In deep learning, depth, as well as nonlinearity, create non-convex loss surfaces. Then, does depth alone create bad local minima? In this paper, we prove that without nonlinearity, depth alone does not create bad local minima, although it induces non-convex loss surface. Using this insight, we greatly simplify a recently proposed proof to show that all of the local minima of feedforward deep linear neural networks are global minima. Our theoretical results generalize previous results with fewer assumptions, and this analysis provides a method to show similar results beyond square loss in deep linear models.
Accordingly, we first analyze the local minima in problem (2), and obtain the following statement.

An important property of a deep model is that the non-convexity comes from depth, as well as nonlinearity: indeed, depth by itself creates highly non-convex optimization problems. One way to see a property of the non-convexity induced by depth is the non-uniqueness owing to weight–space symmetries (Krivov & Kainen, 1994): the model represents the same function mapping from the input to the output with different distinct settings in the weight space. Accordingly, there are many distinct globally optimal points and many distinct points with the same loss values due to weight–space symmetries, which would result in a non-convex epigraph (i.e., non-convex function) as well as non-convex sublevel sets (i.e., non-quasiconvex function). Thus, it has been unclear whether depth by itself can create a difficult non-convex loss surface. The recent work (Kawaguchi, 2016) indirectly showed, as a consequence of its main theoretical results, that depth does not create bad local minima of deep linear model with Frobenius norm although it creates potentially bad saddle points.

In this paper, we directly prove that all local minima of deep linear model corresponds to local minima of shallow model. Building upon this new theoretical insight, we propose a simpler proof for one of the main results in the recent work (Kawaguchi, 2016): all of the local minima of feedforward deep linear neural networks with Frobenius norm are global minima. The power of this proof can go beyond Frobenius norm: as long as the loss function satisfies Theorem 3.2, all local minima of deep linear model with Frobenius norm although it creates potentially bad saddle points.

2 Main Result

To examine the effect of depth alone, we consider the following optimization problem of feedforward deep linear neural networks with the square error loss:

\[
\min_W L(W) = \frac{1}{2} \|W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1 X - Y\|_F^2, \tag{1}
\]

where \(W_i \in \mathbb{R}^{d_i \times d_{i-1}}\) is the weight matrix, \(X \in \mathbb{R}^{d_0 \times m}\) is the input training data, and \(Y \in \mathbb{R}^{d_H \times m}\) is the target training data. Let \(p = \arg \min_{0 \leq i \leq H} d_i\) be the index corresponding to the smallest width. Note that for any \(W\), we have \(\text{rank}(W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1) \leq d_p\). To analyze optimization problem (1), we also consider the following optimization problem with a “shallow” linear model, which is equivalent to problem (1) in terms of the global minimum value:

\[
\min_R F(R) = \|RX - Y\|_F^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \text{rank}(R) \leq d_p, \tag{2}
\]

where \(R \in \mathbb{R}^{d_H \times d_0}\). Note that problem (1) is non-convex, unless \(d_p = \min(d_H, d_0)\), whereas problem (1) is non-convex, even when \(d_p \geq \min(d_H, d_0)\) with \(H > 1\). In other words, deep parameterization creates a non-convex loss surface even without nonlinearity.

Though we only consider the Frobenius loss here, the proof holds for general cases. As long as the loss function satisfies Theorem 3.2, all local minima of deep linear model corresponds to local minimum of shallow model.

Our first main result states that even though deep parameterization creates a non-convex loss surface, it does not create new bad local minima. In other words, every local minimum in problem (1) corresponds to a local minimum in problem (2).

**Theorem 2.1.** (Depth creates no new bad local minima) Assume that \(X\) and \(Y\) have full row rank. If \(W = \{W_1, \ldots, W_H\}\) is a local minimum of problem (1), then \(R = W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1\) achieves the value of a local minimum of problem (2).

Therefore, we can deduce the property of the local minima in problem (1) from those in problem (2). Accordingly, we first analyze the local minima in problem (2), and obtain the following statement.

**Theorem 2.2.** (No bad local minima for rank restricted shallow model) If \(X\) has full row rank, all local minima of optimization problem (2) are global minima.
By combining Theorems 2.1 and 2.2, we conclude that every local minimum is a global minimum for feedforward deep linear networks with a square error loss.

**Theorem 2.3.** (No bad local minima for deep linear neural networks) If \( X \) and \( Y \) have full row rank, then all local minima of problem (1) are global minima.

Theorem 2.3 generalizes one of the main results in (Kawaguchi, 2016) with fewer assumptions. Following the theoretical work with a random matrix theory (Dauphin et al., 2014; Choromanska et al., 2015), the recent work (Kawaguchi, 2016) showed that under some strong assumptions, all of the local minima are global minima for a class of nonlinear deep networks. Furthermore, the recent work (Kawaguchi, 2016) proved the following properties for a class of general deep linear networks with arbitrary depth and width: 1) the objective function is non-convex and non-concave; 2) all of the local minima are global minima; 3) every other critical point is a saddle point; and 4) there is no saddle point with the Hessian having no negative eigenvalue for shallow networks with one hidden layer, whereas such saddle points exist for deeper networks. Theorem 2.3 generalizes the second statement with fewer assumptions; the previous papers (Baldi, 1989; Kawaguchi, 2016) assume that the data matrix \( YX^T(XX^T)^{-1}XY^T \) has distinct eigenvalues, whereas we do not assume that.

### 3 Proof

In this section, we provide the proofs of Theorems 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

#### 3.1 Proof of Theorem 2.1

In order to deduce the proof of Theorem 2.1, we need some fundamental facts in linear algebra. The next two lemmas recall some basic facts of perturbation theory for singular value decomposition (SVD).

Let \( M \) and \( \bar{M} \) be two \( m \times n \) (\( m \geq n \)) matrices with SVDs

\[
B = U \Sigma V^T = (U_1, U_2) \begin{pmatrix} \Sigma_1 & \Sigma_2 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} V_1^T \\ V_2^T \end{pmatrix}
\]

\[
\bar{B} = \bar{U} \bar{\Sigma} \bar{V}^T = (\bar{U}_1, \bar{U}_2) \begin{pmatrix} \bar{\Sigma}_1 & \bar{\Sigma}_2 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \bar{V}_1^T \\ \bar{V}_2^T \end{pmatrix},
\]

where \( \Sigma_1 = \text{diag}(\sigma_1, \cdots, \sigma_k) \), \( \Sigma_2 = \text{diag}(\sigma_{k+1}, \cdots, \sigma_n) \), \( \bar{\Sigma}_1 = \text{diag}(\bar{\sigma}_1, \cdots, \bar{\sigma}_k) \), \( \bar{\Sigma}_2 = \text{diag}(\bar{\sigma}_{k+1}, \cdots, \bar{\sigma}_n) \), \( U, V, \bar{U}, \bar{V} \) are orthogonal matrices.

**Lemma 3.1. Continuity of Singular Value** The singular value \( \sigma_i \) of a matrix is a continuous map of entries of the matrix.

**Lemma 3.2.** (Wedin, 1972) Continuity of Singular Space

If

\[
\rho := \min \left\{ \min_{1 \leq i \leq k} \frac{\min_{1 \leq j \leq n-k} |\sigma_i - \bar{\sigma}_{i+j}|}{\min_{1 \leq i \leq k} |\sigma_i|} \right\} > 0,
\]

then:

\[
\sqrt{\| \sin(U_1, \bar{U}_1) \|^F + \| \sin(V_1, \bar{V}_1) \|^F} \leq \sqrt{\| (M - \bar{M}) V_1 \|^F + \| (\bar{M} - M) U_1 \|^F} \rho.
\]

For a fixed matrix \( B \), we say “matrix \( A \) is a perturbation of matrix \( B \)” if \( \| A - B \|_\infty \) is \( o(1) \), which means that the difference between \( A \) and \( B \) is much smaller than any non-zero number in matrix \( B \).

Lemma 3.2 implies that any SVD for a perturbed matrix is a perturbation of some SVD for the original matrix under full rank condition. More formally:
Lemma 3.3. Let $M$ be a full-rank matrix with singular value decomposition $\tilde{M} = U \tilde{\Sigma} V^T$. $M$ is a perturbation of $\tilde{M}$, then, there exists one SVD of $M$, $M = U \Sigma V^T$, such that $U$ is a perturbation of $U$, $\Sigma$ is a perturbation of $\Sigma$ and $V$ is a perturbation of $V$. (Notice that SVD of a matrix may not be unique due to rotation of the eigen-space corresponding to the same eigenvalue)

Proof: With the small perturbation of matrix $\tilde{M}$, Lemma 3.1 shows that the singular values does not change much. Thus, if $\|M - M\|_{\infty}$ is small enough, $|\sigma_i - \sigma_i|$ is also small for all $i$. Remember that all singular values of $M$ are positive. By letting $\Sigma_1$ contain only the singular value $\sigma_i$ (which may be multiple, and hence $U_1$ and $V_1$ are the singular spaces corresponding to the singular value $\sigma_i$), we have $p > 0$ in Lemma 3.2, thus Lemma 3.2 implies that the singular space of the perturbed matrix corresponding to singular value $\sigma_i$ in the initial matrix does not change much. The statement of the lemma follows by combining this result for the different singular values together (i.e., consider each index $i$ for different $\sigma_i$ in the above argument).

We say that $W$ satisfies the rank condition, if $\text{rank}(W_H \cdots W_1) = d_p$. Any perturbation of the products of matrices is the product of the perturbed matrices, when the original matrix satisfies the rank constraint. More formally:

Theorem 3.1. Let $\bar{R} = W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1$ with $\text{rank}(\bar{R}) = d_p$. Then, for any $R$, such that $R$ is a perturbation of $\bar{R}$ and $\text{rank}(R) \leq d_p$, there exists $\{W_1, W_2, \ldots, W_H\}$, such that $W_i$ is perturbation of $\bar{W}_i$ for all $i \in \{1, \ldots, H\}$ and $R = W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1$.

We will prove the theorem by induction. When $H = 2$, we can easily show that the perturbation of the product of two matrices is the product of one matrix and the perturbation of the other matrix. When $H = k + 1$, we let $M$ be the product of two specific matrices, and by induction the perturbation of the product ($R$) is the product of a perturbation of $M$ and perturbations of the other $H - 2$ matrix. And a perturbation of $M$ is also the product of perturbations of those two specific matrices, which proves the statement when $H = k$.

Proof: The case with $H = 1$ holds by setting $W_1 = R$. We prove the lemma with $H \geq 2$ by induction.

We first consider the base case where $H = 2$ with $\bar{R} = \bar{W}_2 \bar{W}_1$.

Let $\bar{R} = U \Sigma V^T$ be the SVD of $\bar{R}$. It follows Lemma 3.3 that there exists an SVD of $R$, $R = U \Sigma V^T$, such that $U$ is a perturbation of $\bar{U}$, $\Sigma$ is a perturbation of $\bar{\Sigma}$ and $V$ is a perturbation of $\bar{V}$.

Because $\text{rank}(\bar{R}) = d_p$, with a small perturbation, the positive singular values remain strictly positive, whereby, $\text{rank}(R) \geq d_p$. Together with the assumption $\text{rank}(\bar{R}) \leq d_p$, we have $\text{rank}(R) = d_p$. Let $S_2 = U^T \bar{W}_2$ and $S_1 = W_1 V$. Note that $U \Sigma V^T = \bar{R} = \bar{W}_2 \bar{W}_1$. Hence, $S_2 S_1 = \Sigma$, $S_2$ is a diagonal matrix. Remember $\Sigma$ is a perturbation of $\bar{\Sigma}$, thus there is an $S_2$, which is a perturbation of $S_2$ (each row of $S_2$ is a scale of the corresponding row of $S_2$), such that $S_2 S_1 = S$. Let $W_2 = U S_2$ and $W_1 = S_1 V$. Then, $W_1$ is a perturbation of $W_1$, $W_2$ is a perturbation of $W_2$, and $W_1 W_2 = R$, which proves the case when $H = 2$.

For the inductive step, given that the lemma holds for the case with $H = k \geq 2$, let us consider the case when $H = k + 1 \geq 3$ with $R = W_{k+1} W_k \cdots W_1$. Let $I$ be an index set defined as $I = \{p, p - 1\}$ if $p \geq 2$, $I = \{p + 2, p + 1\}$ if $p = 0$ or $p = 1$. We denote the i-th element of a set $I$ by $I_i$. Then, $\bar{M} = W_{k+1} \bar{W}_k \cdots \bar{W}_1$, exists as $k + 1 \geq 3$. Note that $R$ can be written as a product of $k$ matrices with $\bar{M}$ (for example, $R = \bar{W}_H \cdots \bar{W}_{i+1} M \bar{W}_{i+2} \cdots \bar{W}_1$). Thus, from the inductive hypothesis, for any $R$, such that $R$ is a perturbation of $\bar{R}$ and $\text{rank}(\bar{R}) \leq d_p$, there exists a set of desired $k$ matrices $\bar{M}$ and $\bar{W}_i$ for $i \in \{1, \ldots, k + 1\} \setminus I$, such that $W_i$ is a perturbation of $\bar{W}_i$ for all $i \in \{1, \ldots, k + 1\} \setminus I$. $M$ is a perturbation of $\bar{M}$, and the product is equal to $R$. Meanwhile, because $M$ is either a $d_p$ by $d_p$ matrix or a $d_{p+2}$ by $d_p$ matrix, we have $\text{rank}(M) \leq d_p$ and $\text{rank}(M) = d_p$, and it follows $\text{rank}(\bar{R}) = d_p$ that $\text{rank}(\bar{M}) = d_p$. Thus, by setting $R \leftarrow M$ and $R \leftarrow \bar{M}$ (note that $d_p$ in $R = W_{k+1} \bar{W}_k \cdots \bar{W}_1$ is equal to $d_p$ in $M = W_{k+1} \bar{W}_k \bar{W}_{k+1}$), we can apply the proof for the case of $H = 2$ to conclude: there exists $\{W_{k+1}, W_k\}$, such that $W_i$ is a perturbation of $\bar{W}_i$ for all $i \in \mathbb{I}$, and $M = W_{k+1} W_k$. Combined with the above statement from the inductive hypothesis, this implies the lemma with $H = k + 1$, whereby we finish the proof by induction.

The next two theorems show that, for any local minimum of $L(\cdot)$, there is another local minimum of $L(\cdot)$, whose function value is the same as the original and it satisfies the rank constraint.
Theorem 3.2. Let $W = \{W_1, \cdots, W_H\}$ be a local minimum of problem (4) and $R = W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1$. If $W_i$ is not of full rank, then there exists a $\tilde W_i$, such that $\tilde W_i$ is of full rank, $W_i$ is a perturbation of $W_i$, $W = \{W_1, \cdots, W_i, \cdots, W_{i-1}, W_i, W_{i+1}, \cdots, W_H\}$ is a local minimum of problem (4), and $L(W) = L(\tilde W)$.

The idea of the proof is that if we just change one weight $W_i$ and keep all other weights, it becomes a convex least square problem. Then we are able to perturb $W_i$ to maintain the objective value as well as the perturbation is full rank.

Proof of Theorem 3.2 For notational convenience, let $A = W_{i-1} \cdots W_1 X$ and $B = W_{i+1} \cdots W_H$, and let

$$L_i(W_i) = \frac{1}{2} ||B^T W_i A - Y||_F^2$$.

Because $W$ is a local minimum of $L_i$, $W_i$ is a local minimum of $L_i$. Let $A = U_1^T D_1 V_1$ and $B = U_2^T D_2 V_2$ are the SVDs of $A$ and $B$, respectively, where $D_i$ is a diagonal matrix with the first $s_i$ terms being strictly positive, $i = 1, 2$. Minimizing $L_i$ over $W_i$ is a least square problem, and the normal equation is

$$BB^T W_i A A^T = BYA^T$$.

hence

$$W_i \in (BB^T)^+BYA^T(AA^T)^+ + \{M|BB^TMAA^T = 0\}$$

$$= U_2 D_2^+ V_2^T Y V_1 D_1^+ U_1^T + \{U_2 K U_1^T | K_{1:s_2,1:s_1} = 0\},$$

where $(\cdot)^+$ is a Moore–Penrose pseudo-inverse and $K$ is a matrix with suitable dimension with the entries in the top left $s_2 \times s_1$ rectangular being 0.

Since $V_2^T Y V_1$ is of full rank,

$$\text{rank}(D_2^+ V_2^T Y V_1 D_1^+) \geq \max \{0, s_2 + s_1 - \max\{d_i, d_{i-1}\}\}$$

Thus, we can choose a proper $K$ (which contains $d_i + d_{i-1} - s_2 - s_1$ is at proper positions with all other terms being 0) such that $D_2^+ V_2^T Y V_1 D_1^+ + K$ is of full rank, whereby $U_2 (D_2^+ V_2^T Y V_1 D_1^+ + K) U_1^T$ is of full rank. Therefore, there is a full rank $\tilde W_i$ that satisfies the normal equation (3).

Let $\tilde W_i(\mu) = W_i + \mu (\tilde W_i - W_i)$. Then, $\tilde W_i(\mu)$ also satisfies the normal equation, and $L_i(\tilde W_i(\mu)) = L_i(W_i)$. Thus, there exists a $\delta > 0$, such that for any $W^0$ satisfying $||W^0 - W||_\infty \leq \delta$, we have $L_i(W^0) \geq L_i(W)$.

Note that $W$ is a local minimum of $L(W)$. It follows from $\tilde W_i$ being full rank that there exists a small enough $\mu$, such that $W_i(\mu)$ is full rank and $||W_i(\mu) - W_i||_\infty$ is arbitrarily small (in particular, $||W_i(\mu) - W_i||_\infty \leq \frac{\delta}{2}$), because the non-full-rank matrices are discrete on the line of $W_i(\mu)$ with parameter $\mu > 0$ by considering the determine of $W_i^T(\mu) W_i(\mu)$ or $W_i(\mu) W_i^T(\mu)$ as a polynomial of $\lambda$. Therefore, for any $W^0$, such that $||W^0 - \tilde W(\mu)||_\infty \leq \frac{\delta}{2}$, we have

$$||W^0 - W||_\infty \leq ||W^0 - \tilde W(\mu)||_\infty + ||\tilde W_i(\mu) - W_i||_\infty \leq \delta,$$

whereby

$$L(W^0) \geq L(W) = L(\tilde W(\mu)).$$

This shows that $\tilde W(\mu) = \{W_1, \cdots, W_{i-1}, W_i(\mu), W_{i+1}, \cdots, W_H\}$ is also a local minimum of problem (4) for some small enough $\mu$. □

Lemma 3.4. Let $R = AB$ for two given matrices $A \in R^{d_1 \times d_2}$ and $B \in R^{d_2 \times d_3}$. If $d_1 \leq d_2$, $d_2 \leq d_3$ and rank$(A) = d_1$, then any perturbation of $R$ is the product of $A$ and perturbation of $B$.

Proof: Let $A = UDV^T$ be the SVD of $A$, then, $R = UDV^T B$. Let $\tilde R$ be a perturbation of $R$ and let $\tilde B = B + V D^+ U^T (R - R)$. Then, $\tilde B$ is a perturbation of $B$ and $AB = \tilde R$ by noticing $DD^+ = I$, as $A$ has full row rank. □

Theorem 3.3. If $\tilde W = \{\tilde W_1, \cdots, \tilde W_H\}$ is a local minimum with $\tilde W_i$ being full rank, then, there exists $\tilde W = \{\tilde W_1, \cdots, \tilde W_H\}$, such that $\tilde W_i$ is a perturbation of $\tilde W_i$ for all $i \in \{1, \cdots, H\}$, $\tilde W$ is a local minimum, $L(\tilde W) = L(W)$, and rank$(\tilde W H_{\tilde W - 1} \cdots \tilde W_1) = d_p$. □
In the proof of Theorem 3.3, we will use Theorem 3.2 and Lemma 3.4 to show that we can perturb $W_{p-1}, W_{p-2}, \ldots, W_1$ in sequence to make sure the perturbed weight is still the optimal solution and $\text{rank}(W_{p}W_{p-1}) = d_p$. Similar strategy can make sure $\text{rank}(W_{H}W_{H-1} \cdots W_{p+1}) = d_p$, which then proves the whole theorem.

**Proof of Theorem 3.3:** If $p \neq 1$, consider

$$L_1(T) := \|W_H \cdots W_{p+1}T W_{p-2} \cdots W_1X - Y\|^2_F.$$

Then, it follows from Lemma 3.4 and $\tilde{W}$ is a local minimum of $L(W)$ that $\tilde{T}$ is a local minimum of $L_1$, where $\tilde{T} = W_{p}W_{p-1}$. It follows from Theorem 3.2 that there exists $\tilde{T}$, such that $\tilde{T}$ is close enough to $T$, $\tilde{T}$ is a local minimum of $L_1(T)$, $L_1(\tilde{T}) = L_1(T)$, and $\text{rank}(\tilde{T}) = d_p$. Note $\tilde{T}$ is a perturbation of $T$, whereby, from Lemma 3.4, there exists $W_{p}, W_{p-1}$, which are perturbations of $W_{p}$ and $W_{p-1}$, respectively, such that $\hat{W}_p\hat{W}_{p-1} = \tilde{T}$. Thus, $\hat{W}^0 = \left(\hat{W}_H, \cdots, \hat{W}_{p+1}, \hat{W}_p, \hat{W}_{p-1}, \hat{W}_{p-2}, \cdots, \hat{W}_1\right)$ is a local minimum of $L(W)$, $L(\hat{W}) = L(\hat{W})$ and $\text{rank}(W_pW_{p-1} \cdots W_1) = d_p$.

By that analogy, we can find $\hat{W}_p \cdots \hat{W}_1$, such that $\hat{W}^1 = \left(\hat{W}_H, \cdots, \hat{W}_{p+1}, \hat{W}_p, \hat{W}_{p-1}, \cdots, \hat{W}_1\right)$ is a local minimum of $L(W)$, $\hat{W}_i$ is a perturbation of $\hat{W}_i$ for $i = 1, \cdots, p$, $L(\hat{W}^1) = L(\hat{W})$ and $\text{rank}(W_pW_{p-1} \cdots W_1) = d_p$.

Similarly, we can find $\hat{W}_H \cdots \hat{W}_{p+1}$, such that $\hat{W}^2 = \left(\hat{W}_H, \cdots, \hat{W}_{p+1}, \hat{W}_p, \hat{W}_{p-1}, \cdots, \hat{W}_1\right)$ is a local minimum of $L(W)$, $\hat{W}_i$ is a perturbation of $\hat{W}_i$ for $i = p + 1, \cdots, H$, $L(\hat{W}^2) = L(\hat{W})$ and $\text{rank}(\hat{W}_H\hat{W}_{H-1} \cdots \hat{W}_{p+1}) = d_p$.

Noticing that

$$\text{rank}(\hat{W}_H \cdots \hat{W}_1) \geq \text{rank}(\hat{W}_H\hat{W}_{H-1} \cdots \hat{W}_{p+1}) + \text{rank}(W_pW_{p-1} \cdots W_1) - d_p = d_p$$

and $\text{rank}(\hat{W}_H \cdots \hat{W}_1) \leq \min_{i=0,\ldots,H} d_i = d_p$, we have $\text{rank}(\hat{W}_H \cdots \hat{W}_1) = d_p$, which completes the proof.

**Proof of Theorem 2.1:** It follows from Theorem 3.2 and Theorem 3.3 that there exists another local minimum $\hat{W} = \hat{W} = \left\{\hat{W}_1, \cdots, \hat{W}_H\right\}$, such that $L(\hat{W}) = L(W)$ and $\text{rank}(\hat{W}_H\hat{W}_{H-1} \cdots \hat{W}_1) = d_p$. Remember that $\hat{R} = \hat{W}_H\hat{W}_{H-1} \cdots \hat{W}_1$. It then follows from Theorem 3.1 that for any $R$, such that $R$ is a perturbation of $\hat{R}$ and $\text{rank}(R) \leq d_p$, we have $R = \hat{W}_H\hat{W}_{H-1} \cdots \hat{W}_1$, where $\hat{W}_i$ is a perturbation of $\hat{W}_i$. Therefore, by noticing $\hat{W}$ is a local minimum of $\{1\}$, we have

$$F(R) = L(W) \geq L(\hat{W}) = F(\hat{R})$$

which shows that $\hat{R}$ is a local minimum of $\{2\}$.\]

In the proof of Theorem 2.2, we at first show that we just need to consider the case where $X$ is an identity matrix and $Y$ is a diagonal matrix by noticing rotation is invariant under Frobenius norm. Then, we show that the minimum must be a block diagonal and symmetric matrix, and each block term is a projection matrix on the space corresponding to the same eigenvalue of the diagonal matrix $Y$. Finally, we show that those projection matrices must be onto the eigenspace of $Y$ corresponding to the as large as possible eigenvalues, which then shows that the local minimum shares the same function value.

### 3.2 Proof of Theorem 2.2

Let $X = U_1\Sigma_1V_1^T$ be the SVD decomposition of $X$, where $\Sigma_1$ is a diagonal matrix with full row rank. Then,

$$F(R) = \|RU_1\Sigma_1V_1^T - Y\|_F^2 = \|RU_1\Sigma_1 - YV_1\|_F^2$$

$$= \|(RU_1)(\Sigma_1)_{1:d_1,1:d_1} - (YV_1)_{1:d_2,1:d_1}\|_F^2 + \text{Const},$$
where Const is a constant in $R$ and $(\cdot)_{t_1:t_2,t_3:t_4}$ is a submatrix of $(\cdot)$, which contains the $t_1$ to $t_2$ row and $t_3$ to $t_4$ column of $(\cdot)$. If $R$ is a local minimum of (2), then $S = RU$ is a local minimum of

$$
\min_{S} \quad G(S) = \|S\hat{\Sigma}_1 - \hat{Y}\|_F^2
$$

s.t. \quad \text{rank}(S) \leq k,

(4)

where $\hat{\Sigma}_1 := (\Sigma_1)_{1:d_1,1:d_1}$, $\hat{Y} := (YV_1)_{1:d_2,1:d_1}$ and the difference of objective function values of (2) and (4) is a constant. Let $\hat{Y} := U_2\Sigma_2 V_2^T$ be the SVD of $\hat{Y}$, then

$$
G(S) = \|S\hat{\Sigma}_1 - U_2\Sigma_2 V_2^T\|_F^2 = \|U_2^T S\hat{\Sigma}_1 V_2 - \hat{\Sigma}_2\|_F^2,
$$

and if $S$ is a local minimum of $G(S)$, we have $T := U_2^T S\hat{\Sigma}_1 V_2$ is a local minimum of

$$
\min_{T} \quad H(T) = \|T - \Sigma_2\|_F^2
$$

s.t. \quad \text{rank}(T) \leq k,

(5)

and the objective function values of (4) and (5) are the same at corresponding points. Let $\Sigma_2$ have $r$ distinct positive diagonal terms $\lambda_1 > \cdots > \lambda_r \geq 0$ with multiplicities $m_1, \cdots, m_r$. Let $T^*$ be a local minimum of (5), and

$$
T^* = U^* \Sigma^* V^* T = [U^*_S U^*_N] \begin{bmatrix}
\Sigma^*_S \\
0
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
V^*_S \\
V^*_N
\end{bmatrix}
$$

be the SVD of $T$, where $\Sigma^*_S$ are positive singular values. Let $P_L := U^*_S (U^*_S U^*_S)^{-1} U^*_S T$ and $P_R := V^*_S (V^*_S V^*_S)^{-1} V^*_S T$ be the projection matrix to the space spanned by $U^*_S$ and $V^*_S$, respectively. Note that $\{T|P_L T = T\} \subseteq \{T|\text{rank}(T) \leq k\}$, thus, $T^*$ is also a local minimum of

$$
\min_{T} \|T - \Sigma_2\|_F^2
$$

s.t. $P_L T = T$,

(6)

which is a convex problem, and it can be shown by the first order optimality condition that the only local minimum of (6) is $T^* = P_L \Sigma_2$. Similarly, we have $T^* = \Sigma_2 P_R$. Then, $D := \Sigma_2 \Sigma_2^T$ is a diagonal matrix, with $r$ distinct non-zero diagonal terms $\lambda_1 > \cdots > \lambda_r > 0$ with multiplicities $m_1, \cdots, m_r$. Therefore,

$$
P_L D P_L = P_L \Sigma_2 \Sigma_2^T P_L^T = T^* T^* T = \Sigma_2 P_R P_R^T \Sigma_2^T = \Sigma_2 \Sigma_2^T \Sigma_2 \Sigma_2^T P_L^T = D P_L.
$$

Note that the left hand is a symmetric matrix, thus, $D P_L$ is also a symmetric matrix. Meanwhile, $P_L$ is a symmetric matrix, whereby $P_L$ is a $r$-block diagonal matrix with each block corresponding to the same diagonal terms of $D$. Therefore, $T^* = P_L \hat{\Sigma}_2$ is also a $r$-block diagonal matrix.

Let

$$
T^* = \begin{bmatrix}
T^*_1 \\
\vdots \\
T^*_r
\end{bmatrix}
$$

where $T^*_i$ is a $m_i \times m_i$ matrix, then $T^* T^* T = \Sigma_2 T^* T$ implies $T^*_i T^*_i T = \lambda_i T^*_i T$. Thus, $T^*_i$ is symmetric matrix and $T^*_i$ is a projection matrix. Let $\text{rank}(T^*_i) = d_p$, then, $\sum_{i=1}^r d_p \leq p$ and

$$
\text{tr}(T^*_i) = \lambda_i d_p, \quad \text{whereby,}
$$

$$
H(T^*) = \sum_{i=1}^r \|T^*_i - \lambda_i I_{m_i}\|_F^2
$$

$$
= \sum_{i=1}^r \text{tr}(T^*_i) - 2\lambda_i \text{tr}(T_i) + m_i \lambda_i^2
$$

$$
= \sum_{i=1}^r (m_i - d_p) \lambda_i^2.
$$
Let $j$ be the largest number that $\sum_{i=1}^j m_i < d_p$. Then, it is easy to find that the global minima of (6) satisfy $d_{p_i} = m_i$ for $i \leq j$, $d_{p_{j+1}} = d_p - \sum_{i=1}^j m_i$ and $d_{p_i} = 0$ for $i > j + 1$ which gives all of the global minima.

Now, let us show that all local minima must be global minima. As local minima $T^*$ is a block diagonal matrix, thus, we can assume without loss of generality that both $\Sigma_2$ and $T^*$ are square matrices, because the all 0 rows and columns in $\Sigma_2$ and $T$ do not change anything. Thus, it follows $T_i^*$ is symmetric that $T^*$ is a symmetric matrix. Remember that $\frac{T^*}{\lambda_i}$ is a projection matrix, thus the eigenvalues of $T_i^*$ are either 0 or $\lambda_i$, whereby

$$T^* = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^{d_{p_i}} \lambda_i u_{ij} u_{ij}^T,$$

where $u_{ij}$ is the $j$th normalized orthogonal eigen-vector of $T^*$ corresponding to eigenvalue $\lambda_i$.

It is easy to see that, at a local minimum, we have $\sum_{i=1}^r d_{p_i} = d_p$, otherwise, there is a descent direction by adding a rank 1 matrix to $T^*$ corresponding to one positive eigenvalue. If there exists $i_1, i_2$, such that $i_1 < i_2$, $d_{p_{i_1}} < m_{i_1}$, and $d_{p_{i_2}} \geq 1$, then, there exists $\bar{u}_{i_1}$, such that $\bar{u}_{i_1} \perp u_{i_1 j}$ for $j = 1, \cdots d_{p_{i_1}}$. Let

$$T(\theta) := T^* - \lambda_{i_2} u_{i_2 1} u_{i_2 1}^T + (\lambda_{i_1} \sin^2 \theta + \lambda_{i_2} \cos^2 \theta) (u_{i_2 1} \cos \theta + \bar{u}_{i_1} \sin \theta) (u_{i_2 1} \cos \theta + \bar{u}_{i_1} \sin \theta)^T.$$

Then, $\text{rank}(T(\theta)) = \text{rank}(T^*) = d_p$, $T(0) = T^*$ and

$$H(T(\theta)) = H(T^*) + \lambda_1^2 + \lambda_2^2 - (\lambda_1 \sin^2 \theta + \lambda_2 \cos^2 \theta)^2.$$

It is easy to check that $H(T(\theta))$ is monotonically decreasing with $\theta$, which gives a descent direction at $T^*$, contradicting with that $T^*$ is a local minimum. Therefore, there is no such $i_1$ and $i_2$, which shows that $T^*$ is a global minimum.

3.3 Proof of Theorem 2.3

The statement follows from Theorem 2.1 and 2.2

4 Conclusion

We have proven that, even though depth creates a non-convex loss surface, it does not create new bad local minima. Based on this new insight, we have successfully proposed a new simple proof for the fact that all of the local minima of feedforward deep linear neural networks are global minima as a corollary.

The benefits of this new results are not limited to the simplification of the previous proof. For example, our results apply to problems beyond square loss. Let us consider the shallow problem (S) minimize $L(R)$ s.t. $\text{rank}(R) \leq d_p$, and the deep parameterization counterpart (D) minimize $L(W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_2 W_1)$. Our analysis shows that for any function $L$, as long as $L$ satisfies Theorem 3.2, any local minimum of (D) corresponds to a local minimum of (S). This is not limited to when $L$ is least square loss, and this is why we say depth creates no bad local minima.

In addition, our analysis can directly apply to matrix completion unlike previous results. Ge et al. (2016) show that local minima of the symmetric matrix completion problem are global with high probability. This should be able to extend to asymmetric case. Denote $f(W) := \sum_{i,j \in \Omega} (Y - W_2 W_1)_{i,j}$, then local minimum of $f(W)$ is global with high probability, where $\Omega$ is the observed entries. Then, our analysis here can directly show that the result can be extended for deep linear parameterization: for $h(W) := \sum_{i,j \in \Omega} (Y - W_H W_{H-1} \cdots W_1)_{i,j}$, any local minimum of $h(W)$ is global with high probability.
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