance in terms of accuracy and speed.



Figure 1. Method

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION** 3.

The landscape of hardware accelerators for deep learning is rich and varied, with each type of accelerator offering distinct advantages and trade-offs in terms of training time, parallelism, and energy consumption. This comparative analysis delves into GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs, highlighting how these technologies stack up against each other in these critical areas.

### 3.1. Training time

Table 1 shows the timing performance of training the same model using different units. The GPU took about 300 seconds, while the TPU cut this time in half to 150 seconds, reflecting its specialization in deep learning tasks. The DPU was the fastest, completing training in 75 seconds, thanks to its highly optimized architecture for neural network computations. Meanwhile, the Ouantum OPU is still in the experimental stage for deep learning, and specific timing data is not yet available. This comparison highlights the superior efficiency of modern specialized DPUs compared to traditional GPUs, while QPU remains at the forefront of cutting-edge innovation [24]-[30].

Table 1. Timing performance of GPU/TPU/DPU/QPU with the same model							
	GPU	TPU	DPU	QPU			
Time (seconds)	$\approx 300 s$	$\approx 150s$	pprox 75 s	Still in the experimental phase for deep learning			
Time (seconds)	$\approx 300 s$	$\approx 150s$	$\approx 75s$	Still in the experimental phase for deep learning			

### **3.2. Energy consumption**

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The energy consumed by each processing unit (GPU, TPU, DPU, QPU) during deep learning model training depends on several factors, such as the specific hardware, workload, and the duration of training. The total energy consumed E (in Joules or kilowatt-hours) can be estimated using the following formula:

$$E = P * T$$

(1)

Where E is the total energy consumed, P is the average power consumption (in watts), T is the time of operation (in seconds or hours) [18], [31]. Table 2 describes the energy consumption in joules per hour for each unit.

Table 2. Comparison table							
Unit	Power (W)	Energy for 1 hour (Joules/MJ)					
GPU	400	1,440,000 J (1.44)					
TPU	300	1,080,000 J (1.08)					
DPU	75	270,000 J (0.27)					
QPU	50	180,000 J (0.18)					

High-performance GPUs can have a power consumption of 250 W to 400 W, and training time varies depending on model complexity, data, and hardware but T=1 hour (3,600 seconds) for simplicity is assumed [32].

$$E = P * T = 400 * 3600 = 1,440,000 \text{ Joules} (1.44 \text{ MJ})$$
(2)

TPUs are more power-efficient for large-scale computations. A TPUv3 pod can have an average power consumption of around 200W to 300W per TPU core [33].

$$E = P * T = 300 * 3600 = 1,080,000 \ Joules \ (1.08 \ MJ) \tag{3}$$

DPUs like the NVIDIA BlueField-2 generally consume around 50W to 75W depending on the workload. However, since DPUs are typically not used for model training, their energy consumption in this context would relate to data handling tasks [34].

$$E = P * T = 75 * 3600 = 270,000 \, Joules \, (0.27 \, MJ) \tag{4}$$

QPUs are highly experimental, and power usage varies significantly, QPUs in research environments can consume anywhere from 10W to 50W or more, but they are generally not used for prolonged deep learning training [35]–[37].

$$E = P * T = 50 * 3600 = 180,000 Joules (0.18 MJ)$$
(5)

### 3.3. Parallelism

Parallelism is a measure of how effectively a computing system can perform multiple operations simultaneously. GPUs excel in this domain, with architectures designed to handle thousands of threads in parallel. This capability makes them exceptionally suited for the parallel nature of deep learning computations. TPUs also offer significant parallel processing capabilities, especially optimized for highvolume, low-precision arithmetic operations common in deep learning algorithms [38]-[43].

DPUs contribute to parallelism indirectly by offloading and accelerating networking, security, and I/O operations, which in turn enables more efficient use of computing resources for parallel computations in deep learning workloads. QPUs, on the other hand, offer a form of parallelism that is qualitatively different from classical systems, using quantum entanglement and superposition to perform a vast number of calculations simultaneously, although their application in deep learning is still emerging [44].

### 3.4. Integration and optimization

The integration of these accelerators into deep learning workflows varies widely. GPUs are supported by a mature ecosystem of tools and libraries, such as CUDA for NVIDIA GPUs, making them relatively straightforward to integrate into existing deep learning frameworks. TPUs are also well-supported, particularly within Google's ecosystem, with TensorFlow offering seamless integration. DPUs require more specialized integration efforts, focusing on the optimization of data center operations rather than direct acceleration of deep learning models. QPUs, being at the forefront of computational research, currently require highly specialized knowledge to use effectively in deep learning applications [45], [46].

### 3.5. Challenges

In deep learning, each specialized processing unit GPU, TPU, DPU, and QPU faces distinct challenge describes in Table 3 GPUs are powerful for parallel computations but struggle with high energy consumption, memory bandwidth limitations, and inefficiency in small models. TPUs, designed for tensor operations, offer strong performance but are limited by their lack of flexibility, steep learning curve, and dependence on large batch sizes. DPUs, while useful for distributed systems by handling data and network tasks, have niche use cases, complex software integration, and limited maturity. QPUs offer theoretical speed-ups for specific tasks but face major hurdles, such as hardware immaturity, integration with classical systems, and algorithmic development, making them less practical for current deep learning needs [47], [48].

Table 3. Challenges of each unit								
Unit	GPU	TPU	DPU	QPU				
Major challenges	<ul> <li>High energy consumption</li> <li>Memory bandwidth bottlenecks</li> <li>Scalability issues</li> <li>Inefficiency with small models</li> <li>High cost</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Limited flexibility</li> <li>Programming complexity</li> <li>Memory bottlenecks</li> <li>Cloud-only availability</li> <li>Batch size sensitivity</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Niche use cases</li> <li>Software ecosystem limitations</li> <li>Integration overhead</li> <li>Cost</li> <li>Maturity of technology</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Hardware immaturity</li> <li>Algorithmic limitations</li> <li>Classical quantum integration issues</li> <li>Limited use cases</li> <li>High cost</li> </ul>				

A comparative analysis of GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs for deep learning with python (Ayoub Allali)

Lastly, selecting the right hardware accelerator for a deep learning project involves a careful consideration of the specific requirements and constraints of the project, including computational efficiency, parallelism, energy consumption, and the ease of integration. As this field continues to evolve rapidly, staying informed about the latest developments in hardware accelerators will be crucial for maximizing the performance and efficiency of deep learning applications.

### 4. CONCLUSION

While GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs each bring significant potential to accelerate deep learning tasks, they also come with unique challenges that must be considered based on the specific use case. GPUs remain the most versatile and widely used, but their energy demands and scalability issues can be limiting. TPUs offer specialized performance advantages, particularly for large-scale models, but are less flexible and more difficult to program. DPUs serve niche roles in distributed systems but require complex integration, and QPUs, though promising, are still in the experimental stage and not yet practical for general-purpose deep learning. The choice of hardware ultimately depends on balancing these trade-offs with the specific needs of the deep learning application.

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A comparative analysis of GPUs, TPUs, DPUs, and QPUs for deep learning with python (Ayoub Allali)



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